

# SOC-2070: POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

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## Cuyahoga Community College

**Viewing: SOC-2070 : Poverty in the United States**

**Board of Trustees:**

March 2019

**Academic Term:**

Fall 2019

**Subject Code**

SOC - Sociology

**Course Number:**

2070

**Title:**

Poverty in the United States

**Catalog Description:**

Survey of social and personal dimensions of poverty in the United States regarding individuals, groups and larger communities. For persons wishing to develop in-depth understanding and skills development regarding the impact of poverty. Designed for students interested in social work, education, nursing and other health related disciplines.

**Credit Hour(s):**

3

**Lecture Hour(s):**

3

## Requisites

**Prerequisite and Corequisite**

SOC-1010 Introductory Sociology or SOC-2051 Introduction to Social Welfare, or SOC-2040 Introduction to Social Work.

## Outcomes

**Course Outcome(s):**

Analyze the human toll of poverty and related social problems as well as the development and delivery of social services designed to ameliorate them.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

**Objective(s):**

1. Examine the various and contrasting definitions of poverty and comparable responses and "solutions".
2. Discuss the extent, prevalence and the dynamics of poverty.
3. Identify the impact of income and wealth inequality on American poverty as well as poor people.
4. Analyze the structural processes and socioeconomic factors that, arguably, cause poverty as these can be distinguished from and yet be made relevant to the problems of individuals.
5. Examine poverty as a social problem; one that complicates the lives of racial and cultural minorities, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, the disabled and other persons with special needs.
6. Examine the role of social workers in the process of combating poverty.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

Apply conceptual framework and critique social science material relative to income and wealth inequality and poverty as an American and global phenomenon.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

**Objective(s):**

1. Correlate the various aspects of poverty with both constructive and dysfunctional behaviors.
  2. Analyze current issues, policies and attitudes toward poverty and poor people.
  3. Examine the demographics of poverty and socioeconomics of the poor.
  4. Discuss Affirmative Action as a policy in answer to American racial hegemony.
  5. Examine poverty as it complicates the lives of racial and cultural minorities, gays, lesbians, the disabled and other persons with special needs.
  6. Write a critical analysis of at least one issue relevant to poverty as an American and/or global phenomenon.
  7. Review articles on a variety of current issues related to poverty in the United States.
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**Methods of Evaluation:**

1. Oral participation in discussing assigned work
2. Outside projects
3. Panel Discussion
4. Oral Presentation
5. Critical Analysis Paper
6. Final grade may be based on:
  - a. Oral participation
  - b. Examinations
  - c. Quality of projects
  - d. Writing skills
  - e. Role playing and other in-class assignments
  - f. Instructor's evaluation of student's effort, interest, development and accomplishment during course.

**Course Content Outline:**

1. Definition of poverty
  - a. Extent
  - b. Prevalence
  - c. Dynamics
  - d. Demographics
  - e. Government standards
    - i. Currency
    - ii. Applicability
  - f. Poverty as a social problem for cultural minorities
2. Nature of poverty and discrimination
  - a. Impact of income
    - i. Minimum wage
    - ii. Quality of life
    - iii. A living wage
  - b. Wealth inequality
    - i. Global comparisons
      1. Quality of life
      2. Poverty definition
      3. Social safety net
        - a. Pensions
        - b. Government support
    - ii. Issues related to politics and public policy
      1. Socioeconomics
      2. Rural poverty/place matters
      3. Urban poverty/place matters
      4. Criminalization of the poor
  - c. Socioeconomic factors

- i. Causal factors of social institutions
  - ii. Causal factors of human behavior
- d. Structural processes
- 3. Public Awareness
  - a. Opportunities cost for individuals
  - b. Social/Societal cost
  - c. Attitudes towards poverty and poor people
- 4. Public programs and policies
  - a. Human agent
    - i. Social Worker
    - ii. Educators
    - iii. Medical professionals
    - iv. Legal professionals
    - v. Public safety professionals
    - vi. Religious leaders
    - vii. Community leaders
  - b. Social Safety Net programs/policies
    - i. Welfare
    - ii. Medicaid
    - iii. Medicare
    - iv. Social Security
    - v. Unemployment
    - vi. Housing
  - c. Legal and educational systems of the poor
    - i. Criminal justice
    - ii. Access to education
  - d. Affirmative action
- 5. Mental/physical health of the poor
  - a. Maternal health care
    - i. Lack of prenatal care
    - ii. Nutrition issues
  - b. Infant health care
    - i. Low birth weight
    - ii. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
    - iii. Infant mortality rate
  - c. Nutrition issues
    - i. Access: Food deserts
    - ii. Education and awareness
  - d. Men's health
    - i. Mental
    - ii. Physical
  - e. Women's health
    - i. Mental
    - ii. Physical
  - f. Children's health
    - i. Mental
    - ii. Physical

## Resources

Edelman, Peter. *So Rich, So Poor: Why It's So Hard to End Poverty in America*. New York: New Press, 2013.

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Edelman, Peter. *Not a Crime to Be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America*. New York: New Press, 2018.

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Barker, Robert. *Dictionary of Social Work*. 20th ed. 2013.

---

Davis, Larry and Terry Mizrahi. *The Encyclopedia of Social Work (4 Volumes)*. 20th ed. Oxford University Press, 2010.

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Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2016.

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Edin, Kathryn. *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York, NY: First Marine Books, 2016.

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Shelby, Tommie. *Dark Ghettos*. Harvard University Press, 2018.

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Reich, Robert. *The Common Good*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2018.

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Goldrick-Rab, Sara. *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

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Abramsky, Sasha. *The American Way of Poverty: How the Other Half Still Lives*. New York, NY: Nation Books, 2014.

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Stevenson, Brian. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015.

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#### **Resources Other**

1. Textbooks and supplemental materials which meet performance objectives will be identified annually by Tri-C campus course resources selection committee as appointed by Social and Behavioral Sciences faculty.

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