WS 391 – Special Topics
Women and Poverty: Race, Place, and Age

Professor Cynthia B. Struthers
Office: 502 Stipes
Office phone: (309) 298-2282
E-mail: CB-Struthers@wiu.edu
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 am – noon, and other times by appointment

Class period: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 am – 10:45 am
Room: 330 Morgan

Required reading:
Reserved readings in library and those assigned in class—see Reading List

Course description:
In this course we will examine the poverty of women and how it varies by race, place or residence, and over the life course. We will examine the structures of disadvantage in place in U.S. society that create poverty and operate to keep people but especially women and children poor. At the same time we will examine our position in the social hierarchy in the hope of increasing not only our understanding of poverty but our empathy for the poor.

Course objectives:
- Students will gain a better understanding of how capitalism and patriarchy create and perpetuate poverty.
- Students will gain a better understanding of the salience of gender as a system of inequality.
- Students will gain a better understanding of social welfare in the United States and how it has changed over time.
- Students will gain a better understanding of how poverty varies by race, place, and age.
- By the end of the course students should be familiar with existing welfare programs, policies, and practices and begin to have some ideas for addressing poverty.

General information:
This is a reading and writing intensive course.
With the exception of the first week of class you are expected to have completed all assigned reading for the week on Tuesday. Tuesday will be primarily a lecture day and Thursday will be a day to discuss lecture material and reading assignments for the week.

Class policies:
- You are expected to attend class.
- You are expected to arrive on time for class and to stay for the entire class period.
- You are expected to participate in class discussions. This class is organized as a seminar where discussion of course material is essential.
- You are expected to treat your classmates and professor with courtesy. A college classroom must be a place where people are free to express their opinion in a safe and open environment. Many of our beliefs about poverty are firmly entrenched in our psyche so we may not be aware of how strongly we hold these beliefs or how inflexible they have become. We therefore will need to be thoughtful in our commentary and listen carefully to the views of others.
- If a situation arises that will interfere with your ability to complete the course you should contact the professor immediately.
- Anyone that misses 6 or more classes will automatically lose 20 points from their grade.
- Please turn in assignments on time. Any assignment turned in late will lose 2.5 points.

Listen...think...talk!

Course requirements and grading scale:
Seminar/Discussion Leader = 25
Outside contribution to class = 25
Reaction papers 5 @ 10 = 50
Living Expense Diary/Budget Report = 50
Final Exam-Essay Exam (Students may use course books and class notes to complete the exam.) = 100

Total points for the class = 250

A straight scale will be used to determine your final grade for the course. Be sure to make copies or save on disk anything you turn in and hold on to all course material until the course is over and you have your final grade.

225 – 250 = A
200 – 224 = B
175 – 199 = C
150 – 174 = D
149 or less = 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>August 19 and 21</td>
<td>Establishing the Foundations of Women’s Poverty</td>
<td>Why are women poor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>August 26 and 28</td>
<td>Engels, Hartmann, Benston, Huber, and Collins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No class Sept. 2 or Sept. 4</td>
<td>Walby, D. Smith, Lerner, Higgenbotham, and Dill</td>
<td>Welcome to Welfare (in the beginning...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 9 and 11</td>
<td>Gordon, Quadagno, Gilkes, and Wilson</td>
<td>Welfare Reform: Where we are now Reaction Paper 1 Sept. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>September 16 and 18</td>
<td>Hays: Chapters 1 and 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>September 23 and 25</td>
<td>Hays: Chapters 3 and 4</td>
<td>Reaction Paper 2 Sept. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>September 30 and October 2</td>
<td>Hays: Chapters 5 and 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>October 7 and 9</td>
<td>Hays: Chapters 7 and 8</td>
<td>Why rural?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>October 14 and 16</td>
<td>Falk and Lyson Duncan: Chapter 1 – Blackwell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 21 and 23</td>
<td>Duncan: Chapter 2 – Dahlia</td>
<td>Reaction Paper 3 Oct. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>October 28 and 30</td>
<td>Duncan: Chapter 3 – Gray Mountain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>November 4 and 6</td>
<td>Duncan: Chapter 4, Danziger, and Lichter and Jensen</td>
<td>What about paid employment? And what about the elderly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>November 11 and 13</td>
<td>Kuttner: Introduction through page 50 Supplemental Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>November 18 and 20</td>
<td>Kuttner: Pages 51 – 107 Supplemental Reading</td>
<td>Reaction Paper 4 Nov. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>November 25 and 27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>December 2 and 4</td>
<td>Kuttner: Pages 108 – 163 Supplemental Reading</td>
<td>Living Expense Diary Dec. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam 8:00 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading List:

Week 2


Week 3


Week 4


Week 5
Hays - Chapters 1 and 2

Week 6
Hays - Chapters 3 and 4

Week 7
Hays - Chapters 5 and 6

Week 8
Hays - Chapters 7 and 8

Week 9

2) Duncan – Chapter 1

Week 10
Duncan – Chapter 2
Week 11
Duncan – Chapter 3

Week 12
1) Duncan – Chapter 4


Week 13
1) Kuttner – Introduction – p. 50

2) Supplemental Reading

Week 14
1) Kuttner – Pp. 51 - 107

2) Supplemental Reading

Week 15

2) Supplemental Reading

The following books are available in Reserved Reading:
The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State; Families and Work, Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology; Pitted but not Entitled; The Truly Disadvantaged, and Forgotten Places. The Monthly Review and the American Sociological Review are available in the periodicals section of the library.