Course Description
The goal of this course is to explore poverty in the context of the United States from a sociological perspective from a practical standpoint. The course is designed to be both informative and useful in practice. Throughout the quarter we will discuss and learn about how poverty is defined, who sets this definition and explore some of the causes of poverty. Although there are many to study poverty, this course will use a sociological viewpoint to better understand how structures influence people and shape outcomes for individuals. Throughout the course we will read text that describe the everyday lives of those living in poverty and reflect upon how this impacts society as a whole. We will discuss the various policy and programs attempting to alleviate poverty and discuss their potential positive and negative impact. Furthermore, we will use this information to propose potential actions in the future to lessen and/or address the crisis of poverty.

Course Objectives
The goal of this course is to explore the causes and consequences of poverty in the United States from a sociological perspective. We will cover theoretical perspectives, but the goal of the course is to apply knowledge in addressing issues of poverty. By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and describe some of the causes of poverty from a sociological perspective.
- Identify and describe concepts and attitudes of the American public as they relate to poverty.
- Think critically about the definition and measurement of poverty in the US.
- Demonstrate empathy and understanding of the consequences of poverty.
- Demonstrate understanding of policies and programs that address poverty.
- Apply new knowledge to address poverty in the US and locally.

Throughout the course, you will be asked not only to think critically about the issues regarding poverty in the U.S., but also to apply this new knowledge in an attempt to address some of these issues.
**Required Texts**

Where We Stand: Class Matters  
Bell Hooks

Articles and materials as assigned weekly on D2L.

**Required Course Technology**

In order to fully participate in this online class you will need to have regular access to a computer, an internet connection and an Office Suite. I recommend Microsoft Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint, etc.), but you can use Google Docs. Please keep in mind that many of these documents and applications do not always work seamlessly on Chromebook and D2L. I recommend using a laptop or personal computer. Without these tools, full participation online will be challenging. Use of a mobile device is also not recommended other than to check email and announcements. You will not always be able to view all materials using the D2L mobile application.

**Discussion Posts**

For many students poverty may be an issue you are close to and for others it may be something you experience as an outsider. No matter where we are on that spectrum, issues related to poverty can result in heated conversations at times. As we discuss some of the debated issues in our online forums it is important to create an atmosphere of respectful dialogue. Below I have listed some guidelines to follow when posting and responding to online discussion. **Please read!!**

- Be respectful and considerate of others’ viewpoints. Not everyone will see the same points as you do, but the goal is to learn. Assume positive intent of the writer.
- Keep discussion post language respectful.
- Write in complete sentences and paragraphs. I will not be grading for grammar or spelling, but your posts should be clear and thoughtful.
- Do not write in ALL CAPS—this indicates anger or frustration.
- Cite any quotes or ideas that are not your own. (APA or ASA is fine)
- Incorporate ideas, theories and examples from readings and texts.
- Post each week—you will so much more from the course! It also adds to the learning experience for everyone else.

**Academic Honesty & Plagiarism**

You are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU policies.

If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else’s written or spoken words), you must include it in quotation marks. Any time you take a direct quote, as well as when you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source. Failure to cite your
sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students with disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the PSU Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) and the instructor at the beginning of the term to arrange accommodations. The DRC is located in 435 Smith and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their website at [http://www.pdx.edu/drc](http://www.pdx.edu/drc).

**Discrimination and Harassment Policy**
As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact 503-725-5672. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student model “Creating a Safe Campus” in your D2L.

**Course Outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1: Who is poor? Who decides?</strong></td>
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<td>Defining Poverty and Class in the United States</td>
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<td>Week 1:</td>
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<td>Defining Poverty</td>
<td>Discussion Posts:</td>
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<td>D2L Articles</td>
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<td>• 2 responses</td>
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<td>Week 2:</td>
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<td>D2L Articles</td>
<td>Discussion Posts:</td>
<td>Jan. 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>View: Inequality for All</td>
<td>• Post</td>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 responses</td>
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<td><strong>Module 2: Why are people poor? What keeps people poor?</strong></td>
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<td>Understanding Poverty from a Sociological Perspective</td>
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<td>Week 3:</td>
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<td>D2L Articles</td>
<td>Discussion Posts:</td>
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<td>• Post</td>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
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<td>• 2 responses</td>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Topic Write-up</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Jan. 29</strong></td>
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<td>Week 4:</td>
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<td>D2L Articles</td>
<td>Discussion Posts:</td>
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<td>• Post</td>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
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<td>• 2 responses</td>
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**Module 3: What are the consequences of poverty? Who bears the human cost?**
The Faces of Poverty: Women, Children and People of Color
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>D2L Articles</th>
<th>Discussion Posts:</th>
<th>Mid-Term</th>
<th>Feb. 10</th>
<th>Feb. 12</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Post &amp; 2 responses</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Where We Stand: Class Matters</td>
<td>Post &amp; 2 responses</td>
<td>Feb. 17</td>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
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<td>Feb. 24</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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**Module 4: What does poverty look like in Portland-Metro?**
Homelessness, Gentrification and Education

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>D2L Articles</th>
<th>Discussion Posts:</th>
<th>Mid-Term</th>
<th>Feb. 17</th>
<th>Feb. 19</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Post &amp; 2 responses</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>D2L Articles</td>
<td>Post &amp; 2 responses</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>March 12</td>
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**Module 5: What can we do?**
The Way Forward: Policy and Reform

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>D2L Articles</th>
<th>Discussion Posts:</th>
<th>Mid-Term</th>
<th>March 17</th>
<th>March 19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Where We Stand: Class Matters: 121-130, 156-164</td>
<td>Post &amp; 2 responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No reading, finals week</td>
<td>Final Paper Final Reflection</td>
<td>March 23</td>
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**Grading**
Weekly Discussion Posts (10pts/wk) 90 pts.
  Post (5 pts.)
  Responses (5 pts.)
*lowest discussion score will be thrown out.

Paper Topic Write-up 10 pts.
Mid-Term 30 pts.
Annotated Bibliography 10 pts.

**This outline is a working document and may be adapted over the course of the quarter to meet student needs and time constraints.**
Grading and Late Work

Grading for the course will be based upon the following scale:

- 92-100% = A
- 90-91% = A-
- 86-89% = B+
- 83-85% = B
- 80-82% = B-
- 76-79% = C+
- 73-75% = C
- 70-72% = C-
- 66-69% = D+
- 63-65% = D
- 60-62% = D
- 59% and below = F

**I do not accept late discussion postings because it becomes cumbersome and difficult to keep up with. You will also be placed in discussion groups so it is important that you engage with your classmates. I want to be able to engage in the course as an instructor and this can hinder my engagement. If you have a special circumstance, (illness, accident, etc.) please talk with me as soon as possible. I understand life happens, but it is much easier to help you and adapt if we communicate. I will also offer extra credit a few times throughout the term to accommodate. The goal is to have assignments build upon each other.

Assignments that are turned in after the posted due date will be docked 1/2 point for each day they are late. Late assignments will not be accepted beyond 2 weeks after the due date.

Assignments and Exams

The majority of your points for this class come from your weekly participation on the discussion boards. In addition, you will have assignments, a mid-term and a final paper and reflection. The assignments are meant to build upon each other so your final paper will be a culmination of your work for the quarter. Your final project will be a Policy/Reform paper in which you will propose support of a policy, a new policy or reform to address one topic related to poverty in the Portland-Metro area. You will need to pick a specific problem, choosing from the topics given. The assignments are detailed below:
**Introduction and Reference Paper (10 pts.)**

For this assignment you will write a short description of your problem and provide an outline of the areas you plan on covering. This assignment is meant to give you a start in thinking about your final paper. Here are the guidelines:

- You may choose which problem you would like to study more about, but it must be related to one of the following topics:
  - Homelessness
  - Gentrification
  - Race and Poverty
  - Challenges of Urban Education
  - Affordable housing
- Your write-up should introduce your topic (what population, program and context you will write about)
- This is a rough draft, but should follow academic writing guidelines (See Owl Purdue).
- References should include at least 4 sources from outside this class, and 4 sources from course readings.
- The write-up should be at least one page
- Should contain an outline of what you hope to write about

**Course Mid-Term (30 pts.)**

The mid-term will cover material and reading from the first 5 weeks of the course. The questions will be provided 1 week in advance. The exam will be essay format and will be open book/open notes.

**Annotated Bibliography (10 pts.)**

For this assignment you will write an annotated bibliography. A template will be posted for you to follow.

- Your assignment should include 8-12 references
- Should follow posted guidelines
- All references need to be related to your topic and problem
- The majority of your references should be peer-reviewed articles. Wikipedia or blogs are not acceptable sources. Government websites and non-profits are ok, but need to be included in addition to academic sources.

**Final Policy/Reform Paper (40 pts.)**

For this assignment you will put all of your previous work together to form one cohesive paper. You will need to expand on your initial write-up, include a bibliography and purpose a reform or policy consideration to address your topic/problem. You will also need to include a conclusion.
Here are the guidelines:

- Your paper should be 6-10 pages long (*title and reference slides not included)
- Should follow academic writing guidelines
- Your paper should reference studies, articles, quotations in your text using APA or ASA formatting throughout
- Your paper should include the following sections:
  - Title
  - Introduction to the problem
  - Background on the problem
  - Description of how others have addressed/studied the problem
  - Proposed policy change and/or reform
  - Conclusion
  - References
- Your reform should address the problem or topic laid out in your introduction and background
- The reform or policy consideration should be reasonably attainable with tangible outcomes (e.g. abolishing capitalism may solve the problem of poverty, but is unlikely to receive consideration by the majority in the US; versus supporting labor movements to improve wages)
- Your paper should include a conclusion reviewing what you have said and the outcomes of your proposal
- You should cite at least 2 references from the course.
- Your final paper should include revisions from previous papers/assignments

**Final Reflection (20 pts.)**

You will have a final reflection in a discussion format. You will be asked to reflect upon your own learning throughout the quarter and respond to your classmates.