

Politics of Poverty
Rutgers University - Newark
Spring 2018
Thursday 6:00 – 9:00pm
Conklin Hall 446

Professor: Domingo Morel, PhD
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Course Description

In the past four decades, the United States has experienced an unprecedented rise in income and wealth inequality. How has the American political system affected levels of inequality in the U.S.? How has inequality shaped American politics? This course is designed to help students understand the political causes and consequences of inequality in America. The course will cover various topics including political participation, campaign finance, economic policy, housing, policing and incarceration, and education.

Course Format and Requirements

This course meets once a week. Attendance and active participation are important aspects of your class experience and evaluation. The course meetings will consist of a combination of lectures, discussions, and student presentations. In addition to reading the assigned materials, students must come prepared to discuss current events as well. Each class will begin with a discussion of current events in American politics.

Course Assessment

- 2 short papers (20%): First paper due by Wednesday, February 28. Second paper due by Wednesday, April 18.
- Podcast proposal (10%): Due in class on Thursday, February 8
- Podcast storyboard (10%): Due on Thursday, March 22
- 2 Journal Entries (10%): Entry #1 due on February 22; Entry #2 due on April 5.
- Podcast (30%): Due by 8pm on Wednesday, April 25
- 1-page description of podcast (5%): Due by 8pm on Wednesday, April 25 (along with podcast)
- Discussion/Participation (15%)

Short Paper:

Students are expected to submit 2 short papers throughout the semester. The papers will provide a critical analysis of the day's reading assignments. Students will choose which day to submit the assignment. The first paper is due by Wednesday, February 28. The second paper is due by Wednesday, April 18. The paper should be 2 pages in length and should include the following: brief summary of the readings, major arguments; analysis and critique of the readings; and two questions generated by the readings. Papers are due via e-mail (domingo.morel@rutgers.edu) by 8pm the Wednesday before class.

Podcast:

Podcast assignment details and all assignments related to the podcast (proposal, storyboard, group presentation, journal entries, and description) will be discussed in class. Detailed guidelines will be posted on Blackboard course website once the assignments have been discussed in class.

Discussion/Participation:

Our class will benefit greatly from active participation from all class members. The unique analysis and personal experiences that each of you contributes to the discussions will help educate the rest of us. Class participation consists of the following components: (1) attending class; (2) Be prepared by doing the required readings (3) engaging regularly in class discussions.

COURSE POLICIES

Communications Inside and Outside of Class: Each student is responsible for all communications made during our class meetings as well as via e-mail. Periodically, the instructor will find it necessary to convey information to the class outside of our in-class sessions. In general, I will post any class announcements via e-mail to your Rutgers e-mail address.

Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities who need disability-related accommodations should work with the Office of Disability Services to arrange these accommodations as soon as possible.

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity: Students are expected to adhere to the Rutgers Honor Code.

Religious Observance: Any student who is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to participate in any course requirement on a particular day will be provided with an opportunity to make up the requirement without penalty. If religious observance will prevent meeting a course requirement on a particular day, please meet with me as soon as possible to identify reasonable alternative arrangements.

Electronic Devices

Unless otherwise instructed, students may not use laptops or other electronic devices (e.g., tablets) in class. Cell phones should be off while students are in class.

Contacting the Professor

Students are encouraged to attend office hours to discuss course material, assignments and other academic concerns. Students who cannot attend office hours may email me to schedule an appointment.

COURSE MATERIALS

There are 2 required books for this course. The books are available for purchase at the Bookstore:

- Morel, Domingo. 2018. *Takeover: Race, Education, and American Democracy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stiglitz, Joseph. 2012. *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*. New York, NY: Norton.

All other readings will be posted on our class Blackboard site.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

The class readings may change slightly as salient policy issues may evolve over the course of our class. I will let you know about changes to the syllabus at least a week in advance.

Date	Topic
Thursday, January 18	Introduction What is political inequality?
Thursday, January 25	Meet with Julie Winokur Creating a Podcast
Thursday, February 1	Inequality <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Piketty, Thomas and Emmanuel Saez. 2014. "Inequality in the Long Run." <i>Science</i>, May 23, 344(6186): 838-843.▪ Autor, David. 2014. "Skills, Education and the Rise of Earnings Inequality among the Other 99 Percent" <i>Science</i>, May 23, 344(6186), 843-851.▪ Jencks, Christopher. 2002. "Does Inequality Matter?" <i>Daedalus</i> 131(1):49-65.
Thursday, February 8	Poverty in America **Podcast Proposal Due** <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Katz, Michael. "The Undeserving Poor: Morals, Culture and Biology", Chapter 1 in <i>The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty</i> (available online through Rutgers University Library)▪ Weeks, Daniel. "Poverty vs Democracy in America" https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/01/poverty-vs-democracy-in-america/282809/▪ Kristof, Nicholas. "It's Not Just About Bad Choices" https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/14/opinion/sunday/nicholas-kristof-its-not-just-about-bad-choices.html▪ Pew Research, "Who's poor in America?" http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/01/13/whos-poor-in-america-50-years-into-the-war-on-poverty-a-data-portrait/
Thursday, February 15	Economic Inequality <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Joseph Stiglitz. 2012. <i>The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future</i>. New York, NY: Norton. (Chapters 1-5)
Thursday, February 22	Democracy and Inequality **Journal Entry #1 Due** <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Larry Bartels. 2008. <i>Unequal Democracy</i>. Chapters 1, 9, and 10. (Blackboard)▪ Gilens, Martin. 2005. "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 69 (5):778-96. (Blackboard)
Thursday, March 1	Elections and Campaign Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Keith G. Bentele and Erin E. O'Brien. 2013. "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i>, 11(4):1088-1116. (Blackboard)▪ Lynda Powell. 2013. "The Influence of Campaign Contributions on Legislative Policy." (Blackboard)

- Nicholas Confessore, Sarah Cohen, and Karen Yourish. “The Families Funding the 2016 Presidential Election” *New York Times*, Oct. 10, 2015: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/10/11/us/politics/2016-presidential-election-super-pac-donors.html>
- Elizabeth Drew, “How Money Runs Our Politics,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 4, 2015: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/06/04/how-money-runs-our-politics/>

Thursday, March 8 **Event: Conversation with Mayor Ras Baraka (Details to follow)**

Thursday, March 15 **Spring Break**

Thursday, March 22 **Economic Policy **Final Storyboards Due****

- Christopher Howard, “The Hidden Side of the American Welfare State,” *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 108, No. 3 (Autumn 1993): 403-436. (Blackboard)
- Blank, R (2002) Evaluating Welfare Reform in the U.S., *Journal of Economic Literature*, p1105-1145. (Blackboard)
- Holt, Steve. (February 2006) “The Earned Income Tax Credit at Age 30: What We Know.” Pages 1-17 Brookings Research Brief. (Blackboard)
- “Minimum Wage,” in *The CQ Researcher*, Issues for Debate in American Public Policy (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc, 2014, 15th edition) pp. 281-299. (Blackboard)

Thursday, March 29 **Housing Segregation and Inequality**

- Desmond, Matt. 2012. “Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty.” *American Journal of Sociology* 118(1):88-133.
- Rothstein, Richard. 2014. “The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of its Troubles.” <http://www.epi.org/publication/making-ferguson/>
- Gary Orfield. 2013. “Housing Segregation Produces Unequal Schools: Causes and Solutions” in *Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do to Give Every Child an Even Chance*, pp.40-60. (Blackboard).

Thursday, April 5 **Meet with Podcast Group **Journal Entry #2 Due (via email)****

Thursday, April 12 **Policing and Incarceration**

- James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling (1982). “Broken Windows.” *The Atlantic*: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/>.
- Barstow, David. “Antidrug Tactics Exact Price On a Neighborhood, Many Say.” *New York Times*, April 1, 2000. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/01/nyregion/antidrug-tactics-exact-price-on-a-neighborhood-many-say.html>
- Goffman, Alice. 2009. “On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto.” *American Sociological Review* 74(3):339-357.

Thursday, April 19 **Inequality, Education and American Democracy**

- Morel, Preface and Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 6.

Thursday, April 26 **Conclusion – Podcast Listening Party**