The Politics of Poverty

Political Science 4000-2
Dr. Belinda Creel Davis
232 Stubbs Hall
578-2129
davisbe@lsu.edu

Tues, Thurs 10:40-12:00
220 Coates Hall
Office Hrs: by appointment
Monday 9:30-11:30
Thursday 2:00-3:00

The purpose of this course is to introduce poverty as the key to understanding some of the most important problems facing our county. The class will start by defining public policy and its origins. We will then move to a discussion of how we define poverty, its causes, and our choice of solutions. Because poverty has been defined as a problem worthy of national government attention since the 1930s, any discourse on poverty is inherently a political one.

Course Requirements
You are expected to come to class prepared to participate in the discussion of the day’s reading assignment. There is no textbook for this course. All of the class readings can be downloaded from the Moodle website or found via a link on the Moodle website. An *next to a class date indicates a Moodle download reading assignment. All students must abide by the Student Academic Honor Code. Cheating will not be tolerated. All electronic devices (cell phones, ipads, laptops, etc) must be placed inside a zipped backpack during exams. Failure to place electronic devices inside a zipped backpack will be considered cheating.

Exams
There are three exams in the course. Each exam is worth 120 points and will consist of twenty-five multiple choice questions (2 points each) and seven short answer questions (10 points each). If you miss an exam, you may take a makeup exam the first Tuesday after the regular exam at 7:30 am in my office. If you cannot take the makeup exam on that Tuesday at 7:30 am, I require a doctor’s note or obituary in order for you to schedule another time. Makeup exams consist of two essay questions worth 60 pts each.

Quizzes
There will be 10 pop quizzes or assignments scattered throughout the course. Each quiz or assignment is worth 15 points. Only 8 quizzes/assignments will count towards your grade so if you take all 10, I will count the best 8 of the 10 grades. Quizzes may consist of information from the previous class lecture or the assigned reading. THERE ARE NO MAKEUPS ON QUIZZES/ASSIGNMENTS. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Paper
There is one two-part paper assignment for the course. The first part is a 20 point thought paper due on September 7th at the beginning of class. You must answer the following questions based on your current beliefs:

1. Why are poor people poor?
2. What is the responsibility of government when it comes to dealing with poverty?

Answers for each question should be one to two paragraphs long and written in complete sentences. The paper should be double spaced, with one inch margins, and use Times New Roman 12 point font. The paper should be 1-2 pages long. The only information needed at the top of the page is your name and the date on the same line.

The second part of the paper is worth 100 points and is due on Friday, December 10th at 3:00. You must answer the questions listed above again, but this time you must defend your answer based on the readings from this course plus readings you gather from outside the course. When readings are cited, you may use parenthetical citations (example: (Davis and Bali 2008)). This paper must be 4-5 pages long, double spaced, with one inch margins, and use Times New Roman 12 point font. The paper must answer both questions in a single essay format. In other words, your discussion of why poor people are poor should inform your discussion of government responsibility for the problem. You must incorporate at least 5 readings from the course and 3 readings from outside the course. Your name and the course information must be included on a title page that does NOT count in the page total. Do not put your name anywhere on the paper besides the title page. You must turn in a hard copy of this paper. Early papers may be placed in my office mailbox.

**Bonus**

Each of you starts out with 5 bonus points. These 5 points are yours to lose. You lose these points by emailing me and asking me questions that are answered on the syllabus or that can answered using LSU’s website. Some examples are “Where is your office?” “When are your office hours?” etc.

**Readings Schedule and Topic Outline**

*Section One: What is public policy? What is poverty?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 24th</td>
<td>Introduction; What is public policy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 26th*</td>
<td>Policy Making Process</td>
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<td>Peters Chapters 1 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>August 31st</td>
<td>Policy Making Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2nd*</td>
<td>Behavioral Assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7th*</td>
<td>What is poverty?</td>
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<td>“How Poor Are America’s Poor: Examining the ‘Plague’ of Poverty in America”</td>
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“10 Important Questions about Child Poverty and Family Economic Hardship”
Reminder: Thought paper is due.

September 9th*
What Does Poverty Look Like?
“Theories of Poverty: Who or What Is to Blame for Poverty?”

September 14th*
Why are Poor People Poor?

Section Two: Policy Solutions to the Problem of Poverty

September 16th*
Solutions: Poverty among the Elderly
“Elderly Poverty: The Challenge before Us.”
“Can the Rich and Famous Save Social Security?”

September 21st*
Solutions: Poverty and Children
“Who are America’s Poor Children?”

September 23rd
Exam One

September 28th
Solutions: Health Care and Poverty

September 30th*
AFDC and Why America Hated It
Reading TBA

October 5th*
Solutions: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
What does TANF look like in Louisiana
http://www.cbpp.org

October 7th
Basics of Research Methods/Basics of Evaluation

October 12th*
Evaluating TANF: Sanctions

October 14th*
Evaluating TANF: Financial Independence
October 19th*
Education and Poverty
“Turn Around Schools That Work” by Richard Kahlenberg

Section Three: How do race and poverty intersect in America?

October 26th*
Stereotyping of Welfare Mothers
“Queens Teens and Model Mothers” by Holloway Sparks

October 28th
Exam II

November 2nd*
Race and Welfare: News Media and Race

November 4th*
Race and Welfare: Distributing Discipline

November 9th*
Race and Welfare: Vocational Education

November 16th*
Race and Welfare: Public Education
Williams. 2010.

November 18th*
Immigration and Social Services

November 23rd*
Poverty and Crime

November 30th
Exam III

December 1st
Paper Discussion

December 10th
Final Exam: Paper is due at 3:00.