

**General Education Course Information Sheet**  
*Please submit this sheet for each proposed course*

Department & Course Number      Sociology 98Tb  
 Course Title                              The Production of Poverty Knowledge

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroups(s) for this course

**Foundations of the Arts and Humanities**

- Literary and Cultural Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice \_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations of Society and Culture**

- Historical Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Analysis       X

**Foundations of Scientific Inquiry**

- Physical Science \_\_\_\_\_  
     *With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units*  
     *(or more)*
- Life Science \_\_\_\_\_  
     *With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units*  
     *(or more)*

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

The course introduces students to how poverty is studied and conceptualized in the United States and asks that they think critically about the ways these scholarly understandings are created. In so doing, this course asks two questions: What do we know about the causes and consequences of poverty in the U.S.? How do we know what we know about the causes and consequences of poverty in the U.S.? We will discuss the varied ways social scientists conceptualize, discuss, and research contemporary poverty, giving attention to different methodological approaches and what they can or cannot offer for understanding what it means to be poor in the United States.

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3. List faculty member(s) and teaching fellow who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):  
Dr. Stefan Timmermans (Professor); Pamela Prickett (teaching fellow)

4. Indicate what quarter you plan to teach this course:

2012-2013      Winter    X                         Spring \_\_\_\_\_

5. GE Course units       5.0   

6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

- General Knowledge

The course explores in detail theories and methodologies used to explain poverty in the United States. The course encourages students to think critically about the varied ways poverty has been studied and discussed over the past thirty years.
- Integrative Learning

Students will learn to compare theories about the causes and consequences of poverty, which have developed by sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and economists. In written assignments students must synthesize different disciplinary and theoretical perspectives in order to discover what is gained (and lost) within each perspective. For the final paper, students will integrate these different theories by studying one of poverty's core themes, highlighting what in that area is understudied, and then propose a way of filling that intellectual gap with innovative research.
- Ethical Implications

The course will inform students about poverty policy in the U.S. and the ways policy solutions often fail to address the core causes of poverty. In so doing, students will evaluate ethically the implications of these policies as citizens and future leaders.
- Cultural Diversity

The course analyzes how poverty is distributed in the U.S. thereby relating poverty to issues of race, ethnicity, and gender. Students will explore the diverse experiences of the poor through readings that cover a range of subgroups in the U.S., including but not limited to African Americans, Latinos, and single mothers. It is a requirement that students approach these issues with tolerance and cultural sensitivity.
- Critical Thinking

The primary goal of the course is to push students to make critical and logical assessments of research and policy on poverty in the U.S.
- Rhetorical Effectiveness

Students will learn to frame and deliver reasoned and persuasive arguments about the causes and consequences of poverty during class discussions and in writing, of which there are several opportunities throughout the quarter to improve rhetorical skills.
- Problem-solving

The course is focused on discussing the problems of poverty. More specifically, the final paper assignment requires students to demonstrate an ability to determine what gaps exist in our scholarly understandings about poverty and to propose a way to solve that problem through research.
- Library & Information Literacy

Students will need to search, select, organize, and manage information on a proposed final paper topic throughout the term, using a variety of traditional and digital sources.

<b>(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK</b>
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1. Seminar:

3 (hours)

**(A) TOTAL student contact per week**  **(HOURS)**

<b>(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)</b>
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- |                                     |            |         |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 1. General Review & Preparation:    | <u>n/a</u> | (hours) |
| 2. Reading                          | <u>7</u>   | (hours) |
| 3. Group Projects:                  | <u>n/a</u> | (hours) |
| 4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams: | <u>n/a</u> | (hours) |
| 5. Information Literacy Exercises:  | <u>n/a</u> | (hours) |
| 6. Written Assignments:             | <u>3</u>   | (hours) |
| 7. Research Activity:               | <u>2</u>   | (hours) |

**(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week**  **(HOURS)**

**GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal 15 hours/week**        15

## **The Production of Poverty Knowledge**

**Soc 98** (Proposed CUTF syllabus for Winter or Spring 2013)

Pamela Prickett  
209 Haines Hall  
Office Hours: TBD  
prickett@ucla.edu

### **Course Description**

The main objective of the course is to encourage students to think critically about how scholarly understandings about poverty are created. In so doing, this course asks two key questions:

- (1) What do we know about the causes and consequences of poverty in the U.S.?
- (2) How do we know what we know about the causes and consequences of poverty in the U.S.?

We will discuss the varied ways social scientists conceptualize, discuss, and research contemporary poverty, giving attention to different methodological approaches and what they can or cannot offer for understanding what it means to be poor in the United States. We will examine current government measures of poverty and question whether they adequately capture inequality. Students will learn about contemporary policy approaches aimed at alleviating poverty and why they often fail to eradicate problems for affected individuals and families. Lastly, students will produce research proposals that offer innovative ways to advance the literature on poverty and inequality in an attempt to prepare them for graduate school or policy research.

To accomplish these goals, the course is divided into three units. The first four weeks provide an overview of the major theoretical approaches used by sociologists to explain the persistence of poverty in the United States, with a heavy emphasis on research related to urban poverty. The readings cover a range of research methods, including but not limited to ethnography, interviews, surveys, and quantitative methods. We will spend a great deal of time trying to understand how different methodological approaches produce different types of knowledge. Then, we will spend four weeks putting these theories to work to explain specific cases – welfare, education, crime, and health. In the remaining two weeks we turn from consumers of knowledge to producers of knowledge by working together to come up with new ideas for future research. This will be achieved through independent research as well as by “workshopping” student papers in class.

### **Classroom etiquette**

Many students will come to class with preconceived ideas about the controversial topics to be covered throughout the term, such as welfare policy or teenage pregnancy. You may have strong opinions about course topics based on your personal experiences, and I encourage you to share them as they relate to the readings or class discussions. In fact, I want you to use this course to question why you have these ideas and how they developed. This is part of the process of being critical. That said being a critical consumer of knowledge does not grant you license to be

disrespectful. NO DISRESPECT FOR ANY PERSON WILL BE TOLERATED. Instead, try to keep an open mind. You may learn to see these “problems” in new ways and find yourself changing the way you think about poverty. At least, that is my hope!

## Grading

Students will be assessed in the following manner:

### 1. Class participation (20%)

In order for this seminar to be effective, students must come to class every week prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Reading the text just before class starts is not enough to fully participate – you must give yourself enough time after reading to think about and reflect on what you have read. Please bring the readings and your notes with you to class each week. Also, to facilitate informed discussions please skim news websites to stay abreast of contemporary public discourse on poverty. This portion of the course grade is also where you will be assessed for your participation in the paper workshop in Week 9.

### 2. Reaction essays (30%)

Three 500-word reaction essays – each worth 10% of your final grade – are due throughout the term (specifically, Weeks 2, 4, and 11). Detailed questions for each essay will be posted on the course website one week prior to the expected due date. In general, these essays are for you to offer your critical assessments of readings AND class discussions. You will be asked to draw on specific points made by students and myself, so you will have to attend class to be able to adequately answer the questions (and therefore receive full credit).

### 3. Final project: prospectus, first draft, peer review, and final draft (50%)

This project consists of four parts:

Paper prospectus – 5%

First draft – 10%

Peer review – 5%

Final draft – 30%

The paper prospectus is due Week 6 and should include the student’s chosen paper topic, a brief outline of major arguments and proposed research plan, and an annotated bibliography with the 5-7 most important sources the student expects to use in his/her paper.

A draft of your paper is due in class during Week 8. I will make brief comments about the ideas and structure of the paper and will hand these back to you the following week so that you have time to incorporate my suggestions into your final paper. At that time, we will also hold an in-class paper workshop meant to mimic the types of workshops held by graduate students in the sociology department. You will present a 5-10 minute synopsis of your paper for the class and then we will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a group.

Also that week you will participate in a one-on-one written peer review. I will assign you a course “buddy” early in the term. This will be your go-to person to email and/or call if you miss

a class or have an administrative question. This will be the person whose paper you are required to read and comment on in week 9. I will post a set of questions on the course website that you should use in your 1-2 page peer review with copies due both to your “buddy” and me.

The final paper is due Week 10 and should be at least 15 pages in length. Students will select a theory or case from the class (e.g. welfare, survival strategies, etc) and critically engage with the literature on that subject. You will need to compare that literature over time to understand what about our knowledge in this substantive area has changed and why. What contributions have social scientists made towards understanding the problem? What remains unknown or understudied? The second half of the paper will then be a research proposal that puts forth a plan to investigate one of these said gaps in the literature. Establish why we need to know more about this and how you would go about trying to study it. Rather than going out and conducting the actual research, you will need to develop a methods plan (what types of questions to ask if using interviews; what data sets available if prefer quantitative methods; archives you would access for historical methods, etc.). Students do not need to have experience in these methods but instead an interest in learning more about them.

\*Please note: should you wish to develop this proposal into an actual research project, I will happily put you in contact with the organizers of the Sociology honors program who organize a year-long research seminar, or I will personally help you transform it to essay-format for admission to graduate school.

### Extra Credit

Each week (except the first and last) you will have the opportunity to explore a topic in further detail, if you so desire. I have included a “recommended reading” that delves deeper into the week’s theme. For extra credit, you may submit a 500-word critical response to the recommended reading worth 0.5 total grade points. This extra half-point will be added to your final grade at the end of the term. You may submit a **maximum of two** extra credit responses during the term.

The response is due the same week as the reading is assigned. No late responses accepted. Your response should include a summary of the author’s argument/s, what kind of evidence the author uses to support his or her claims, and how the reading relates to the required texts for that week.

### Required Texts

In addition to selected readings available on the course website or online through the library', students are expected to purchase or borrow the following books because we will read them in their entirety (or close thereto).

1. William Julius Wilson (1987). *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner-City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
2. Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (2003). *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*. New York: Scribner.

3. Sudhir A. Venkatesh (2008). *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. New York: Penguin Books.

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

Please refer to the attached reading list for more details about specific readings.

#### **Week 1: Introduction**

Definitions of poverty and current statistics  
Coverage of poverty, both in the news and entertainment media

##### Readings:

“*This Will Be on the Midterm. You Feel Me? Why so many colleges are teaching The Wire.*”  
([Slate article](#))

##### In-class activity:

Screening of an episode of HBO’s “The Wire”

#### **Week 2: “Structural” explanations, Part I**

Labor markets

##### Readings:

Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (Part I and Chapter 7)  
Newman, *No Shame in My Game*

Recommended: Wilson, *More than Just Race*

\*\*\**Reaction paper #1 critical response to “The Wire” due beginning of class (be sure to incorporate readings)*

#### **Week 3: “Structural” explanations, Part II**

Residential segregation (i.e. neighborhoods)

##### Readings:

Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*  
Charles, “Neighborhood Racial-Composition Preferences”

Also, please skim Orr, Larry, et al (2003). “Moving to Opportunity: Interim Impacts Evaluation”  
([HUD report link](#)-- executive summary only!).

Recommended: Harding, *Living the Drama*

**Week 4: “Cultural” explanations**

Culture of poverty; social isolation theory; survival strategies

Readings:

Lewis, “The Culture of Poverty”

Small et al, “Reconsidering Culture and Poverty”

LeBlanc, *Random Family* (entire book)

Recommended: Zhou and Bankston, *The New Second Generation*

\*\*\**Reaction paper #2 analysis of the so-called “culture vs. structure” debate due beginning of class*

**Week 5: Welfare**Readings:

Edin and Lein, *Making Ends Meet*

Hays, *Flat Broke with Children*

Recommend: Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare* excerpt

In-class activity: Los Angeles family budget & constructing welfare policy

**Week 6: Education**Readings:

Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*

Neckerman, *Schools Betrayed*

Recommended: Carter, “‘Black’ Cultural Capital” article

\*\*\**Research paper prospectus due beginning of class*

**Week 7: Health**Readings:

Abraham, *Mama Might be Better Off Dead*

“Enough To Make You Sick?” (2003, [NY Times link](#))

“A night in the ER: adrenaline, chaos and very long waits” (2011, [LA Times County/USC story link](#))

Recommended: Case and Paxson, “Children’s Health and Social Mobility”



**Week 8: Crime, violence, law enforcement**Readings:

Anderson, *Code of the Street*

Venkatesh, *Gang Leader for a Day* (entire book)

Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record"

Recommended: Patillo-McCoy, *Black Picket Fences*

*\*\*\*First draft research paper due beginning of class*

**Week 9: Student workshop**Readings:

Paper of your pre-assigned course "buddy" (bring 2 copies of your written review to class)

Recommended: Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists*

**Week 10: Conclusions**

Revisiting course themes

Comparisons with other countries

Future policy directions

Readings:

Smeeding, "Poor People in Rich Nations"

"It's Better to Be Poor in Norway than in the U.S."

(<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0414/p17s02-cogn.html>)

*\*\*\*Final research paper due beginning of class*

**Please note:** Reaction essay #3 reflecting on the course and fellow student presentations due during finals week



## New Course Proposal

	Sociology 98TB Production of Poverty Knowledge				
<a href="#">Course Number</a>	Sociology 98TB				
<a href="#">Title</a>	Production of Poverty Knowledge				
<a href="#">Short Title</a>	POVERTY KNOWLEDGE				
<a href="#">Units</a>	Fixed: 5				
<a href="#">Grading Basis</a>	Letter grade only				
<a href="#">Instructional Format</a>	Seminar - 3 hours per week				
<a href="#">TIE Code</a>	SEMT - Seminar (Topical) [T]				
<a href="#">GE Requirement</a>	Yes				
<a href="#">Major or Minor Requirement</a>	No				
<a href="#">Requisites</a>	Satisfaction of entry-level Writing requirement. Freshmen and sophomores preferred.				
<a href="#">Course Description</a>	Seminar, three hours. Enforced requisite: satisfaction of Entry-Level Writing requirement. Freshmen/sophomores preferred. Examination of how scholarly and public understandings of poverty in U.S. come to exist as they do, with emphasis on varied theoretical and methodological approaches used to create this knowledge. Letter grading.				
<a href="#">Justification</a>	Part of the series of seminars offered through the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows				
<a href="#">Syllabus</a>	File <a href="#">Sociology 98Tb syllabus.pdf</a> was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.				
<a href="#">Supplemental Information</a>	Professor Stefan Timmermans is the faculty mentor for this course.				
<a href="#">Grading Structure</a>	class participation - 20% reaction essays - 30% paper prospectus - 5% first draft - 10% peer review - 5% final draft 30%				
<a href="#">Effective Date</a>	Winter 2013				
<a href="#">Discontinue Date</a>	Summer 1 2013				
<a href="#">Instructor</a>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Title</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pamela Prickett</td> <td>Teaching Fellow</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Title	Pamela Prickett	Teaching Fellow
Name	Title				
Pamela Prickett	Teaching Fellow				
<a href="#">Quarters Taught</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Winter <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer				
<a href="#">Department</a>	Sociology				
<a href="#">Contact</a>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>E-mail</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CATHERINE GENTILE</td> <td>cgentile@oid.ucla.edu</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	E-mail	CATHERINE GENTILE	cgentile@oid.ucla.edu
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## ROUTING STATUS

Role: Registrar's Office

Status: Processing Completed

Role: Registrar's Publications Office - Hennig, Leann Jean (lhennig@registrar.ucla.edu) - 56704

Status: Added to SRS on 7/27/2012 1:53:01 PM

Changes: Title, Description

Comments: Edited course description into official version.

Role: Registrar's Scheduling Office - Thomson, Douglas N (dthomson@registrar.ucla.edu) - 51441

Status: Added to SRS on 7/16/2012 11:46:03 AM

Changes: Short Title

Comments: No Comments

Role: FEC School Coordinator - Castillo, Myrna Dee Figurac (mcastillo@college.ucla.edu) - 45040

Status: Returned for Additional Info on 7/13/2012 3:55:19 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: Routing to Doug Thomson in the Registrar's Office

Role: FEC Chair or Designee - Meranze, Michael (meranze@history.ucla.edu) - 52671

Status: Approved on 6/26/2012 4:28:24 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: I wonder if she knows that there are actually histories of the production of knowledge about poverty?

Role: L&amp;S FEC Coordinator - Castillo, Myrna Dee Figurac (mcastillo@college.ucla.edu) - 45040

Status: Returned for Additional Info on 6/11/2012 2:57:45 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: Routing to Michael Meranze for FEC approval

Role: CUTF Coordinator - Gentile, Catherine (cgentile@oid.ucla.edu) - 68998

Status: Approved on 6/11/2012 1:39:24 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: on behalf of Professor Kathleen L. Komar, chair, CUTF Program

Role: Initiator/Submitter - Gentile, Catherine (cgentile@oid.ucla.edu) - 68998

Status: Submitted on 6/11/2012 1:38:42 PM

Comments: Initiated a New Course Proposal

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Comments or questions? Contact the Registrar's Office at  
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