

## Syllabus

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### POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE U.S.

PSCI 139-401; HSOC 139-401; URBS 137-401  
Fox Leadership and ABCS Seminar  
Thurs, 3-6; Leadership Hall Seminar Room  
3814 Walnut St. (entrance on left side of building)  
Fall Semester, 2005  
Prof. Mary Summers  
mysummer@sas.upenn.edu  
215-746-7118  
office hours, Wednesdays 2-4 and by appt  
Leadership Hall, rm 20

Wendy Ginsberg, Course grader (and consultant for your papers!)  
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This academically based community service seminar will explore the ideas and theories, alliances and opposition that have shaped policy and organizing efforts addressed to the problems associated with urban poverty in the United States with a special focus on the issues of increasing inequality, education, low wage work, health and nutrition, welfare reform and social security. Students will evaluate contemporary policy debates and programs in the light of selected case studies, readings, and their own experience working with community groups, institutions, and federal programs in West Philadelphia. A focus on the role of leadership in politics, theory, institutions, and organizing efforts will include guest speakers. The course will ask students to think broadly about the problems associated with urban poverty in America at the turn of the twenty-first century and the possibilities for addressing these problems in a significant fashion.

#### Community service

All students taking the course should participate in some form of relevant community service. Several community service projects have agreed to welcome students from the course: a food stamp enrollment campaign coordinated by the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (GPCAH); National Student Partnerships, a student-led volunteer service organization that links people in need with a wide range of services; a Philadelphia based campaign of Call to Renewal (a national network of churches and faith-based organizations working to overcome poverty) to protect Social Security (and potentially other projects); an opportunity to work with small groups of students in a World History class of juniors at University City High School. Seminar participants who wish to work with other organizations or institutions on problems related to urban poverty may develop their own projects (preferably in groups) in consultation with the

instructor.

Requirements for PS198-303 include at least 100-200 pages of weekly readings, with 4 brief (1-3 pages) responses to the readings and 4 reflections on your community service over the course of the semester submitted by email by Wednesdays at noon. These responses will not be individually graded but will count towards the class participation component of your grade. (The class that you present may count as one of the reflections on the readings. You may turn in these reflections in the weeks of your choice.) They may be submitted on the Class Blackboard or emailed to me. There will be one short paper (3-5 pages) due Sept. 29th, a midterm paper (5-7 pages) due Oct. 20th, and an analysis (3-5 pages) of your community service project due Nov. 17th. With at least one partner, you will also be responsible for presenting a debate with regard to issues raised by the readings during one class in the course of the semester. At the end of the semester, students have an option for a 10-15 page research paper/project or a discussion paper. For those of you taking the research paper option, bring possible topics to class for discussion on Oct. 6th your basic argument and research strategy on Nov. 10th, a first draft on Dec. 1st. Final drafts of all papers due Dec. 14th. You may choose to work either individually or in groups on your research papers. A project that involves significant research and analysis may meet the requirements for both the course and the associated independent study (PSCI 199; see below). If you choose to take the discussion paper option, you are encouraged to discuss the questions with your fellow students, but you must write your own paper.

Students will have the option of receiving an additional independent study credit (PSCI/HSOC 199), if they commit to at least four hours a week on their community service work, a journal, and a relevant research paper or multi-media project. Examples of possible final projects include, but not limited to: an evaluation of the project; research on an issue important to the community organization you are working with; research on "best practices" in other states and cities with regard to a related issue; a proposal for a campaign or public policy initiative that might better address this issue; a series of lesson plans; other options, as discussed with the instructor.

\*\*You must notify the instructor ([mysummer@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:mysummer@sas.upenn.edu)) if you wish to take this independent study credit by Monday, Sept 19th; and she will submit your names for registration for the credit with the Political Science Department. (Add period ends, Sept. 23rd.)\*\*

Grading: For PS198-303 your research or final discussion paper will count for 35% of your grade; your class participation (including the overall quality of your reflection responses on reading and community service work for 20%); your first discussion paper 5%, your analysis of your community service 10%, and your

midterm 30%. You may have an option to submit first drafts of papers.

For PS199, 50% of your grade will be based on your final project; 50% on your reflections on your work and feedback from project supervisors.

Required books: Michael Katz, *The Price of Citizenship: Redefining the American Welfare State* (2001); Lisbeth B. Schorr, *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America* (1998); Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities* (1991); Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* (1998); David Shipler, *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*; George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*; Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (1999) There will also be a bulk pack that includes all other readings.

Recommended: Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (1999); David Zucchino, *Myth of the Welfare Queen* (1997); Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickle and Dimed* (2001); Kevin Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy* (2002); Harrell Rodgers, Jr., *American Poverty in a New Era of Reform* (2000), Sharon Hays, *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*.

Books are on sale at House of Our Own Book Store, 3920 Spruce St.; open Mon-Sat, 10-7; Sun. 12-5 (215-222-1576). The bulk pack will be available at Campus Copy, 3907 Walnut, 215-386-6410 COURSE CALENDAR

#### Week 1 \* Sept 8: INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS

Begin reading David Shipler, *The Working Poor* and George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*

SPEAKER: Wednesday, Sept. 14th, Jim Wallis, author of *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, speaking at Penn Law School Auditorium at 7:30, sponsored by the White Dog Café.

#### Week 2: Sept 15: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY SERVICE SITES

Readings: Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*, 1-6; Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity*, 1-19; Lisbeth Schorr, *Common Purpose*, ix-21

\*\*Email instructor regarding your choice of community service sites and note whether you want to take additional independent study credit for community service by 9/19. Also email top 3 preferences for class for which you will be responsible for presenting debate.\*\*

\*\*Questions for first discussion paper handed out

Week 3: Sept 22: Wealth, poverty and inequality in the United States

Debate Question: Debate Question: Can political and economic policies successfully promote forms of “development” that do not exacerbate inequality?  
Conflicting historical perspectives; definitions of poverty and development

Readings: Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (1999), 1-53; Michael Katz, *The Price of Citizenship: Redefining the American Welfare State* (2001), 1-56; William Kelso, *Poverty and the Underclass: Changing Perceptions of the Poor in America* (1994), vii, 3-13; Kevin Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich* (2002) , vii-xxii, 88-168, 405-422; Sharon Hays, *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform* (2003), 3-31.

Week 4: Sept. 29: Definitions/ theories of poverty

Cultural /economic/ political explanations; how they drive policy proposals....  
Debate Question: What can we learn from the failures of the “War on Poverty”?  
Should government programs intended to remedy problems associated with poverty address economic or cultural issues?

Readings: Shipler, *Working Poor*, 3-95, 142-200; Rodgers, *American Poverty*, 9-61; William Kelso, *Poverty and the Underclass*, 273-315; Thomas J. Sugrue, “Poor Families in an Era of Urban Transformation: The ‘Underclass’ Family in Myth and Reality,” in Stephanie Coontz, ed., *American Families: A Multicultural Reader* (2000), 243-257; Lisbeth Schorr, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, ix-xxix (1988, 1989).

Recommended: Micaela di Leonardo, “White Lies, Black Myths: Rape, Race and the Black ‘Underclass,’” 53-68 (bulk pack)

\*\*First discussion paper due\*\*\*

Midterm Discussion Paper Questions Handed Out

Week 5: Oct 6: The Politics of Poverty and Education:

Debate Question: Is the No Child Left Behind Act an important step forward in addressing the inequalities in American education?

Readings: Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*; David Shipler, *Working Poor*, 231-253; Schorr, *Within Our Reach*, 215-255 (bulk pack); Linda Darling Hammond, “Standards and Assessments: Where We Are and What We Need.” (2003)  
Recommended, Deborah Meier, ed., *In Schools We Trust: Creating Communities*

of Learning in an Era of Testing and Standardization (2002) 96-182 (bulk pack);  
Lisbeth Schorr, Common Purposes, 232-297

Students writing research papers should email me topics and be prepared to discuss in class.

Tuesday, Oct. 11th: Jim Wallis, Free Library of Philadelphia, 12-1:30

Week 6: Oct. 13: The Politics of Poverty, Health and Medical Care:  
Debate Question: What are the pros and cons of establishing a tax funded health system with universal coverage?

David Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 201-230; Helen Epstein, "Ghetto Miasma; Enough to Make You Sick?" *New York Times*, Oct. 12, 2003; Ichiro Kawachi and Bruce Kennedy, *The Health of Nations: Why Inequality is Harmful to Your Health* (2002), 43-59; Schorr, *Within Our Reach*, 111-178; Katz, *Price of Citizenship*, 257-292

Recommended: [Justhealthcare.com](http://Justhealthcare.com) web site

Week 7: Oct. 20: The Politics of Poverty, Hunger and Nutrition

Debate Question: Does the rise of the obesity epidemic indicate that the tax dollars spent on programs like food stamps and school lunch programs should be folded into block grants that would allow the states more flexibility in developing anti-poverty and nutrition strategies?

Readings: Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*, 20-38, 54- 201-255, 288-318; George McGovern, *The Third Freedom: Ending Hunger in our Time* (2002), 11-18, 69-82; Douglas Besharov, "We're Feeding the Poor as If They're Starving," *Washington Post*, Dec. 6, 2002; Leslie Kaufman, "Are the Poor Suffering from Hunger Anymore?" *The New York Times*, Feb. 23, 2003; Kate O' Beirne, "Poor and Fat," *The National Review*, Feb. 10, 2003.

Midterms due

Week 8: Oct 27: The Politics of Poverty and Low Wage Work

Debate Question: Does the Earned Income Tax Credit represent a more effective strategy for rewarding work and aiding the working poor than raising the minimum wage?

Readings: David Shipler, *The Working Poor*; Katz, *Price of Citizenship*, 171-194;  
Recommended: Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (2001)

Oct 28th WORLD FOOD DAY: Preventing Hunger: Promoting Health  
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger program at William J. Green Federal Building, 600 Arch St, 8:30-12:30 (Picture ID required)

Week 9: Nov. 3: The Politics of Poverty, Job Training and Full Employment:

Debate Question: Should promoting a full employment economy and putting people to work be government responsibilities?

Readings: Shipler, *The Working Poor*, 254-284; Gordon Lafer, *The Job Training Charade* (2002), 1-123, 156-189, 210-224; Katz, *Price of Citizenship*, 341-359.

Week 10: Nov. 10: The Politics of Poverty and "Welfare"

Debate Question: Do market based solutions provide the best solution to the many problems associated with government programs that are supposed to serve the poor?

Readings: Lisbeth Schorr, *Common Purpose*, 1-231, 301-385; Sharon Hays: *Flat Broke with Children*, 33-61, 215-240; social security readings.

Research papers: Argument and research strategy due.

Week 11: Nov. 17: The Politics of Poverty: Grass Roots and Faith-Based Organizing Efforts

Debate Question: What are the pros and cons of grass roots and faith-based organizing efforts? What difference can they make in the life circumstances of low income Americans? Do they represent a retreat from engagement in our national politics?

Readings: Michael Gecan, *Going Public* (2002), ix-32, 65-99; ;Jim Wallis, *Faith Works* (2000, 2001), ix-xix, 1-14, 76-99, 178-196 (bulk pack); Katz, *The Price of Citizenship*, 137-170.

Analysis of Community Service Projects Due  
Questions for final discussion paper given out

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Week 12: Dec. 1: The Politics of Poverty: the Media, Public Opinion, and Party Politics

Debate Question: Is it a mistake for politicians to promote or defend programs targeted at the economic needs of the poor? Will they be more successful (and do more good) if they speak to broader goals, programs, and audience

Readings: Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (1999) 1-79, 102-132, 154-216; Katz, *Price of Citizenship*, 317-340; Jim Wallis, *Faith Works*, 314-332

First drafts of research papers due (optional for discussion papers)

Week 13: Dec. 8: Last class: wrap up, presentations of research and discussion of community service work.

Dec. 14th ALL PAPERS DUE.