

SPP 836
SEMINAR ON POVERTY AND PUBLIC POLICY
Winter 2004

T/Th 8:30-10:00

Location: School of Education, Room 2310

Professor Rebecca M. Blank

Office Hours: T/Th 10-11 or by appointment

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I. Course Description

This course analyzes the conditions and causes of poverty within the United States, relying on a multidisciplinary literature from economics, sociology, political science, and psychology that has attempted to analyze U.S. poverty. The bewildering number of anti-poverty programs that have been tried in the last 20 years underscores the extent of disagreement about the causes of poverty, the situation of the poor, and the role of the government in encouraging income redistribution and social change. We will discuss the relationship between various intellectual/research approaches and various policy approaches. The first part of the course explores the problem of poverty, including a discussion of various causal theories about poverty and the underlying implications of these theories. The second part of the course analyzes specific research issues, many of them tied to particular policy debates, such as the effect of the economy on the poor, the role of welfare on family formation, the impact of neighborhood characteristics on residents' behavior, or the impact of recent welfare reforms on labor market behavior and family well-being.

II. Course Requirements

1. Timely completion of required readings.
2. Participation in class meetings.
3. One major paper, which reviews the literature and lays out a research proposal relating to a key issue in poverty. Students considering thesis work in this area should use this paper to explore a possible topic.
4. Participation in leading one class discussion on a specific set of research papers
5. Final exam.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Major Paper (due Tuesday, April 20).....	40%
Class Discussion leadership.....	15%
Final Exam (Tuesday, April 22, 10:30-12:30).....	25%
General Class participation.....	20%

The paper, the final exam, and the leadership of class discussion will be discussed further in class. During the first month, this class will meet concurrently with the master's level class, SPP 736, Poverty, Inequality, and Public Policy. Starting in mid-February, the Ph.D. students in SPP 836 will meet on Tuesdays with the master's level class and on Thursdays by themselves with Professor Blank to discuss research papers in key areas of poverty. These discussions will focus broadly on the methodologies as well as the conclusions of the papers.

III. Readings

All required readings are marked with a "***" on the attached reading list. The following books are available at Ulrich's, Michigan Book and Supply, or the Union Bookstore and are required reading. They are also on reserve in Foster Library.

Rebecca Blank. *It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*. Princeton University Press. 1997.

Sheldon Danziger and Robert Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*. Harvard University Press/Russell Sage Foundation. 2001.

Lawrence Mead. *Beyond Entitlement*. Free Press. 1986.

Katherine Newman. *No Shame in My Game*. Alfred Knopf. 1999.

William J. Wilson. *When Work Disappears*. Alfred Knopf. 1996.

All other required readings (except those marked otherwise) are available in two coursepacks that are for sale at Ulrich's and also on reserve in Foster Library. One coursepack is available under SPP736 (Poverty, Inequality and Public Policy) and contains readings that will be used for those days when class is held jointly with the master's students. The other coursepack is for Ph.D. students only (for those days when we meet separately) and is available under SPP836. In this syllabus, the readings marked with a "*** (P)" are from the SPP736 coursepack, while the readings marked with a "** (PhD)" are from the SPP836 (Ph.D.) coursepack.

For most days, the reading list includes a number of optional readings. Students with long-term research interests in the area of poverty will find it useful to become familiar with all of the readings. For Ph.D. students with long-term interests in the area of poverty and welfare, the following books might also be useful to acquire and read (these are all available through amazon.com.) We do not read any of these books in their entirety in this course, but reference them in several places on the reading list:

Elijah Anderson. Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community.
University of Chicago Press. 1990

Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein. Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive
Welfare and Low-Wage Work. Russell Sage. 1997.

David Ellwood. Poor Support. Harvard University Press. 1988.

Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur. Growing Up with a Single Parent. Harvard University
Press. 1994.

Charles Murray. Losing Ground. Basic Books. 1984.

Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward. Regulating the Poor (1993 edition). Vintage
Books. 1993.

I. The Problem of Poverty

(Ford School MPP students are excused from class on January 6 and 8 due to the IPE).

(A) *Organizational/Introductory Class (Tuesday, Jan 6, KS & RB)*

(B) *One view of Poverty (Thursday, January 8, KS & RB)*

** No Shame in My Game. (Please come to class on Jan 8 prepared to discuss this book.)

II. Defining and Measuring Poverty

(A) *Who Are the Poor? (Tuesday, Jan 13, KS and RB)*

** It Takes A Nation. Chapter 1.

** No Shame in My Game. Chapter 1.

A. Kotlowitz. There Are No Children Here

M. Harrington. The Other America.

(B) *Measuring Poverty (Thursday, Jan 15, RB)*

** Gary Burtless and Timothy Smeeding. "The Level, Trend, and Composition of American Poverty." Understanding Poverty. Chapter 1.

Connie Citro and Robert Michael, National Research Council, Chapter 1 (through p89), Measuring Poverty: A New Approach, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1995.

Susan E. Mayer and Christopher Jencks, "Poverty and the Distribution of Material Hardship," Journal of Human Resources, Winter 1989.

M. Federman, T. Garner, K. Short, and W. Cutter. "What Does It Mean to Be Poor in America?" Monthly Labor Review, Vol 119:5, May 1996.

(C) *Poverty Dynamics (Tuesday, Jan 20, KS)*

** (P) Mary Jo Bane and David Ellwood, "Slipping In and Out of Poverty: The Dynamics of Spells," Journal of Human Resources, Winter 1986.

** Mary Corcoran, "Mobility Persistence and the Intergenerational Determinants of Children's Success." Understanding Poverty. Chapter 4.

Ann H. Stevens, "The Dynamics of Poverty Spells: Updating Bane and Ellwood," American Economic Review, May 1994.

Susan E. Mayer and Leonard M. Lopos. "Has the Intergenerational Transmission of Economic Status Changed?" Joint Center for Poverty Research Working Paper #22706-18-2001. 2001.

Peter Gottschalk, "The International Transmission of Welfare Participation: Facts and Possible Causes." Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. 1992.

II. Causes of Poverty

(A) *Economic/Market Models (Thursday, January 22, RB)*

** (P) Ronald Ehrenberg and Robert Smith. Modern Labor Economics, Seventh Edition Chapter 6 and Chapter 9. Addison-Wesley, 2000

Derek Neal and Sherwin Rosen. "Theories of the Distribution of Earnings." Handbook of Income Distribution, Volume 1. A.B. Atkinson and F. Bourguignon, eds. North-Holland. 2000.

(B) *Institutional/Structural Models (Tuesday, January 27, RB)*

** (P) Campbell McConnell and Stanley Brue, Chapter 16 -- "Critiques of Orthodox Wage Theory," Contemporary Labor Economics, McGraw Hill, 1992, p480-493.

** William J. Wilson. When Work Disappears – Chapters 1-5. Alfred Knopf. 1996.
(NOTE: When Work Disappears has been an influential book. Students with long-term research interests in poverty are encouraged to read the entire volume.)

Suzanne Berger and Michael Piore, Dualism and Discontinuity in Industrial Societies, Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge University Press, 1980, Chapters 2-3.

(C) *Cultural/Behavioral Models (Thursday, January 29, RB)*

** (P) Oscar Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty," Scientific American, October 1966.

** Lawrence Mead. Beyond Entitlement.—Chapters 4 and 11. Free Press, 1986.
(NOTE: Beyond Entitlement has been an influential book. Students with long-term research interests in poverty are encouraged to read the entire volume.)

** (P) Thomas J. Kane. "Giving Back Control: Long-term Poverty and Motivation." Social Service Review, September 1987

Elijah Anderson, Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community. University of Chicago Press. 1990.

Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner, Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co, 1967.

Mercer L. Sullivan, "Getting Paid": Youth, Crime, and Work in the Inner City, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.

III. A History of Responding to Poverty

(A) *Before the 1960s* (Tuesday, Feb 3, RB)

James Patterson, America's Struggle Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Walter Trattner, From Poor Law to Welfare State, New York, NY: Free Press, 1974.

(B) *The War on Poverty and Beyond: 1960-1996* (Thursday, Feb 5, RB)

** (P) Michael Katz, Chapter 3 -- "Intellectual Foundations of the War on Poverty," The Undeserving Poor, New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1989.

** (P) Charles Murray, Losing Ground, Chapters 15-16. Basic Books. 1984.

** (P) David Ellwood, Poor Support, Chapters 2 and 3. Harvard University Press.

(NOTE: Both Losing Ground and Poor Support have been influential books and students with long-term research interests in poverty are encouraged to read both volumes in their entirety.)

Vincent Burke and Vee Burke, Nixon's Good Deed: Welfare Reform, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1974

Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Regulating the Poor (1993 edition). Vintage Books, 1993.

(C) *The 1996 Reforms and Afterwards* (Tuesday, Feb 10, RB)

** LaDonna Pavetti. "Welfare Policy in Transition. Understanding Poverty, Chapter 7.

** (P) Thomas Corbett, "The New Face of Welfare: From Income Transfers to Social Assistance?" Focus. Vol 22:1, Special issue 2002.

** (P) Rebecca Blank, "Evaluating Welfare Reform in the United States. Journal of Economic Literature, Vol 40:4, December 2002. (Some of this you will want to come back to in later sessions.)

R. Kent Weaver. Ending Welfare As We Know It. Washington, D.C.:
Brookings Institution. 2000.

IV. Welfare and Work

(A) **PhD Seminar:** *Work Disincentives and Welfare Dependence (Thursday, Feb 12)*

** It Takes A Nation, Chapter 3

** (PhD) Robert Moffitt. “An Economic Model of Welfare Stigma.” American Economic Review. Vol 73:5, December 1983.

** (PhD) Rebecca Blank. “Analyzing the Duration of Welfare Spells.” Journal of Public Economics. Vol 39:3, August 1989.

(B) *Work Disincentives/Welfare Dependence (Tuesday, Feb 17, RB)*

** It Takes A Nation, Chapter 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3

** (P) David Ellwood and Mary Jo Bane. Welfare Realities – Chapter 3. Harvard Press, 1994.

** Larry Mead. Beyond Entitlement -- Chapters 5 and 7. Free Press, 1986.

Robert Moffitt, “Incentive Effects of the U.S. Welfare System: A Review,” Journal of Economic Literature, March 1992, p1-37.

(C) **PhD Seminar:** *Mandatory Welfare-to-work Programs (Thursday, Feb 19)*

** It Takes A Nation, Chapter 4.7 and 4.8.

** (PhD) Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, and Lisa A. Gennetian. “Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program” MDRC. September 2000.

** (PhD) Dan Bloom and Charles Michalopoulos. How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Employment and Income: A Synthesis of Research. MDRC. 2001.
www.mdrc.org/publications/99/full.pdf

Gayle Hamilton, et. al. “National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches?” MDRC. 2001.

V. Critiques of Welfare and Family

(A) *Fertility and Family Structure Among the Poor (Tuesday, Mar 2, KS)*

** Maria Cancian, & Deborah Reed, “Trends in Family Structure and Behavior and the Poverty Problem.” Understanding Poverty, Chapter 2.

** (P) Arline Geronimus “Teenage Childbearing and Personal Responsibility: An Alternative View.” Political Science Quarterly. 1997.

** (P) “Multiple Partner Fertility,” Fragile Families Research Brief, June 2002.

Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur. Growing Up with a Single Parent. Harvard University Press, 1994.

(B) **Ph.D. Seminar:** *Marriage and Family Formation Strategies (Thursday, Mar 4)*

** (PhD) Isabel V. Sawhill and Adam Thomas. “For Richer or for Poorer: Marriage as an Antipoverty Strategy.” Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. Vol 21:4, 2002.

** (PhD) Daniel T. Lichter, Deborah, R. Graefe, and J. Brian Brown. “Is Marriage a Panacea? Union Formation Among Economically Disadvantaged Unwed Mothers.” Social Problems. Vol 50:1, 2003.

(C) *Welfare and Family Structure/Fertility (Tuesday, Mar 9, KS)*

** (P) Charles Murray, “Does Welfare Bring More Babies?” Public Interest, Spring 1994.

** (P) H. Elizabeth Peters, Robert D. Plotnick and Se-ook Jeong. “How Will Welfare Reform Affect Childbearing and Family Structure Decisions?” Institute for Research on Poverty, Discussion Paper No. 1239-01. October 2001.

Robert Moffitt, “The Effect of Welfare on Marriage and Fertility: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know?” in Welfare, the Family, and Reproductive Behavior: Research Perspectives. National Research Council, R. Moffitt, ed. National Academy Press. 1998.

(D) **Ph.D Seminar:** *Effects on Children (Thursday, Mar 11)*

** (P) Vonnie McLoyd, “Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Child Development,” American Psychologist, 53 (2): 185-204. 1998.

** (PhD) Elizabeth Clark-Kauffman, Greg J. Duncan, and Pamela Morris. “How Welfare Policies Affect Child and Adolescent Achievement.” American Economic Review, Vol 93:2, May 2003, Papers and Proceedings.

P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, et. al. “Mothers’ Transitions from Welfare to Work and the Well-being of Preschoolers and Adolescents.” Science. Vo 299, March 7, 2003.

Mary Corcoran, “Mobility Persistence and the Intergenerational Determinants of Children’s Success. Understanding Poverty, Chapter 4.

Greg J. Duncan and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, eds. The Consequences of Growing up Poor. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation. 1997.

Pamela A. Morris, et. al. How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research. MDRC. March 2001.

VI. The Labor Market

(A) *Jobs and the Economy (Tuesday, Mar 16, RB)*

** It Takes A Nation, Chapter 2

** (P) Rebecca Blank and Lucie Schmidt, “Work and Wages and Welfare Reform.” The New World of Welfare. Russell Sage Press. 2001.

** No Shame in My Game. Chapter 3.

Alfred Young, “On the Outside, Looking In: Low Income Black Men’s Conceptions of Work Opportunity and the Good Job.” Coping with Poverty. University of Michigan Press. 2000.

Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein. Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work. Russell Sage. 1997.

(B) **PhD Seminar:** *The EITC (Thursday, Mar 18)*

** (P) Saul D. Hoffman and Laurence S. Seidman. Helping Working Families: The Earned Income Tax Credit. Chapters 1-3. Upjohn Institute. 2003.

** (PhD) Nada Eissa and Jeff Leibman, “Labor Supply Response to the Earned Income Tax Credit.” Quarterly Journal of Economics. Vol 111:2, 1996.

Stacy Dickert-Conlin and Douglas Holtz-Eakin. “Employee-based Versus Employer-Based Subsidies to Low-Wage Workers: A Public Finance

Perspective,” in Finding Jobs, R. Blank and D. Card, eds. Russell Sage, 2000.

Lawrence Katz. “Wage Subsidies for the Disadvantaged,” in Generating Jobs, R. Freeman and P. Gottschalk, eds. Russell Sage, 1998.

National Tax Journal. Vol 53:4, part 2. Special Issue on the EITC.
December 2000. (Not on reserve)

VII. Poor Neighborhoods and Peer Effects

(A) *Are There Neighborhood Effects? (Tuesday, Mar 23, RB)*

** It Takes A Nation, 4.9

** Ronald F. Ferguson, “Community Revitalization, Jobs, and the Well-Being of the Urban Poor.” Understanding Poverty, Chapter 12.

Paul Jargowski, Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios and the American City.
Russell Sage, 1997.

Mercer L. Sullivan, “Getting Paid”: Youth, Crime, and Work in the Inner City. Ithaca
NY: Cornell University Press. 1989.

(B) **PhD Seminar:** *Neighborhood Effects (Thursday, Mar 25)*

** (PhD) Micere Keels, Greg J. Duncan, Stephanie Deluca, Ruby Mendenhall, and James Rosenbaum, “Fifteen Years Later: Can Residential Mobility Programs Provide A Permanent Escape from Neighborhood Segregation, Crime, and Poverty?” Joint Center for Poverty Research Working Paper No. 330. March 2003.

** (PhD) John Goering, Judith D. Feins and Todd M. Richardson. “A Cross-Site Analysis of Initial Moving to Opportunity Demonstration Results.” Journal of Housing Research, Vol 13:1, 2002.

Mark Hughes and Julie Sternberg. The New Metropolitan Reality. The Urban Institute.
December 1992.

Timothy Bartik, Who Benefits from State and Local Economic Development Policies? –
Chapters 1, 2, 8, and 9. Upjohn Institute, 1996.

(C) *Role of Race (Tuesday, March 30, RB)*

** (P) Robert C. Lieberman, Shifting the Color Line -- Chapter 4. Harvard University Press, 1998.

** John Yinger, "Housing Discrimination and Residential Segregation as Causes of Poverty," Understanding Poverty, Chapter 10.

** (P) William Darity and Patrick Mason, "Evidence on Discrimination in Employment," Journal of Economic Perspectives. Spring 1998.

Reynolds Farley, Sheldon Danziger, and Harry Holzer, Detroit Divided. Russell Sage, 2000.

(D) **Ph.D. Seminar:** *Race and Immigration (Thursday, Apr 1)*

** (PhD) John Iceland and David R. Harris, "Why Work Disappears: Neighborhood Racial Composition and Employers' Relocation Intentions." Joint Center for Poverty Research Working Paper No. 45. October 1998.

** (PhD) George J. Borjas. "Long-run Convergence of Ethnic Skill Differentials: The Children and Grandchildren of the Great Migration." Industrial and Labor Relations Review. Vol 47(4). July 1994.

** (PhD) Richard Alba, Amy Lutz, and Elena Vesselinov. "How Enduring Were the Inequalities Among European Immigrant Groups in the United States?" Demography. Vol 38(3). August 2001.

** (PhD) George J. Borjas. "Long-Run Convergence of Ethnic Skill Differentials, Revisited." Demography, Vol 38(3) August 2001.

VIII. Other Issues Critical Issues in Welfare Reform

(A) *Declining Caseloads – What Does it Mean? (Tuesday, Apr 6, RB)*

** (P) Re-review Rebecca Blank, "Evaluating Welfare Reform", pages 1120-1139.

** (P) Sandra Danziger, et. al. "Barriers to the Employment of Welfare Recipients." Prosperity for All? R. Cherry and W. M. Rogers, eds. Russell Sage. 2000.

Gregory Acs and Pamela LoPrest, with Tracy Roberts, "Final Synthesis Report of Findings from ASPE "Leaver" Grants" U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. November 2001.

(B) **PhD Seminar:** *Effects of Welfare Reform on Work Behavior (Thursday, Apr 8)*

** (PhD) Maria Cancian, Robert Haveman, Dan Meyer, and Barbara Wolfe, “Before and After TANF: The Economic Well-Being of Women Leaving Welfare.” Working paper, December 1999.

** (PhD) Robert Schoeni and Rebecca Blank, “What Has Welfare Reform Accomplished? Impacts on Welfare Participation, Employment, Income, Poverty, and Family Structure.” Working Paper, University of Michigan. September 2000.

Focus. Special Issue. 2002.

Rucker C. Johnson and Mary E. Corcoran. “The Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency: Job Quality and Job Transition Patterns After Welfare Reform.” Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. Vol 22(4). Autumn 2003.

(C) *Federalism questions: Who Should Respond? (Tuesday, Apr 13, KS)*

** It Takes A Nation, Chapter 5

** (P) Therese McGuire, “Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations and Social Welfare Policy,” in Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations: Perspectives and Prospects, R.C. Fisher, ed. Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1997.

** (P) Carol J. De Vita, Sarah Wilson, 2001. “Faith-Based Initiatives: Sacred Deeds and Secular Dollars,” Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute; available at: <http://www.urban.org/Template.cfm?Section=ByTopic&NavMenuID=62&template=/TaggedContent/ViewPublication.cfm&PublicationID=7400>

(D) **Ph.D. Seminar:** *Studying Welfare Reform in Action (Thursday, April 15)*

** (P) Sandra Danziger, et. al. “Barriers to the Employment of Welfare Recipients.” Prosperity for All? R. Cherry and W. M. Rogers, eds. Russell Sage. 2000.

** (PhD) Laura Lein, Alan F. Benjamin, Monica McManus, and Kevin Roy. “Economic Roulette: When Is a Job not a Job?” Working Paper from the August 2002 American Sociology Association session. Welfare, Children, and Families Project, Johns Hopkins, University. 2002.

Thomas Gais, Richard Nathan, Irene Lurie, and Thomas Kaplan. The Implementation of the Personal Responsibility Act of 1996: Commonalities, Variations, and the Challenge of Complexity. The New World of Welfare, R. Blank and R Haskins, eds. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Press. 2001.

(E) *Multi-Dimensional Programs: What Have we Learned? (Tuesday, Apr 20, RB)*

** It Takes A Nation, Chapters 6 and 7

** (P) Rebecca Blank, David Card, and Philip Robins, “Financial Incentives for Increasing Work and Income Among Low-Income Families,” in Finding Jobs, R. Blank and D. Card, eds. Russell Sage, 2000.

Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, Lisa Gennetian, Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. MDRC. 2000.

Charles Michalopolous, David Card, Lisa Gennetian, Kristen Harknett and Philip Robins. The Self-Sufficiency Project at 36 Months: Effects of a Financial Work Incentive on Employment and Income. SRDC, June 2000.

*****FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, April 22. 10:30-12:30 *****