



COURSE: The Psychology of Poverty and Social Class (2006) - Heather Bullock

Required Readings:

Course packet of readings.

Secombe, K. (1999). *"So you think I drive a cadillac?" Welfare recipients' perspectives on the system and its reform*. Allyn & Bacon: New York.

Course Description and Objectives:

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 the intersectionality of class, ethnicity/race, and gender. The impact of socioeconomic status 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.

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 behavior
- (3) be able to analyze how stereotypes about the poor shape social policy
- (4) be able to identify factors that would improve life circumstances and opportunities for low-income families

Course Schedule:

M 1/9 WELCOME TO THE COURSE!

I. SOCIAL CLASS, POVERTY, AND STRATIFICATION

W1/11; W 1/18 Defining Social Class and Stratification

Assigned readings:

Weber, L. (1998). A conceptual framework for understanding race, class, gender, and sexuality. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 22, 13-32.

Lott, B. & Bullock, H.E. (forthcoming). Chapter 4: Psychology, social class, and resources for human welfare. In *Psychology, and economic justice: Personal and political intersections*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Rothman, R.A. (2002). Theoretical approaches to stratification. *Inequality and stratification: Race, class, and gender* (4th ed., pp. 22-35). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Browse on the web:

U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, September). *Income, poverty and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2004* (P60-229). Retrieved December 5, 2005, from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty04.html>

M 1/23 Class Status and Identity

Assigned readings:

- Fine, M., Weis, L., Addleston, J., & Marusza, J. (1997). (In)secure times: Constructing White working-class masculinities in the late 20th 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.

W1/25; M 1/30; W 2/1 Legitimizing Inequality: Classist Stereotypes and Attributions for Poverty

Assigned readings:

- Marx, K. (2001). Ideology and class. In D. Grusky (Ed.), *Social stratification: Class, race, and gender in sociological perspective* (pp. 101-102). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bullock, H.E. (1995). Class acts: Middle class responses to the poor. In B. Lott and D. Maluso (Eds.), *The social psychology of interpersonal discrimination* (pp. 118-159). New York: Guilford Press.
- Cozzarelli, C., Tagler, M.J., & Wilkinson, A.V. (2002). Do middle-class students perceive poor women differently? *Sex Roles*, 47, 519-529.
- Lott, B., & Bullock, H.E. (forthcoming). The psychology and politics of class warfare. In *Psychology, and economic justice: Personal and political intersections*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- 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.

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

Essay 1 Due: Wednesday 2/8 at the start of lecture

II. STRUCTURED INEQUALITY AND LIFE CHANCES

M 2/6; W 2/8 Children, Cognitive Development, and Education

Assigned Readings

- Hochschild, J.L. (2003). Social class in the public schools. *Journal of Social Issues*, 59, 821-840.
- McLoyd, V.C. (1998). Socioeconomic disadvantage and child development. *American Psychologist*, 53(2), 185-204.
- Fritzberg, G.J. (2001). Less than equal: A former urban schoolteacher examines the causes of educational disengagement. *The Urban Review*, 33(2), 107-129.
- Weigner, S. (1998). Poor children "know their place:" Perceptions of poverty, class, and public messages. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 2, 100-118.

M 2/13 Early Parenting

- Furstenberg, F.F. (2003). Teenage childbearing as a public issue and private concern. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 23-39.
- Kalil, A., & Danziger, S.K. (2000). How teen mothers are faring under welfare reform. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(4), 775-798
- Higginson, J.G. (1998). Competitive parenting: The culture of teen mothers. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(1), 135-149.

W 2/15; W 2/22 Health and Well-Being

Assigned Readings:

- Scott, J. (2005, May 16). Life at the top in America isn't just better, it's longer. *New York Times*.

Retrieved January 1, 2006, from:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/16/national/class/HEALTH->

[FINAL.html?ei=5070&en=7c10c1a9eebd4a1d&ex=1136437200&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1136272794-SanDwTqrC+ZijfXT9P7Z6Q](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/16/national/class/HEALTH-FINAL.html?ei=5070&en=7c10c1a9eebd4a1d&ex=1136437200&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1136272794-SanDwTqrC+ZijfXT9P7Z6Q)

Belle, D., & Doucet, J. (2003). Poverty, inequality, and discrimination as sources of depression among U.S. women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27, 101-113.

Jayakody, R., & Stouffer, D. (2000). Mental health problems among single mothers: Implications for work and welfare reform. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(4), 617-634.

Todd, J.L., & Worrell, J. (2000). Resilience in low-income, employed, African American women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 24, 119-118.

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

Essay 2 Due: Wednesday 3/1 at the start of lecture

III. LIVING IN POVERTY

M 2/27 – W 3/8 Low-Income Women and the Welfare System

Assigned Readings:

So you think I drive a cadillac?

Lichter, D.T., & Jayakody, R. (2002). Welfare reform: How do we measure success? *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 117-141.

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.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING INTERCLASS RELATIONS

M 3/13; W 3/15 Toward A More Equitable Society

Assigned 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(1), 105-118.

McIntyre, A. (2000). Constructing meaning about violence, school, and community: Participatory action research with urban youth. *The Urban Review*, 32, 123-154.

Rice, J.K. (2001). Poverty, welfare, and patriarchy: How macro-level changes in social policy can help low income women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 355-374.

Mink, G. (2002). Valuing women's work. In G. Delgado (Ed.), *From poverty to punishment: How welfare reform punishes the poor* (p. 139-146). Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center.

Response Paper #3 Due: Free Write