**RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course centers on the sociology of poverty in rural areas in the United States as well as in other, particularly third-world nations. The sociology of poverty is part of the broader study of stratification, a core substantive field in the discipline. The course situates the topic of rural poverty into sociological theories and research on stratification. However, sociological theory and research on poverty and inequality are often aspatial or have an urban bias. We thus go beyond conventional approaches to studying poverty and add a spatial dimension. Our focus is: “Who gets what, *where* and *why*?” Attention is to spatial inequalities in socioeconomic well-being within the U.S. and cross-nationally.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this course are: 1) to study the topic of rural poverty as part of the broader study of social stratification--or inequality across places and people; 2) to understand the major sociological theoretical perspectives dealing with the causes and consequences of poverty; 3) to understand the social and economic factors creating and maintaining poverty and how these vary over different geographic contexts and population groups; 4) to identify the unique aspects of poverty characterizing rural people and places; 5) to develop your critical skills in evaluating the theoretical and methodological approaches presented in the readings 6) to broaden your own professional/research interests.

**Grade breakup:**

Class participation and attendance 10%

Quizzes 20%

Mid-term exam 30%

Final Exam 40%

**IV.** **WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS**

**Part I Social Stratification and Poverty: Sociological Theoretical Perspectives, Concepts and Measures**

**Week 1-2 Poverty and Rurality: Concepts, Definitions, Measurement.**

Bradley R. Schiller, The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2004), Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 1-66).

. Alan Krueger, “The UN Aims to Cut Poverty in Half” New York Times, 2/5/2005. Available: Lobao web-page, *http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~hcrd/staff/lobao.html*

Alkire, Sabina, “Dimensions of Human Development”, World Development, 2002. Volume 39, Number 2, pp. 181-205. *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

Jensen, Leif, Diane McLaughlin and Tim Slack.2003. “Rural Poverty: The Persisting Challenge.” In Challenges for Rural America in the 21tst Century, edited by David L. Brown and Louis E. Swanson. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. *Available: OSU’s library electronic reserve, titled: Challenges for Rural America*.

“Social Exclusion: The European Approach to Social Disadvantage,” by Hilary Silver and S.M. Miller, *Poverty and Race Research Action Council* ([www.prrac.org),](http://www.prrac.org),) 2002. *Available: Lobao web-page*, *http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~hcrd/staff/lobao.html*

f. David Newman, “The Architecture of Stratification: Social Class and Inequality,” Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everday Life,Sage, 2002, pp. 277-319.*Available:* *OSU’s library electronic reserve, titled: Sociology: Exploring the Archtiecture of Everday Life*. (Review: for those needing background on the topic of stratification).

**Week 3-4 Explanations of Poverty: Individual-Level Approaches**

**(the culture of poverty, human capital, and status attainment and their critiques)**

Schiller, Chapters: 4, Labor Force Participation (pp. 67-89); 5, The Working Poor (pp.90-106) ; 7, Family size and structure (pp.125-139 ); 8, The Underclass: Culture and Race (pp.140-155); 9 Education and Ability (pp.156-169)

Rank, Chapters 1,2 and 3, pp. 1-82.

**Week 5-6 Explanations of Poverty: Political Economic and Other Structural**

**Approaches.**

a. David Brown and Marlene Lee, “Persisting Inequality between Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan America: Implications for Theory and Policy.” Pp. 151-167 in A Nation Divided, Cornell University Press 1999. *Available: OSU’s library electronic reserve, titled: A Nation Divided*.

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b. Schiller, Chapter 10, Discrimination in the Labor Market, (pp. 174-191).

c. Peet, pp. 91-106, 115-118.

d. Rank, Chapters 4, 7, 8, and 9.

**Week 7-8 Spatial-Structural Explanations of Poverty: Uneven Development and the Geography of Poverty.**

a. Michael Storper and Richard Walker, "The Inconstant Geography of Capitalism," pp. 6-35 in The Capitalist Imperative (Basil Blackwell, 1989). *Available: OSU’s library electronic reserve, titled: The Capitalist Imperative*

b. Lobao, Linda, 2004. “Spatial Inequality: Continuity and Change in Terroritorial Stratification Processes.” Rural Sociology Volume 69, Issue#1, pp. 1-30. *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

c. Ducan, Worlds Apart, pp. ix-72

d. Kapur Mehta Aasha and Amita Shah. 2003. “Chronic Poverty in India: Incidence, Causes, and Policies.” World Development, Volume 31, Issue #3, March 2003, pp. 491-511. *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

**Mid Term Evaluation**

**Part II Rural Poverty in the United States**

**Week 9-10 Gender, Race and Ethnicity, and Region**

a. Duncan, Worlds Apart, pp 73-151

b. RSS Task Force, Persistent Poverty in Rural America, Chapter 6, Racial and ethnic minorities, ( pp. 174-199), and Chapter 7 “Women and Persistent Rural Poverty” (pp.200-229).  *Available: OSU’s library electronic reserve, titled: Persistent Poverty in Rural America*

**Week 11-12 Farming, Rural Development, and State Policy**

a. Linda M. Lobao, Locality and Inequality (The State University of New York Press, 1990) Chapters 1-4; skim Chapter 5; Chapter 6; Chapter 9.

b. Dan Lichter and Leif Jensen, 2002 “Rural America in Transition” pp. 77-110 in Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform, edited by Bruce Weber, Greg Duncan, and Leslie Whitner. W.E. Upjohn Institute, Kalamazoo, MI. *Available: OSU’s library electronic reserve, titled: Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform.*

c. Ducan, Worlds Apart, pp.152-208

d. J. Brian Brown and Daniel T. Lichter, “Poverty, Welfare, and the Livelihood Strategies of Nonmetropolitan Single Mothers.”2004 Rural Sociology, Volume 69, Number 2, pp. 282-301. *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

e. Todd Swanstrom et. al, Economic Inequality and Public Policy: The Power of Place, City and Community, December 2002, pp. 349-371.  *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

**Part III Poverty and Developing Nations**

**Week 13**  **Theoretical Perspectives and Overview of Poverty in the Third World**

a. Peet. Sociological Theories of Modernization (pp. 71-90); Dependency and World Systems Theory and critiques (pp. 107-114, 118-122); Post-structuralism (pp.123-162); Feminist Theories (pp163-194).

b. David Hulme and Andrew Shepherd, “Conceptualizing Chronic Poverty,”  *World Development*, 2003 Volume 31, Issue #3, pp. 403-423.  *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

c. De Janvry, Alain and Elisabeth Sadoulet. 2000. “Rural Poverty in Latin America: Determinants and Exit Paths.” Food PolicyVolume 25, pp. 389-409. *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*

**Week 14-15 Issues in Rural Poverty Research in Developing Countries.**

**Week 16 Final term exam,**

1. Das, Raju, 2002. “The Green Revolution and Poverty.” Geoforum Volume 33, pp. 55-72.  *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.
2. Wobst, Peter and Channing Arndt. 2004. “HIV/AIDS and Labor Force Upgrading in Tanzania.” *World Development*, Volume 32, Issue #11, pp. 1831-1847. *Available: OSU OSCAR journal system*.

**Additional reading suggested by course instructor:**

**Rural Policy Institute**

[http://www.rprconline.org](_ô) This is the website for Rupri, Rural Policy Institute, which produces reports about rural poverty.

**Institute for Women’s Policy Research**

[http://iwpr.org](_ô) This organization’s website contains much information about women’s work and well-being, family well-being, and child care

**Annie E. Casey Foundation**

[http:///www.aecf.org](_ô)

<http://www.bread.org/institute/hunger_report/2005-pdf.htm>

**Books of Interest**

1. *When Work is Not Enough: State and Federal Policies to Support Needy Workers*, by Robert P. Stoker and Laura A. Wilson, Brookings Institution Press, 2006.
2. *Ordinary Poverty: A Little Food and Cold Storage,* by William DiFazio, Temple University Press, 2005*.*
3. *Differences That Matter: Social Policy and the Working Poor in the United States and Canada*, by Dan Zuberi, Cornell University Press, 2006.
4. *Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success*, edited by Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, and Melissa Osborne, Princeton University Press, 2005.
5. *Poverty or Development: Global Restructuring and Regional Transformations in the U.S. South and the Mexican South*, Richard Tardanico and Mark Rosenberg (editors), Routledge 2000.
6. *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality* by Glenn Firebaugh, Harvard University Press, 2003.
7. *Social Inequality* edited by Kathryn Neckerman, Russel Sage Foundation, 2004.
8. *The Meritocracy Myth* by Stephen J. McNamee and Robert K. Miller Jr., Rowman and Littlefield, 2004.
9. *Rooted in Place: Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community*, by William Falk, Rutgers University Press, 2003.
10. *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* by Harry M. Caudill, Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1963 ISBN 1931672008 A classic book on Appalachia.
11. *The Invisible Farmers*, Carolyn Sachs, Rowman & Littlefield, June 1983, ISBN 0865980942
12. *As You Sow*, Walter Goldschmidt, Rowman & Littlefield, Jan. 1978, ISBN 0916672115
13. *Harvest of Rage*, Joel Dyer, Westview Press, Aug. 1998, ISBN 0813332931
14. *Rural Radicals*, Catherine McNichol Stock, Penguin USA, Dec. 1997, 0140268472
15. *Pigs, Profits, and Rural Communities*, Kendall Thu and E. Paul Durrenberger, SUNY Press, Sept. 1998, ISBN 0791438872
16. *Making Ends Meet*, Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein, Russell Sage Foundation, March 1997, ISBN 087154234X
17. *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich*, Kevin Phillips, Random House.
18. *Children of the Land*, Glen Elder and Rand Conger, University of Chicago Press, 2000, ISBN 0226202666
19. *Debt and Dispossession: Farm Loss in America’s Heartland*, Kathryn Marie Dudley, University of Chicago Press, May 2002, ISBN 0226169138
20. *Working Hard and Making Do*, Joan Smith and Margaret Nelson, University of California Press, May 1999, ISBN 0520215753
21. *Poverty in America: A Handbook,* John Iceland, 2003. University of California Press.
22. *Indian Reservations in the United States: Territory, Sovereignty and Socioeconomic Change*, Klaus Frantz and Frantz Frantz, University of Chicago Press, Aug. 1999, ISBN 0226260895
23. *Learning to Labor*, Paul E. Willis, Columbia University Press, October 1981, ISBN 0231053576
24. *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser, Harper Collins, January 2002, ISBN 0060938455
25. *Waltzing with the Ghost of Tom Joad: Poverty, Myth, and Low Wage Labor*, Robert Lee Maril, University of Oklahoma Press, 2000 ISBN 0806132558
26. *Illusions of Prosperity: America’s Working Families in an Age of Economic Insecurity*, Joel Blau, Oxford University Press, 1999.

*Understanding Poverty*, edited by Sheldon H. Danziger and Robert H. Haverman, Russell Sage Foundation, 2001.