



## **COURSE: Psychology of Poverty and Social Class - Wendy R. Williams**

**Course Description:** This course explores contemporary theories, findings, and social issues regarding the psychology of poverty and social class in the United States. Pulling from cognitive, developmental, social, and clinical psychology, emphasis is placed on understanding how poverty, wealth, and privilege influence beliefs and behaviors across the lifespan. The course is guided by a feminist analysis that recognizes the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, and social class. Although poverty is a global/transnational issue, the current course will focus on the American context only, as one “case study” in the complexities involved in ameliorating inequality. Thus, a major goal of the class is that students think critically about issues surrounding poverty, wealth, and privilege at the individual and societal level (including media depictions of poverty as well as public policy and collective action). Learning will take place using readings, lecture, discussion, media analysis, guest speakers, and experiential learning.

Articulation of course goals and objectives: Because this course meets the AAAW perspective, upon completion of this course, a successful student will:

1. know and appreciate cultural contributions, perspectives, and/or experiences of women
2. understand how mechanisms of institutionalization, privilege, power and cultural stereotyping affect women, and how they have resisted patterns of domination.
3. reflect upon one’s own identity and place within a diverse society.
4. be able to access and evaluate resources by and about women.

### ***More specifically, this course will:***

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Measurement of goals</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Content</b>	provide information on how systems of privilege maintain social class inequalities.	identify structural barriers that prevent mobility at various life stages and explaining how these structures reify privilege.	All assignments
<b>Skills</b>	encourage the application of course content to a one’s own life, a community placement, and other “real world” situations.	use critical reflection to express how psychological research and theory can be applied to one’s own life, a community placement, and other “real world” situations.	All assignments
<b>Values</b>	foster social change for low-income people	demonstrate increased social sensitivity and empathy for low-income individuals by taking action on their behalf.	Learning Contributions, Experiential Analyses Essays, and “Giving Voice” Project

## ASSIGNMENTS

- **Learning Contributions** (20% of your grade): Your contributions to the course will count as part of your grade (see the “Learning contributions” rubric). Half of the points will be given at the midterm and the second half for the remainder of the course. If you have questions about how you can improve your contributions, please come see me.
- **Brief analysis essays** (25% of your grade): In addition to completing the daily readings, you will need to write a 1 page analysis for each of the readings for all 25 of the discussion days (see “Brief analysis essays” rubric). Papers are due at the start of class when related material is discussed.
- **Literature Review** (5% of your grade): You must complete a Literature Review of ten empirical articles on a topic assigned by the professor, which will benefit the efforts of local organizations fighting poverty and economic inequality. Reviews will be graded on a 100-point scale (see “Literature Review” rubric).
- **Experiential Analyses Papers** (20% of your grade): You will complete four experience-based assignments: 1) “The American Dream” Debate, 2) “Stories of Hunger in Kentucky,” 3) “Social Class Autobiography,” and 4) “A Day of Action.” Each is worth 5% of your grade (see each assignment sheet for more information). Each is due at the beginning of class on the dates noted on the course schedule.
- **“Giving Voice”** (10% of your grade): You must create a final project (see “Giving Voice” assignment) which “gives voice” to a problem related to course content. Projects will be graded on a 100-point scale.
- **Final Exam** (20% of your grade): There will be one cumulative final exam in this course. It will include multiple choice questions, short essays, and long essays based on readings, lectures, and activities from class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<b><u>Week I.</u></b> 1/10	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> <i>Wed</i> —no assignment
<b><u>Week II.</u></b> 1/17	<b>RESEARCH METHODS &amp; MEASUREMENT</b> <i>Wed</i> — <u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u> : Article #1 & Brief Analysis Essay #1 due
<b><u>Week III.</u></b> 1/22, 1/24	<b>TERMS &amp; POLICIES</b> <i>Mon</i> — <u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u> : Article #2 & Brief Analysis Essay #2 due <i>Wed</i> — <u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u> : Article #3 & Brief Analysis Essay #3 due
<b><u>Week IV.</u></b> 1/29, 1/31	<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> <i>Mon</i> — <u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u> : Article #4 & Brief Analysis Essay #4 due <i>Wed</i> — <u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u> : Article #5 & Brief Analysis Essay #5 due

<b><u>Week V.</u></b> 2/5, 2/7	<b>LEGITIMIZING IDEOLOGIES</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #6 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #6 due</i> ** “The American Dream Debate” <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #7 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #7 due</i>
<b><u>Week VI.</u></b> 2/12, 2/14	<b>COGNITION</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Articles #8&amp;9 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #8&amp;9 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #10 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #10 due</i>
<b><u>Week VII.</u></b> 2/19, 2/21	<b>DEVELOPMENTAL</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #11 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #11 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #12 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #12 due</i>
<b><u>Week VIII.</u></b> 2/26, 2/28	<b>ADOLESCENCE &amp; EDUCATION</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #13 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #13 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #14 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #14 due</i> ** “Stories of Hunger in Kentucky” Due
<b><u>Week IX.</u></b> 3/5, 3/7	<b>SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)</b>
<b><u>Week X.</u></b> 3/12, 3/14	<b>WORK &amp; PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #15 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #15 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #16 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #16 due</i> ** “Social Class Autobiography” Due
<b><u>Week XI.</u></b> 3/19, 3/21	<b>MENTAL &amp; PHYSICAL HEALTH</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #17 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #17 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #18 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #18 due</i>
<b><u>Week XII.</u></b> 3/26, 3/28	<b>VIOLENCE &amp; CRIMINAL JUSTICE</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #19 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #19 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #20 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #20 due</i>
<b><u>Week XIII.</u></b> 4/2, 4/4	<b>STIGMA &amp; DISCRIMINATION</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #21 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #21 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #22 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #22 due</i>
<b><u>Week XIV.</u></b> 4/9, 4/11	<b>COLLECTIVE ACTION</b> <i>Mon—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #23 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #23 due</i> <i>Wed—<u>Reading &amp; Assignment</u>: Article #24 &amp; Brief Analysis Essay #24 due</i> ** “Day of Action” Assignment Due
<b><u>Week XV.</u></b>	<b>FINAL EXAM, PAPERS &amp; PROJECTS</b>

4/16, 4/18      Mon— FINAL EXAM  
Wed—Reading & Assignment: Article #25 & Brief Analysis Essay #25 due

**Week XVI.**      **FINAL PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS**  
4/23, 4/25      Mon—Final Literature Reviews Due  
Wed—“Giving Voice” Presentations

**Week XVI.**      **FINAL PRESENTATIONS**  
5/2      Wed—If needed presentations will continue into exam block—3pm

### **Articles**

#### **Article #1**

- Diemer, M. A., Mistry, R. S., Wadsworth, M. E., Lopez, I., & Reimers, F. (2013). Best practices in conceptualizing and measuring social class in psychological research. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 13(1), 77-113.

#### **Article #2**

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2015). Policy basics: An Introduction to TANF. Retrieved <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-22-10tanf2.pdf>
  - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2015). Policy basics: Unemployment Insurance. Retrieved [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasic\\_introtoi.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasic_introtoi.pdf)
  - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2017). Policy basics: Introduction to Supplemental Security Income. Retrieved [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/PolicyBasics\\_SocSec-IntroToSSI.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/PolicyBasics_SocSec-IntroToSSI.pdf)
- \*\*write one analysis that includes all three articles**

#### **Article #3**

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2016). Policy basics: Introduction to Medicaid. Retrieved [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasics-medicaid\\_0.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasics-medicaid_0.pdf)
  - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2017). Policy basics: Introduction to Public Housing. Retrieved [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasics\\_housing.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasics_housing.pdf)
  - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2017). Policy basics: Introduction to SNAP. Retrieved <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/policybasics-foodstamps.pdf>
- \*\*write one analysis that includes all three articles**

#### **Article #4**

- Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1971). Relief, labor and civil disorder: An overview. In *Regulating the poor: The functions of public welfare* (pp. 3-38). New York: Pantheon Books.

#### Article #5

- Bullock, H. E., Lott, B., & Troung, S. (2011). SPSSI and poverty: Reflections at 75. *Journal of Social Issues*, 67(1), 150-164.

#### **Article #6\*\*write an analysis of the position to which you are not assigned to debate Pro:**

- Pew Charitable Trusts (2012). Pursuing the American Dream: Economic mobility across generations. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS\\_Assets/2012/Pursuing\\_American\\_Dream.pdf](http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2012/Pursuing_American_Dream.pdf)
- **Con:** Heritage Foundation (2011). Air conditioning, cable tv, and an Xbox: What is poverty in the US today? Retrieved from:  
[http://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2011/pdf/bg2575.pdf](http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2011/pdf/bg2575.pdf)

#### Article #7

- Appelbaum, L. D., Lennon, M. C., & Aber, J. L. (2006). When effort is threatening: The influence of the Belief in a Just World on American's attitudes toward antipoverty policy. *Political Psychology*, 27(3), 387-402.

#### Article #8 & 9

- Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E. (2013). The scarcity mindset. In *Scarcity: Why having too little means so much* (pp.19-66). New York: Times Books.  
\*\*write one analysis paper for chapter 1 and one analysis for chapter 2

#### Article #10

- Kraus, M. W., & Keltner, D. (2009). Signs of socioeconomic status: A thin-slicing approach. *Psychological Science*, 20(1), 99-106.

#### Article #11

- Heberle, A. E., & Carter, A. S. (2015). Cognitive aspects of young children's experience of economic disadvantage. *American Psychologist*, 141(4), 723-746.

#### **Article #12**

- Weinger, S. (2000). Economic status: Middle class and poor children's views. *Children & Society*, 14, 135-146.

#### Article #13

- Kozol, J. (1991). The savage inequalities of public education in New York. In *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. (pp. 51-83). New York: Random House.

#### Article #14

- Kalil, A., & Danziger, S.K. (2000). How teen mothers are faring under welfare reform. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56, 775-798.

#### Article #15

- Scarbrough, J.W. (2001). Welfare mother's reflections on personal responsibility. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 2, 261-276.

**Article #16**

- Blustein, D. L. (2008). The role of work in psychological health and well-being: A conceptual, historical, and public policy perspective. *American Psychologist*, 63, 4, 228-240.

**Article #17**

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

**Article #18**

- Lankenau, S.E. (1999). Stronger than dirt: Public humiliation and status enhancement among panhandlers. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 28, 3, 288-318.

**Article #19**

- Riger, S., Staggs, S.L., & Schewe, P. (2004). Intimate Partner Violence as an obstacle to employment among mothers affected by welfare reform. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60, 801-818.

**Article #20**

- Reiman, J. (2004). ...And the poor get prison. In *The rich get richer and the poor get prison*. (pp.103- 156). New York: Pearson.

**Article #21**

- Lott, B. (2002). Cognitive and behavioral distancing from the poor. *American Psychologist*, 57(2), 100-110.

**Article #22**

- Reutter, L. I., Stewart, M. J., Veenstra, G., Love, R., Raphael, D., Makwarimba, E. (2009). "Who do they think we are anyway?: Perceptions of and responses to Poverty Stigma, *Qualitative Health Research*, 19, 297-311.

**Article #23**

- Abramovitz, M. (2001). Learning from the history of poor and working-class women's activism. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 577, 118-130.

**Article #24**

- Cohen, M. B., & Wagner, D. (1992). Acting on their own behalf: Affiliation and political mobilization among homeless people. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 19(4), 21-40.

### **Article #25**

- Hughes, J. L., Brannan, D., Cannon, B., Camden, A. A., & Anthenien, A. M. (2017). Conquering APA style: Advice from APA style experts. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, 22(3), 154-162.