

Syllabus
WWS 594e: Poverty and Public Policy
Spring 2007

Professor: Sara McLanahan
Office: Wallace Hall, Room 265
Office Hours: By appointment
E-mail: mclanaha@princeton.edu

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the nature and causes of poverty in the United States. Topics include: (1) Overview: measurement, dynamics and causes of poverty, (2) the role of the family in reproducing poverty, (3) racial disparities in the development of human capital, (4) the role of neighborhoods in reproducing poverty, (5) the history of US welfare policy, and (6) Welfare states in comparative perspective.

II. REQUIREMENTS

Students will prepare written comments on the readings each week and will be responsible for discussing their comments in class. They are also required to attend two afternoon lectures. For the final exam, students may choose to complete a take-home exam, write a policy brief, or write an empirical paper using data from the Fragile Families Study. Grades will be based on the following criteria:

Written comments	25%
Class participation	25%
Final exam	50%

III. BOOKS, READINGS, AND WEBSITES

Most of the readings for this course come from *Understanding Poverty*, an edited book that may be purchased from the Princeton University Store or Amazon.com, and *The Future of Children*, an on-line journal on children's policies. Copies of these two volumes are also available on reserve at the Stokes Public and International Affairs & Population Research Library on the bottom floor of Wallace Hall. All other readings are available in the electronic library or online.

Sheldon Danziger and Robert Haveman (Eds.) 2001. *Understanding Poverty*. Russell Sage Foundation & Harvard University Press.

Isabel Sawhill, Sara McLanahan and Elisabeth Donahue (Eds.) 2005. *Marriage and Child Wellbeing: The Future of Children*. <http://www.futureofchildren/publications>

Cecilia Rouse, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Sara McLanahan (Eds.) 2005. *School Readiness: Closing the Race/Ethnic Test Score Gap: The Future of Children*. <http://www.futureofchildren/publications>

Isabel Sawhill and Sara McLanahan (Eds.) 2006. *Opportunity in America: The Future of Children*. <http://www.futureofchildren/publications>

Useful Websites

Census – Poverty Reports – <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html>

National Poverty Center – U. Michigan-- <http://www.npc.umich.edu/>

Institute for Research on Poverty - <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/>

Joint Center for Poverty Research – <http://www.jcpr.org/>

Luxembourg Income Study – <http://www.lisproject.org/>

Innocenti Research Center – <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/>

Fragile Families Study – <http://crcw.princeton.edu/fragilefamilies/>

Three Cities Study-- <http://www.jhu.edu/~welfare/>

LA Neighborhood Study-- <http://www.lasurvey.rand.org/>

The Urban Institute – New Federalism Project <http://newfederalism.urban.org>

Center for Law and Social Policy- <http://www.clasp.org/>

WEEK 1: MEASUREMENT, DYNAMICS, AND CAUSES

Sheldon Danziger and Robert Haveman, Introduction in *Understanding Poverty*.

Gary Burtless and Timothy Smeeding, Chapter 1 in *Understanding Poverty*.

Hilary Hoynes et al. 2006. "Poverty in America: Trends and Explanations," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 20, No. 1. (electronic library)

Mary Corcoran, Chapter 4 in *Understanding Poverty*

Isabel Sawhill and Sara McLanahan. "Introducing the Issue," *Opportunity in America: The Future of Children*, pp. 3-18.

Michael Hout and Emily Beller. "Intergenerational Social Mobility: The United States in Comparative Perspective," *Opportunity in America: The Future of Children*, pp. 19-36.

Review "Frequently Asked Questions"

National Poverty Center <http://www.npc.umich.edu/poverty/>

Institute for Research on Poverty <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/faqs/faq6.htm>

Daniel Lichter and Martha L. Crowley. 2002. "Poverty in American." *Population Bulletin*. <http://www.prb.org/Template.cfm?Section=PRBLibrary&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=6084>

WEEK 2: POVERTY AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

Sara McLanahan. "Diverging Destinies: How Children Fare Under the Second Demographic Transition." *Demography*. 41(4): 607-627 (electronic library)

Maria Cancian and Deborah Reed, Chapter 2 in *Understanding Poverty*

Isabel Sawhill, Sara McLanahan and Elisabeth Donahue, *Marriage and Child Wellbeing: The Future of Children* (selected chapters TBD).

Susan Mayer and Jens Ludwig, "'Culture' and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty," *Opportunity in America: The Future of Children*, pp. 175-196.

WEEK 3: POVERTY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Lynn Karoly, Chapter 9 in *Understanding Poverty*

Cecilia Rouse, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Sara McLanahan, *School Readiness: Closing the Race/ethnic Test Score Gap: The Future of Children* (selected chapters TBD)

W. Steven Barnett and Clive Belfield, "Early Childhood Development and Social Mobility," *Opportunity in America: The Future of Children*, pp. 73-98.

WEEK 4: POVERTY AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

John Yinger, Chapter 10 in *Understanding Poverty*

Steven Durlauf, Chapter 11 in *Understanding Poverty*.

Ron Ferguson, Chapter 12 in *Understanding Poverty*

Jeffrey Kling, Jens Ludwig, and Lawrence Katz. (2005). "Neighborhood effects on crime for female and male youth: Evidence from a randomized housing voucher experiment." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120:1, 87-130. (electronic library)

Susan Clampet-Lundquist, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey Kling and Greg Duncan. (forthcoming) "Moving at-risk teenagers out of at-risk neighborhoods: why do girls fare better than boys," *Journal of Human Resources* (electronic library)

WEEK 5: THE U.S. WELFARE STATE

Karl Scholz and Kara Levine. Chapter 6 in *Understanding Poverty*.

Donna Pavetti. Chapter 7 in *Understanding Poverty*.

Rebecca Blank, "Evaluating Welfare Reform in the United States." *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol XL (December 2002): 1105-1166. (electronic library)

Pamela Morris, Aletha Huston, Greg Duncan, Danielle Crosby and Hans Bos. 2001. "How work and welfare policies affect children: a synthesis research. MDRC, New York: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/81/cf.pdf

WEEK 6: COMPARATIVE WELFARE STATES.

Josta Esping-Anderson 1992. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* Chapter 1 (electronic library)

Timothy Smeeding, Lee Rainwater, and Gary Burtless Chapter 5 in *Understanding Poverty*

Irwin Garfinkel, Lee Rainwater, and Timothy Smeeding, 2006. "A Re-examination of Welfare States and Inequality in Rich Nations: How In Kind Transfers and Indirect Taxes Change the Story" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Volume 25, Issue 4. pp. 897-918. (electronic library)

Irwin Garfinkel, Lee Rainwater, and Timothy Smeeding. Selected chapters from *The American Welfare State: Laggard or Leader?* (book manuscript)