

**SOC 4131 – Sociology of Poverty and Social Welfare****Fall 2020, 3 Credit Hours****Professor Michael D. Gillespie, Ph.D.****ONLINE**Office: ~~3130 Blair Hall~~Contact: Email: mgillespie@eiu.edu;Office Hours: T/R 1p-2:30p;

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[Soc 4131 F'20 Teams Page](#)<https://calendly.com/profgillespie>**Course Description**

In this course, we will critically examine the nature and extent of poverty and food insecurity in the United States. You will learn about important social issues as we review historical and contemporary perspectives on poverty, poverty measurement, characteristics of impoverished populations, underlying causes and consequences of poverty and food insecurity, and government programs and policies that address poverty and hunger.

Some of the questions on which we will focus include:

- What are the main perspectives on poverty and what are their historical roots?
- How have perceptions of poverty developed over time?
- What different methods are used to measure and understand poverty?
- Who are "the poor"? Who are the "food insecure"? How are they related?
- How do cultural and economic processes contribute to poverty?
- How are poverty and food insecurity geographically concentrated?
- Why are people from particular racial and ethnic backgrounds and family structures more likely to be poor?
- What are the goals and purposes of social welfare programs?
- Why does poverty still exist despite the creation of social welfare programs?
- What are the limits of social welfare policy?

**The Online Classroom Experience:**

I am aware that students access, engage, and interact with online course materials and activities with different levels of comfort and technological capabilities. I also understand that the best mode of delivery for this course is in a traditional face-to-face format. Neither you nor I chose these circumstances, and I am committed to ensuring that you are able to perform to your potential this semester. If your ability to engage with this course is due to barriers created by inadequate access to, or condition of, proper technology, please contact me as soon as possible. It is my aim to ensure that there are no undue barriers or burdens to your success.

**Students:** As an online class, I encourage my students to take an active role. Your attitude can help determine your success in this online experience. I challenge you to be open-minded, self-motivated, accepting of critical thinking, willing to work collaboratively, and trusting of the online experience. Good written communication skills and a minimum level of technological experience with Microsoft Office and D2L are expected; access to a device equipped with a web camera and microphone is also preferred. Finally, I strongly encourage you to commit the time necessary (six to eight hours per week) to stay current with the course content.

**Professor:** I assume the responsibilities to appropriately design the content and facilitate the pace of the course. Online instruction is not "face-to-face gone digital, audio or video." Interaction between students, between myself and my students, and between the students and the learning materials is my focus. Online, my role is not as a "distributor of information" rather my energy is as the agent whereby the discovery of learning is facilitated in a student-centered environment. I commit to be your guide through the course as you actively participate in the discovery, synthesis, and contributions to the learning material.

**Seminar Format:** This course is structured as an **online seminar** - traditional “lectures” are limited. Each module, one released per week, will include a brief presentation on the topic, but the majority of the work will be dependent upon the students’ reading, participation in online discussions, and other activities. With the release of new module each Monday morning, brief content quizzes and discussion topics will be posted. The discussions will form a major portion of the course, and for each module, will be due by Friday at 6pm; each participant should post responses informed by the readings, other participants’ contributions, as well as their own perspective/experience/opinion. Your participation in this seminar will be graded based on your contributions to the online discussion and other activities.

**Assignments:** You will apply what you are learning through three main assignments: an analysis of how poverty or poor populations are framed in the media, an applied project on “making ends meet,” and a final policy memo.

*Separate detailed assignment guides will be provided on D2L.*

**Final Essay:** A final reflexive essay will be due on the day of the scheduled final exam: Thursday December 17, 2020 by 12pm.

### **Eastern Illinois University Student Learning Goals and Objectives:**

- **Critical Thinking:**
  - Asking essential questions and engaging diverse perspectives on poverty and food insecurity.
  - Seeking and gathering poverty-related data, information, and knowledge from experience, texts, graphics, and media.
  - Understanding, interpreting, and critiquing relevant data, information, and knowledge to reflect on poverty and social welfare in the United States.
  - Integrate what has already been learned through other sociology courses and electives to the sociological study of poverty, food insecurity, and social welfare.
  - Integrate personal perspectives, experiences, and opinions to issues of poverty, inequality, and welfare.
- **Applied Reading and Writing:**
  - The seminar format enables the student to ask essential questions and engage with diverse perspectives.
  - Create written documents appropriate for professional consideration including policy makers and advocates.
  - Clear verbal and written defensible applications, analyses, evaluations, and arguments about poverty, social policy, and related controversies.
  - Describe and synthesize concepts, principles and theories used to study poverty and food insecurity.
- **Quantitative Reasoning:**
  - Reading and interpreting poverty data presented in tables, graphs, charts, and narrative forms.
  - Critically evaluating methodologies and data for poverty and food insecurity.
  - Constructing persuasive verbal and written arguments utilizing quantitative material.

## **Required Texts**

Edin, Kathryn J. and H. Luke Shaefer, *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*, Boston: Mariner Books (2016)

Iceland, John, *Poverty in America: A Handbook*, University of California Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2013)

Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2018*, ERR-270, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, September 2019. (Posted on D2L)

Semega, Jessica L., Melissa Kollar, John Creamer, and Abinash Mohanty, *U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports, P60-266(RV), Income and Poverty in the United States: 2018*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2019. (Posted on D2L)

\*Additional Weekly Reading Assignments from Texts, Journal Articles, and the Media will be provided on Desire2Learn.

## **Grading and Assessment**

This course is structured and functions in a way where your participation is expected and will be included in your final grade. The distribution of points will be as follows:

Total Points: 675

Media Portrayals and Historical Poverty <b><i>Due October 2, 2020</i></b>	75 points (11% of grade)
Making Ends Meet Project <b><i>Due November 13, 2020</i></b>	150 points (22% of grade)
Policy Memo Project <b><i>Due December 11, 2020</i></b>	125 points (19% of grade)
Final Reflexive Essay <b><i>In-class on December 17, 2020</i></b>	100 points (15% of grade)
D2L Discussion Questions	10 points/module; 150 total (22% of grade)
Module Content Quizzes	5 points/module; 75 points (11% of grade)

**Assignment submissions:** *All assignments are due on the given date via Dropbox. Each assignment should follow either ASA or APA style with appropriate in-text citations and reference standards. Resources for these styles are available on D2L as well as through the Booth Library webpage.*

**Writing Standards:** *Good writing is essential to the point that it communicates your voice. This is not a writing course, but a course with a tremendous amount of writing. I am interested in your ideas, not your punctuation. I provide guidelines for page format and length, font size, and other best practices as parameters in which I look forward to reading your prose.*

## Sociology 4131 – Sociology of Poverty and Social Welfare

### Fall 2020: Weekly Basic Themes and Required Textbook Reading Assignments<sup>1</sup>:

The course is separated in four ‘sections’ of material:

Section 1: Historical and Contemporary Views on Poverty

Modules 1-4

Section 2: Poverty Measurement

Modules 5-6

Section 3: Conditions of Inequality and Poverty Populations

Modules 7-12

Section 4: The Social Safety Net

Modules 13-15

Week of:	D2L Module	Theme	Reading Assignment *D2L	Assignment(s) Due Date
Aug. 24 – Aug. 28	1	INTRODUCTION; DEFINING POVERTY	Iceland, Introduction, pp 1-10 *Coleman-Jensen, et. al. pp. v-vi *Semega, et. al. pp1-3	
Aug. 31 – Sept. 4	2	HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES	Iceland, Ch. 1, pp. 11-21 *Schiller, Ch. 1, pp. 1-17	
Sept. 7 – Sept. 11	3	REPRESENTING AND FRAMING THE POOR	*Katz, Ch. 1, pp. 1-49 *Kendall, Ch. 1, pp. 1-19	
Sept. 14 – Sept. 18	4	POVERTY, PLACE, & PERSPECTIVES	*Kneebone & Berube, Ch. 1 pp. 1-12 *Winne, Introduction, pp. xi-xxii	
Sept. 21 – Sept. 25	5	HOW ARE THE POOR COUNTED	Iceland, Ch. 2, pp. 22-38 *Food Insecurity – An Assessment of the Measure, Ch. 3, pp. 41-54 Edin, Introduction, pp. x1-xxiv	
Sept. 28 – Oct. 2	6	OFFICIAL, ABSOLUTE, AND RELATIVE POVERTY	*Semega, et. al., pp. 1-23 *Pimpare, <i>Poor Math</i>	Paper 1 Due Oct. 2, 2020
Oct. 5 – Oct. 9	7	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POOR	Iceland, Ch. 3, pp.39-60 *Coleman-Jensen, et. al., pp. 1-23 *Morris, et. al., <i>The Prevalence of Food Security and Insecurity Among Illinois University Students</i>	
Oct. 12 – Oct 16	8	CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE – CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES	Iceland, Ch. 5, pp. 79-113 Edin, Ch. 1, 1-33	
Oct. 19 – Oct. 23	9	ECONOMY, LABOR, AND THE WORKING POOR	Iceland, Ch. 6, pp. 114-129 Edin, Ch. 2, pp. 35-63	
Oct. 26 – Oct. 30	10	RACE, ETHNICITY, SOCIAL CLASS, AND MOBILITY	*Sharkey, Introduction, pp. 1-23 Edin, Ch. 3, pp. 65-91	
Nov. 2 – Nov. 6	11	BUDGETS, AND CONSEQUENCES, TO MAKE ENDS MEETS	*Halpern-Meekin, et. al., Ch. 1, pp. 23- 58 Edin, Ch.4, pp. 93-128	
Nov. 9 – Nov. 13	12	PLACE, POVERTY, AND INSECURITIES	Edin, Ch. 5, pp. 129-156 *Mader and Busse, <i>Hunger in the Heartland</i>	Paper 2 Due Nov. 13, 2020

Nov. 16 – Nov. 20	13	A BRIEF HISTORY OF WELFARE AND POVERTY POLICIES	Iceland, Ch. 7, pp 130-155 *Reisch, Ch. 1, pp. 5-42	
Nov. 23 – Nov. 27		THANKSGIVING	Break	Thanksgiving
Nov. 30 – Dec. 4.	14	APPROACHES TO FIGHTING POVERTY 1	Edin, Ch. 6, pp. 157-174 *Allard, Ch. 7, pp. 171-196	
Dec. 7 – Dec. 11	15	APPROACHES TO FIGHTING POVERTY 2	*Price and Sampson, pp. 245-257 *Anti-poverty Policy Innovations: The Russell Sage Foundation	Paper 3 Due Dec. 11, 2020
Dec. 14 – Dec.18	16	FINAL ESSAY	Final Essay	Due Dec. 17, 2020

<sup>1</sup> All dates and readings are tentative and subject to change by the professor

I recommend the use of the Brightspace Pulse [app](#) for your mobile devices to stay up-to-date with your online materials and courses.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### Course Ground Rules:

Sociology is one of the few subjects that allows us to explore ourselves as part of something bigger, how something beyond our immediate lives impacts who we are, and how who we are impacts other individuals and groups. Sociology is dynamic and exciting. Social problems and issues—how we understand, interpret, and deal with them, are also dynamic and can cause serious, but important, debate. Therefore—**first and foremost**—every participant's views are valid and every voice **must** be respected.

Success in this class will be achieved through your own energy, engagement, inquisitiveness, and **ability to be open-minded**. An environment conducive to open dialogue is the goal. The classroom is a space for learning, not just from lecture but also from your fellow colleagues.

There are three ground-rules under which you and I will be approaching this course:

1. If you always agree with me, then there is only one of us doing the thinking – and that is dangerous!
2. You are expected to be active in creating your own knowledge.
3. RESPECT your peers, yourself, and respect the gravity of the subject matter.

### Seminar format:

This course is designed as a seminar centered on lectures, reading & extensive class discussion. You are expected to prepare to participate in the online discussion & it is very important that you keep up with your readings. If you are unprepared or fail to participate, you will jeopardize your educational experience and impact your final grade.

Class participation is class engagement. Engagement in this course is exercised through your continued and productive contribution: reading assignments are completed, assignments are finished and submitted on time, and mindfully participate in discussion and activities. Engagement in the course is both critical to your personal success and the success of the group.

### Tokens:

Life happens. It is a fact of life, really! Therefore I grant each student **5 tokens** that can be redeemed when, well, life happens. Perhaps you will need them, perhaps not. But if you need an extra day for a paper, you miss a discussion, or you forgot to take a quiz, use a token. You still have to complete the work, but if life happens, let me know ahead of the due date and turn in a token. That's it.

If life REALLY happens, the student code of conduct has assurances for you and the proper protocol to make sure you can complete the course:

*The professor will grant make-up privileges (when make-up is possible) to students for properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, participation in an official University activity, or participation in volunteer emergency work (110 ILCS 122/); and such absences will not militate against students in classes in which attendance is used directly in determining final grades. It is the student's responsibility to initiate plans for make-up work and to complete it promptly. If in the professor's judgment the duration or number of absences renders make-up unfeasible, the professor may contact the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Department Chairperson to determine an appropriate action.*

## General Communication and Conduct Policy - Netiquette Expectations

Eastern Illinois University (EIU) is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity has many manifestations, including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. I encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, I will intervene as I monitor the dialogue in the courses. I will request that inappropriate content be removed from the Course room and will recommend university disciplinary action. Learners as well as faculty should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette. The following are good guidelines to follow:

- Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- Never post harassing, threatening, or embarrassing comments. If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person. Conflicts of ideas are encouraged, while conflicts of feelings are discouraged.
- Never post content that is harmful, abusive; racially or culturally insensitive, or religiously offensive, vulgar; sexually explicit, or otherwise potentially ignorant.

In all my classes, I strive to provide a positive and productive learning environment for students. It is important that we all act in a respectful manner toward each other and do not disturb the class.

### Help with course material:

Office hours are provided for students to seek guidance with course content. Office hours are provided for the sole purpose of helping students and should be utilized as needed. I am more than willing to go the extra mile but only if you are, too.

I routinely check the course for postings and emails Monday – Friday between 8a and 12pm and occasionally on the weekend. I will respond within 24 hours unless your message is sent over the weekend, then allow up to 48 hours for a reply. *In the case of an emergency only, you can text me at 734-717-0901.*

### Technical Support Help for Students:

Contact: EIU User Services                      Phone: 217-581-4357                      Email: support@eiu.edu

D2L Brightspace Support (provided by D2L)

Phone: 1-877-325-7778 (toll free)                      Email: Click [here](#) to submit an issue via email.

*Note: D2L provides support for USING D2L Brightspace only. For login and other issues, contact EIU User Services listed above.*

D2L Brightspace [Tutorials for Students](#)

## **DISCLAIMER**

The course content and this syllabus are subject to change at any time to allow for a flexible and open learning environment.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### The Student Success Center:

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (<http://www.eiu.edu/~success>) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696.

### Booth Library:

Located in the center of campus, Booth Library is the best place to do research, find expert help, or study in a calm, distraction-free environment. In addition to the many print resources, Booth provides access to high quality e-books, journals and scholarship not freely available on the Web. Stop by the Reference Desk or go to <http://library.eiu.edu> to explore library resources. Get expert help with your research by contacting the Booth Library reference librarians. Visit, call 581-6072, or go to <http://booth.eiu.edu/ask> to connect with a librarian.

### Writing Center:

I encourage you to use EIU's Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, documenting your papers, and working with sentence-level concerns. The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress. Visit <https://www.eiu.edu/writing/> for more information and hours of operation.

### Academic Integrity:

ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT WORK. Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct:  
<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>

***Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.*** These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submissions, plagiarism, complicity to such acts, computer misuse, and classroom disruptions. You are responsible for your work, the quality of your work, and the validity of your work. Any violation of academic integrity is serious and, if founded, could result in a failing grade on the assignment – and if serious enough – in the course.