



University of Maryland College Park School of Public Health

FMSC 381: Families, Poverty, and Affluence Final revision 7.21

Semester: Summer 2011
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Required Texts and Other Readings

Hays, S. (2004). *Flat broke with children: Women in the age of welfare reform*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0195176014

Moore, W. (2010). *The other Wes Moore: One name, two fates*. New York: Spiegel & Grau. ISBN: 978-0-385-52819-1.

Secombe, K. (2007). *Families in poverty*. New York: Pearson. ISBN: 0-205-50254-7.

Shieler, D. (2005). *The working poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Vintage Books. ISBN: 0-375-70821-9

Course Description

We live in a society which offers vastly different life chances to individuals and families. This course will focus on understanding the dynamics of socioeconomic status in the United States. We will consider how social, historical, and economic patterns shape social policies – and how the creation of, and reaction to, such policies shape families' experiences with wealth and poverty. We will also examine how the social structures of race, ethnicity, gender, and age interrelate to issues of **sustainability and equity** among families.

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this course, the student will be able to:

- Develop a critical consciousness by learning basic information about socioeconomic dynamics, life patterns, **sustainability**, and historical experiences of families in the United States;
- Consider different theoretical frameworks for understanding how poverty and affluence shapes daily experiences of equity among families and individuals;
- Examine our own experiences and perspectives on social class and family life;
- Actively engage in course material through discussion of readings, lecture materials, media presentations, and student presentations.

Program Competencies Addressed in This Course

The following competencies for the Department of Family Science are addressed in this course:

1. Evaluate policy and programmatic interventions to address social and behavioral factors that influence family well-being.
2. Analyze and critique the range of social structures and systems such as health, legal, and economic that affect family well-being.

Course Policies

Communication

If you have any questions or concerns related to this course, you are welcome to email me. E-mail correspondence is probably the best way to get in touch with me. I will respond to e-mail within 24 hours. Please do not wait if you have questions regarding your assignments. ***I will check my e-mail every day and expect that you will do the same.***

Expectations

I view this class as a partnership between the instructor and students with the goal of an enjoyable semester during which the students learn and master the course material. Both students and the instructor are expected to take an active role in achieving this goal. Students are expected to work hard to learn the course material and successfully complete the assignments. Students are also expected to be proactive and talk with the instructor if they are having a problem or need extra assistance. The instructor will work hard to help the students learn and master the material and will be available to students and responsive to their concerns.

However, if you have logistical questions about the course (e.g. due dates, how to submit materials, etc.) please consult the syllabus and/or information on blackboard before contacting me. **I will respond last, if at all, to questions that can be answered by looking at the syllabus or the materials posted on blackboard.**

A Note About On-Line Classes

This course is entirely on-line; there will be no in-person meetings other than the final exam. On-line courses are different from face-to-face courses. Students often find they have to take more responsibility for staying on track in on-line courses than they do in face-to-face courses. Successful completion of this course will require that you stay on top of the course work and assignment due dates. There are assignments due each week and falling behind by 1 week in a 6 week course can be detrimental to your grade. To avoid falling behind, log on to the blackboard course space and check your e-mail at least once a day.

You need to have at least a moderate level of comfort using a computer, the internet and blackboard (www.elms.umd.edu). You will also need a reliable computer that has access to the internet.

Although we will not have in-person classes, feel free to contact me at any time through e-mail or make an appointment to meet with me in person.

Email – the Official University Correspondence

All enrolled students are provided access to the University's email system and an email account. *All official University email communication will be sent to this email address* (or an alternate address if provided by the student). Email has been adopted as the primary means for sending official communications to students, so email must be checked on a regular basis. Academic advisors, faculty, and campus administrative offices use email to communicate important and time-sensitive notices.

Your instructor welcomes inquiries about course content and assignments. When you e-mail your instructor about a course-related issue, it is helpful if you include "381" somewhere in the subject line (e.g., "381 – Question about Monday's assignment"). Unfortunately, your instructor cannot review

advance drafts of written assignments for class via e-mail. Please note that email correspondence should follow guidelines for professional communication. Use proper forms of address (e.g., Professor Roy, not “hey, Kevin”). Students should use correct grammar and complete sentences. When students receive a response from an instructor, they are encouraged to reply with a short “thank you” email to confirm receipt of response.

Special Accommodations / Disability Support Services

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations for test taking or other needs, you will need documentation from Disability Support Service (301-314-7682). If you are ill or encountering personal difficulties, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. You can also contact Learning Assistance Services (301-314-7693) and/or the Counseling Center (301-314-7651) for assistance.

Academic Integrity

The University's code of academic integrity is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. Any of the following acts, when committed by a student, constitutes academic dishonesty:

CHEATING: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in an academic exercise.

FABRICATION: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this code.

PLAGIARISM: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

For more information see: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html>.

The Honor Pledge is a statement undergraduate and graduate students should be asked to write by hand and sign on examinations, papers, or other academic assignments. The Pledge reads:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.shc.umd.edu>.

Grading Procedures

Grades are not negotiable. Your final grade will be based on an objective evaluation of your performance in this course. If you are concerned about your grade, you are encouraged to email me periodically throughout the semester to check on your progress and to discuss ways of improving your grade (if desired). Unless a student can demonstrate that near catastrophic events have led to a case of extreme hardship and that the majority of the coursework has already been completed, grades of “Incomplete” will not be given for this section of FMSC 381. If such events do occur, a grade of

“Incomplete” must be negotiated with me before the final exam and may only be possible if the student has completed the majority of assignments/exams.

Each student’s grade will be weighted as follows:

a. Discussion board (5 responses at 50 pts each)	250 pts
b. Exams (2 at 100 pts)	200 pts
c. Final exam	200 pts
d. Poverty Simulation Project	150 pts
e. Poverty Policy Analysis Paper	<u>200 pts</u>
Total	1000 pts

Students will be evaluated on participation and the completion of all assignments. Students will be graded on the *quality* of their contributions to the class—their creativity, the degree to which their effort to understand and grow from the class discussions/activities/readings is demonstrated, the degree to which they work to share and develop their thinking, and their timeliness in completing assignments.

This course is not graded on a curve. Your final course grade will be based on an objective evaluation of your performance throughout the semester. During this course, you may track your progress in the class by using the “My Grades” feature on Blackboard, which will be kept up-to-date for this purpose. Final grades will be assigned based on the scale below

920-1000 pts	A (4 GPA points)
900-919	A- (4 GPA points)
880-899	B+ (3 GPA points)
820-879	B (3 GPA points)
800-819	B- (3 GPA points)
780-799	C+ (2 GPA points)
720-779	C (2 GPA points)
700-719	C- (2 GPA points)
650-699	D+ (1 GPA point)
600-649	D (1 GPA point)
550-599	D- (1 GPA point)
≤ 549	F (0 GPA points)

Unless a computational error has been made, grades will not be changed after the end of the semester. Please do not come to my office with “extenuating circumstances” for why your grade should be changed.

Unless a student can demonstrate that near catastrophic events have led to a case of extreme hardship, grades of “Incomplete” will not be given for FMST 381. Additionally, University of Maryland policy states that “incomplete” grades may be given only in cases where a student has made satisfactory progress over the course of the semester and has completed a majority of total assignments. For further information, please see www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/grading.htm

Blackboard

Online course management for FMSC 381 Section 0101 will be done through Blackboard, the Enterprise Learning Management System (ELMS) being used by the University of Maryland. To log onto ELMS,

direct your web browser to <http://elms.umd.edu> (notice there is no “www” before the address) and log in using your university directory ID and password (the same login you use for your UMD e-mail).

There will be many tasks that you can accomplish through the Blackboard system. First, you should regularly examine the “announcements” page and the course calendar on Blackboard in order to keep yourself apprised of news in the course, changes to the syllabus, changes in your instructor’s office hours, etc. Announcements made in class will be posted on Blackboard before or after each class.

All papers and assignments will be submitted through Blackboard.

Directions to submit your assignments through Blackboard:

1. Save your document in the following format: “LAST NAME-NAME OF ASSIGNMENT”
2. Go to www.elms.umd.edu
3. Click on “FMSC 381 Sec-0101”
4. Click on “Assignments”
5. Then click the name of the assignment (e.g. “Poverty Simulation Project”)
6. Then click the browse button to “attach local file” (e.g. “Smith- Poverty Simulation Project”)
7. Click “submit” NOT “save”

If I am unable to open or read an assignment that you send, I will e-mail you and you are expected to resend the assignment within two days of my e-mail. **If you fail to respond within two days, you will lose 5 points for each day the assignment is late.**

Online Lectures

Lectures are posted on Blackboard in Power Point format, and all lectures will be accompanied by audio file format. Most lectures are in the form of PowerPoint. I encourage you to take notes on all material presented.

Respect for each other

Participation in this online course will be conducted through the Blackboard discussion board. Although everyone will not always agree with each other, I expect everyone to be respectful of others in the class; this involves respectfully disagreeing to others’ online posts and refraining from any derogatory comments or name calling in the entries. If you are disrespectful, the entry will be removed from the site and you will not receive credit for that posting.

Course Requirements

Discussion Board

There will be 5 online discussions throughout the semester. Each week, a new entry will be posted on the discussion board in Blackboard and it will be based on a current issue related to families and social class. All students are expected to contribute to this discussion at least once a week. To earn full credit, all entries must meet the following requirements: (1) be at least 300 words; (2) respond to the topic or at least one other student’s posting (unless you are the first to reply to the entry); and (3) include at least one reference to course content. Entries will be graded based on thoughtfulness and quality of writing. Entries must be completed by 5:00 pm EST on the due date. Entries will only be posted for approximately 3 days so if you do not reply in time then you will lose those points and will not be able to make them up.

Online Quizzes: Friday, July 22 and Friday, August 5

There will be 2 quizzes that you will take online throughout the semester. They will be taken through Blackboard. Quizzes must be completed by 11:00pm EST on the due date. Quizzes will only be available during the posted quiz day so if you do not complete it in time you will lose those points and will not be able to make them up.

The two quizzes given in this course will be objective in nature (a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and matching). They will be based on class lectures and discussions, assigned readings, activities, and videos. The quizzes are not cumulative; however, students should keep in mind that much of the course material builds on previous material, and therefore ideas from previous modules may appear on later quizzes.

Exam: Friday, August 19, 9-11 am, SPH Room 307

There will be one in-person exam based on assigned readings and class activities (podcasts, articles, movies, etc.). You are responsible for all reading material whether it is directly covered in lecture or not. The exam will be comprehensive in nature. The exam must be taken when scheduled and no make-up exams will be given without a University-approved excuse. The final exam will be:

If you will be taking the exam somewhere else aside from University of Maryland, College Park, then you are responsible for arranging a testing center at least **one week** before the exam date. You will need to secure a location, and time; pay any fees associated with using this testing center; and provide me with all of the contact information for this site so that I may get the exam to them in time. Students who fail to meet these requirements must take the exam as scheduled at UMCP; otherwise, they will earn a '0' on the exam.

Poverty Simulation Project: Monday, August 1

This exercise is designed to give students a personalized encounter with some aspects of poverty. For those of you who have experienced poverty first hand, your knowledge should help you with this assignment. *This assignment should be a minimum of 6 typed (double-spaced) pages in addition to the "budget sheet" which must be filled out and attached to your written essay. The following sections should be included in your assignment.*

PART ONE: GROWING UP WITH CLASSES (2-3 pp)

In this first section, students should discuss their own socioeconomic family background through childhood and adolescence. Please address the following questions:

- How were the values, beliefs, and stories of your family influenced by an awareness of socioeconomic circumstances?
- How did your family's socioeconomic circumstances shape your experiences for daily life (housing and neighborhood) and for education (primary and secondary school)? How did these circumstances shape your interaction with friends and families while growing up?
- Did your family experience changes in socioeconomic circumstances? How did this change in resources affect you?

PART TWO: THREE POVERTY BUDGETS

Fill out the blank budget sheet. For the first column, calculate as accurately as possible how much you spend and/or is spent on you for each of the categories listed on the budget exercise sheet. Family and other support (such as scholarship) should be included and evaluated for its dollar worth. It does not

matter how much you have “coming in”; what matters for this column is how much is being spent on you.

For the second column you are to calculate how you would live at a fictional “poverty level” budget. You must figure out how you would live on \$776 per month. In this assignment you are to assume that your family and friends are at the same socioeconomic level as yourself and that they are unable to give you assistance. Also, for your assignment you are not receiving welfare or any government assistance (e.g., Medicaid, housing programs).

For the third column, you are to create a fictional “extreme poverty” budget. This is the economic level of many welfare recipients; however, for your assignment you are not receiving welfare or any government assistance (e.g., Medicaid, housing programs). You can assume that your income of \$388 per month comes from part-time low-paying employment (i.e., no health insurance). In this assignment you are to assume that your family and friends are at the same socioeconomic level as yourself and that they are unable to give you assistance.

The budget sheet will be evaluated on how realistically you make your decisions. Any explanations regarding budget figures may be discussed in the essay section of this assignment. Educational grants/loans may not be used for columns 2 & 3.

PART THREE: ASSESSMENT OF POVERTY BUDGETS (3-5 pp)

The final part of your poverty simulation assignment is to write an assessment which addresses the following two questions:

- Relate Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to your behavioral and emotional well being as you become downwardly mobile. Be thorough in your discussion concerning changes in your living patterns and changes concerning your perceptions and attitudes toward your life (2 pp).
- How would you relate the behavioral and emotional changes you raised in your discussion of Maslow to issues faced by people in readings from the course? Connect these issues to cultural and structural theories of poverty. (Show your understanding of readings – be specific!) (2 pp)

Please remember that you are to write about what you think your own experience would be living in poverty or extreme poverty, not to discuss the problem of poverty in general. For the purpose of this assignment, it is appropriate to write in first person (using the word “I”). If you need to give a brief explanation of any of the information regarding the budget sheet, you may do it in this section; however, do not spend the majority of your essay explaining the decisions you made on your budget sheet.

Variations. If you have budgeted less than \$100 per month for either food or health insurance at the poverty and extreme poverty levels you must give precise information as to how that works for you. If you prefer to do your budget project for your entire family or for yourself as part of a couple, you will need to adjust the figures allocated for poverty level and extreme poverty level. For the poverty level you should add \$262 for each additional person and the extreme poverty level should always be half the poverty level. Please see me if you plan on doing this.

Submission. Papers must be turned in during the class period in which they are due. If the paper is not turned in by the end of the class it will be considered late. Late papers will drop one full letter grade (e.g.

A to B) for *every day* (including non-class days) that it is late. Write and sign the honor pledge on your paper (UNIVERSITY HONOR PLEDGE: I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment).

Grading Guidelines for Simulation Project

Social background – 25 points

Budgets – 15 points

Maslow – 25 points

Readings/theories – 25 points

Spelling/grammar – 10 points

Policy Analysis Paper: Monday, August 15

Overview. Each student is expected to choose a policy designed to alleviate the burdens of poverty and inequality for families in the US and write an analytic paper on that policy. Students must discuss each of the following five (5) items:

- An overview of the social, economic, and/or historic circumstances that brought about the policy's creation (1 p);
- The intention of the policy (1 p);
- The consequences of the social policy since implementation (1 p);
- The strengths and pitfalls of the policy (2 pp);
- A consideration of how the policy could be changed and/or improved to more effectively reduce poverty among families (2 pp).

Students are encouraged to use concepts from the course, such as culture/structure, inequality, poverty threshold, mobility, as well as to cite references to course texts (Shipler, Seccombe, etc.).

Each student must choose a paper topic from the following list:

1. **Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)** – Nutrition provision program for low-income families
2. **Paternity Establishment** – Requires that mothers receiving welfare identify the fathers of their children
3. **Child Cap** – Limits welfare assistance for children conceived while mothers on welfare
4. **Child Care and Development Fund**- Provides subsidies for child care to low-income families
5. **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** – Tax refund program benefiting low-income workers
6. **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** – Education reform policy
7. **Unemployment Insurance** – Protection for workers who lost their job through no fault
8. **Child Support Enforcement** – Policies governing provision of child-support by non-custodial parents
9. **State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)** – Provides health insurance for children in families above the poverty line but still economically vulnerable
10. **Immigration & Guest Worker Program** – Proposed program to allow individuals from other countries to work temporarily in the US
11. **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – Formerly known as Food Stamps, which is a nutrition provision program for low-income individuals and families
12. **Early Head Start** – Early education/preschool program for children in low-income families
13. **Social Security** – Ideas related to altering the US Social Security system to increase its stability and longevity

14. **Second Chance** – Prison rehabilitation program

15. **Healthy Homes Initiative**- Addresses child environmental health by focusing on housing related hazards

The length of this paper should not exceed eight (8) typed, double-spaced pages. A maximum of four students will be assigned to each policy.

You will be turning in three separate but related assignments for this project.

1. A list of at least eight references is due no later than **July 16** . References should include academic journal articles, books, government reports, etc – not just web references!! Your list should be in proper APA format; this is your chance to make sure you know how to do this correctly before turning in your final paper. Please refer to your handouts, to this website (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>), or to the APA manual (available in the UMD library) if you are not familiar with this formatting style. This component is worth **10 points**.
2. A sentence outline is due no later than **August 8**. Your outline should provide the topic sentences for each paragraph in your paper (you can edit these later, but this is just to help me – and you – see where you’re going). A sample outline will be provided for your reference. This component is worth **15 points**.
3. Final papers are due at the beginning of class on **August 15**. Your final paper is worth **75 points**, with distribution of points accordingly:

Grading Guidelines for Poverty Policy Analysis final paper

Circumstances, intention, and consequences of policy – 30 pts

Strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve policy – 30 points

Spelling/grammar – 5 points

APA format – 10 points

Format and citations. Papers should be written using proper APA format (this includes margin width, font style and size, cover page, and reference citations). An additional page, your reference list, must be attached to the end of your paper. You can find information on the Internet and in your APA guidelines handout for specifics of APA style. There is also information available on how to do parenthetical documentation using APA style.

Web citations in the reference must include the name of the organization from which the information was obtained, in addition to the Web address and of course the name of the article and author if possible (see APA guide to citing articles/websites). Your reference page *should include references other than Web references* – Wikipedia is not an authoritative source of academic information. Journal articles that are located online should be documented as journal articles (i.e., please do not list journal articles located through the university library website as electronic documents). You are allowed to use interviews for references, but these must be thoroughly documented (name, date, organization) and they cannot be your only reference. The technical aspects of your paper (grammar, spelling, proofreading, parenthetical citations, and bibliographic citations) will be evaluated. Parenthetical citations must be used to document all sources used in your paper. Parenthetical citations are used for all ideas that come from your reference sources. Parenthetical citations for your Internet sources should never be listed by the web address.

COURSE CALENDAR: Please note that this course calendar is tentative and subject to change based on a number of variables (e.g., if we don't finish a topic on a given day, presentation challenges, etc.). It is your responsibility to find out what you missed in class (including any changes to the syllabus) if you are absent.

Week One, July 11-15, Concepts for Class and Family Life

Lectures	A growing gap: Why focus on inequality between poor and affluent families? Theories of inequality: How are families shaped by culture and structure? Defining gaps: How can we measure poverty and affluence? Patterns of inequality: How can we reconsider poverty and affluence?
Readings	Moore book, ch 1-5 Seccombe, ch 1, 2 Cherlin Coontz Keister
Films/Media	NPR report, 11 min http://www.npr.org/2011/05/19/136018514/mississippi-losing-the-war-with-obesity
Assignments	Paper topic choice Discussion 1 (7/17)

Week Two, July 18-22, Concepts for Class and Family Life

Lectures	Employment: Wages, workers, and social policy Consumerism/globalization: How have they impacted class, gender, and family life? Diversity: How do families vary by class, race, ethnicity? History of social welfare policy: What has been done about inequality with families?
Readings	Moore book, ch 6-8 Shieler, 13-38; 77-95 Pager Portes Seccombe, ch 4 Gilding, Great Disruption, Ch 14-18
Film	The story of stuff (www.storyofstuff.com), 21 min. No Impact Man
Assignments	References for research paper (7/24) Discussion 2 (7/24) Exam 1 (7/25-26)

Week Three, July 25-29, Families and Public Goods

Lectures	Childhood and parenting in context Education as a public good: No Child Left Behind Pathways through young adulthood Jobs as public goods: Entry into employment and minimum wage policy
Readings	Seccombe, ch 3 Lareau Furstenberg Shipler, pp. 121-141 Jones, The Green Collar Economy, Ch 2, 3
Films	Waiting for Superman 30 days on minimum wage
Assignments	Discussion 3 (7/31)

Week Four, August 1-5, Families and Public Goods

Lectures	Dislocation of family life: Military families during wartime Health as a public good: Health care policies and disparities across families Poverty, affluence, and place Housing as a public good: Social policy and public concerns
Readings	Houppert, Home fires burning Coontz & Folbre Evans
Films	Unnatural Causes
Assignments	Poverty simulation projects due (8/2) Discussion 4 (8/7) Exam 2 (8/8-8/9)

Week Five, August 8-12, Safety Nets for Changing Families

Lectures	Mothering: Feminization of poverty and teen pregnancy Mothering: Strategies for changing families Reform of the safety net: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) A complete safety net: Child care, Head Start, food stamps, WIC
Readings	Shieler, pp. 39-76 Hays, Ch 1-6 Seccombe, 5-6 Steingraber, Raising Elijah, ch 3, 6, 8
Film	Legacy
Assignments	Sentence outlines due (8/12) Discussion 5 (8/14)

Week Six, August 15-19, Safety Nets for Changing Families

Lectures	Fathering: Strategies for changing families A place for fathers in the safety net: Child support and paternity establishment Dislocation of family life: Incarcerated parents Comparative policies & possibilities: What do other countries do about inequality among families?
Readings	Roy Arditti et al Seccombe, ch 7 Hays, ch 7-8
Assignments	Research papers due (8/15) Discussion 6 (8/17) Exam 3 (8/19)