



## **COURSE: The Psychology of Poverty and Economic Justice – Heather Bullock**

### **Course Description**

*As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.*

*- Nelson Mandela (2005)*

This course examines social psychological dimensions of economic (in)justice and the correlates and consequences of class-based inequities in the United States. Emphasis is placed on understanding intersections of class, ethnicity/race, and gender. The impact of social class on both the individual (e.g., identity) and group levels (e.g., differential access to health care, employment opportunities) is examined.

Much of the quarter is dedicated to understanding classism, particularly how classist attitudes and beliefs influence support for various welfare policies and “safety net” programs. Institutional and interpersonal forms of classism are reviewed and strategies for reducing classist discrimination and improving interclass relations are considered.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, you should:

1. have a better understanding of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of poverty
2. understand how social class influences attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors
3. be able to analyze how classist, racist, and sexist stereotypes shape social policy
4. be able to identify factors that would improve life circumstances and opportunities for low-income families

### **Required Readings**

Secombe, K. (2015). “So you think I drive a cadillac?” Welfare recipients’ perspectives on the system and its reform (4th edition). New York: Pearson.

### **Supplemental Readings**

Supplemental readings are provided for students who want to read more about a particular topic. They are offered to enrich your course experience but are not required. These materials will be accessible electronically.

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation of Course Performance**

The focus of this class is on critical analysis, synthesizing diverse perspectives and concepts, and developing the ability to discuss and evaluate relevant research findings and theoretical arguments. This class is not about memorizing facts or statistics. As we move through the quarter, please focus on what you are learning and how your skills are developing.

You should expect to spend an average of 15 hours per week on this course. Attending two weekly lectures and your discussion section will take 4 hours and 45 minutes per week. This course involves a significant amount of reading, and you should plan to read all required course materials. Most readings are straightforward, but others may be challenging, and the amount of time you spend reading may fluctuate from week to week. Please budget approximately 8-9 hours per week for reading course material but some students may require less and others may require more. One of the best ways to

prepare for our exams is to keep up with the reading. You can consider time spent reading as part of exam preparation, however, you will likely need to spend several additional hours prior to exams reviewing notes and course material. Three brief analysis papers require you to draw on concepts and theories from class and apply them to “real world” events. Writing speed varies from student to student; you may wish to budget up to 3 hours to complete each of these assignments, but more time may be necessary.

#### **Performance is Based on the Following Criteria:**

1. **Discussion Section Participation** (10 points): Discussion section attendance is required. We expect you to come to discussion section prepared to discuss the readings and engage in lively analysis of the material. Missing more than three meetings will result in a failing grade for the course.
2. **Brief Analysis Papers** (3 @ 14 points each = 42 points): During the quarter you will be asked to complete three brief analysis papers that focus on integration and application of course information. Prompts for these papers will be discussed in class. Papers must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of the class meeting at which it is due (Paper 1 due 1/31; Paper 2 due 2/14; Paper 3 due 11/29). All papers must use APA style (6th edition).
3. **Midterm Exam** (23 points): An in-class essay exam will be completed on Tuesday, Feb. 21st.
4. **Final Exam** (25 points): The final exam will be held on Thursday March 23rd from 12:00-3:00 p.m. Please plan to attend the final; alternative arrangements for travel cannot be made.

#### **Getting the Most Out of this Class:**

Keep up with the course readings. You should read the assigned readings during the scheduled time period (reading ahead is even better!). Keeping up with the readings will allow you to get more out of lecture meetings and will help stimulate lively discussions. You may find it helpful to take notes on each of the readings (e.g., brief summaries, main points, and questions). Some of the readings may be difficult to follow – do the best you can to make sense of the main points and research findings. As we move through the course, we will give you tips regarding which readings to emphasize.

Think about how the course material relates to your own experiences. Draw connections between personal experience and observations, theory, and research.

Speak-up, share your ideas, and listen to your colleagues. We hope that everyone will participate in class discussions! Also, listen to your peers during class meetings and respect opinions/experiences that differ from your own. Talk to and learn from each other!

Bring outside materials (e.g., newspaper articles, public opinion polls, advertisements, music, anecdotes) related to course material to share with the class.

#### **Course Summary with Key Dates**

##### **I. Social Class, Poverty, and Stratification**

Welcome!	Tu. 1/10
Defining Social Class, Poverty, and Stratification	Th 1/12; Tu 1/17
Class Status: Identity, Privilege, and Stigma	Th 1/19
Justifying Class Inequality: Stereotypes, Beliefs,	Tu 1/24; Th 1/26; Tu 1/31** and Attributions

\*\*Due Tu 1/31: Brief Analysis Paper 1 - Interviews about Attributions for Poverty and Wealth

## II. Structured Inequality and Life Chances

Children/Youth, Development, and Education	Th. 2/2; Tu. 2/7
Adolescent Parenting	Th. 2/9
Health and Well-Being	Tu 2/14**; Th 2/16

\*\*Due Tu 2/14: Brief Analysis Paper 2 - Observational Analysis of School/Neighborhood Resources

\*\* Exam on Tu 2/21\*\* on Material from 1/10 – 2/16\*\*

## III. Families Living in Poverty

Low-Income Women and the Welfare System	Th 2/23; Tu 2/28; Th 3/2; Tu 3/7
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## IV. Strategies for Improving Interclass Relation and Promoting Economic Justice

Toward A More Equitable Society	Th 3/9; Tu 3/14**; Th 3/16
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\*\*Due 3/14: Brief Analysis Paper 3 – Social Psychological Policy Analysis of Your Choosing\*\*

Final In-Class Exam on Thursday 3/23 from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

Tu 1/10 WELCOME!

### I. SOCIAL CLASS, POVERTY, AND STRATIFICATION

Th 1/12; Tu 1/17 Defining Social Class, Poverty, and Stratification

#### Required readings:

- Smith, L. (2010). Ch. 1: What is social class? Psychology, poverty, and the end of social exclusion (pp. 5-23). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Bullock, H. E. (2016). The widening economic divide: Economic disparities and classism as critical community context. In M.A. Bond, C. Keys, and I. Serrano-García (Eds.), *APA handbook of community psychology* (pp. 353-367). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Download from the internet or from Canvas (these are too long to include in the hard copy reader):

- U.S. Census Bureau. (2016, September). Income and poverty in the United States: 2015. (P60-256). Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.html>
- APA Task Force on Socioeconomic Status (2006, August). Task force report on socioeconomic status. Retrieved from [www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/task-force-2006.pdf](http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/task-force-2006.pdf)
- Leonhardt, D. (2016, December 8). The American dream, quantified at last. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/08/opinion/the-american-dream-quantified-at-last.html?emc=eta1>

Th 1/19

Class Status: Identity, Privilege, and Stigma

Required readings:

- Fine, M., Weis, L., Addleston, J., & Marusza, J. (1997). (In)secure times: Constructing White working-class masculinities in the late 20 century. *Gender and Society*, 11, 52-68.
- Bettie, J. (2000). Women without class: Chicas, cholas, trash, and the presence/absence of class identity. *Signs*, 26, 1-35.
- Mistry, R.S., Brown, C.S., White, E.S., Chow, K.A., & Gillen-O'Neil, C. (2015). Elementary school children's reasoning about social class: A mixed-methods study. *Child Development*, 86, 1653-1671.
- Piff, P. K. (2014). Wealth and the inflated self: Class, entitlement, and narcissism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40, 34-43.

Tu 1/24; Th 1/26; Tu 1/31\*\*

Justifying Class Inequality: Stereotypes, Beliefs, and Attributions

Response Paper #1 Due Tuesday 1/31: Interviews about Attributions for Poverty and Wealth

Required readings:

- Bullock, H. E. (2013). Chapter 3. Beliefs about poverty, wealth, and social class: Implications for intergroup relations and social policy. In *Women and poverty: Psychology, public policy, and social justice*. (pp. 40-69). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Watkins-Hayes, C., & Kovalsky, E. (2016). The discourse of deservingness: Morality and the dilemmas of poverty relief in debate and practice. In D. Brady and L.M. Burton (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the social science of poverty* (pp. 193-220). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, M. O., & Bullock, H. E. (2016). Ideologies and beliefs about poverty. In D. Brady and L.M. Burton (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty* (pp. 93-116). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gilens, M. (2003). How the poor became black: The racialization of American poverty in the mass media. In S.F. Schram, J. Soss, and R.C. Fording (Eds.), *Race and the politics of welfare reform* (pp. 101-130). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Henry, P. J., Reyna, C., & Weiner, B. (2004). Hate welfare but help the poor: How the attributional content of stereotypes explains the paradox of reactions to the destitute in America. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34, 34-58.

- Brown-Iannuzzi, Dotsch, R., Cooley, E., & Payne, B. K. (early view). The relationship between mental representations of welfare recipients and attitudes toward welfare. *Psychological Science*, 1-12.

#### Supplemental readings:

- Streib, J., Ayala, M., & Wixted, C. (2016). Benign inequality: Frames of poverty and social class inequality in children's movies. *Journal of Poverty*.
- Christandl, F. (2013). The belief in a just world as a personal resource in the context of inflation and financial crises. *Applied Psychology*, 62, 486-518.
- Davidai, S., & Gilovich, T. (2015). Building a more mobile America – One income quintile at a time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10, 60-71.

## II. STRUCTURED INEQUALITY AND LIFE CHANCES

Th 2/2; Tu 2/7                      Children/Youth, Development, and Education

#### Required readings:

- Hochschild, J. L. (2003). Social class in the public schools. *Journal of Social Issues*, 59, 821-840.
- McLoyd, V., Jocson, R. M., & Williams, A. (2016). Linking poverty and children's development: Concepts, models and debates. In D. Brady and L.M. Burton (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the social science of poverty* (pp. 141-168). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Streib, J. (2011). Class reproduction by four year olds. *Qualitative Sociology*, 24, 337-352.
- Fine, M., Burns, A., Payne, Y. A., & Torre, M. E. (2004). Civic lessons: The color and class of betrayal. *Teachers College Record*, 106, 2193-2223.
- Rondini, A. (2016). Healing the hidden injuries of class? Redemption narratives, aspirational proxies, and parents of low-income, first generation college students. *Sociological Forum*, 31, 96-116.
- Access online: DeParle, J. (2012, December 22). For poor, leap to college often ends in hard fall. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/23/education/poor-students-struggle-as-class-plays-a-greaterrole-in-success.html>

#### Supplemental readings:

- Odgers, C. L. (2015). Income inequality and the developing child: Is it all relative? *American Psychologist*, 70, 722-731.
- Johnson, A. D., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2012). Child care and early education for low-income families: Choices and consequences. In V. Maholmes and R.B. King (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of poverty and child development* (pp. 354-371). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Th 2/9                                      Adolescent Parenting

#### Required readings:

- Grau, J. M., Wilson, K.S., Smith, E.N., Castellanos, P., & Duran, P.A. (2012). Adolescent parenting: Risk and protective factors in the context of poverty. In V. Maholmes and R.B. King (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of poverty and child development* (pp. 157-182). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Sisson, G. (2012). Finding a way to offer something more: Reframing teen pregnancy prevention. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 9, 57-69.
- McClelland, S. I., & Fine, M. (2008). Embedded science: Critical analysis of abstinence-only evaluation research. *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies*, 8, 50-81.

#### Supplemental readings:

- Constantine, N. A., Jerman, P., & Huang, A. X. (2007). California parents' preferences and beliefs regarding school-based sex education policy. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 39, 167-175.
- Mollborn, S. (2007). Making the best of a bad situation: Material resources and teenage parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 92-104.
- Kohler, P. K., Manhart, L. E., & Lafferty, W. E. (2008). Abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education and the initiation of sexual activity and teen pregnancy. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 42, 344-351.

Tu 2/14\*\*; Th 2/16                      Health and Well-Being

Response Paper #2 Due Tuesday 2/14: Observational Analysis of School/Neighborhood Resources

#### Required readings:

- Scott, J. (2005, May 16). Life at the top in America isn't just better, it's longer. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/16/national/class/HEALTH-FINAL.html?ei=5070&en=7c10c1a9eebd4a1d&ex=1136437200&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1136272794-SanDwTqrC+ZifXT9P7Z6Q>
- Burgard, S. A., & Kalousova, L. (2015). Effects of the great recession: Health and well-being. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, 181-201.
- Belle, D., & Doucet, J. (2003). Poverty, inequality, and discrimination as sources of depression among U.S. women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27, 101-113.
- Abu-Bader, S. H., & Crewe, S. E. (2006). Predictors of depression among African American women who were former welfare recipients: A path diagram. *Best Practices in Mental Health*, 2, 1-22.
- Shah, A. K., Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E. (2012). Some consequences of having too little. *Science*, 338, 682-685.
- Smith, L. (2008). Positioning classism within counseling psychology's social justice agenda. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 36, 895-924.

#### Supplemental readings:

- Thompson, M. N., Nitzarim, R.S., Her, P., & Dahling, J.J. (2013). A grounded theory exploration of undergraduate experiences of vicarious unemployment. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, 421-431.

\*\* Exam on Tuesday 2/21\*\* on Material from 1/10 – 2/16\*\*

### III. FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY

Th 2/23; Tu 2/28; Th 3/2; Tu 3/7                      Low-Income Women and the Welfare System

Required readings:

- So you think I drive a cadillac?
- Bullock, H. E. (2013). Chapter 4. Welfare reform at 15 and beyond: How are low-income women and families faring? In *Women and poverty: Psychology, public policy, and social justice*. (pp. 70-103). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Limbert, W. M., & Bullock, H. E. (2005). "Playing the fool:" U.S. welfare policy from a critical race perspective. *Feminism and Psychology*, 15, 253-274.

Supplemental readings:

- Gustafson, K. (2009). The criminalization of poverty. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 99, 643-716.
- Stryker, R., & Wald, P. (2009). Redefining compassion to reform welfare: How supporters of the 1990s US federal welfare reform aimed for the moral high ground. *Social Politics*, 16, 519-557.

Read online:

- Casey, T., & Maldonado, L. (2012, December). Worst off-single-parent families in the United States: A cross-national comparison of single parenthood in the U.S. and sixteen other high-income countries. Retrieved from <http://www.legalmomentum.org/our-work/women-and-poverty/resources--publications/worst-off-single-parent.html>

IV. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING INTERCLASS RELATIONS AND PROMOTING ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Th 3/9; Tu 3/14\*\*; Th 3/16      Toward A More Equitable Society

Response Paper #3 Due Tuesday 3/14: Free Write

Required readings:

- Batson, D. C., Polycarpou, M. P., Harmon-Jones, E., Imhoff, H. J., Mitchener, E. C., Bednar, L. L., Klein, T. R., & Highberger, L. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve feeling toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72, 105-118.
- McIntyre, A. (2000). Constructing meaning about violence, school, and community: Participatory action research with urban youth. *The Urban Review*, 32, 123-154.
- Morgan, G. S., & Chan, W.Y. (2016). Different paths to protest: Predictors of collective action in the Occupy movement. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 46, 565-582.
- Bullock, H. E., Truong, S. V., & Chunn, L. (2016). Combatting social exclusion: "Safe space" and the dynamics of inclusion at a homeless farming site. *Journal of Poverty*.
- Rank, M. R. (2016). Toward a new paradigm for understanding poverty. *The Oxford handbook of the social science of poverty* (pp. 866-883). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lott, B., & Bullock, H. E. (2007). Professional activism for social change and economic justice. In *Psychology and economic justice: Personal, professional, and political intersections*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Supplemental readings:

- Roussos, G., & Dovidio, J. F. (2016). Playing below the poverty line: Investigating an online game as a way to reduce prejudice toward the poor. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 10.
- Smith, L. (2015). Raising the minimum wage: Toward a psychological perspective. *American Psychologist*, 6, 557-565.
- Shrivastava, P., & Ivanova, O. (2015). Inequality, corporate legitimacy and the Occupy Wall Street movement. *Human Relations*, 68, 1209-1231.