POVERTY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE  
SOCIOLOGY 228  
Fall 2010

Professor David Brady  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Wednesday 2:50-5:20  
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This class will seek to train graduate students in the social science, theories and debates within the sociology of poverty. We will scrutinize major scholarly traditions, contending theories, frontiers of research, social changes throughout the world, and a host of methodologies. Further, we will spend ample time studying the U.S., other advanced capitalist democracies, and the developing world. Among the goals I have for this course, I aim to: i) develop students’ analytical and writing skills; ii) cultivate students’ theoretical depth and understanding; iii) expand students’ scholarly knowledge of this diverse but coherent field, and iv) engage students’ with a rich and exciting set of intellectual debates.

The class will study poverty with an explicitly comparative perspective: different theoretical perspectives, different dimensions of poverty, different substantive domains, and different regions, nations and historical periods. Many of the readings highlight countries besides the U.S., partly because the U.S. is less than 5% of the world’s population. As well, I have especially sought out readings on less developed countries (as those regions tend to be underrepresented in contemporary sociology). Finally, the class will seek to highlight areas of this field that are more neglected by our department and will spend less time on areas that are already well-represented in our department.

READINGS:  
The readings will include seven books and a host of journal articles and chapters. The books are available at The Regulator Bookstore on 9th Street.


The remaining readings will be available through the course’s Blackboard site and/or provided in the preceding class. In general, students should read the readings in the order they are listed.

EVALUATION:  
Students will be graded on three exams and class participation. The exams will be take-home exams and will involve students answering 2-3 essay questions in a total of about 10 pages. Though class material and learning cumulatively build over the semester, the exams will largely
be non-cumulative. Students will typically have one week to complete the exam. The exams will be evaluated for professional writing skills, conceptual and theoretical depth, mastery of the material, creativity and analytic rigor. Moreover, the exams will seek to facilitate students’ skills of writing a theoretical section of a research paper.

Active class participation can take a variety of forms, including enthusiastic and intellectually rigorous discussion, correspondence with the class and/or professor, and regular class attendance. If individual graduate students are not participating in class discussion, I reserve the right to request weekly written summaries of the readings. The composition of final grades are:

- Exam 1: 20%
- Exam 2: 25%
- Exam 3: 30%
- Class Participation: 25%

I do not give incomplete grades, except under extreme circumstances. In the case an incomplete is warranted, you should contact me before the exam is due.

**CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Section I: Foundations of Poverty Research**

**September 1** Introduction to the Class; and The Extent of Poverty in the World

**September 8** History and Theories of Poverty Research


**September 15** The Conceptualization and Measurement of Poverty


**September 22** Urban Poverty I: Core Arguments


**September 29 Urban Poverty II: Extensions and Applications**


**EXAM #1 DUE October 6**

**Section II: Conflict, Politics and Social Change**

**October 6  Contemporary Global Poverty**


Read one of these two:


**October 13  The Origins of Poverty in the Global South**


**October 20  Protest, Resistance and Mobilization**

**October 27  The Welfare State**

**November 3  Ideology and Attitudes**

**EXAM #2 DUE November 10**

**Section III: Key Domains and Institutions of Poverty**

**November 10 Education**
Saporito, Salvatore; Sohoni, Deenesh Sohoni. 2007. “Mapping Educational Inequality: Concentrations of Poverty among Poor and Minority Students in Public Schools.” *Social Forces* 85: 1227-1253

**November 17 Work and Labor Markets**


December 1 The Family


December 8 Crime


EXAM #3 DUE December 16

December 16 EXAM #3 DUE, Thursday 2pm