This course examines attempts to alleviate poverty in the U.S. with an emphasis on current policies and debates. “Poverty in the U.S.” is a recommended precursor to this class.

**Grading:**
- 25% participation, attendance
- 5% federal budget assignment
- 15% debate presentation
- 30% position papers (5 @ 6% each)
- 25% final paper

**Participation/Attendance:** All students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings. An absence can only be excused if it is brought to my attention before class.

**Position Papers:** Due for each of the eight debates (aside from your debate and two others of your choosing) arguing your position on the debate question. A position paper:
1. employs rigorously at least two readings on that topic from the syllabus,
2. is submitted at the beginning of class in hard copy (not via email),
3. is single-spaced, 500-1000 words, includes a title and word count in the heading,
4. can employ a policy memo format (concise writing, bulleted points, lists, etc.)
5. and does not need a bibliography.

Position papers are graded w/a check plus (6/6), check (5/6), or check minus (4.5/6). They can be made up if you miss a week, but will be graded down a notch. Most receive checks.

**Final Paper:** There will be one longer essay assignment with several options at the end of the course (8-15 pages). My goals here are to set you loose on a policy topic or “target population” related to anti-poverty policy that interests you and for you to address that policy area in a comprehensive, original and evidence-based manner. There is no final exam.

**Debates:** We will engage in a series of eight debates. It is my hope that we can have fun, civil and stimulating policy discussions using this format.

**Required Books:**
COURSE SCHEDULE

**WEEK 1: Anti-Poverty Policy in Its Sociological and Historical Context**
Recommended: Chalk: Iceland, “Poverty in America” (general statistical overview)

**Chalk:** Wilson, “When Work Disappears” (Chps. 1-2) (sociological)

**Chalk:** Bianchi, “Feminization/Juvenilization of Poverty” (trends)

**Chalk:** Sawhill/Jargowsky, “The Decline of the Underclass” (trends)
Reference: Reports and Data, OAI, Medicare: [http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/)
Reference: Chalk: “Social Security Programs in the U.S.”

3/31 (Tu): Introduction

4/2 (Th): The American Welfare State: History and Spending
**DUE:** Federal Budget Assignment (@ Chalk/Assignments)

**Chalk:** “Welfare Timeline” (7 pages)

**Chalk:** Trattner, “Depression and a New Deal” (26 pages)

**Chalk:** Schwartz, “Fighting Poverty with Virtue” (19 pages)

**WEEK 2: Current Dilemmas and Possibilities in U.S. Anti-Poverty Policy**
Recommended: Watch: Frontline, “Ten Trillion and Counting”

**Chalk:** Piven/Cloward, “Regulating the Poor: Welfare” (Marxist critique)

**Chalk:** Page and Simmons, “Social Insurance” (48 pages)
Reference: Chalk: CBO, “Changes in Participation in Means-Tested Programs, 2005”

4/7 (Tu): The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

**Chalk:** Urban Institute, “Is There a System Supporting Low-Income Working Families?”

**Chalk:** Jared Bernstein, “Two Cheers for the EITC,” *American Prospect*

Review: **Chalk:** “The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (407 pages)

**Guest speaker (video):** Indivar Dutta-Gupta, Professional Staff, U.S. House
Email: Indivar.Dutta-Gupta@mail.house.gov
1) Social policy in stimulus bill, 2) Obama anti-poverty agenda, 3) How policy gets done

4/9 (Th): **DEBATE 1:** Recession and Deficit: What Now for the American Welfare State?

**Chalk:** Minoff, “Ending Child Poverty in the UK” (13 pages)

**Chalk:** Waldfogel, “Investing in Our Children: U.S. Can Learn from U.K.”

**Chalk:** Review: “Why Doesn’t U.S. Have a European-Style Welfare State?” (70 pgs)

**Chalk:** Samuelson, “Can’t Do Much about Poverty” (2 pages)

**DUE:** Position Paper

**WEEK 3: Assessing the Reconfigured American Welfare State**
Recommended: Hays, *Flat Broke with Children*, pp. 215-240

**Chalk:** Broughton, “TANF Implementation in Illinois” (33 pages)

**Chalk:** “Welfare Reform Readings”

4/14 (Tu): The New American Welfare State

Allard, *Out of Reach*, Chapters 1-4, 7 (recommended 5-6)

**Guest speaker:** Scott Allard, Associate Professor, SSA ([www.scottwallard.com/](http://www.scottwallard.com/))
4/16 (Th): DEBATE 2: Welfare Reform  
**Chalk:** Heritage, “Welfare Reform at 10” (8 pages)  
**Chalk:** “Leaver studies reviewed” (9 page)  
**Chalk:** Jencks, “Liberal Lessons from Welfare Reform”  
**DUE:** Position Paper

4/16, 4/17 (Th, Fri): Dynamics of Inequality in America from 1968 to Today  
[http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/iprat40/iprat40-agenda.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/iprat40/iprat40-agenda.html)

4/17 (Fri): America and Chicago’s Health Safety Net: A Century of Continuity and Change  
9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the UofC School of Social Service Administration  
[http://ssacentennial.uchicago.edu/events/symposium-grogan-polla-agenda.shtml](http://ssacentennial.uchicago.edu/events/symposium-grogan-polla-agenda.shtml)

**WEEK 4: Work and Welfare: Possibilities and Constraints**  
Recommended: Other readings in **Chalk:** “Living Wage” folder  
**Chalk:** “The Negro Family: A Case for National Action (Moynihan Report)”  
**Chalk:** Broughton, “Reforming Poor Women” (14 pages)  
**Chalk:** O’Conner, “Poverty Knowledge” (50 pg.) – radical critique of liberals

Hays, *Flat Broke with Children*, pp. 3-43, 63-71, 95-105, 121-137, 179-214  
**Chalk:** “The New Hope Project”

4/23 (Th): DEBATE 3: Living/Minimum Wage Laws  
**Chalk:** Chicago City Council, “The Chicago Living Wage Ordinance”  
**Chalk:** Cato, “Keeping the Poor Poor”  
**Chalk:** EPI, “Living Wage”  
**DUE:** Position Paper

**WEEK 5: Children in Poverty: Are the Stars Aligning for Them?**  
Arne Duncan and Turnaround School:  
Reference: Fragile Families Study:  
Recommended: **Chalk:** Other readings in “Children” folder  
LeAlan Jones et al., *Our America*;  
Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Race, Class, and Family Life*;  
Abernathy, *No Child Left Behind and the Public Schools*;  
Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation*;  
Charles Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools*;  
Jane Waldfogel, *What Children Need*

4/28 (Tu): Addressing Children’s Poverty, Urban Education  
Tough, Paul, *Whatever It Takes*, Chapters 1-2, 8-9, 11 (recommended: 3-7, 10)  
**Chalk:** Obama-Biden Transition Project, “Promise Neighborhoods Recs” (3 pg)  

4/30 (Th): DEBATE 4: Child Poverty Advocacy Seminar  
**Chalk:** Heckman, “Investing in Children”  
**Chalk:** “Reducing Poverty through Preschool Interventions” (12 pages)  
**Chalk:** “History of Kids’ Insurance”  
**DUE:** Position Paper
WEEK 6: Rocky Road to a New Model of Affordable Housing: The CHA’s PFT
Recommended: Massey and Denton, “American Apartheid”
Hirsch, Making the Second Ghetto
Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum, “Crossing the Class and Color Lines”
Derek Hyra, The New Urban Renewal
Chalk: Spear, “Black Chicago”
Chalk: Kotlowitz, “Where is Everyone Going?”
Readings in Chalk: “Housing” folder

5/5 (Tu): Poverty, Segregation and Public Housing
Currie, The Invisible Safety Net, Ch. 4, “Home Sweet Home”
Chalk: HUD, “Moving to Opportunity Report”
Chalk: Schwartz and Tajbakhsh, “Mixed-Income Housing”

5/7 (Th): DEBATE 5: Housing Policy/Plan of Transformation
Chalk: CHA, “Plan for Transformation”
Chalk: Fraser, “The Promise of Mixed-Income Housing”
DUE: Position Paper

WEEK 7: Addressing Health Care’s Crisis for the Poor, Uninsured and the Budget
Recommended: Kling, Crisis of Abundance
Brownlee, Overtreated
Cohn, Sick: The Untold Story of America’s Health Care Crisis
Readings in Chalk: “Health Care” folder

5/12 (Tu): Health Care for the Poor
Chalk: Abraham, “Mama Might Be Better Off Dead” (30 pages)
Currie, The Invisible Safety Net, Ch. 2, “In Sickness and In Health”
Chalk: Alan Weil, “A Health Plan to Reduce Poverty” (18 pages)

5/14 (Th): DEBATE 6: Reforming Medicaid/Universal Health Care
Listen: Chalk: Cogan: www.econtalk.org/archives/2006/07/cogan_on_improv.html (50 min)
Chalk: “PNHP Single-Payer Proposal”
Chalk: Friedman, “How to Cure Health Care”
Chalk: Krugman, “The Health Care Crisis and What to Do About It”
DUE: Position Paper

WEEK 8: Assessing Obama’s Green Collar Jobs Agenda for the “Dual Crisis”

5/19 (Tu): Green Collar Jobs
Van Jones, The Green Collar Economy, Introduction, 1-2, 5, 6 (recommended 3-4, 7)
Watch: TED Talk: Majora Carter, “Greening the Ghetto”: www.ted.com/ (19 mins.)
In-class viewing: “Van Jones on Green Jobs”
5/21 (Th): **DEBATE 7:** Are there Effective Ways to Align Green and Anti-Poverty Policies?

**Chalk:** City of Chicago, “The Chicago Climate Action Plan” (selections)

**Chalk:** TBD

**DUE:** Position Paper

**WEEK 9: Reforming the Criminal Justice System and Reconnecting Young Men**

Recommended: Levitt, *Freakonomics*, Chapter 4

**Chalk:** “Prisons” folder

**Chalk:** Morenoff/Sampson, “Violent Crime & Neighborhood Transition”

**Chalk:** Edelman, “Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men”

**Chalk:** Levitt, “Why Do Increased Arrest Rates Appear to Reduce Crime?”

5/26 (Tu): **Drugs, Crime and Prison**

Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, Intro, Chps. 1, 3 (Recommended 2, 4)

**Chalk:** DeParle, “The American Prison Nightmare”

**In-class viewing** (if possible): “The Wildest Show in the South”

5/28 (Th): **DEBATE 8: Reforming the Prison System**

Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, Chp. 6-7, Conclusion (Recommended 5)

**Chalk:** Kelling and Bratton, “Declining Crime Rates: The NYC Story” (“Broken Windows”)

**Chalk:** Lynch and Sabol, “Effects of Incarceration on Informal Social Control”

**DUE:** Position Paper

**WEEK 10: Where from Here?**

6/2 (Tu): **Returning to the Big Picture**

Currie, *The Invisible Safety Net*, Introduction, Ch. 6, “Defending, Mending Safety Net”

**Chalk:** Skim: Center for American Progress, “Poverty to Prosperity”

6/4 (Th): Reading Day – no classes

**WEEK 11:**

6/8 (Monday): **FINAL PAPERS DUE by 2 p.m. in GB218A or via email**