

SOC 336
SOCIOLOGY OF POVERTY
Fall 1999

Professor: Sara McLanahan
Office: 21 Prospect, Room 109C
Office Hours: By appointment
(Send email to Roseanne Scepansky: rscepans@princeton.edu)
E-mail: mclanaha@princeton.edu

Lecture: Tuesday & Thursday
1:30p-2:20pm
McCosh 28 or
Bowl 2, Robertson Hall

Preceptors: Jean Knab - 258-5508 (jeanknab@princeton.edu)
Kristen Harknett - 258-5508 (harknett@princeton.edu)
Sara McLanahan (and I-fen Lin)

Web site: <http://courseinfo.princeton.edu/courses/SOC336>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the nature and causes of poverty in the United States and the role of government in ameliorating poverty. Special attention is given to the importance of family structure, neighborhoods, and labor market conditions in determining the level and distribution of poverty. Welfare state policies are examined from a historical and comparative perspective, including recent changes in the U.S. welfare system.

II. REQUIREMENTS

Students will write two, short (one hour) exams covering the lectures and readings. The first exam will be given at the end of the sixth week, and the second exam will be given on exam day, January 17th. Students are required to attend weekly precepts and to prepare six short written assignments on alternate weeks. Each student will write a short research paper (12 to 15 pages) analyzing welfare reform in his or her state. The papers will be due on Dean's Day (January 11, 2000).

Final grades will be based on the following:

Exams	30%
Precept	30%
Papers	40%

III. BOOKS AND READINGS, WEBSITES

Books may be purchased from the Princeton University Store. They are also on reserve at Firestone Library. Other reading materials are available in Firestone and/on the web.

Blank, Rebecca M. (1997). *It Takes A Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Jencks, Christopher. (1992). *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, poverty, and the Underclass*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Moffitt, Robert. (1998). *Welfare, the Family and Reproductive Behavior*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Murray, Charles. (1984). *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*. New York: Basic Books.

Pierson, Christopher. (1991). *Beyond the Welfare State*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Wilson, William Julius. (1996). *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Vintage Books.

WEBSITES:

Census Bureau – <http://www.census.gov/>

Greenbook - <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/98gb/intro.htm>

IRP - <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/>

JCPR – <http://www.jcpr.org/>

MDRC – Welfare Experiments – <http://www.mdrc.org/> “Projects” or “Publications”

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

Welfare Information Network – <http://www.welfareinfo.org>

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (September 21 and 23)	Defining and Measuring Poverty
Week 2 (September 28 and 30)	The Faces and Causes of Poverty
Week 3 (October 5 and 7)	Poverty and the Economy
Week 4 (October 12 and 14)	Poverty and the Family
Week 5 (October 19 and 21)	The Underclass Debate
Week 6 (October 26 and 28)	The Underclass Revisited

BREAK

Week 7 (November 9 and 11)	The Origin & Growth of the Welfare State
Week 8 (November 16 and 18)	Welfare States in Crisis
Week 9 (November 23)	The Conservative Challenge
Week 10 (Nov 30, Dec 2)	The Liberal/Progressive Agenda
Week 11 (December 7 and 9)	Precursors to Welfare Reform
Week 12 (December 14 and 16)	What's Happening Now?

Introduction (September 16)

Blank, Rebecca M. (1997). *It Takes A Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Introduction.

Week 1 (September 21 and 23) Defining and Measuring Poverty

Citro, Constance F. and Robert T. Michael, (eds.) (1995). *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*. "Executive Summary," Panel on Poverty and Family Assistance: Concepts, Information Needs, and Measurement Methods. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
http://pompeii.nap.edu/bo_book/0309051282/html/index.html

Fisher, Gordon M. "The Development and History of the Poverty Thresholds." *Social Security Bulletin*, 55, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 3-14.

Institute for Research on Poverty. <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp>. (Review Frequently Asked Questions and Links to Poverty Related Resources. Also download and read, "Revising the Poverty Measure." *Focus* 19:2: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/focus.htm>

Week 2 (September 28 and 30) Faces and Causes of Poverty

Blank, Rebecca. *It Takes A Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapter 1.

DeParle, Jason. (1998). "What Welfare-to-Work Really Means." *New York Times Magazine*, December 20: pp 50-59, 70-72, 88-89.

O'Hare, William P. (1996). "A New Look at Poverty in America." *Population Bulletin*, 51:2:2-47.

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

Welfare Information Network. <http://www.welfareinfo.org>. Scan.

Week 3 (October 5 and 7) Poverty and the Economy

Blank, Rebecca. *It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapter 2-4

Week 4 (October 12 and 14) Poverty and the Family

Bachrach, Christine. "The Changing Circumstances of Marriage and Fertility in the United States." In *Welfare, The Family and Reproductive Behavior*. Washington D.C.: The National Research Council. Chapter 2

Garfinkel, Irwin, Sara McLanahan, Daniel Meyer, and Judith Seltzer. (1998). "A Brief History of Child Support Policies in the United States" and "A Patchwork Portrait of Nonresident Fathers." In I. Garfinkel et al (eds.), *Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

McLanahan, Sara. (1994). "The Consequences of Single Motherhood." *The American Prospect*. 18:48-58. (<http://epn.org/prospect/18/18mcla.html>)

Moffitt, Robert. (1998). *Welfare, the Family and Reproductive Behavior*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Chapter 4

Stacey, Judith. (1998). "Dada-ism in the 1990s: Getting Past Baby Talk About Fatherlessness." In C. Daniels, (ed.), *Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Whitehead, Barbara D. (1993). "Dan Quayle Was Right." *The Atlantic Monthly*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/election/connection/family/danquayl.htm>

Week 5 (October 19 and 21) The Underclass

Wilson, William Julius. (1996). *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Vintage Books. Chapters 1-5

Week 6 (October 26 and 28) The Underclass Revisited/Exam

Jencks, Christopher. (1992). *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, poverty, and the Underclass*. New York: Harper Perennial. Chapters 4 and 5

Fall Break (October 30-November 7)

Week 7 (November 9 and 11) Welfare States in International Comparison

Pierson, Christopher. (1991). *Beyond the Welfare State*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press. Chapters 1-4

Week 8 (November 16 and 18) Welfare States in Crisis

Pierson, Christopher. (1991). *Beyond the Welfare State*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press. Chapters 5-6

Week 9 (November 23) The Conservative Challenge

Mead, Lawrence. (1982). "Social Programs and Social Obligations." *Public Interest*, Fall, Vol 69, pp 17-32.

Murray, Charles. (1984). *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*. New York: Basic Books.

Week 10 (November 30 and December 2) The Liberal/Progressive Agenda

Bernstein, Jared and Irwin Garfinkel. (1996). "Welfare Reform: Fixing the System Inside and Out." In Schafer, Todd and Jeff Faux (eds.), *Reclaiming Prosperity: A Blueprint for Progressive Economic Reform*. New York: Economic Policy Institute. Pp. 173-190.

Blank, Rebecca. (1996). *It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 5-7

Jencks, Christopher. (1992). *Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty, and the Underclass*. New York: Harper Perennial. Chapter 2

Skocpol, Theda. (1995). "Targeting within Universalism Politically Viable Policies to Combat Poverty in the United States." *Social Policy in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wilson, William Julius. (1996). *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Vintage Books. Part 2

Week 11 (December 7 and 9) Precursors to Welfare Reform

MDRC – Welfare Experiments – <http://www.mdrc.org/> "Projects" or "Publications"

Maynard, Rebecca et al. "Changing Family Formation Behavior Through Welfare Reform." *Welfare, The Family and Reproductive Behavior*. Washington D.C.: National Research Council. Chapter 6

Week 12 (December 14 and 16) Where Are We Now?

Currie, Janet. (1998). "The Effects of Welfare on Child Outcomes." *Welfare, The Family and Reproductive Behavior*. Washington D.C.: National Research Council. Chapter 7

Edelman, Peter. (1997). "The Worst Thing Bill Clinton Has Done." *The Atlantic Monthly*. March, <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97mar/edelman/edelman.htm>

Haskins, Ronald. "Introduction." Liberal and Conservative Influences on the Welfare Reform Legislation of 1996.

Klerman, Jacob. (1998). "Welfare Reform and Abortion." *Welfare, The Family and Reproductive Behavior*. Washington, DC.: National Research Council.

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

Welfare Information Network. <http://www.welfareinfo.org>

Final Paper Due Dean's Date: January 11, 2000

Final Exam Due January 17, 2000