

**SOCIAL POLICY SPECIAL TOPICS SEMINAR:  
POVERTY AND ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAMS  
(195.652.01)**

Johns Hopkins University  
Spring 2008  
Tuesdays 10am-11:50  
Location: Dunning 211

Dr. Demetra Smith Nightingale  
Wyman Park Building #547  
JHU office: 410-516-8796  
Urban Institute office: 202-261-5570  
[dnight@jhu.edu](mailto:dnight@jhu.edu)

Office Hours: Mondays 9-noon  
                  Tuesdays 1-3  
                  Thursdays 9-noon  
                  And by appointment

**Course Summary:**

This semester's Social Policy Special Topic is "Poverty and Anti-poverty Programs" and will cover methods used to measure poverty (e.g., official, alternatives); trends in and major dimensions of US poverty; US compared to other developed countries; and programs intended to alleviate, reduce, or eliminate poverty.

**Required Books:**

Citro, Constance and Robert T. Michael, Editors. *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*. National Academy Press, Washington 1995.

Danziger, Sheldon H. and Robert A. Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*. Russell Sage/Harvard University Books 2002.

**Course Requirements:**

Research or policy paper (draft=20%, final=30%)  
Periodic status reports on the paper (15%)  
Class attendance and engaged participation based on assigned readings (15%)  
Presentation (PowerPoint slides, presentation, facilitated discussion) 20%

**Class Assignments**  
(Subject to Change)

- Jan. 29            OVERVIEW OF COURSE
- Introduction to poverty measurement and antipoverty programs  
Possible research paper topics (literature reviews, empirical analysis,  
legislative history)  
Class requirements and schedule
- Feb. 5            THE BASICS OF POVERTY MEASUREMENT AND CURRENT POLICY  
ISSUES
- Rebecca Blank, “How to Improve Poverty Measurement in the United States”  
Draft publication, November 2007
- Feb. 12           ANNUAL CENSUS POVERTY REPORTS, MEASURES, AND RECENT  
CHANGES
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. “Income, Poverty and Health Insurance in the U.S:  
2006”. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/p60-233.pdf>
- Paper Topic due (preliminary)
- Feb. 19           POVERTY TRENDS, PARAMETERS, AND PERSISTENCE
- Danziger and Haveman, Introduction plus Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4
- Iceland, John, “Why Poverty Remains High: The Role of Income Growth,  
Economic Inequality, and Changes in Family Structure, 1949-1999”  
*Demography* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Aug., 2003), pp. 499-519
- Feb. 16           ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAMS
- Danziger and Haveman Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9
- Citro and Michael, Appendix D
- OUTLINE DUE

- Feb. 26 ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAMS (CONT.)  
Danziger and Haveman Chapters 10, 13, and 15
- Mar. 4 ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS, MEASURES, THRESHOLDS (NAS)  
Citro and Michael Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4
- Mar 11 EFFECTS OF POVERTY MEASURES AND ALTERNATIVES (NAS)  
Citro and Michael, Chapters 5, 7, and 8  
Meyer, Bruce D. and James X. Sullivan “Three Decades of Consumption and Income Poverty” 2006 [http://npc.umich.edu/publications/u/working\\_paper06-35.pdf](http://npc.umich.edu/publications/u/working_paper06-35.pdf)  
Citro and Michael, Appendix A (Dissent)
- PROGRESS REPORT DUE
- Mar. 18 NO CLASS--SPRING BREAK
- Mar. 25 CROSS-NATIONAL TRENDS  
Chapters 2 and 3 in McFate, et al *Poverty, Inequality and the Future of Social Policy: Western States in the New World Order* and review Chapter 1 (read in the other course)
- Apr. 1 REPORTS DUE
- Apr. 8 PRESENTATIONS AND CLASS DISCUSSIONS
- Apr. 15 PRESENTATIONS AND CLASS DISCUSSIONS
- Apr. 22 PRESENTATIONS AND CLASS DISCUSSIONS

**Examples of Possible Topics:**

Effect of education on poverty rates and trends  
Underclass concepts and trends  
Poverty trends cross-nationally or in another country  
Trends in childhood poverty  
Feminization of poverty  
Aging and poverty  
Welfare reform and poverty  
Rural poverty  
Macroeconomic effects on poverty  
Race and poverty