This course examines poverty and inequality in the United States from a sociological perspective, drawing upon the rich social history of Chicago as a case study. The course will explore race, class, and gender stratification, drawing especially from ethnographic and historical accounts, to understand poverty’s creation and reproduction. The format of the class will be discussion interspersed with lecture. You, therefore, are welcomed and expected to play an active role in our class meetings. I will offer “Anti-Poverty Policy in the U.S.,” designed as a follow-up to this class, next term.

**Grading:**
- 25% participation and attendance
- 5% poverty demographics assignment
- 5% immigration demographics assignment
- 30% book reviews (3 @ 10% each)
- 35% 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 (email) before class.

**Book Reviews:** Write a review of between 800-1,000 words for three of our six required books (see schedule below for due dates). The reviews are to be text-based and comprehensive in their analysis of the assigned portions, but are certainly free to venture beyond. Your review might assess the book’s strength and weakness, its contribution to an understanding of the reproduction of poverty, its methodological approach, and even provide limited commentary on rhetoric and style. They are due at the beginning of class.

**Final Paper:** There will be one longer essay assignment at the end of the course (8-15 pages). With the assignment I will provide formatting guidelines for documenting your work.

**Readings List:**
WEEK 1: COURSE SCHEDULE

1/6 (Tu.): Introduction

I. Overview of Poverty in America: Demographics and Perspectives

Recommended Readings: *Poverty Knowledge*, Alice O'Connor

1/8 (Th.): Who is Poor? Where are they? How has it changed?

**Chalk:** “Iceland, Poverty in America” (32 pages)

**Chalk:** “The Geography of U.S. Poverty and Its Implications” (6 pages)

**Chalk:** “Census Poverty 2007” (skim for answers; do not print)

Recommended: **Chalk:** “Two Steps Back: City and Urban Poverty Trends”

DUE: Poverty demographics assignment

WEEK 2:

1/13 (Tu.): Social Stratification and Capitalism

Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, Chapters 1 and 2 (50 fairly dense pages)

IIa. The Role of Race: The Great Migration and Segregation


1/15 (Th.): The Making of the Chicago Ghetto

**Chalk:** Spear, “Black Chicago” (43 pages)

**In-class film excerpt:** “Race: Power of an Illusion” (Disc 3)

Recommended: **Chalk:** “Chicago’s Other Suburbs (geography)” (14 pages)


WEEK 3:

1/20 (Tu.): Reworking the Color Line

Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, Chapter 3 (61 pages)

**In-class film excerpt:** “Ethnic Notions” (20 min.)

1/22 (Th.): Urban Homelessness: Social Organization on the Sidewalk

Mitchell Duneier, *Sidewalk*, pp. 3-80

**In-class:** Guest speakers from Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

**Evening event!** Homelessness count with Suburban Alliance to End Homelessness

WEEK 4:

1/27 (Tu.): Homelessness and Sidewalk


Recommended: **Chalk:** “Illinois Homelessness” (11 pages)

Recommended: “Taylor’s Campaign” (documentary, 75 min. – in Reg)
1/29 (Th.): The Sidewalk Debate
   Mitchell Duneier, Sidewalk, pp. 293-330
   Chalk: Wacquant, “Scrutinizing the Street” (required: pp. 1468-1486)
   Chalk: Duneier, “What Kind of Combat Sport is Sociology?” (26 pages)
   DUE: Sidewalk book review

**WEEK 5:**

2/3 (Tu.): The Childhood Experience of Urban Segregation
   Le Alan Jones and Lloyd Newman, Our America (entire book)
   Recommended: [http://soundportraits.org/on-air/ghetto_life_101/](http://soundportraits.org/on-air/ghetto_life_101/)
   Recommended: [http://soundportraits.org/on-air/remorse/](http://soundportraits.org/on-air/remorse/)
   Recommended: “Hoops Dreams” (documentary, 171 min. – in Reg)
   DUE: Our America book review

**IIb. The Role of Race/Ethnicity: Latino Poverty in the United States**
   Recommended Readings: Latino Crossings, Nicholas De Genova, Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas

2/5 (Th.): Immigration and Latino Poverty in the United States
   Dohan, The Price of Poverty, Preface, Chapters 1-2 (about 40 pages)
   Chalk: “Homeland Security, Immigration Statistics” (skim for answers; do not print)
   DUE: Immigration demographics assignment

**WEEK 6:**

2/10 (Tu.): “Building a Better Underclass”
   Massey, Categorically Unequal, Chapter 4 (53 pages)

2/12 (Th.): Latino Poverty: Work, Crime and Welfare
   Dohan, The Price of Poverty, Part II or Part III or Part IV (need discussants)
   DUE: The Price of Poverty book review
   Recommended: Chalk: Broughton, “Reynosa Series” (27 pages)
   Recommended: “Bread and Roses” (film, 110 min. – in Reg)

**III. The Role of Class: Deindustrialization and Social Inequality**

**WEEK 7:**

2/17 (Tu.): Class-Centered Theory: Deindustrialization and Neighborhood Change
   William J. Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged, Preface, Chapters 1-2 (64 pages)
   In-class film excerpt: “Roger and Me”
   Recommended: Massey, Categorically Unequal, Chapter 5 (52 pages)
   Recommended: “Roger and Me” (film, 90 min. – in Reg) or “The Big One” (not in Reg)
2/19 (Th.): Globalization, Deindustrialization and American Poverty  
William J. Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged, Chapter 3 (30 pages)  
**DUE:** The Truly Disadvantaged book review  
**Chalk:** Broughton, “Globalization On The Prairie” (5 pages)  
Recommended: **Chalk:** Uchitelle, “The Disposable American”

**WEEK 8:**

2/24 (Tu.): Class, Culture and Rural Poverty  
**Chalk:** Cynthia Duncan, “Worlds Apart”  
**Chalk:** “Rural Poverty at a Glance”  
Recommended: **Chalk:** Grindstaff, “The Money Shot” (pp. 17-33, Chp. 8; 48 pages)  
**In-class film excerpt:** “Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class”  
Recommended: “People Like Us: Soc. Class in U.S.” (documentary, 124 min. – in Reg)

**IV. Gender and Poverty**  

2/26 (Th.): Women and Girls Living in Poverty  
Lisa Dodson, *Don't Call Us Out of Name*, pp. vii-x, 1-49

**WEEK 9:**

3/3 (Tu.): Female-headed Households: The Debate  
Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, Chapter 6 (30 pages)  
**DUE:** Categorically Unequal book review

3/5 (Th.): Gender and Poverty  
Lisa Dodson, *Don't Call Us Out of Name*, pp. 50-82  
**Chalk:** Waite, “Case for Marriage” (17 pages)  
Recommended: **Chalk:** Edin and Reed, “Why Don’t They Just Get Married” (20 pages)

**WEEK 10:**

3/10 (Tu.): Choice and Motherhood  
Lisa Dodson, *Don't Call Us Out of Name*, pp. 83-113, 214-225  
Recommended: *Don't Call Us Out of Name*, pp. 114-146  
**DUE:** Don't Call Us Out of Name book review

3/12 (Th.): Reading Period – No classes

**EXAM WEEK:**

3/16 (Mon.): **DUE:** FINAL ESSAY by 2 p.m. (no final exam) in GB218A or via email