

## PAI/SOC/PSC 400 Poverty Policy

Fall 2020

Mondays, 10:45-noon

Eggers 070/Zoom

Colleen M. Heflin, Professor of Public Administration and International Affairs

Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Studies

Faculty Affiliate, Aging Studies Institute

Faculty Affiliate, Sociology

Office: 426 Center for Policy Research Eggers Hall

**Office Hours: Zoom Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment ([cmheflin@syr.edu](mailto:cmheflin@syr.edu))**

### Course Description

This seminar will examine the nature and extent of poverty in the United States, its causes and consequences, and the antipoverty effects of existing and proposed government programs and policies. The following questions will be addressed:

What is poverty? Why is poverty so persistent? Why are poverty rates for minorities so high? What are the dynamics of rural poverty? What are the goals and purposes of social welfare programs? How has welfare reform changed the playing field? Is marriage a viable antipoverty strategy? Is there a culture of poverty? How are immigration and demographic trends changing the U.S. demographic profile? How do current economic conditions impact people in poverty?

### Course Objectives

1. To understand the measurement of poverty and other measures of economic well-being.
2. To explore how demographic characteristics, including race, family status, immigration status and geography alter the risk of being poor in America.
3. To study the different common explanations for why poverty exists.
4. To evaluate what policy options are effective at addressing poverty at the federal and state level.

### Required Texts

John Iceland's, Poverty in America: A Handbook, is required for this class. This book is available in the SU bookstore but also on Amazon in both a paperback and electronic format.

Additional readings are assigned for each session. All readings (besides the book) are available online or on Blackboard (under the tab "Content" by session). **You are required to have the readings accessible during each discussion part of the class each session.** Students officially enrolled in the class should have automatic access to the Blackboard site. I will use Blackboard as a means for updating the syllabus, making announcements, posting readings, and resources.

### Grading Scale

A	93.00 – 100.00	B-	80.00 – 82.99	D	60.00 – 69.99
A-	90.00 – 92.99	C+	77.00 – 79.99	F	< 60.00
B+	87.00 – 89.99	C	73.00 – 76.99		
B	83.00 – 86.99	C-	70.00 – 72.99		

## Grade Calculation

1.	Class discussion	15%
2.	Reading Checks (10 @ 2% each)	20%
3.	Federal Policy Paper	45%
	Problem Statement (5%)	
	Summary of Two Policies (10%)	
	Presentation (10%)	
	Final Draft (20%)	
4.	State Policy Project	20%

## Late Assignment Policy

After an assignment is due, 10% will be deducted for each 24-hour period that the assignment is late (computer problems, IT problems, etc.). I encourage you to begin these assignments early! If you know before the deadline that you will be unable to make the deadline, especially because of health issues, please contact me BEFORE you miss the deadline.

## Class Discussion

Class discussion is an integral part of this course. As such, it is important to lay down some ground rules for discussion.

- There are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the questions we will be exploring in this class. However, discussion should take place on the academic plane of reasoned argument. This means that all students must be prepared (**with readings in hand!**) to discuss the material. Further, students are expected to **regularly and respectfully** share their thoughts, questions, and observations about the readings.
- Students have the right and should feel empowered to take reasoned exception and to voice opinions contrary to those offered by the instructor and/or other students (S.R. 6.1.2).
- Equally, the course instructor has the right—and the responsibility—to ensure that all academic discourse occurs in a context characterized by respect and civility. Obviously, the accepted level of civility would not include attacks of a personal nature or statements denigrating another on the basis of race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, age, national/regional origin, etc., or other irrelevant factors.

## Options for class participation

Our classroom can accommodate about 1/2 of the class for socially distanced face-to-face (F2F) instruction—it is my hope that each of you can join me in my classroom as much as possible. For the remaining time, you will join me through Zoom during the same time as the classroom discussion is occurring. Both the F2F and Zoom sessions will break into small group groups and report back to the larger classroom. Both groups of students can fully participate in the classroom discussion. As a consequence, you are required to attend either the F2F or the live Zoom session each week. If you are unable to attend either F2F or the live Zoom session, you should contact me directly to make an alternative arrangement.

I will award up to 10 discussion points to each student each week. Failing to participate in more than one class will be detrimental to your final grade.

- Five points will be awarded for completing the online interactive elements prior to the class meeting time. This may entail responding to a multiple choice question, an open-ended question, or creating a short video in response to question or prompt.
- The other five points will be awarded for active participation in the class discussion. If you are participating F2F, you can earn these points by asking questions about class material, responding to discussion questions, or talking in your small group exercise time. If you are participating by live Zoom, you can earn these points also by asking clarifying or extension questions, responding to my discussion questions or talking in small group breakout rooms. However, since the format is a little strange this term, students participating on-line also have the option of responding to discussion board questions (found in Blackboard in the discussion board).

## **Course Assignments**

### **Reading Checks**

There will be eleven reading checks for this class over the readings for Session 2-Session 12. Reading checks will be open book and open note and must be taken **online** before the start of our live/F2F session. The objective is to ensure that you have read and are familiar with the assigned readings before the discussion-based portion of the class. This will help ensure that our discussion is empirically based.

Your lowest scoring quiz will be dropped, and the remaining 10 quizzes will each count toward 2 percent of your total grade. If you miss a quiz for any reason (including failing to complete a quiz prior to class), you can drop that quiz. Quizzes cannot be made up.

### **Federal Policy Paper & Mock Hearing**

We will discuss the structure and format for the Mock Congressional Hearings and the choice of topics during the first few sessions. In essence, you will select a social problem and recommend a specific strategy to address the issue. Your recommendations will be based on your reading of the current research on the issue. You may choose any social policy, including those dealing with child care, preschool programs, health insurance, employment and training programs education, the minimum wage, housing, welfare, food stamps, and child support.

The policy analysis research paper will require a substantial amount of work on your part. It is not an assignment that can be successfully completed in a short time. Papers should present thoughtful policy analysis of the issue under study based on a *careful* review of the relevant empirical literature, with data and research evidence that documents the pros and cons of the policy reform you are analyzing. You will be graded on the *quality* of the evidence you present in your paper and not on the particular position taken. That is, it does not matter to me if a paper on the minimum wage proposes to increase the minimum wage or eliminate it. What matters is that the paper is well-researched, refers to recent data and policy analyses on the issues, and that analysis is sound and conclusions are well-documented.

### ***PHASE 1: Problem Statement (Due September 14, in class | 5%)***

Identify your social problem of interest in 1 page. Students are encouraged to discuss potential paper topics with me during office hours and over email.

**PHASE 2: Policy Options (Due October 12, 5pm, submit via Blackboard | 10%)**

Write a brief memo describing two social policies that target the social problem you defined in **Phase 1**. For example, if your social problem is the working poor and your two policies are the minimum wage and the EITC, your memo should describe the details of the minimum wage and the EITC. Include key details such as who is covered/eligible under the policy, when the policy was implemented, how it has changed over time, and how it is funded.

**PHASE 3: Hearing (Due November 16 or 23, in class | 10%)**

During the last two class sessions, you will present your policy idea to your peers as part of a mock Senate Hearing exercise. Students will be grouped into four-member Senate panels by substantive policy area, and each student on the four-member panel will have five minutes and five PowerPoint slides to present their policy idea. Panels will present to an audience of four peers, who will act as Senators (pick your favorite or be your future self!) and ask questions of the panel for 10 minutes total.

**PHASE 4: Final Paper (Due December 2nd, 5pm, submit via Blackboard | 20%)**

The final paper should be 8-10 pages long and include the following components:

1. Introduction/motivation
  - a. What is the social problem?
  - b. Who is affected? (How many people? What characteristics do they share? Where do they live?)
  - c. Why do we care? (What consequences are associated with the social problem?)
2. Introduction of two policy options aimed at fixing the social problem
  - a. Describe details of the two key policies.
3. Policy Analysis
  - a. How much do we spend on the program?
  - b. What evidence is there about program effectiveness? (What outcomes does it produce, for whom, and under what conditions?)
  - c. Are there unintended consequences of the program?
4. Conclusion
  - a. Which policy do you choose as a better option for targeting the social problem?
  - b. Discuss what led you to this decision.

**State Policy Project**

**(Due November 2, 5pm, submit via Blackboard | 20%)**

Draft a three-page policy brief that details one state's policies targeting family, housing, food or income support policy—feel free to get creative with the format and pictures!

1. Choose a state
2. Choose a social policy area
3. Summarize state demographics (use Census American Fact Finder)
4. Summarize the details of the state policies:
  - a. Is this state generous or stingy when it comes to providing benefits?
  - b. Does the state encourage or discourage participation among eligible populations?
5. Provide suggestions for reform.

## **Stay Safe Pledge**

Syracuse University's Stay Safe Pledge reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on the well-being of our community members. This pledge defines norms for behavior that will promote community health and wellbeing. Classroom expectations include the following: wearing a mask that covers the nose and mouth at all times, maintaining a distance of six feet from others, and staying away from class if you feel unwell. Students who do not follow these norms will not be allowed to continue in face-to-face classes; repeated violations will be treated as violations of the Code of Student Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

## **Food and Drink in the Classroom**

Eating and drinking require the lowering of the face mask, creating a potentially dangerous situation. For this reason, students are not allowed to eat or drink in class during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instructors teaching classes that are longer than 80 minutes in duration should allow students to leave the room as needed or include a short break to allow students to get a drink.

## **Online Etiquette**

Students participating remotely in hybrid class sessions are participating on an equal basis as the students who are in the classroom. It is reasonable to expect online students to have their webcam on and to call on them as you would call on students who are in the room. Online students should dress and behave as they would in a face-to-face class. In both hybrid and fully online classes, students should use the "raise hand" function to ask questions and refrain from interrupting the class. You may wish to review the '[Netiquette for Students](#)' resource at the ITS Answers page.

## **Paper Expectations and Turnitin**

Papers are to be handed in electronically through Turnitin in Blackboard. Turnitin is a plagiarism prevention system that identifies "matched text." You have the opportunity to view your "Originality Report" and check that all sources you have used are properly acknowledged and cited. Thus, you should leave yourself some time to run this check before submitting a final version. Note that all submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future.

Be sure to edit and rewrite several times, proofread and spell-check the paper, and number the pages. You are allowed to use one of two citation styles. The first is the conventional footnote format, with a note in the text and the reference in an accompanying footnote or endnote. The second style is the embedded citation format (sometimes known as MLA format), where the author and page number are placed in parentheses at the end of the sentence. A bibliography should also accompany the paper.

## **University Attendance Policy**

Attendance in classes is expected in all courses at Syracuse University either online or in-person. Students who do not attend classes starting with the first scheduled meeting may be academically withdrawn as not making progress toward degree by failure to attend. Instructors set course-specific policies for absences from scheduled class meetings in their syllabi. It is a federal requirement that students who do not attend or cease to attend a class to be reported at the time of

determination by the faculty using Orange Success to alert the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Financial Aid. Students should also review the university's religious observance policy and make the required arrangements at the beginning of each semester.

### **Students in Quarantine or Isolation**

Students who enter quarantine (exposure to COVID-positive person) or isolation (confirmed COVID infection) will not be able to attend in-person class sessions. Instructors will be notified of these situations. Affected students may continue to participate in classes remotely. If a student becomes unable to participate in classes, the normal notification process, facilitated by the Office of Student Assistance, will be used to notify faculty.

### **Digital Etiquette**

Texting, emailing and surfing the web during class are extremely disrespectful and disruptive behaviors. To prevent undue distraction and to encourage a participatory and respectful classroom environment, the use of cell phones, laptop computers or other electronic devices will not be permitted in class, unless I give explicit instructions, it is required as special accommodation or otherwise negotiated with me. Students who use such devices will be asked to leave class and may be marked absent. Additionally, you may not audio or video record class sessions without the instructor's permission.

### **Use of Class Materials and Recordings**

Original class materials (handouts, assignments, tests, etc.) and recordings of class sessions are the intellectual property of the course instructor. You may download these materials for your use in this class. However, you may not provide these materials to other parties (e.g., web sites, social media, other students) without permission. Doing so is a violation of intellectual property law and of the student code of conduct.

### **DISABILITY SYLLABUS STATEMENT**

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit [Center for Disability Resources](#). Please call (315) 443-4498 or email [disabilityresources@syr.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@syr.edu) for more detailed information.

The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about

university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. SU students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person quizzes and exams also apply to online reading check and assignments. In this course, all work submitted must be yours alone. Discussing or communicating about reading checks with anyone during the 30-minute period violates academic integrity expectations for this course. The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure, regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

## **Course Schedule**

Session Topics (readings for each session are listed below)

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. August 24    | Introduction to the Class and Poverty Policy                     |
| 2. August 31    | What is poverty?   |
| 3. September 7  | Who is poor in America?  |
| 4. September 14 | Economic Mobility and Its Consequences                           |
| 5. September 21 | A Short History of Poverty Policy                                |
| 6. September 28 | What is the role of the economy in poverty?                      |
| 7. October 5    | What is the role of culture and discrimination in poverty?       |
| 8. October 12   | What is the role of structures of inequality in poverty?         |
| 9. October 19   | What is the role of family structure and immigration in poverty? |
| 10. October 26  | How does where you live matter for poverty?                      |
| 11. November 2  | Income and Near Income Solutions to Poverty                      |
| 12. November 9  | Education and Training Solutions to Poverty                      |
| 13. November 16 | Federal Policy Hearing I   |
| 14. November 23 | Federal Policy Hearing II  |

## **Assigned Readings**

All readings are required. Note that given the changing situation, I may update the readings required throughout this course in order to provide you with current and relevant readings.

### **1. Introduction to the Class and Poverty Policy**

- Discuss David Ellwood's Three Helping Conundrums (Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family, Chapter 2). (1988)
- 1<sup>st</sup> day exercise

### **2. What is poverty?**

- Iceland, John, Poverty in America, Chapters 1 and 2: "Methods of Measuring Poverty." Pp.11-37
- How the US Census Bureau Measures Poverty Infographic ([https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2017/demo/poverty\\_measure-how\\_print.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2017/demo/poverty_measure-how_print.pdf)).
- Robert Rector and Jamie Bryan Hall. March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. "How Poor, Really, Are American's Poor?" The Heritage Foundation Commentary. (<https://www.heritage.org/poverty-and-inequality/commentary/how-poor-really-are-americas-poor>)

### **3. Who is Poor in America?**

- Iceland, John, Poverty in America, Chapter 3: "Characteristics of the Poverty Population." Pp.39-60
- Income and Poverty in the United States, 2018 [p60-266 income and poverty 2018.pdf](#) (focus on poverty)
- "Tracking the COVID-19 Recession's Effects on Food, Housing and Employment Hardships." Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

- Health Insurance in the United States, 2018 [p60-267 health insurance 2018.pdf](#) (skim)
- Supplemental Poverty Measure, 2018 [p60-268 SPM 2018.pdf](#) (skim)

#### 4. Economic Mobility and its Consequences

- Raj Chetty, David Grusky, Maximilian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca, and Jimmy Narang. 2017. “The Fading American Dream: Trends In Absolute Income Mobility Since 1940.” *Science* 28 Apr 2017: Vol. 356, Issue 6336, pp. 398-406 DOI: 0.1126/science.aal4617. (<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/356/6336/398/tab-pdf>)
- Ann Huff Stevens. “Transitions into and out of poverty in the United States.” Center for Policy Research Policy Brief.
- Ariel Kalil. “Effects of the Great Recession on Child Development.” *The Annals of the American Academy of the Political and Social Science*. November 2013 (p.232-249).

Optional:

- Podcast <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/american-dream-really-dead/> (39 minutes)

#### 5. A Short History of Poverty Policy

- Edin, K. and Shaefer, L. (2016) “20 Years since welfare reform.” *The Atlantic* (7 pages).
- Iceland, John, *Poverty in America*, Chapter 7: “Poverty and Policy.” Pp.130-157.
- Robert Moffitt. “The Great Recession and the Social Safety Net.” *The Annals of the American Academy of the Political and Social Science*. November 2013 (p.143-167).

#### 6. What is the role of the economy in poverty?

- Groshen, Erica L., and Harry J. Holzer. “Improving Employment and Earnings in the Twenty-First Century Labor Markets: An Introduction. RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences December 2019, 5 (5) 1-19; <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2019.5.5.01>
- Iceland, John, *Poverty in America*, Chapter 6: “The Great Recession.” Pp.114-129.
- UN report finds COVID-19 is reversing decades of progress on poverty, healthcare and education. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/sustainable/sustainable-development-goals-report-2020.html>

#### 7. What is the role of individual choice in poverty? (Racism and the Culture of Poverty)

- Oscar Lewis. “The Culture of Poverty” *Scientific American*. October 1966.
- Lawrence Mead. *Beyond Entitlement*. 1986. Free Press. Chapter 4.
- William M. Rodgers, *Race in the Labor Market: The Role of Equal Employment Opportunity and Other Policies*: RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences Dec 2019, 5 (5) 198-220; DOI: 10.7758/RSF.2019.5.5.10 (<https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/rsfjss/5/5/198.full.pdf>)
- David Pedulla. “Pathways: Discrimination” *The State of the Union 2018*. Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. (4 pages)

#### 8. What is the role of institutional racism in poverty?

- Ta-Nehsi Coates. "The Case for Reparations" *The Atlantic*.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- Kriston McIntosh, Emily Moss, Ryan Nunn and Jay Shambaugh. "Examining the Black-white wealth gap." February 27, 2020. Brookings Institute: UpFront.  
<https://brook.gs/2vitl2p>.
- Adia Harvey Wingfield. "The Failure of Race-Blind Economic Policy." *The Atlantic* February 16, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/02/race-economic-policy/516966/>
- Matthew Boesler, "'Baby Bonds' Could Help the US Wealth Gap." Bloomberg.  
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-05/-baby-bonds-could-help-the-u-s-wealth-gap>

### 9. What is the role of family structure and immigration in poverty?

- Elizabeth L. Doran, Ann P. Bartel, Jane Waldfogel "Gender in the Labor Market: The Role of Equal Opportunity and Family-Friendly Policies" *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* Dec 2019, 5 (5) 168-197; DOI: 10.7758/RSF.2019.5.5.09  
<https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/rsfjss/5/5/168.full.pdf>
- Christopher Jencks and Kathryn Edin, "Do Poor Women Have the Right to Bear Children?" *The American Prospect*. No. 20. 1995.
- Steven Raphael and Eugene Smolensky. "Immigration and Poverty in the United States." *Focus* (p.27-31)

### 10. How does where you live matter for poverty?

- Rebecca Blank. 2005. "Poverty, Policy, and Place: How Poverty and Policies to Alleviate Poverty are Shaped by Local Characteristics." *International Regional Science Review*. 28(4): 441-464.
- Alana Semuels. 2015. "How to Decimate a City". *The Atlantic*.
- Introduction to public housing and introduction to housing vouchers by Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

### 11. Income and Near Income Solutions to Poverty

- Perez-Lopez Daniel and Charles Adam Bee. "How are Americans Using their Stimulus Payments?" June 24, 2020. US Census Bureau:  
<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/06/how-are-americans-using-their-stimulus-payments.html>
- Peppin, Gabrielle. "Effects of Welfare Time Limits" WE Upjohn Institute Policy Briefs. July 8 2020.  
[https://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=up\\_policybriefs](https://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=up_policybriefs)
- Carlson and Neuberger. 2017. "WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families for 40 Years." Center for Budget and Policy Priorities Policy Futures.
- "Policy Basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)" Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.
- "Policy Basics: The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)" Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

- Michael Horrigan. “Work Disincentives Effects of the CARES Act and Policy Options to Address Them.” June 16, 2020. UpJohn Institute. <https://www.upjohn.org/research-highlights/work-disincentive-effects-cares-act-and-policy-options-address-them>

## **12. Education and Training Solutions to Poverty**

- Yoshikawa, et al. (2013). Investing in our future: the evidence base on preschool. <https://www.fcd-us.org/assets/2016/04/Evidence-Base-on-Preschool-Education-FINAL.pdf>
- Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach et al. "Fourteen Economic Facts on Education and Economic Opportunity." The Hamilton Project. March 2016.
- Sawhill, I. (2015). Making Pell Grants conditional on college readiness. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2015/10/20/make-pell-grants-conditional-on-college-readiness/>

## **13. Hearing I**

## **14. Hearing II**