Course Description

This seminar provides a foundation and overview for students interested in understanding the intersection between social work and sociology. The readings bring together sociological theory and scholarship as they relate to contemporary social work and social welfare issues. Topics, chosen to illustrate the intersection of the two fields and to bring together expertise from both perspectives, may include poverty, social stratification, and health. Beyond the Joint Sociology/Social Work students, the course is expected to attract joint Social Work/social science students from other disciplines, as well as graduate students in economics, public policy, political science, psychology, and other fields. The course will include activities such as guest speakers, works-in-progress discussions, readings, and presentations.

The seminar will focus in depth on such topics as:

- The sociological perspective on current U.S. society and issues pertinent to social welfare policy, services, and practice
- The divergence and convergence of sociological and social welfare/social work perspectives on social problems in the U.S. such as poverty & inequality, family demography, health & illness, immigration and ethnic identity, social service policy and organization
- Theoretical and methodological approaches in contemporary social work research and in sociology, how to apply sociological frameworks and perspectives to address dilemmas in social welfare and social work
- The need for sociological research and interdisciplinary influences for constructing the knowledge base of social welfare policy, services, and practice

Prerequisites: The course is open to doctoral students in all departments and programs. Master’s students in social work, urban planning, public policy, nursing, women’s studies, African American studies, and other related fields may also enroll with the permission of the instructor.
Required Readings *(books plus articles on CTools, still a work in progress, 12.2014)*


Course Organization and Assignments

The course will be conducted as a seminar that combines short lectures by the instructor, presentations by students, and semi-structured discussions of course topics and readings. To be successful, a seminar requires the full participation of all members. This requires active and critical engagement with the course material, including the assigned readings.

**In-Class participation/presentation (50%)**

Since the success of a seminar depends on the participation and mutual responsibility of all its members, it is expected that students will prepare the readings assignments for each week, and participate regularly, fully, and in a manner that demonstrates respect for their colleagues. Further details and a schedule of presentations will be discussed in class.

**Due:** Weekly

**Paper: Review and Integrative Essay (50%)**

Students will select a topic of interest and develop a set of references that present a reasonably good slice of the state of knowledge in basic research scholarship and applied practice/policy in the field. The paper will develop a critical review of what we know and what gaps in knowledge/further questions the studies raise. The paper will then begin to develop a research program that proposes to address the emerging questions/gaps. The paper should be written to a policy research funder, such as a foundation, aiming to develop new needed knowledge in this area. It should average 10 pp. double-spaced in length. The ideal for practicing integrative and innovative thinking would be to review both sociological and social work/welfare/social policy articles/book chapters that utilize a variety of methods and focus on either place or people-based analyses, or that debate individual-based vs. structure-based processes or solutions to the social problem of focus. Time will be set aside in the seminar to discuss students’ progress and problems with their essays and to present to the class on your review and developing paper.

**Due:** Set of references due by winter break; Paper due by last week of class

Course Topics & Required Readings
Week 1: January 9  Course introduction & getting organized

Week 2: January 16  Moving to Opportunity Experiment

Readings, facilitated by Sandy


Week 3: January 23  Changing Geography of Poverty

Readings, facilitated by Alex


Week 4: January 30  Suburban Poverty

Readings, facilitated by Alex


Week 5: February 6  Antipoverty Organizations & Place

Guest lecture by Eve Garrow & 2 students facilitate discussion
**ESSAY TOPICS DUE**

**Week 6: February 13 Scarcity & Decision Making**

Readings, facilitated by Rick Rodems


**Week 7: February 20 School Reform, Context, & Students**

Readings, facilitated by Sandy


**Week 8: February 27 People in Reentry from Incarceration**

Guest lecture by Reuben Miller & 2 students facilitate discussion

- Miller, Reuben. (forthcoming) Devolving the carceral state: Race, prisoner reentry, and the micro-politics of urban poverty management. Punishment & Society. (Ctools)


**REFERENCES FOR ESSAYS DUE**

**NO CLASS – Winter Break**

**Week 9: March 13: Poverty & Health Care**

Readings, facilitated by Alex


**Week 10: March 20: Trust & Networks**

Guest lecture by Judith Levine & 2 students facilitate discussion


**Week 11: March 27  Papers in Progress presentations**

**Week 12: April 3 Papers in progress presentations continued**

**Week 13: April 10**

Attend National Poverty Center Lecture: *Poverty, Policy, and People: 25 Years of Research and Training at the University of Michigan*

Week 14: April 17 Summary Debates: People vs. Place, Income vs. Services

Last Day of Class: ESSAY PAPER DUE