

THE STRUCTURE OF POVERTY, GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY  
WGST 3510/POLS 3800/SOC 3510

Dr. Melissa Ochoa  
Email: Melissa.Ochoa@slu.edu  
Office Location: MCG 123  
Office Hours:

Classroom: MCG 260  
Meeting Time: T/TH 9:30-10:45am  
Course Credit Hours: 3

- x Noted on Canvas weekly
- x T/TR 11:00am-12:00pm
- x by appointment

**IMPORTANT:**

- x During weekdays, I will respond to emails within 24 hours or sooner; Normal weekday email hours are 8:30am-5:00pm; weekends vary. Plan accordingly.
- x If I have to miss a class unexpectedly, expect an email with class instructions. Always check your email before class.

**Course Description:**

This course examines the structural causes of poverty at the global and local levels from a multidisciplinary perspective. It also gives students an opportunity to explore ways in which average citizens can take action to alleviate poverty. While other variables will not be discounted, we will concentrate on the social, political, and economic structures that produce and perpetuate cycles of poverty. The global dimension of the course will focus primarily on developing countries while the local dimension will focus on policies and programs in the U.S. We will also examine the extent to which the structural causes of poverty are the same or different between the global and local levels.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- x identify structural sources of, and some solutions to, poverty;
- x analyze the impact of social policies on social problems, especially poverty;
- x propose some ways that individuals can work together to bring about social change, in particular to alleviate poverty; and
- x recognize the value of civic-political engagement for bringing about greater social justice.

In this course, we will use an intersectional approach to both the subject matter and to classroom dynamics. Intersectionality is the recognition that we are all individuals with multiple social identities that intersect and shape our worldviews, and that these intersecting identities privilege and disadvantage each of us in different ways.

**Required Textbooks:**

- & Tirado, Linda. 2014. *Hand to Mouth* New York: Berkley Books. ISBN: 978-0425277973
- x Rank, Mark, Lawrence Eppard, and Heather Bullock. 2021. *Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty* Oxford University Press.
- x Kristof, Nicholas D., and Sheryl WuDunn. 2010. *Half the Sky* New York: Vintage Books.
- x Other readings posted on Canvas (be checking the syllabus and Canvas)







This project will serve as the core of your reflection and research papers and determine the general topic for your annotated bibliography. All students will meet with me individually early in the semester to plan your project. There will also be some small group discussions during class in order to share ideas about your experiences.

Our class will be assigned an "embedded writing consultant" to assist those of you who wish to get help with any stage of the writing process, from conceptualization through the final product. I encourage everyone to seek their help--one can always improve one's writing skills.

Following are the individual components of the project:

**A) Project log (required):**

You will need to keep a log of the time you spend on your service learning and turn it in with your Critical Reflection paper. Unless you are initiating an original project, it must be signed by a supervisor. Please use the "Service-Learning Course Hours Form" for this purpose, available on the website of SLU's Center for Service and Community Engagement at <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/center-for-service/pdfs/service-learning-course-hours.pdf>. If you do not put in the minimum of 15 hours work on the project, it will significantly lower your Critical Reflection paper grade.

**B) Preliminary Reflection paper (50 points):**

About five weeks after the beginning of the semester, each student will write a 1-page description of their service-learning project, including:

¶ Paragraph 1: What is the agency or site? What are its goals? Who does it serve? Why did you choose it? What is your role?

¶ Paragraph 2: Is this agency/site service- or social change



Your bibliographic selections should cover a range of the issues involved in your topic-- for example, do not have four sources that provide only statistical data.

For the version you turn in to be graded, label each entry in bold type and note the category of reference it is (e.g., scholarly book, statistical source, etc.). Also, write your research question at the very beginning of the bibliography. The due date can be found in the class schedule, below.

### Final research paper (40 points):

This paper should be a scholarly analysis of the general topic area you have chosen (e.g., food insecurity; housing; childcare; sweatshops) and an evaluation of the contribution your service-learning agency/site (or those like it) can make to poverty alleviation. Your goal is to use your research and your experience working on the project to evaluate how citizens can bring about greater social justice for the issue you have chosen. In some cases, the organizations/sites where students do their projects will fall short of their initial expectations, but these will still be opportunities for learning. Be sure to address the following questions somewhere in your paper:

1. What does this issue have to do with poverty? (Include some history of the issue here.)  
For example,
  - xWhat have been the dominant political discourses about the issue?
  - xWhat is the history of public policy/international policy about the issue?
  - xWhat does the scholarly/scientific literature say about this issue?
2. How does the agency/site where you did your service-learning project fit into this broader history of political action and discourse on poverty?

### 8) Group presentation (100 points):

Each group will collaborate to create and deliver a 10-12 minute presentation to the rest of the class. These will be presented during the scheduled final exam period. The topic of each group's presentation can vary depending on the students' interests, but it should include some sort of synthesis of the group's work over the course of the semester. Here are a few examples, but I encourage you to think of others <sup>2</sup> just get my approval before you proceed:

- , What were the common themes among each of your projects/topics in terms of how to alleviate poverty?
- , In what ways were your projects/topics different, why were they different, and in what ways does it matter?
- , What are some promising practices, approaches, or solutions to alleviating poverty? They can be modeled on one or more of your projects/sites or they can be about how these approaches could be done better.
- , What have you learned from each other that you didn't know before?

Your presentations can take any of a number of different forms. Here are just a few ideas:

- , You can have everyone speak in turn.
- , You can have one person speak and others do support work, such as write a script,



SL Preliminary Reflection Paper	50 points	_____
SL Critical Reflection Paper & Addendum	150 points	_____
FRP Annotated Bibliography	200 points	_____
Final Research Paper	400 points	_____
Group Presentation	100 points	_____

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Total: 1144 points \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL POINTS	PERCENTAGE	LETTER GRADE
1030+	90-100%	A
996-1029	87-89%	B+
939-995	82-86%	B
916-938	80-81%	B-
881-915	77-79%	C+
824-880	72-76%	C
801-823	70-71%	C-
687-800	60-69%	D
0-686	0-59%	F

### Tentative Course Calendar

Date	Class Readings & Materials
Intro Week	
Tuesday, January 17	Syllabus Overview; Activity x Eduardo Porter, "Home Health Care: Shouldn't It Be Work Worth Doing?" <i>New York Times</i> August 29, 2017, available online.
Thursday, January 19	Guest Lecture; Dr. John McEwan from Digital Humanities
Week 1	
Tuesday, January 24	DL#1/WR #1 Due Why Is There So Much Poverty In the US? x Rank et al., <i>Poorly Understood</i> , Section II. Why Is There Poverty? pp. 41-69; Section III. What Is the Cost of Poverty? pp. 73-96; and Section IV. Does Welfare Work? pp. 99-113.
Thursday, January 26	x John Iceland, <i>Poverty in America: A Handbook</i> (2006), Chapter 3 (pp. 20-37). x Amartya Sen, <i>Development as Freedom</i> (1999), pp. xi-xiv, 3-8, 20-24, and 33-34. x + DO \$ GDP V 3 \$ * U D V V 2 U R R W 7 K L C N 7 D Q N % X L O G I eadhiñg for Social Justice (NY: The New Press, 1998), pp. 81-97.

<p>Week 2</p> <p>Tuesday, January 31</p>	<p>DL#2/WR #2 Due Global Poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Daniel Groody, <i>Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice</i> (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 1-10.</li> <li>x Jeffrey Sachs, <i>The Age of Sustainable Development</i> (2015), pp. 1-7, 45-69, and 244-249.</li> </ul>
<p>Thursday, February 2</p>	

Week 3

x

- x Rank et al., Poorly Understood Section V. How Extensive Is Inequality? pp. 127-154 and Chapter 19, Why Do The Myths Persist? pp. 157-165.
- x

- x Linda Gibbs, Jay Bainbridge, Muzzy Rosenblatt, and Tamiru Mammo, **How Ten Global Cities Take on Homelessness: Innovations That Work** (Oakland, CA: The University of Calif. Press, 2021), Chapter 5: Supportive Housing
- x Sarah Mervosh, "Minneapolis, Tackling Housing Crisis and Inequity, Votes to End Single-Family Zoning," **New York Times** December 13, 2018, available online at <https://nyti.ms/2GgoJP0>.

**Structural Inequality: Occupational and educational segregation**

Thursday, April 13

- x Nikole Hannah-Jones, "It Was Never About Busing," **New York Times** July 14, 2019, available online.
- x Paul Tough, "What College Admissions Offices Really Want," **New York Times** September 10, 2019.
- x Jeffrey Sachs, **The Age of Sustainable Development** (2015), pp. 239-243.
- x

- x Read the interactive **New York Times** piece on the inequity of extreme heat by Somini Sengupta, August 6, 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/06/climate/climate-change-inequality-heat.html>
- , Ronald Skeldon, "Migration and Poverty," *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 17(4): 67-82 (2002).
- , Richard Partington, "Conflicts and Poverty Drive Big Jump in Global Migration, Finds Report," *The Guardian* December 5, 2018, available online.

Poverty Alleviation Strategies: Macrolevel Policies

Thursday, April 27

- x 1 D Q F \ ) U D V H U 3 5 H L Q Y H Q W Boston Review Feb/Mar 1994).
- x Rank at el., *Poorly Understood* Chapter 20. Reshaping Social Policy, pp. 166-176.
- x Caitlyn Collins, Making Motp02 435.43 408.79 140.66 re W\* n BT /F4

Note: Syllabus subject to change at any point. Please check your email daily.

Use the QR & RGH WR OHDUQ DERXW 6/8 ¶V \$FDGHPLF , QWHJULW\ Title IX resources, Student Success Center, University Writing Services, Mandatory Face Masks Statements, and In-Person Class Attendance and Participation Statement.

**Title IX.** Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, that faculty member must notify 6/8 ¶V 7LWOH , ; & R R U G L O a s w a r t s G D [ Q ] G J V E K D U q H 0 . 0 0 0 0 9 1 2 0 6 1 2 7 9 2 r e W\*