

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW 311	Instructor's name:	Yolanda C. Padilla, Ph.D., LMSW-AP Assistant Professor
Unique Number:	54680	Office Number:	SSW 3.130K
Semester:	Spring 1995	Office Phone:	471-6266 ypadilla@mail.utexas.edu
Meeting Time/Place:	Tues-Thurs. 12:30am-2:00pm SSW 2.112	Office Hours:	Tuesdays 1:45-3:45pm or by appointment

POVERTY AND PUBLIC POLICY

I. Course Description

The focus of this course is on poverty among children and families. The course is designed to provide students with the ability to analyze the current empirical and theoretical perspectives on poverty and the U.S. antipoverty policies. Special emphasis will be given to the implications of poverty and poverty policy for a variety of social work areas and fields of practice, including child welfare, health, mental health, services to adolescents, and welfare, among others. It will cover the following topics: theories on the causes and consequences poverty, the extent of poverty in the U.S., welfare reform and other relevant public policy issues, social work intervention, and research methods applicable to the study of poverty.

II. Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, each student should be able to:

1. identify contemporary research issues on children and families in poverty;
2. differentiate between economic hardship and poverty as a pervasive condition that involves poor housing and neighborhood conditions; deteriorating community infrastructure, including schools, recreational opportunities, and employment opportunities; lack of adequate health care, and other factors;
3. conceptualize social problems associated with poverty, such as teenage pregnancy, high drop out rates, etc., from a well-developed theoretical framework in order to understand the complex relationship between different underlying conditions that come into play in causing poverty;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the consequences of poverty for other areas of social well-being, including the effect on the individual life cycle, the family, the community, and the society;
5. evaluate a variety of antipoverty policies, including contemporary welfare reform; including their effect men, women, and people of various ages, ethnicity, socio economic status and physical and mental abilities;
6. assess the special problems of service delivery to the poor and the impact of social values on service delivery in the United States, including the ways that

- issues of diversity (such as culture, class, gender, physical or mental ability, age) have been addressed;
7. link actual social conditions related to poverty with theoretical poverty policy concepts and empirical data;
 8. illustrate the significance of poverty policy in society in general, and in social work practice, in particular;
 9. critically analyze the relationship between prevailing assumptions about the nature of poverty and proposed interventions, including issues of values and ethnics.

III. **Teaching Methods**

This class will use a variety of active learning techniques, including group and individualized assignments, experiential learning, information gathering, critical reading, and writing. The following teaching methods will be used:

1. in-class collaborative learning groups (including lectures)
2. observations of the policy-making process;
3. independent library research;
4. analytic writing.

IV. **Course Readings**

Required Texts (Purchase Required)

Main text

Chafel, J. A. (ed.) (1993). Child Poverty and Public Policy. Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute Press.

Secondary text

Schorr, L. B. (1989). Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage. New York: Anchor Books.

Policy Reports and Other Papers (On Reserve: LRC SSW 1.214A)

Danziger, S. (1991). "The War on Poverty Made a Difference." Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan.

Danziger, S. and Danziger S. K. (1993). "Child poverty and public policy: Toward a comprehensive antipoverty agenda." Daedalus 22:1(Winter) 57-84.

Iscue, L. K. (1993). Action for Texas children: Trends and influences in child and family policy (Child Studies Project Report). Austin: University of Texas at Austin, Institute of Human Development and Family Studies.

Kids count data book: State profiles of child well-being. (1994). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The progress of nations. (1993). New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Recommended Readings

- Danziger, S. and Stern, J. (1990). "The Causes and Consequences of Child Poverty in the United States." School of Social Work Working Papers No. 1990-91-04. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Danziger, S. H., Sandefur, G. D., and Weinberg, D. H. (1994). Confronting Poverty: Prescriptions for Change. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Edelman, M. W. (1987). Families in peril: An agenda for social change. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Haveman, R. H. and Wolfe, B. L. (1994). Succeeding Generations: On the Effects of Investments in Children. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Haveman, R. H. and Wolfe, B. L. (Spring 1994). "Investing in Children." FOCUS 16:1(Spring)24-27.
- Hernstein, R. and Murray, C. (1994). The Bell Curve. New York: Free Press.
- Huston, A. C., McLoyd, V.C., and Garcia Coll, C. (1994). "Children and Poverty: Issues in Contemporary Research." Child Development 65:2(April) 265-282.
- Jencks, C. (1992). Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty, and the Underclass. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Massey, D. S. (1993). "Latinos, Poverty, and the Underclass: A New Research Agenda." Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences 15:4(November)449-475.
- Mead, L. M. (1992). The New Politics of Poverty: The Non working Poor in America. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
- Smeeding, T. (1992) "Why the U.S. Antipoverty System Doesn't Work Very Well." Challenge 35:1(January-February 1992) 30-35.
- Special Report on the Status of Hispanic Children in Texas. (1995). Austin, TX: Center for Public Policy Priorities.
- "New Permanence of Poverty." (1989). Society 22:6(January-February) 2-4.
- Texas kids count data book. (1994). Austin, TX: Center for Public Policy Priorities.
- The National Center for Children in Poverty. (1991). "How we can help the Children of Poverty." Educational Digest 56:7(March) 6-8.
- Trattner, W. (1994). From poor law to welfare state: A history of social welfare in America (5th. ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987). The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (*A Classic in Poverty Theory*)

V. Course Requirements

A. Cooperative Learning Group Assignments

The main teaching method used in this class will be based on collaborative learning techniques, in which students critically analyze case examples based on the assigned readings. Collaborative learning group (CLG) exercises are systematic discussions involving small group discussions and the preparation of take-home worksheets, in-class analytical individual worksheets, and in-class group worksheets. The collaborative learning technique is not based on memorization of information, but on critical analysis, application, and interpretation of concepts. Therefore, CLGs help develop students' higher order learning objectives (application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).

Take-home worksheets: In preparation for this task, students will be asked to briefly answer a few questions based on the concepts in the assigned readings for that day or to list the main points in the readings. The take-home worksheets will serve as an aid for conducting small group discussion. **Each student should bring two copies of the take-home worksheet--one to turn in at the beginning of class and one to use in the group.** The take-home worksheets should be **two to three pages** in length and do not need to be type-written, but must be legible. Take-home worksheets will be graded based on how well they reflect the reading of the assigned reading(s).

Individual analytical worksheets: Individual analytical worksheets will be the students' notes based on their critical analysis of an assigned case examples. The students' analysis will draw on the concepts in the assigned readings (from the notes in their take-home worksheets). On some occasions these worksheets will be assigned and prepared in advance of the class period, and should be prepared in formal essay form. For some CLG exercises, essays will be written after the group discussions.

In-class group analytical worksheets: In-class group worksheets will be the groups' notes based on their discussion of the assigned case/reading. Each group will assign a leader and a scribe. Scribes are to synthesize and integrate the ideas from each of the group members and prepare in-class group worksheets. Each student's contribution is based on their individual analytical worksheets. The scribe presents the group's analysis back to the class as a whole. The instructor will serve as a facilitator by helping organize the information presented by all groups in the class-wide discussion.

In order to receive credit for the cooperative learning group assignments, students must submit all required worksheets and participate in the in-class group work.

B. Poverty Policy Issue Research Paper

Students will write a 10-15 page paper in which they will research and critically analyze a policy issue of interest.

Because the information gathered by the students will serve as the basis for several cooperative group exercises, students will select a policy issue of relevance to poverty from several categories assigned by the instructor. Students will

investigate the empirical and theoretical context of the issue. For the final paper the following should be submitted: a newspaper file, a summaries of relevant meetings attended, the paper.

The purpose of this assignment is (1) to help students link actual social conditions with theoretical poverty policy concepts and empirical data, and (2) illustrate the significance of poverty policy in society in general, and in social work practice, in particular.

Therefore, the approach to the paper will be to lay out the issues and important developments concerning a particular topic the way they are portrayed in the media and in the public forum and then to provide a theoretical and empirical analysis of that topic. One example is teenage pregnancy. One way that the problem is portrayed in the media is as a major cause of poverty and welfare dependency. Thus, the problem is conceptualized in many different ways and many types of solutions and policy alternatives are being offered. The task of the student will be to examine relevant theoretical formulations of the issue and relevant studies that provide information on the extent and dimensions of the problem. Thus, the student will analyze what the data shows: do studies show that there is indeed a relationship between teenage pregnancy and poverty? What do theories concerning this issue suggest is the relationship between teenage pregnancy and poverty?

Special attention should be given to women, people of color, gays and lesbian persons, and/or other groups who may be especially impacted by the issues in the area of research you select.

Newspaper/news magazine article file

In order to become informed about the issues and the latest developments on their selected poverty policy issue, students will maintain a file of current articles from major newspaper/news magazines (some of these include The New York Times, Newsweek, etc.; the Austin-American Statesman is also acceptable).

The purpose of this assignment will be to help the students connect theoretical policy concepts and empirical data with actual social conditions.

Students should collect one article per week (for a minimum of 10 articles in the semester) and keep a folder with a copy of the articles.

Periodically, I will announce specific dates when articles will be used in the collaborative learning groups. All students should bring an article for that day.

Attendance at committee meetings related to relevant legislation

The Texas Legislature will be in session in the Spring 1995. Students will be expected to attend at least three hearings or meetings related to legislation relevant to their research topic. Alternatively attendance at relevant meetings related to the topic (conferences, etc.) can be substituted if legislation related to the topic of interest is not being introduced in this session. Attendance at the Texas Social Work Legislative Day even can count as one of the three required meetings.

Students will be required to provide a 1-2 page summary of the meeting. Also include the following information for each meeting: date, time, and location of the meeting, and name of the sponsoring organization (if appropriate).

Your summaries will serve as a basis of discussion for at least one CLG immediately following SPRING BREAK. Therefore, be sure to have attended at least two meeting by then (or attend one before Spring Break and one immediately following the Break).

C. Essay Exams

All exams will be in essay format and will follow the same principles of the collaborative group teaching method by focusing on the application and analysis of the information learned in the course.

D. Course Grading

All grades will be determined in the following manner:

Grading scale	Final Grade	
90-100 = A	Part I of paper	25%
80-89 = B	Part II of paper	25%
70-79 = C	Collaborative Learning	
60-69 = D	Worksheets/Essays	20%
50 and below = F	<u>Essay Exams</u>	<u>30%</u>
		Total = 100%

VI. Class Expectations and Policies

- 1. Attend class regularly.**
Because this class is based on collaborative learning techniques, attendance and class participation are strictly required.
- 2. Turn assignments in on the due dates.**
Late assignments (sections of the paper) will have five points per calendar day deducted from the final grade unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor and/or a catastrophic event has occurred.

In order to receive full credit on collaborative learning group assignments students must participate in all levels of the assignment: take-home, individual, and group work. Students who submit take-home analytical essays and do not participate in the class part of the analysis (or who participate, but do not turn in take-home worksheets) will not receive credit for that week. Students will be allowed three no-credit CLG assignments. Therefore, no make-ups will be given for CLG assignments.
- 3. Be present for the examinations/submit take-home exams on time.**
Exceptions are made only if special circumstances make this impossible and prior arrangements have been made with me.
- 4. Follow the rules of scholastic honesty.**
Assignments or examinations which show evidence that they have not been completed directly by the student will not be accepted and may result in automatic failure for the course. Plagiarism and cheating during examinations constitute scholastic dishonesty and will result in recommendation for dismissal from the University according to University guidelines.
- 5. Request and use feedback.**
I will work with you throughout the semester and provide you with initial

feedback and suggestions for revisions on assignments. Please arrange to meet with me prior to the time the particular assignments are due.

6. **Offer feedback.**

Student feedback about the course is welcome and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor. If you have difficulties with the course content, assignments, my expectations of you, or your expectations of the course, talk to me as soon as possible during the semester.

7. **Participate in class discussions and other in-class activities.**

This is one way that students can learn from each other. Differences in values, opinions, and ideas will be respected.

8. **Present written and oral presentations professionally.**

Grades will be lowered if assignments are not clearly stated and have not been proofread and contain numerous grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

9. **Use APA Style for referencing.**

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is the style manual to be used by all students. A handout on APA style are available at the SSW Student Services Office (SSW 3.104A). A copy of the full manual is available at the LRC (SSW 1.214A). Appropriate referencing is required on all written assignments. Use quotation marks for short, direct quotes or indentations for longer, direct quotes with page numbers and appropriate citations to the author's work.

VII. Course Schedule

Important: This syllabus is subject to change depending on student progress. Changes will be announced in advance. In-class videos and other instructional materials will be used occasionally throughout the semester. Students should be prepared to discuss the readings by Tuesday of each week. Due dates for paper sections and exam dates will be provided within the first two week of the semester.

Date	Topics	Readings
Week 1		
JAN. 17	Introduction to course Introductions of instructor and students A portrait of children and families in poverty	Chafel, <u>Chp. 2, "Profiles of Children and Families in Poverty"</u>
Week 2		
*JAN. 24	<i>Strategies for collaborative learning: Improving skills in critical reading and application of concepts (Bloom's taxonomy) Training Session by the Learning Skills Center</i>	Chafel, <u>Foreword</u> <u>Chp. 1, "Child Poverty: Overview and Outlook"</u>
JAN 26	Overview of contemporary research on children and families in poverty: issues of concern to social work	<i>Recommended: Huston, McLoyd, & Garcia Coll, "Children and Poverty: Issues in Contemporary Research."</i>
Week 3		
JAN. 31/ FEB. 2	The extent of poverty in the U.S.	Chafel, <u>Chp. 3, "Who are the Poor? A Demographic Perspective"</u> <u>Kids Count Data Book</u> <u>Texas Kids Count Data Book</u> <i>Recommended: "The New Permanence of Poverty," <u>Society</u></i>
Week 4		
FEB. 7/9	Theoretical perspectives on the causes of poverty	Chafel, <u>Chp. 4, "Children of Poverty: Why are they Poor?"</u> <i>Recommended: Wilson, <u>The Truly Disadvantaged</u> Edelman, <u>Families in Peril</u> Massey, "<u>Latinos, Poverty, and the Underclass</u>"</i>

Week 5
FEB. 14/
16 The consequences of poverty

Schorr,
Introduction
Chp. 1, "The High cost of
Rotten Outcomes"
Chp. 2, "The Risk Factors"

Chafel,
Chp. 5, "Childhood Poverty
and Child Maltreatment"

Week 6
FEB. 21/
23 The relationship between prevailing assumptions
 about the nature of poverty and proposed
 interventions

Chafel,
Chp. 6, "The Child in
Poverty: Enduring Images
and Changing
Interpretations"

*FEB. 21 *Texas Social Work Legislative Day*
(Place and time to be announced)

Recommended:
Danziger, Sandefur, &
Weinberg, Chapter 16,
"The Nature, Causes, and
Cures of Poverty:
Accomplishments from
Three Decades of Poverty
Policy and Research"
Hernstein & Murray, The Bell
Curve

Week 7
FEB. 28/
MAR. 3 The historical record of U.S. antipoverty policy

Danziger, "The War on
Poverty Made a Difference"
The Progress of Nations
(Both on reserve: Learning
Resource Center, SSW
1.214A)

Recommended:
Smeeding, "Why the U.S.
Antipoverty System
Doesn't Work Very Well"

Week 8
MAR 7/9 A legislative analysis of the 1990 major children's
 legislation at the federal level: an emphasis on
 poverty

Chafel,
Chp. 7, "The 101st Congress:
An Emerging Agenda for
Children in Poverty"

Week 9
MAR. 14/
16 **SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS THIS WEEK)**

Week 10

MAR. 21/ 23 Toward a comprehensive antipoverty agenda

Danziger & Danziger , "Child poverty and public policy: Toward a comprehensive antipoverty agenda."
(On reserve: Learning Resource Center, SSW 1.214A)

Recommended:
The National Center for Children in Poverty, "How we can help the Children of Poverty."
Mead, The New Politics of Poverty
Jencks, Rethinking Social Policy

Week 11

MAR. 28/ 30 Discussion based on poverty policy issues from student projects

Readings based on student literature reviews for projects

Week 12

APR. 4/6 The link between the current well-being of children and the future economic well-being of the nation

Chafel,
Chp. 8, "Human Capital: The Biggest Deficit"

Recommended:
Haveman & Wolfe,
Succeeding Generations

Week 13

APR. 11/ 13 Advocating for social and economic justice for children and families in poverty: a reflection of social work values

Chafel,
Chp. 9, "Advocacy for Children in Poverty"
Chp. 10, "Integrating Themes about Child Poverty in Search of a Solution"

Recommended:
Edelman, Families in Peril

Week 14

APR. 18/20 Attributes of successful intervention:
comprehensive social services for high-risk families

Schorr,
AN OVERVIEW OF
SUCCESSFUL
SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS:
Chp. 3 through Chp 9 (except
Chp. 6): **one chapter
assigned per group by
area of interest:**
Chp. 3, "Fewer Early and
Unplanned Pregnancies"
Chp. 4, "Brigher Beginnings
Through Improved Prenatal
Care"
Chp. 5, "Child Health Services
that Make a Difference"
Chp. 7, "Strengthening
Families from Outside"
Chp. 8, "The Care and
Education of Young
Children"
Chp. 9, "Schools, Balance
Wheel of the Social
Machinery"

Everybody:
Chp. 10, "The Lessons of
Successful Programs"
Action for Texas Children
(On reserve: Learning
Resource Center, SSW
1.214A)

Week 15

APR. 25/27 Discussion based on poverty policy issues from
student projects

Readings based on student
literature reviews for
projects

Week 16 Discussion based on poverty policy issues from
MAY 2/7 student projects

Readings based on student
literature reviews for
projects

VIII. Bibliography

Required Readings

Chafel, J. A. (ed.) (1993). Child Poverty and Public Policy. Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute Press.

Schorr, L. B. (1989). Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage. New York: Anchor Books.

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Danziger, S. H., Sandefur, G. D., and Weinberg, D. H. (1994). Confronting Poverty: Prescriptions for Change. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Edelman, M. W. (1987). Families in peril: An agenda for social change. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Haveman, R. H. and Wolfe, B. L. (1994). Succeeding Generations: On the Effects of Investments in Children. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Haveman, R. H. and Wolfe, B. L. (Spring 1994). "Investing in Children." FOCUS 16:1(Spring)24-27.

Hernstein, R. and Murray, C. (1994). The Bell Curve. New York: Free Press.

Huston, A. C., McLoyd, V.C., and Garcia Coll, C. (1994). "Children and Poverty: Issues in Contemporary Research." Child Development 65:2(April) 265-282.

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Mead, L. M. (1992). The New Politics of Poverty: The Non working Poor in America. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

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Wilson, W. J. (1987). The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (*A Classic in Poverty Theory*)