

Urban Studies 402: The City and Homelessness

Instructor: [David Eldridge](#)

Subject Area/Discipline: [Urban Studies](#)

School: [University of Pennsylvania](#)

Project Area: [Homelessness](#)

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description:

This seminar in Urban Studies introduces students to many of the major social issues confronting our nation's cities by focusing specifically on the problem of urban homelessness. The course examines the treatment of homelessness and extreme impoverishment as social problems historically, through contemporary debates, and through people who have experienced homelessness directly or as researchers, advocates, and policy-makers. Approximately 1/3 of the class time will be spent with residents of St. Columba, a homelessness agency for formerly street homeless men with alcohol and drug and/or mental health problems. Several areas of intensive study will include: the low income housing crisis, landlord-tenant law, welfare reform and income maintenance strategies, homelessness prevention, mental health, and the structure of emergency housing services. The course concludes by examining current policies and advocacy strategies.

Course Objectives:

As a result of successful completion of this course, students will:

- (1) have direct experience volunteering for a homelessness agency, St. Columba;
- (2) be able to place their experience at St. Columba into the context of American homelessness and the public policy arena;

(3) generate an increased awareness of the what homelessness means to both those who experience it and to those [of us] who don't;

(4) be knowledgeable about the history, social conditions, policies, and debates involved with homelessness;

(5) be knowledgeable of the variety of service, advocacy and public policy strategies that have been developed to reduce or eliminate homelessness;

(6) have an increased understanding of policy and sociology research and analysis in the context of homelessness;

Course Requirements:

Students are required to prepare for class by reading the assigned materials in advance of class discussions, participate in volunteer activities at St. Columba, and complete a 8-12 page research project.

Class Participation:

The course is designed as a seminar, so each person's contributions to the class are important to its success. Contributions include speaking, listening, and, perhaps obviously, requires punctuality and attendance. If you know in advance of a conflict with attending class, please let me know as soon as possible. Class participation will be evaluated on the basis of contributions made over the course of the semester (25%).

Reflections:

The purpose of the reflections is to intuitively make connections between the experience at St. Columba's shelter and other aspects of the course. Students are to write a 1-2 page reflection after each visit to St. Columba's, for a total of 6 reflections. The reflections will be due at 12PM the day of the next class meeting (Thursday if the visit is on Tuesday; Tuesday if the visit is on Thursday). The reflections should be written in a formal style (including proofreading) and should include both a description of the experience accompanied by thoughts and feelings about it. These are graded on a pass/fail basis (each of 6 reflections equal 3%, totaling 18%).

Research Project:

The purpose of the research project is to develop an in-depth understanding of one aspect of homelessness, which may include a homeless sub-population (street homeless, mentally ill and or drug and alcohol addicted homeless, families, etc.), service delivery (outreach, transitional housing, shelter policy), legislation (McKinney Act), policy (funding, prevention, systems integration), or

another topic of the student's choosing. Research methodology may include secondary research of available literature or primary research based on interviews, surveys, etc.

Students must submit a 2-3 page proposal mid-semester (17%; see Appendix A) and an 8-12 page completed paper (40%; see Appendix B) at the end of the semester. The proposal is due on June 6; the paper is due on June 27.

Resource: Writing Center, 414B Bennett Hall. Call 215-898-8525 to set up a 45 minute consultation or sign up on bulletin board. I suggest asking directions if you call!

Course Evaluation:

Semester Grade:

Participation: 25%
Reflections: 18%
Proposal: 17%
Paper: 40%
Total: 100%

Scale:

A++ 100
A+ 97-99
A 93-96
A- 90-92
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72
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Course Texts:

A. Baumohl, J., Ed. 1996. *Homelessness in America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
[Available at the Penn Book Store].

B. Culhane, D.P., & Hornburg, S.P., Eds. 1997. *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*. Washington, D.C.: Fannie Mae Foundation.
[Available free courtesy Fannie Mae Foundation].

C. Liebow, E. 1993. *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
[Available at House of Our Own Bookstore].

Please note that a number of readings are available through the Internet (these are identified with their http address). Please ask if you have any questions about accessing these readings. Hard copies are available at the Urban Studies office (McNiel 130), which also has an extra computer if you need to use it.

Course Outline:

I. Introduction to the Course, St. Columba, and the Study of Homelessness

Class 1 (5/23): Course Introduction and St. Columba Partnership Overview

First visit to St. Columba's.

Class 2 (5/25): St. Columba: Outreach, ADM, Project H.O.M.E.

1. Erickson, S.E., & Page, J. "To Dance With Grace: Outreach & Engagement To Persons On The Street." In *Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. Washington, D.C.: HUD and HHS, pp. 6-1 ? 6-24.

Location: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/progsys/homeless/symposium/6-Outreach.htm>

2. Oakley, D., & Dennis, D.L. "Responding to the Needs of Homeless People with Alcohol, Drug, and/or Mental Disorders." In Baumohl, J. *Homelessness In America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, pp. 179-186.

Location: TEXT A

3. Read materials from the following web addresses:

A. St. Columba's: http://members.aol.com/prjhome/st_columba/

B. Project H.O.M.E (Housing, Opportunities, Medical Care, Education):
<http://members.aol.com/prjhome/history.html>

II. Homelessness Services and Research

Class 3 (5/30): Services Integration, Systems Integration, and Accountability

Second visit to St. Columba's.

1. Randolph, F., Blasinsky, M., Leginski, W., Parker, L.B., Goldman, & H.H. 1997. "Creating Integrated Service Systems for Homeless Persons With Mental Illness: The ACCESS Program." *Psychiatric Services*, 48: 3, pp. 369-374.

Location: Hand-out (also read through lecture slides and notes]

2. Deborah L. Dennis, D.L., Coccozza, J.J., & Steadman, H.J. "What Do We Know About Systems Integration and Homelessness?" In *Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. Washington, D.C.: HUD and HHS, pp. 12-1 ? 12-24.

Location: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/progsys/homeless/symposium/12-Sysintg.htm>

3. Culhane, D.P., Eldridge, D.L., Rosenheck, R., Wilkins, C. "Making Homelessness Programs Accountable to Consumers, Funders and the Public." In *Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. Washington, D.C.: HUD and HHS, pp. 4-1 ? 4-23.

Location: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/progsys/homeless/symposium/4-Account.htm>

Class 4 (6/1). A History of Homelessness Research: Advocacy, Point Prevalence, and Administrative Data

1. Culhane, D.P., Dejowski, E.F., Ibanez, J., Needham, E., Macchia, I. 1997. "Public Shelter Admission Rates in Philadelphia and New York City: The Implications of Turnover for Sheltered Population Counts." In Culhane, D.P., & Hornburg, S.P., Eds. *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*. Washington, D.C.: Fannie Mae Foundation.

Location: Text B.

2. Wong, Y-L. I. "Patterns of Homelessness: A Review of Longitudinal Studies." In Culhane, D.P., & Hornburg, S.P., Eds. *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*. Washington, D.C.: Fannie Mae Foundation.

Location: Text B.

III. Being Homeless: Experience and Meaning

Class 5 (6/6): Ethnographic Research, Homeless Women, and Shelters

Third visit to St. Columba's.

Liebow, E. 1993. *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women*. New York, NY: Penguin Books. Preface, Introduction (1-21), Chapter 4 (115-147) and one other chapter (1, 2, or 3).

Location: Text C

Class 6 (6/8). Further Consideration on Liebow & Guest Lecturer

PROPOSAL DUE

Guest Lecturer: Steven Metraux, Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology

Liebow, E. 1993. *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women*. New York, NY: Penguin Books. Chapters 5-7 (151-234)
Location: Text C

IV. History, Ideology, Causation, and Policy

Class 7 (6/13). History, Ideology, Causation

1. Hopper, K. 1997. "Homelessness Old and New: The Matter of Definition." In Culhane, D.P., & Hornburg, S.P., Eds. *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*. Washington, D.C.: Fannie Mae Foundation.
Location: Text B

2. Culhane, D.P. "The Quandaries of Shelter Reform: An Appraisal of Efforts to 'Manage' Homelessness." *Social Service Review*.
Location: Handout

3. Koegel, P., Burnam, M.A., & Baumohl, J. 1996. "The Causes of Homelessness." In Baumohl, J., Ed. 1996. *Homelessness in America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
Location: Text A

Class 8 (6/15). Housing and Homelessness Policy

Fourth visit to St. Columba's.

1. Dolbeare, C. 1996. "Housing Policy: A General Consideration." In Baumohl, J., Ed. 1996. *Homelessness in America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
Location: Text A

2. Foscarinis, M. "The Federal Response: The Stewart McKinney Homeless Assistance Act." In Baumohl, J., Ed. 1996. *Homelessness in America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
Location: Text A

3. Galowitz, P. 1999. The Housing Court's Role in Maintaining Affordable Housing. In Schill, M. *Housing and Community Development in New York City: Facing the Future*. NY: State University of New York Press. pp. 177-201.
Location: Handout

V. A Multi-faceted Approach: Sub-Populations and Prevention

Class 9 (6/20). Families, African Americans, and Latinos

Fifth visit to St. Columba's: Question and Answer Session with Staff

Chapters 10-12 In Baumohl, J., Ed. 1996. *Homelessness in America*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
Location: Text A

Class 10 (6/22). Prevention.

1. Lindblom, E. 1997. "Toward a Comprehensive Homelessness-Prevention Strategy." In Culhane, D.P., & Hornburg, S.P., Eds. *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*. Washington, D.C.: Fannie Mae Foundation.
Location: Text B

2. Wong, Y.I., & Koppel, M., & Culhane, D.P., & Metraux, S., & Eldridge, D.E., & Hillier, A., & Lee, H.R. *Help in Time: An Evaluation of the Philadelphia City's Community-Based Homelessness Prevention Program*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. pp. 1-11, 96-121.
Location: Handout

VI. Final Connections: Homelessness, Community, and Learning

Class 11 (6/27). Sixth Visit to St. Columba's: Cook Out

PAPER DUE

Meet at St. Columba for their first cookout ever. We should have the opportunity to hang out with people we already know and hopefully meet some residents we don't know yet. Please consider showing up a little early to help prepare the cookout.

Class 12 (6/29). Wrap-Up: Advocacy, Activism, and Panhandling

1. Chapter 19 in Baumohl: Rob Rosenthal, "Dilemmas of Local Anti-homelessness Movements"
Location: Text A

2. George Wilson, "Exposure to panhandling and beliefs about poverty causation." *Sociology and Social Research: An International Journal* Oct 1991 v76 n1 p14(6)
Location: Handout

APPENDIX A: Paper Proposal Guideline

Purpose:

The purpose of a proposal is threefold:

1. Establish a research question or focus for your research.
2. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the subject you have chosen to investigate.
3. Establish a research and analysis plan for the final paper.

Because this is a modest research project conducted in a short time frame, you may have limited knowledge and an unclear sense about how you'll want to structure your final paper. So, here's how you fulfill the three proposal purposes in the context of this proposal:

1. Write a research question that focuses your attention to a particular area of homelessness. Don't fret over the format of this question too much - it's OK if it feels somewhat vague at this point, and I'll help you refine it.
2. Write up a clear presentation about why you think your topic is worth studying and annotate three sources you will be using to gather data about your subject. An annotation is simply a summary of the sources, which may include individuals or texts (articles, reports, books, etc.). If you do plan to do primary research, it can't be on St. Columba residents and at least one of your sources must be a text of some kind.
3. Describe how you think you can use your sources to answer your research question or shed light on your research focus. Will one source answer one part of the question? Will all three sources provide general background to your research focus?

Format:

Length: 2-3 pages double-spaced with reasonable margins and font size.

Referencing: Any standardized format that specifically identifies references that start with author, year, title, source or publisher, and page numbers if relevant. This could include an internal referencing system that refers to the author listed with complete source information in a reference list or a endnote or footnote system.

Body: Use standard expository format, including a heading and basic research paper structure.

Revisions:

We'll be discussing your project on an ongoing basis - I expect the final version to be related to the proposal, but different as you adapt to changing ideas and

information. Keep me abreast of your progress, particularly regarding basic changes to your project.

APPENDIX B: Research Paper Guideline

Purpose:

There are three basic purposes to a research paper:

4. Present a thesis that ties together your research under an umbrella argument or theme.
5. Use evidence to support your thesis.
6. Demonstrate thorough research through detailed citation of sources.

To fulfill these three purposes and get an "A," do the following:

4. A clear thesis statement given at the beginning of the paper that punctuates the major thrust of your analysis. This statement should be accompanied by a summary of the major sections of your paper and your conclusion.
5. Information and interpretation gathered from at least 7 substantive sources to support your thesis. These include secondary research from academic or policy resources and primary research that is clearly documented with a description of who you interviewed and when you conducted the interview. When using interviews, please do not use the names of your research participants. Finally, you should use a combination of paraphrased citations and direct quotes (you should have at least 4 direct quotes in your paper). Be sure to interpret the evidence, especially quotes, in the context of your thesis.
6. You should use either an internal citation or a footnote/endnote system, and you should include a list of sources at the end of the paper to which these citations refer. Use a standardized format that starts with author, year, title, source or publisher, and page numbers if relevant. The citations should refer to the author so that I can refer to the reference list easily.

Format:

Length: 8-12 pages double-spaced with reasonable margins and font size.

Structure: Include an introduction, body, and conclusion. Pay particular attention to linking your paragraphs with transitional sentences that interpret the evidence you have just presented in the context of your thesis.

Last but not least: Staple your paper and do not use a plastic cover (they're a real pain). Also, don't forget to spell-check AND proofread before handing in the paper.

Finally, if you're interested in sending your paper to a policy-maker and would like some help formatting it to that audience, I would be glad to assist you with that.