

University Fellows

E X P E R I E N C E

Following the classical purpose of education, the production of good citizens, the University Fellows Experience strives to prepare the most able and dedicated students at the University of Alabama for remarkable lives of leadership in and service to their community, state, nation, and world.

Thomas Henry Huxley wrote, “The great end of life is not knowledge, but action.” Similarly, our mission is to shape and enable our exceptionally gifted Fellows to use the knowledge they gain for leadership and service. It is expected that throughout their lives, University Fellows will make a difference for the good, again and again.

UFE 101: Understanding Poverty

Fall 2022 | TR 2-3:15 | Russell Hall 355

Contact Information

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Office Hours: https://calendly.com/danapatton_meeting/15_minutes, and by appointment

Course Description

This seminar will begin developing the students’ understanding of and ability to discuss within diverse groups systemic injustices and the need for social change, as well as provide context for experience in meaningful community engagement in future semesters. Specifically, we will examine one of the most enduring social problems in the United States: poverty. Course-specific topics build from a survey of the conceptualization and measurement of poverty, as well as the demographic groups that are most likely to suffer from high poverty rates. We will review alternative explanations for poverty, focusing on the distinction between individual and structural explanations and how this distinction influences public discourse and the politics of poverty. We will explore in detail the major government programs aimed at alleviating poverty, including the major social insurance and public assistance programs, as well as health, education, and civil rights policies.

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, students should have a thorough understanding of:

- how poverty is defined and measured
- how and why poverty rates vary across different geographic locations and demographic groups
- how and why poverty rates have varied over time
- the major theoretical approaches to explaining variation in poverty rates across time, across countries, and across different demographic groups in the U.S.
- the major government programs designed to alleviate poverty, as well as what the academic literature has concluded concerning their effectiveness
- different theories of the policymaking process with respect to policies that affect poor people
- the variety of sources for detailed data on poverty and its correlates

Required Texts

You may purchase hardcover, paperback, or e-text. Whatever works best for you. The ISBNs provided are for either hardcover or paperback. All books are available on Amazon and the Super Store. See the reading schedule though and be sure your books will arrive prior to needing to complete the reading!

- Case, Anne and Angus Deaton. 2020. *Deaths of Despair: And the Future of Capitalism*. ISBN: 978-0-691-19078-5 (NOTE: This will be the first book we read in Spring 2023 for UFE 102. You may purchase now or later.)
- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*. ISBN: 978-0553447453
- Edin, Kathryn. 2011. *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*. ISBN: 978-0520271463
- Duncan, Cynthia. 2015. *Worlds Apart: Poverty and Politics in Rural America*. ISBN: 978-0300196597
- Edelman, Peter. 2017. *Not a Crime to be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America*. ISBN: 978-1620975480

- Halpern-Meekin, Sarah, Kathryn Edin, Laura Tach, and Jennifer Sykes. 2015. *It's not like I'm poor: How working families make ends meet in a post-welfare world*. ISBN: 978-0520275355

Required Listening

Gladstone, Brooke. "Busted: America's Poverty Myths." *On the Media*, WNYC Studios, 28 Sept. 2016, www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/projects/busted-americas-poverty-myths.

Required Watching

We will watch some short videos in class, as well as longer documentaries you will watch on your own. Pay close attention to the schedule when you are asked to watch something on your own, as we will have guided discussion in the next class meeting. Your participation is vital to the success of those class meetings.

Course Policies and Requirements

Blackboard

- Blackboard (Bb) is a critical part of this course. I will post Announcements on Bb, which will also be delivered to your Crimson email account. You will submit assignments on Bb.

Email

- All email correspondence should be professional in tone and content. Please use the emails listed above and not the email function in Bb.

Attendance and Participation

- We expect you to attend class. There will be a sign-in sheet passed around during every class meeting. If you are unable to attend class for some reason, please let us know in advance. This is very important because some class sessions will include planned discussions with pre-arranged groupings of students.

- Participation is expected. This does not look the same for everyone every class meeting. Some students like to talk a lot in class (and life) whereas others are quieter and wait for their moment to weigh in on discussions. Everyone can't talk during each and every class meeting! Participation can also take the form of active listening and showing outward signs of engagement when others are talking. If a classmate is talking, looking at that person rather than your computer screen is a way to show you are actively participating in class.
- Participation in this course also includes your presence and participation in required Fellows events, such as the State of Fellows address and one dinner discussion in the Fall semester, as well as attendance in our Fall Black Belt Immersion. You are required to attend one dinner discussion in the Fall, but we encourage you to attend a maximum of two.
- We will be discussing difficult topics. You may feel hesitant or anxious about weighing in on some topics due to fear of being misunderstood. This is normal, but we must push through these feelings and engage in thoughtful and respectful discussions on difficult topics.

Electronic Devices

- iPads and laptops may be used to take notes. Research indicates that students who take notes by hand better understand and retain the material compared to students who take notes on a laptop. But, that's up to you and I'm sure you will figure out what works best for you.
- Cell phones are not permitted during class unless you are asked to use them! Cell phone ringers must be turned off and phones put completely away (not on your desk, thigh, etc.). If you have a personal situation that requires you to monitor your phone, please notify us prior to the beginning of class.

Reading

- You should plan to devote a significant amount of time to carefully reading the assigned material. I encourage you to take notes on the reading in whatever format you think will be most helpful to you (chapter outlines, notes on important terms or concepts, etc.).
- I do NOT cover everything from the reading material in lecture. In fact, most lectures will not be directly about the reading.
- You are responsible for purchasing or renting or borrowing the books by the time they are scheduled for reading in the syllabus.

Discussion Posts

- You will post a discussion question/comment once a week related to the reading, listening, or watching assignment. Discussion posts are due by noon on Thursday. See Blackboard for instructions and the grading rubric.

Policy on Late Submission of Discussion Posts

- Discussion posts may be submitted up to the start of class on Thursdays. The penalty for late submission (between noon to 2pm Thursday) of a discussion post is a one letter-grade deduction after grading.

Discussion Responses

- Discussion responses are also due by noon on Thursdays. See Blackboard for instruction and the grading rubric.

Policy on Late Submission of Discussion Responses

- Discussion responses may be submitted up to the start of class on Thursdays. The penalty for late submission (between noon to 2pm Thursday) of a discussion post is a one letter-grade deduction after grading.

Policy on Discussion Post Due Date/Time Extensions

- If you or a family member are seriously ill, please contact us prior to the due date/time to discuss an extension. We may request documentation.
- Inability to meet a due date/time due to University-approved events should be discussed in advance. Documentation is required.

Exams

- There will be two exams. The format of each exam will be announced in class at least one week prior to the exam.

Policy on Missed Exams

You may schedule a make-up exam if you meet the following conditions:

1. You must notify us **prior to the exam** that you are unable to attend due to serious illness, death of a family member, or an approved University trip with the proper paperwork.
2. If you are too ill to take the exam, you must have a doctor's note that verifies your inability to take the exam at the scheduled time.
3. The make-up exam must be re-scheduled within one week of the missed exam.

Grading Summary

Exam 1:	30%
Exam 2:	30%
Discussion Posts:	20%
Participation:	20%

Final Grade Calculation

A+	*	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	≤59
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

*Grades of A+ are rare and only given when students meet an exceptionally high bar on all written work, exams, attendance, consistent demonstration of engagement in class and with the course material, and exhibit outstanding critical thinking skills.

University Policies and Resources

These are the boilerplate policies required to be in all syllabi. Please know that I take ALL of these policies very seriously, especially academic misconduct. I will report plagiarism to the Dean's Office even though it is a LOT of paperwork. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism. If you aren't sure, you should ask me and I will make sure you understand.

At the end of this section of the syllabus, you will see "Wellness Resources". College can be stressful in the best of times, and we are not in those right now! The CDC has recently released a lot of information about adolescent mental health crises during the pandemic. Most of this is focused on children and teens, but most of you are not so far removed from the upper-end of that age group. Please mind your mental health and seek assistance if you are not feeling well. Look out for each other too. Help your friends get help if they are struggling. Sometimes this is as easy as just being there for them and letting a friend know that you notice they are struggling and offering to talk.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

Statement On Disability Accommodations

Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

UAct Statement

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (www.ua.edu/uact) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, hate or bias incidents, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Statement on COVID-19

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at studentaccounts.ua.edu and financialaid.ua.edu.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to [Protect Our Herd](#). COVID-19 vaccines are being administered by the [University Medical Center, the Student Health Center](#) and various businesses and healthcare providers.

Wellness Resources

College can be a stressful time

If you or someone you know is facing a challenging time or dealing with academic or personal stress, anxiety, depression, or other concerns, we strongly encourage and support you to seek assistance or to help friends find the care that they may [need](#).

Also, If you are experiencing a personal crisis and need urgent assistance, you can also contact the following resources:

Counseling Center

- Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-3863).
- Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak with the on-call counselor).
- You may also text BAMA to 741-741 to text with a trained volunteer.

Women and Gender Resource Center

- Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-5040).
- Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak to the on-call advocate for the WGRC).

Course Schedule

This is a tentative reading schedule and subject to change depending on course progress. Any changes to the reading schedule will be announced in class, posted on Bb, and sent via e-mail.

Week 1: August 18

- Introduction
- Activity

Week 2: August 23 and 25

- Activity, continued
- Measuring poverty
- Trends in poverty over time
- Poverty in the Blackbelt
- *Promises I Can Keep*
 - August 25
 - Preface to the 2011 Edition
 - Introduction
 - Chapter 1: “Before We Had a Baby...”
 - Chapter 2: “When I Got Pregnant...”
 - Chapter 3: How Does the Dream Die?

Week 3: August 30 and September 1

- *Promises I Can Keep*
 - August 30
 - Chapter 4: What Marriage Means
 - Chapter 5: Labor of Love
 - September 1
 - Chapter 6: How Motherhood Changed My Life
 - Conclusion: Making Sense of Single Motherhood

Week 4: September 6 and 8

- *Worlds Apart*
 - September 6
 - New Forward
 - Foreword to the 1999 Edition
 - Preface to the 1999 Edition
 - Preface and Acknowledgement for the 2014 Edition
 - Chapter One: Blackwell: Rigid Classes and Corrupt Politics in Appalachia's Coal Fields
 - "Good Rich People" and "Bad Poor People"
 - Blackwell Yesterday: Developing Appalachia's Coal Fields
 - The Families That Run Things
 - The Politics of Work in the Mountains
 - Blackwell's Have-Nots: Scratching a Living Up the Hollows
 - Blackwell's Haves: The Good Life on Redbud Hill
 - Bringing Change to Blackwell
 - Blackwell Twenty Years Later: Hunkering Down with Family
 - September 8
 - Chapter Two: Dahlia: Racial Segregation and Planter Control in the Mississippi Delta
 - Dahlia's Two Social Worlds
 - Work in Dahlia: Creating and Maintaining the Plantation World
 - Class and Case in the Delta
 - White Planters, Politicians, and Shopkeepers
 - Leadership in the Black Community: The Old and the New "Toms"
 - Dahlia's Emerging Middle Class
 - Dahlia Twenty Years Later: New Jobs and New Politics

Week 5: September 13 and 15

- *Worlds Apart*
 - September 13
 - Chapter Three: Gray Mountain: Equality and Civic Involvement in Northern New England
 - A Blue-Collar Middle-Class Mill Town
 - Participation and Investment in the 1990s
 - The Big Middle “Continuum
 - Difficult Times Ahead: Putting Civic Culture to the Test
 - Gray Mountain Twenty Years Later: Holding on to a Blue-Collar Community
 - September 15
 - Chapter Four: Social Change and Social Policy
 - Cultural and Structural Causes of Persistent Poverty
 - Class and Politics in Rural Communities
 - Equality, Democracy, and Social Change
 - Policies to Encourage Mobility and Build Civic Culture
 - Policy for Poor People in Poor Places

Week 6: September 20 and 22

- *Evicted*
 - September 20
 - Author's Note
 - Prologue: Cold City
 - Chapter 1. The Business of Owning a City
 - Chapter 2. Making Rent
 - Chapter 3. Hot Water
 - Chapter 4. A Beautiful Collection
 - Chapter 5. Thirteenth Street
 - September 22
 - Chapter 6. Rat Hole
 - Chapter 7. The Sick
 - Chapter 8. Christmas in Room 400

Week 7: September 27 and 29

- *Evicted*
 - September 27
 - Chapter 9. Order Some Carryout
 - Chapter 10. Hypes for Hire
 - Chapter 11. The 'Hood is Good
 - Chapter 12. Disposable Ties
 - Chapter 13. E-24
 - September 29
 - Chapter 14. High Tolerance
 - Chapter 15. A Nuisance
 - Chapter 16. Ashes on Snow

Week 8: October 4 and 6

October 4: Catch-up; review; discuss

October 6: EXAM 1

Week 9: October 11 and 13

- *Evicted*
 - October 11
 - Chapter 17. This is America
 - Chapter 18. Lobster on Food Stamps
 - Chapter 19. Little
 - Chapter 20. Nobody Wants the North Side
 - Chapter 21. Bigheaded Boy
 - October 13
 - Chapter 22. If They Give Momma the Punishment
 - Chapter 23. The Serenity Club
 - Chapter 24. Can't Win for Losing
 - Epilogue: Home and Hope
 - About This Project

Week 10: October 18 and 20

- *It's Not Like I'M POOR*
 - October 18
 - Introduction
 - Chapter 1. Family Budgets: Staying in the Black, Slipping in the Red
 - Chapter 2. Tax Time
 - October 20
 - Chapter 3. The New Regime through the Lens of the Old

Week 11: October 25 and 27

- *It's Not Like I'M POOR*
 - October 25
 - Chapter 4. Beyond Living Paycheck to Paycheck
 - Chapter 5. "Debt – I Am Hoping to Eliminate That Word!"
 - October 27
 - Chapter 6. Capitalizing on the Promise of the EITC

Week 12: November 1 and 3

- *Not a Crime to be Poor*
 - November 1
 - Introduction
 - Chapter 1. Ferguson is Everywhere: Twenty-First-Century Debtors' Prisons
 - Chapter 2. Fighting Back: The Advocates and Their Work
 - Chapter 3. Money Bail
 - November 3
 - Chapter 4. The Criminalization of Mental Illness
 - Chapter 5. Child Support: Criminalizing Poor Fathers

Week 13: November 8 and 10

- *Not a Crime to be Poor*
 - November 8
 - Chapter 6. Criminalizing Public Benefits
 - Chapter 7. Poverty, Race, and Discipline in Schools: Go Directly to Jail
 - Chapter 8. Crime-Free Housing Ordinances and the Criminalization of Homelessness
 - November 10
 - Chapter 9. Taking Criminal Justice Reform Seriously
 - Chapter 10. Turning the Coin Over: Ending Poverty as We Know It

Week 14: November 15 and 17

- November 15: Catch-up; review; discussion
- November 17: Exam 2

Week 15: THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASSES!

Week 16: November 29 and December 1

- Study week. No classes.

