Required Purchase:

Friedman, David.  *Hidden Order; the Economics of Everyday Life.*

Blank, Rebecca.  *It Takes a Nation.*

Kelso, William A.  *Poverty and the Underclass: Changing Perceptions of the Poor in America.*

Marris, Robin.  *Ending Poverty.*

Additional Readings:

It is important to read widely and critically in this area. You should read a good newspaper and newsmagazine on a regular basis, as stories related to poverty and discrimination appear frequently. Such stories provide a good basis for class discussion, especially by providing opportunities to use the theory developed in the course to help us understand what’s going on in the world. You can also find much information by using Internet: a number of sites specialize in information on poverty and discrimination. Three that may be of particular interest are the Joint Center for Poverty Research (http://www.jcpr.org/), at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago; the Urban Institute (http://www.urban.org/); and that of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin (http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/). A variety of think tanks do at least some of their research and publication on poverty and discrimination topics. They include (among others) the Brookings Institution (http://www.brookings.org/); the Heritage Foundation (http://www.heritage.org/); and the Cato Institute (http://www.cato.org/). Other sites may be found by using one of the search engines available on the Internet.  Yahoo, for example, provides access under its Society and Culture listing.

The following books are also recommended as resources for your annotations.  They should be good supplements for any of the dimensions of poverty we’ll study this semester.


Dworkin, Bermant, and Brown, eds.  *Markets and Morals.*


Garfinkel and Haveman.  *Earnings Capacity, Poverty, and Inequality.*

Hartmann, ed.  *Comparable Worth: New Directions for Research*
Osberg. *Economic Inequality in the United States.*

Papadimitriou and Wolff, eds. *Poverty and Prosperity in the US in the Late Twentieth Century.*


Shulman and Darity, eds. *The Question of Discrimination.*


The following are also available in Moody Library. You can find them on the shelves on the second floor. The abbreviations used in the listings are: AER: American Economic Review; JBS: Journal of Black Studies; JEL: Journal of Economic Literature; JEP: Journal of Economic Perspectives; JLE: Journal of Labor Economics. You may also wish to consult the Journal of Human Resources, as well as other articles and issues of the above journals.


Blau and Kahn, “Gender Differences in Pay.” JEP, Fall 2000.


Gale and Scholz, “Intergenerational Transfers and the Accumulation of Wealth.” JEP, Fall 1994.


Jorgenson, "Did We Lose the War on Poverty?" JEP, Winter 1998.


Sobel, Joel, "Can We Trust Social Capital?" JEL, March 2002.


The following Symposia are all located in the Journal of Economic Perspectives. Please choose one of the articles, rather than the summary article.


“Income Inequality and Trade.” Summer 1995.

“Intergenerational Mobility.” Summer 2002.


Triest, "Has Poverty Gotten Worse?" JEP, Winter 1998.


I strongly encourage you also to sample widely among the May issues of the American Economic Review. This is the Papers and Proceedings issue, carrying papers from the annual meetings held in January of the relevant year. These are generally pretty accessible to most readers, with some exceptions. They are also relatively short, adding to their appeal. There are many sessions devoted to issues of poverty, discrimination, inequality, and welfare reform. I especially recommend the 1994 issue, as it contains more than the usual number of articles related to poverty and discrimination. You may also wish to examine the May 1996 issue of The Quarterly Journal of Economics, which is devoted to the economics of social problems and social policy. Articles from sociology and social work journals also may be useful sources of information.

Written work:

Each of you will turn in two different kinds of written work during the term.

Annotated Bibliography:

This provides a way for you to extend your reading beyond that of the text. There is much writing in the areas of poverty and discrimination, and one of the purposes of the course is to encourage you to sample this writing widely. Please choose articles from those listed above.
Five (5) annotations are required, due on Fridays as indicated in the course schedule. They should be typed and should include the following:

a. A brief summary of the contents of the article. One to one and one-half pages should be sufficient for most articles, though some may require a longer summary. 50% of your grade comes here.

b. A brief evaluation (response to) the article from your own perspective, emphasizing how the article fits into this course; any questions the article may raise for you; and whether you agree with the author’s argument, based on work we have done in this course, on your own experience and knowledge, or work you have done in other courses. One to one and one-half pages should be sufficient. 50% of your grade comes here.

Essay:

Your essay will begin from a prompt (to be handed out later), which will probably take the form of several quotations from the materials we’ve used during the semester. You will be asked to analyze, evaluate, and otherwise consider these quotations—that is, to pit them against one another. You’ll want to summarize accurately the argument of each author; consider the presuppositions underlying the argument (or contention); the strengths and weaknesses of each; confront each with such empirical evidence as is available; and come to a conclusion (evaluation) of your own, based on your arguments. That is, the essay will ask you to participate in a conversation with the authors selected, your part of the conversation being based on what we read, discussed, and otherwise have studied this term.

The stress here is on the word “essay”. I don’t see these essays as being only a report on existing literature. Rather, the goal is to have you think about a particular dimension of poverty or discrimination in some depth, beginning from an existing argument. The idea is for you to come up with a reasoned, coherent stance on an issue. Such a stance can support or oppose existing thought or practice, but it should reflect your position and thinking on an issue.

I’d encourage you to consult with me at each stage of your writing process.

Late papers must receive a grade of zero. This is a numerical way of saying that late work is not accepted.

Examinations:

There will be two (2) examinations during the term, given on Friday, February 13; and Friday, March 26. The final examination is comprehensive and will be given on Friday, May 7, 9-11 (9 am section) or Monday, May 10, 2-4 (12 pm section).

Attendance at examinations is required. There will be no makeup examinations given in this course. If you miss an examination you must fully document the reason for the absence; and this should be done before the examination, if possible. Absences will not be excused except for the most serious, unavoidable reasons. Acceptable reasons include official University business; or serious illness or death, to you or to a member of your immediate family. An unexcused absence from an examination will result in a grade of zero for that examination.

An excused absence permits you to substitute the average of your other examination scores (including that of the final examination) for that of the missed examination.

Examinations will have a mixture of questions: identification questions (perhaps); true, false, and uncertain (and explain); problems; and essays.
Grading:
My perception of your command of the course material will determine your course grade. That is, you tell me what to record as your grade by your performance on examinations, the annotations, and the essay. You may earn a maximum of 500 points in this course: the annotations are worth 50 points (10 points each); the essay is worth 100 points; each examination during the term is worth 100 points; and the final examination is worth 150 points.

Please note that Baylor University requires you to miss no more that 25% of the term’s classes if you wish to receive credit for this course. This means that 12 absences or more require me to record a course grade of F.

The point ranges for each letter grade are as follows:

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There is no such thing as a curve.

I reserve the right to add 1 or 2 points to your total to recognize improvement, class participation, and consistent attendance.

Course Purpose:

Why is it that some people are left behind as an economy grows? Why is it, in the richest economy the world has ever known, that we see destitution that seems intractable? Why is it that poverty seems to be concentrated in certain groups (basically characterized by race and gender): what role does discrimination play in this outcome? Why are some nations rich, and others poor? We’d like to be able to answer questions like this, and others, as well: How can poverty be reduced? Have anti-poverty programs eroded incentives to work and save? Why is it that expenditures in relief of the poor have increased substantially over time, but the numbers of the poor (and the per cent of the population in poverty) seem not to fall—at least not as much as we would hope? How are family structure issues linked to poverty? What can economics, as a way of thinking, contribute to our understanding of these issues?

This course will use the tools of economic analysis to examine these and other questions. The basic tools of supply and demand, especially as they are applied to the operation of the labor market, will provide the core concepts as we try to increase our understanding of the nature, causes, and consequences of poverty and discrimination, and the public policy responses to them.

Course Schedule: (Provisional. B refers to the Blank book, F to the Friedman book, K to the Kelso book, and M to the Marris book.)

January 12: M, Introduction
14:       M, 1-2
16:       B, Introduction; B, 1; K, appendix; (“What do we mean by poverty, exactly?”)
19:       No class; Martin Luther King Day
21:       K, 1-2
23:       Continued; Annotation 1 due
26:       F, 1-2; Pollack, “Notes on How Economists Think”
http://www.jcpr.org/wpfiles/Pollak.pdf
28:       F, 2; F, 13 [pp. 180-182]; F, 12 [pp. 172-175]
30:       F, 4
February 2: F, 4; F, 5
  4:       F, 5
  6:       F, 6; Annotation 2 due
  9:       F, 7
11:       F, 7
February 13: Examination 1
16: F, 7; F, 8
18: F, 11
20: F, 16 [pp. 227-233]
23: F, 17
25: F, 14
27: F, 14; Annotation 3 due

March 1: M, 3-4
3: M, 5-6
5: M, 8-9; [hyperlink to huduser.org]
8: B, 2; Annotation 4 due
10: K, 3
12: K, 4
22: K, 5
24: K, 6; F, 21;
[http://courses.washington.edu/ssci200/Week4Lundberg.pdf]

April 2: K, 9
5: K, 10; [http://courses.washington.edu/ssci200/Work_lecture.pdf]
[http://www.brook.edu/press/review/spring98/loury.htm]
7: Continued; [http://www.bu.edu/irsd/files/socialethnic.pdf]
[http://www.bu.edu/irsd/files/vanderbilt_2.pdf]
14: Continued; [http://www.bu.edu/irsd/files/socialethnic.pdf]
16: K, 11-12; Essay due
19: K, 13
21: K, 15
23: B, 3
26: B, 4-5
28: B, 7; K, 16; [http://www.brook.edu/press/review/oldtoc.htm, Summer 2001]
30: Continued

May 3: Continued
7: Final examination [9 am section], 9-11
10: Final examination [12 pm section], 2-4