PLAN 574

Professor Meenu Tewari

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Class meets T, R: 2:00 – 3:15 pm

Spring 2022

**Carolina Away Program: Instruction is Remote**

# PLAN 574 Political Economy of Poverty and Inequality

**Class meets T, R: 2:00 – 3:15 pm**

**Link:**

<https://go.unc.edu/Plan-Pov-Inequality>

**Office hours:** R 3:30 – 4:30 pm or by appointment

<https://go.unc.edu/Meenu-Office-hours>

#### Course Description

Set within the current and historical debates about economic growth, inequality, and development, the course covers market based as well as public sector and non-profit sector policies and programs that target the poor in lagging regions and inner cities.  The course links these policies and programs to the literature on poverty, economic development, poverty traps, jobs, human capital formation, housing vulnerability and evictions, structural discrimination -- spatial, social and economic, mobility and service provision (including food security, water, public health), social networks, and debates about participation decentralization, street level bureaucracy and reform. We also examine emerging notions of empathy and cultures of care in public and civic action.

How we frame a problem fundamentally shapes what we do about it. We will spend the first part of the course understanding the different ways in which poverty is framed, and the different perspectives from which it is defined and analyzed in the US and in a global context. Following this initial framing, we will explore the diverse structures and sources of poverty, and try to understand, through readings, class activities, debates, interviews and discussion, the lived experience of poverty and inequality in the 21st century and how it may or may not differ from prior conceptions and experiences.  We ask how current challenges such as the pandemic, rapid technical change, the rise of low wage work, lack of affordable housing and precarious incomes play out on the ground and impact different communities, social groups and places. In the last section, in light of these challenges we examine emergent (and some enduring) solutions that seem to work well.  Through case studies we examine the conditions under which some approaches to poverty alleviation work well. We study how they are able to address today’s challenges of poverty and inequality, dislocation and disempowerment in ways that uphold human dignity, validate and acknowledge aspirations, and create space for building capabilities, connection and meaning.

The course has four goals:

1. To introduce students to a nuanced and empirically grounded understanding of the poverty issue in the context of wider debates on development and growth.
2. To provide students with analytical tools with which to navigate the deeply contested and varied approaches to the conception and implementation of poverty programs
3. To foster skills of analytical, independent and creative thinking, and clear and integrative writing abilities
4. To expose students to the perspective that there is no one “right” approach to poverty, but that a historically grounded, empirical approach that questions the assumptions of received wisdom is critical for public innovation and informed action.

***Course Organization***

#### Format

The course will be taught as a combination of lectures and discussion, and high levels of class participation are required. Your regular attendance and participation in all aspects of the course are *essential* for a successful learning experience. All are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to thoroughly engage in class discussion. I expect respectful exchange from all. Conversations and comments must be open and frank but at the same time mindful of and accepting of differences of opinion. This openness of mind and personal responsibility to be inclusive and attentive while conversing is critical to a fruitful learning experience. Similarly, raising good questions is as important as being able to provide succinct and thoughtful answers.

The class will draw on four key learning methods: (i) learning through reading, writing and guided discussion; (ii) learning through the analysis and presentation of case studies; (iii) experiential learning through interviews and reflection; (iv) learning through individual and group exercises that involve debate, presentations, leading class discussion and writing exercises. After setting the stage through short lectures in the first few classes we will turn to a case-study and discussion format for most of the course.

Invited guest speakers will address the class from time to time to share their own perspectives and experience on key topics.

**Readings**

The majority of the required readings will be posted on the course page on Sakai. Any additional readings will be shared online or via email. Some books will be held on reserve in the Undergraduate library

**Course Requirements and Evaluations**

1. Participation, regular attendance and weekly forum posts: 20%
2. Portraits of Poverty (Individual paper + Group Presentation): 20%
3. Case presentation 10%
4. Two group assessments—Mind-map and short questions 20%
5. Group Project (semester long) 30%

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Undergraduate Grade** |  | | | **Graduate Grade** |
| A | 94% | to | 100% | High Pass |
| A- | 90% | to | 93% |
| B+ | 87% | to | 89% | Pass |
| B | 84% | to | 86% |
| B- | 80% | to | 83% |
| C+ | 77% | to | 79% |
| C | 74% | to | 76% |
| C- | 70% | to | 73% |
| D+ | 67% | to | 69% | Low Pass |
| D | 60% | to | 66% |
| F | 0% | to | 59% | Fail |

#### Late Assignments and Absences

A half-letter grade will be deducted for each day of a late assignment. Accommodations will be made if you are sick or there is a documented medical or family emergencies, especially in the face of Covid. Please contact me as soon as you know there will be conflict with a deadline. One absence is allowed. Other unauthorized absences without medical or other justifications will lead to a half letter grade reduction.

**Any request for an approved class absence must be approved by the University** Approved Absence Office [attendance.unc.edu](http://www.attendance.unc.edu). No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

* Authorized University activities
* Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
* Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Covid related issues need not be routed through the University’s Approved Absence Office but can be routed directly to me.

#### Honor Code

Students are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University Approved Absence.

Plagiarism is unacceptable and can lead to a failing grade.

In all written and presented work, you must cite or otherwise fully attribute all ideas, data, and other information that are not your own. This includes information presented in tables, graphs, appendices, etc.

The Honor Code of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill states:

“It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the honor code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.”

I will report any honor code violation to the [Office of Student Conduct](https://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system).

For this course:

* You are permitted and encouraged to work in groups (assigned), seek advice and suggestions from other class members on the written assignments, unless specifically instructed otherwise. This may include exchanging drafts for feedback and/or proofreading, or, if it is a group assignment, working collaboratively.
* All group members must carry their weight. There will be a peer evaluation at the end.

**Safety at Carolina**

I care about your safety and recognize that you cannot fully commit to this course if you do not feel safe.

If you are impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking, I encourage you to seek resources on campus or in the community.

Please contact the following campus resources to discuss your specific needs:

* Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – [Adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu))
* Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu))
* Counseling and Psychological Services ([caps@unc.edu](mailto:caps@unc.edu); confidential)
* Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential)
* Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://www.safe.unc.edu)

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students and my goal is to create a **safe space for everyone in this class**. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. **Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve, I appreciate suggestions**.

**Accessibility**

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. **If you need accommodations, please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.**

* Visit [accessibility.unc.edu](mailto:accessibility.unc.edu)
* Call 919-962-8300
* Email [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu)

**Resources**

My purpose is to help you to excel in this learning environment. Should you need further assistance beyond the help of the professor, please consult the following on-campus resources:

* **The Writing Center** provides one-on-one assistance to students. To make an appointment, browse the Writing Center’s online resources, or submit a draft online. They have additional useful information, such as handouts on how to cite online. [writingcenter.unc.edu](http://writingcenter.unc.edu)
* **The Learning Center** offers individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. [learningcenter.unc.edu](http://learningcenter.unc.edu)
* **Campus Health** provides ambulatory primary medical care, mental health services and wellness programs along with selected specialty services. [campushealth.unc.edu](http://campushealth.unc.edu)

**Data Resources for the Class** – Partial List. For more, contact Phil McDaniel at Davis Library: [pmmcdani@email.unc.edu](mailto:pmmcdani@email.unc.edu)

* Carolina Tracker:  <https://carolinatracker.unc.edu/tracker/>
* [COVID-19 Impact Tracker](https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/research-and-resources/covid-19-impact-tracker) – housing, employment – compares Feb/Aug 2020 at state and county level
* [McKinsey & Co. Interactives](https://www.mckinsey.com/about-us/covid-response-center/interactives)
  + [Unemployment through COVID-19 Crisis](https://covid-tracker.mckinsey.com/unemployment) – county or state level over time
  + [Community Movement During Pandemic](https://covid-tracker.mckinsey.com/mobility) – where do people spend their time
  + [Small Business Vulnerability](https://covid-tracker.mckinsey.com/small-business-vulnerability)
  + [Market Valuation of Sectors throughout 2020](https://covid-tracker.mckinsey.com/financial-impact-sector)
  + [Vulnerable Jobs by Demographic Group](https://covid-tracker.mckinsey.com/vulnerable-jobs/demographic) – race, gender, age, education
  + [Vulnerable Populations Dashboard](https://csbh-dashboard.mckinsey.com/#/)
    - [COVID and Food Insecurity](https://csbh-dashboard.mckinsey.com/#/data-insights?geo=County&lob=All&metric1=pct_food_insecure&metric2=covid_case_count)
    - [COVID and Mental Health](https://csbh-dashboard.mckinsey.com/#/data-insights?geo=State&lob=All&metric1=any_bh_conditions&metric2=any_bhprovider_rate)
* [Opportunity Insights Track the Recovery](https://tracktherecovery.org/) – can look at spending, business, employment, education, and public health impacts of COVID at state, county, or metropolitan level
* Brookings, World Bank, Atlantic city, City Lab have international data
* <https://www.brookings.edu/interactives/visualizing-vulnerable-jobs-across-america/>
* <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/census/maps>
* <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>
* <https://tracktherecovery.org/>
* <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/>
* <https://evictionlab.org/map/#/2016?geography=states&type=er>

**Schedule**

**PART 1: FRAMING POVERTY:** What is Poverty? Measurements, Trends. History and Hypotheses.

**Week 1 Introduction**

1/11 (T): Introduction: Framing Poverty

James, Abro. 2014. Word Matter When Talking Poverty. <https://talkpoverty.org/2014/07/07/words-matter-talking-poverty/>

What comes to mind when you hear “poverty’? <https://www.menti.com/1zzy9ehps2>

Results: <https://www.mentimeter.com/s/55b501cff339a56fb309688fee29f2d3/7f553c7da627>

What comes to mind when you hear “Inequality”?

<https://www.menti.com/fvfuiy2fhp>

Results:

<https://www.mentimeter.com/s/536b0b5d5e5601cbb92397a5435c61d4/db21e1606372>

1/13 (R): Measurements: Who sees poverty, how it is measured? What does it feel like?

Generational, Situational and Chronic Poverty; The Poverty Live, Poverty Thresholds and Relative vs Absolute Poverty

## Institute for Research on Poverty. 2020. Who is Poor? https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resources/who-is-poor/

Pimpare, Stephen. 2014. Generational Poverty the Exception, Not the Rule. <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/06/28/generational-poverty-exception-not-rule>

Federal Guidelines. <https://www.thebalance.com/federal-poverty-level-definition-guidelines-chart-3305843>

**In-Class Activity: What Does Hardship Feel Like: https://playspent.org/html/**

Rosling, Hans. 2018. Factfulness. Chapter 1, and 11.

Ananya Roy video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKASroLDF0M>

**Week 2 Geographies of Poverty**

1/18 (T) Mapping Inequality and Poverty

Activity: Global, inner city, rural.

Group 1, 4, 7: Global poverty Ananya Roy article

Group 2, 5, 8: Inner city Poverty

Group 3, 6: Rural Poverty

Readings and in resources for in-class activity:

* The Opportunity Atlas: <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>
* An Atlantic article on Raj Chetty that touches on his work: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/08/raj-chettys-american-dream/592804/>
* The Mapping Inequality Project with old redlining maps: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>
* This is a video series that might be useful:  <https://prosperitynow.org/new-crisis-same-story-highlighting-innovations-racial-economic-inequality-leaders-color>

This poverty mapping project from NASA is very cool to review. <https://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/collection/povmap/povatlas>;

Hickel, Jason. 2018. Where did Poverty Come From? A Creation Story. In *The Divide. Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Ananya Roy. 2011. Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 35 (2): 223-38. (Sakai)

1/20 (R) Colonialism and Structural Racism in a Global Context: Prof. Michal Osterweil.

Smedley, Audrey. 2007. History of the idea of race…..and why it matters. Paper presented at the conference “Race, Human Variation and Disease: Consensus and Frontiers,” sponsored by the American Anthropological Association. Pp. 1-9. (On Sakai)

Rist, Gilbert. The Metamorphosis of a Myth. In: The History of Development. Pp. 25-28 only. (On Sakai)

**Week 3 Hypotheses and dynamics**

1/25 (T) Falling Into, and Getting Out of Poverty: 8 Hypotheses

Teitz, Michael B. and Chapple, Karen, The Causes of Inner-City Poverty: Eight Hypotheses in Search of Reality. Cityscape, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1998. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=156911 or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.156911>

McKernan, Signe-Mary and Caroline Ratcliffe. 2005. Events that Tigger Poverty Entries and Exits. *Social Science Quarterly*. Vol. 86. A Special Issue: Income, Poverty, opportunity. Pp 1146 – 1149.

Agyeman, Julian. Urban Planning as a Tool for White Supremacy. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/urban-planning-as-a-tool-of-white-supremacy-the-other-lesson-from-minneapolis-142249>

1/27 (R) Poverty Traps

Banerjee, Abhijit and Esther Duflo. 2011. Think Again, Again. Chapter 1, *Poor Economics.* Public Affairs. And A Billion Hungry People? Chapter 2, pp. 19-22 only.

**PART 2: DRIVERS Of POVERTY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

**Week 4 Experiencing Poverty: Housing**

2/1 (T) Eviction – Reading Matthew Desmond

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted. New York, Penguin, Random House (Broadway Books). Each group picks one section from “Rent” and follows the same person’s story in “Out” and “After.’

2/3 (R) Who is more vulnerable to gentrification and displacement? Low income renters or owners?

When gentrification and displacement threaten to push out low income renters or owners, how can families fight back? Are rental neighborhoods more vulnerable? What are some strategies that might work?

Muraca, Frank, 2022. What we know about the impact of Covid in housing so far. <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/2022/01/what-we-know-about-covids-impact-on-affordable-housing-so-far/>

Examples of strengthening housing choice and roots in place:

Sites and Services

Gulyani, Sumila. 2016. Success when we deemed it failure? Revisiting sites and services 20 years later.

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/success-when-we-deemed-it-failure-revisiting-sites-and-services-20-years-later>

Rinde, Meir. 2022. Are tiny homes part of the affordable housing puzzle? <https://shelterforce.org/2021/12/14/are-tiny-homes-a-piece-of-the-affordable-housing-puzzle>

Upzoning

Representation and Voice

**Week 5 Resisting Institutionalized Disempowerment and Historical Neglect**

2/8 (T) How are Place, Poverty and Race Related?

How has state and federal policy led to conditions and trends of chronic poverty?

Rothstein, Richard. 2018. Watch this short film ***Segregated by Design***, narrated by Richard Rothstein <https://vimeo.com/328684375>

OR We will watch this one from NPR in class.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBJyqfoLM>

Nguyen, Mai, Ferguson project. <https://itsofmedia.oasis.unc.edu/#In_the_Shadows_of_Ferguson>

Bloomberg. Blacks in Government: The Effect on Zoning Decisions. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-24/blacks-in-government-the-effect-on-zoning-decisions>

2/10 (R) How do we organize against discrimination and neglect? The Jackson Center and the history of Northside, Chapel Hill. *Presentation by Diana and Aisha of the Jackson Center.*

**Week 6 Being Underserved:** What are the cascading disadvantages of being chronically underserved?

2/15 (T) Education. Bringing experiential education to the poorest: the case of Adharshila Learning Center (Video: Soumya Swaroop and Jayashree)

2/17 (R) Water. Discrimination in the access to basic resources: The Case of Water in Flint Michigan. *Guest Lecture by Professor Shakirah Hudani.*

**Week 7 Portraits of Poverty (Assignment 1)**

2/22 (T) Class presentations and reflections

2/24 (R) Class presentations and reflections

**Week 8 Work, Employment and Skills**

3/1 (T) Precarious work: The Rise of low wage work and wage stagnation: Are Living wage movements a solution? Do we need universal basic minimum income? What impact will technological change have on low wage work?

Case Study: Service workers and tipped industries and the movement around unionization Sam Stites

Redbird, Beth. 2020. What Drives Native American Poverty? <https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/news/2020/redbird-what-drives-native-american-poverty.html>

Returns on soft skills: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/16/01/theres-nothing-soft-about-these-skills>

MIT 2020 Future of Work Reports – Autor, David, David Mindell and Elisabeth Reynolds. 2020. The Work of the Future: Building Better Jobs in the Age of Intelligent Machines. <https://workofthefuture.mit.edu/research-post/the-work-of-the-future-building-better-jobs-in-an-age-of-intelligent-machines/>

3/3 (R) Approaching race and indigeneity in small-town development work – challenges, tactics and strategies: Mark Little TBC

**Week 9 Debt and Fintech (Midterm – Group mind-map)**

3/8 (T) How Debt Makes Poverty Sticky. (Molly De Marco and Jessica Dorrance)

Varoufakis, Yanis. 2017. Talking to My Daughter About the Economy. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girroux. Chapter 4, The Black Magic of Banking.

Schlesinger, Andrea Batista and Maru Jiang. 2020. Challenging the systems that perpetuate racism: A case for public banking. June <https://www.hraadvisors.com/a-case-for-public-banking/>

3/10 (R) Fintech Innovations, LISC and the Common Cents Lab. Laura

**Week 10 Spring Break – no class**

3/15 (T) No class

3/17 (R) No class

**Week 11 Informality and Public Health**

3/22 (T) Informality and the invisible economy:

# Mukhija, Vinit, and Anastasia L-S. 2015. The Informal American City – Beyond Day Labor and Taco Trucks.

# Gordon, Peter. 2019. When A Steady Paycheck in Good Medicine. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/business/healthcare-anchor-network.html>

# World Bank. 2021. As COVID-19 wreaks havoc on service workers, is the informal sector increasing global inequality? (31 minutes podcast with script)

# <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2021/05/24/>[as-covid-19-wreaks-havoc-on-service-workers-is-the-informal-sector-increasing-global-inequality-the-development-podcast](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/podcast/2021/05/24/as-covid-19-wreaks-havoc-on-service-workers-is-the-informal-sector-increasing-global-inequality-the-development-podcast)

Oppenheim and Yamey. 2020. Pandemics and the Poor. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2017/06/19/pandemics-and-the-poor/>

Badger, Emily, 2020. The pandemic has pushed aside city planning rules. But to whose benefit? <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/upshot/pandemic-city-planning-inequality.html>

Mullainathan, Senthil. 2017. The Psychological Lives of the Poor. https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\_JIlpF5WcI&t=34s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_JIlpF5WcI&amp;t=34s)

3/24 (R) Class Discussion: Your cases

**Part 3: IMPLEMENTATION**

**Week 12 Targeting and Anchor Institutions**

3/29 (T) Targeting Within Universalism

3/31 (R) Anchor Institutions and their role in Stabilizing Low Income Neighborhoods. Marielle Saunders and Eve Lettau

**Week 13 Levers to alleviate poverty**

4/5 (T) Street level Bureaucracy

Lipsky, Michael 1980. *Street Level Bureaucracy*. Chapters TBA.

Tendler, Judith. 2007. Preventive Health: The Case of the Unskilled Meritocracy. In *Good Government in the Tropics*. Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press.

Zacka, Bernardo. 2017. *When the State Meets the Street – Public Service and Moral Agency*. Belknap: Harvard University Press. Chapter 1 and 5.

4/7 (R) Civic Participation, Social Capital and Collective Action

\*Brown-Graham, Anita. 2020. Social capital – Health and Economic Benefits of Connecting while Distancing. NC Impact Blog, School of Government, UNC.

<https://ncimpact.sog.unc.edu/2020/11/social-capital-staying-connected-during-distancing/>

Fung, Archon, and Erik Olin Wright. 2001. "Deepening democracy: Innovations in empowered participatory governance." *Politics & Society* 29.1 (2001): 5-41.

Jain, Pankaj S. 1996. "Managing credit for the rural poor: lessons from the Grameen Bank." *World development* 24 (1): 79-89.

S. D. "Big Trouble for Microfinance," 2010. *The Economist*, December 2.

Sean Safford. 2007. How the Garden Club Couldn’t Save Youngstown.

**Week 14 Implementing Food Security: Combating Food Deserts Cooperatives, Food Pantries**

4/12 (T) Multidimensional measures of poverty and hunger as the canary in the coalmine. Interaction with Prof. Maureen Berner

Multi-Dimensional Measures of Poverty: The Potential Contribution of Non-Profit Food Pantry Data to Assess Community Economic Condition” Maureen Berner, Journal of Poverty and Public Policy December, 2017. Vol. 9, No. 4. pp 365-476

Hunger in America. 2020 December. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbEMQjocR1U>

Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2021. Food Deserts in the United States

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/exploring-americas-food-deserts>

4/14 (R) Wellness day – No classes held

**Week 15 Conclusion: Empathy, Vulnerability and Cultures of Care**

4/19 (T) Empathy as the language of planners – disaster recovery in the poorest quarters. Darrien Alexander. TBC

Raworth, Kate. 2017. Seven ways to think like a 21st century economist, pp 21-26 (required). Suggested: Create to Regenerate, Chapter 6, in Doughnut Economics. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

OR Nonviolent Communication

Rosenberg, Marshall. 2015. *Nonviolent Communication: A language of Life.* California: Puddledancer publishers. Summary pp 12-14 and Communication that Blocks, Chapter 2, pp 15-22.

**Week 16 Presentations**

4/21 (R) Group presentations.

4/27 (T) Group presentations