Course Description
This course critically examines the measures and meaning of poverty, providing a clear portrait of the poor using official and alternative definitions of poverty. It examines the life chances and experiences of the poor with and within major social institutions beginning with the family, the education system, and the economy, and polity. It examines three theories that explain the causes of poverty, with a special emphasis on the political economy of poverty. Students will examine the way that social policies create and shape the experiences of the poor in the other four social institutions.

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the semester, students will be able to:
- Articulate the official and alternative definitions of poverty
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each of the definitions of poverty
- Identify the demographic characteristics of the poor population
- Compare-contrast the theoretical explanations of poverty
- Discuss the manner in which social institutions shape the experiences of the poor
- Analyze welfare policies, identifying the assumptions, challenges, and benefits associated with the various policies
- Discuss how the poor have mobilized to challenge the obstacles the policies have produced

Course Readings
Measures and Meaning of Poverty

Demographics of Poverty

Causes of Poverty
Excerpts from Wilson, W.J. 1996. When Work Disappears.
Human Resources.

Social Institutions and the Poor

Family
Excerpts from Hays, S. 2004. Flat Broke with Children

Education
Excerpts from Kozol, J. 2005. Shame of the Nation

Economy
Excerpts from Ehrenreich, B. 2004. Nickeled and Dimed

Polity
Excerpts from Quadagno, J. 1996. The Color of Welfare
Excerpts from Piven, F & Cloward, R. 1993. Regulating the Poor.

The Poor’s Response
Abromovits, M. 2001. Learning from the History of Poor and Working-Class Women's Activism
South Texas Colonia Initiative. Lionel and Janie Lopez.

Evaluation
Exams. There will be a total of four exams. Each exam will be worth 25% of your grade. Exams will be graded on a 100-point scale. Each exam will require a 3-5 page response to a prompt. Students will be expected to draw on all the material reading materials and class discussions to answer the questions. The dates for the exams can be found on the class calendar.

Final Grade Scale:
89.5+ pts = A   79.5-89.4 = B   69.5-79.4 = C   59.5-69.4 = D   <59.5 = F
COURSE POLICIES:

**Exams:**
Students need to bring a pencil or a pen to the exam. Once the exam is distributed, you will be permitted to leave the classroom **ONLY AFTER** you have completed your exam. Those arriving after the first exam is submitted **WILL NOT** be permitted to take the exam. Exams will be returned no more than three class meetings. Exams not picked up on the day they are distributed will be left in the bin outside my office door. If you have questions regarding the grade of your exam, you can come to my office to discuss those with me. Be aware that, after reviewing your exam, I reserve the right to modify your grade UP or DOWN.

**Missed Exams:**
Every effort should be made to be present for ALL scheduled exams. The dates of the exams are posted on the calendar. Should a student miss a scheduled exam, he/she will be permitted to make up ONE exam. Be aware that make up exams tend to be MUCH MORE challenging than the scheduled exams and the format of the exam will be disclosed only upon the administration of the exam. Make up exams will be administered on the day of the final.

**Absences:**
Attendance is expected but will not be taken regularly. You are an adult, responsible for your own time and your own actions. Material will be presented and discussed in class, and that material often appears on exams. It is in your interest to attend. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that regular attendance is positively correlated with grades.

**Grading:**
I reserve the right to curve or NOT curve grades. If there is a particular grade that you *need* or *want*, WORK FOR IT. Essays will be graded using a letter grade system: A++ indicates you’ve received full credit (aka: 100). A+ = 98, A =95, A- = 92, A-/B+ = 90, B+ = 88, B = 85, etc. Extremely poor write ups which do not demonstrate any real mastery of the content will be assigned an F (50), and F- (25), or a zero, depending on the dearth of comments for which credit may be allocated. Remember: You earn your grades; they are not given to you.

**Contacting the Professor:**
Should you need to contact me, the best way to do so is via email. I check my email multiple times, daily. When you do contact me, treat your email as a formal document. Use proper grammar and punctuation. Begin your emails with a proper salutation.

**Electronic Devices:**
LAP TOPS are **not permitted** in my class. Should you wish to record the lectures/discussions, you must use a digital recorder. All cell phones, ipods, ipads, mp3 players, and the like should be turned off prior to class beginning.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**CHEATING POLICY**
Any form of cheating will not be tolerated. Should you be caught cheating, your name will be submitted to the Department Chair, as well as to the Vice President of Student Affairs. If you are caught cheating, you will get a zero on the exam/assignment and will not be allowed to retake the exam/assignment or resubmit the reaction paper. Please see the Student Code of Conduct for the disciplinary procedures pertaining to academic dishonesty.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING**
The College of Arts and Humanities requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located at Driftwood 203E and can be reached at 825.3466.

**STUDENTS with DISABILITIES**
The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe
you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at 825.5816 or visit the office in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

**GRADE APPEAL PROCESS**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**EMAIL**
You have your very own Islander e-mail account. I will be using this account should any correspondence be necessary. All university notifications will be using your Islander account to contact you. To access your Islander email, first go to S.A.I.L. for your new student ID number. Next, go to [http://newuser.tamucc.edu](http://newuser.tamucc.edu) for your new email account. For more information call 825.5618.

**CALENDAR**

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<td>June 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Measures of Poverty</td>
<td>Demographics of Poverty</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
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<td>Living Wage</td>
<td>Historical overview of changes</td>
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<td>Causes of Poverty: Structural Functionalism</td>
<td>Causes of Poverty Conflict Theory</td>
<td>Causes of Poverty Political Economy</td>
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<td>Ludwig, Rector, Heritage Foundation readings</td>
<td>Bane and Weiker readings</td>
<td>Wilson and Bane readings</td>
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<td>Economy</td>
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<td>July 1</td>
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<td>Polity</td>
<td>The Poor’s Response Abromovits</td>
<td>The Poor’s Response Bernstein</td>
<td>EXAM 4</td>
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<td>Horn and Winston Readigns</td>
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