

Law, Poverty, and Inequality

Criminology, Law, and Justice #394

Spring 2021

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 - 1:45pm

Instructor

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Teaching Assistant

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-1 and Thursday 3-5:30 via Zoom

Course Description

This course examines how the law is used to produce, regulate, increase, and reduce poverty and inequality in American society. We will cover the ideas and social forces that developed the American welfare state, its successes and failures, and its erosion in the postwar era. Through this trajectory, we will study the criminalization of poverty, and struggles for health care, housing, immigration, civil rights, and more.

The ideas and themes of this course are important at all times, but given the enormous economic, health, and social crises we face, they are more important than ever. With this in mind, the course will adapt to provide more space for students to consider and envision the social policies they believe are necessary to build a better future.

By the end of the course, students should understand

- What poverty is, how it is measured, and how it has varied over time
- The political and legal history of anti-poverty law and policy
- The gender, race, immigration, health, housing, and disability dimensions of poverty law
- The criminalization of welfare and its impacts on poor people
- The role of social movements in combating poverty and changing public policy
- Career trajectories available to students interested in poverty law

Online Course Logistics

- Lecture
 - Tuesdays: Multiple short lectures will be pre-recorded and posted online. Slides are available here: [CLJ 394 Slides - Spring 2021](#).
- Discussion
 - Thursdays: Online Discussions will be held from 12:30-1:45pm. All students should attend every discussion section, as these sessions will be immensely helpful for learning the course material. However, each week, about 1/6 of the class will be assigned to participate in each discussion section. Discussion sections are not recorded, and students are not required to turn on their cameras.
 - Schedule of assigned discussion section participation:
 - Zoom Discussion Link: <https://uic.zoom.us/j/6937333148>
- Readings
 - Required: Nadasen, Premilla, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, eds. *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996*. Routledge, 2013.
 - Edelman, Peter. *Not a crime to be poor: The criminalization of poverty in America*. The New Press, 2019.
 - All other readings will be posted to Blackboard
- Office Hours
 - Book a Zoom or Phone appointment: <https://rahimkurwa.youcanbook.me>

Assignments and Grading

- 10%: Each week, 5-6 students will be asked to contribute to the weekly zoom discussion.
- There will be 4 take home exams during the semester, these will have short answer questions (roughly half page answers per q).

The emphasis of the course grading is not so much on perfection but on serious engagement with the material and ideas. I know that we are learning and working through enormous challenges, and I am structuring the course and grading with that in mind. I anticipate that students will need to miss time occasionally due to the pandemic and its social and economic fallout, and there are multiple avenues built into the grading to allow students to miss assignments/midterms without requiring an excuse, doctor's note, etc.

Part 1 – History

Week 1 - Introduction and Background for the Course

Weekly Readings:

- Introduction: Nadasen, Premilla, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, eds. *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996*.

Week 2: The Early History of the Welfare State and the Origins of the New Deal

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 1 - Piven, Frances Fox, and Richard Cloward. *Regulating the poor: The functions of public welfare*. Vintage, 2012.
- Chapter 13 - Trattner, Walter I. *From poor law to welfare state: A history of social welfare in America*. Simon and Schuster, 2007.
- Discussion Group 1 - Last names A-D

Week 3: The New Deal and the Rise of Labor Law

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 1 - Nadasen, Premilla, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, eds. *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996*. Routledge, 2013.
- Helgeson, Jeffrey. "American Labor and Working-Class History, 1900–1945." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. 2016.
- Discussion Group 2 - Last names E-Ma

Week 4: The War on Poverty and the Origins of Welfare Reform

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 2 - Nadasen, Premilla, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, eds. *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996*. Routledge, 2013.
- Chapter 3 - Nadasen, Premilla, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, eds. *Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996*. Routledge, 2013.
- War on Poverty Handout.pdf
- Discussion Group 3 - Last names Mi-Pe

Midterm 1 Posted February 4th

Part 2 – Key Issues in Poverty Studies

Week 5: How the Nation Changed after 1970

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 2 - Bonnet, François. The upper limit: How low-wage work defines punishment and welfare. University of California Press, 2019.
- Discussion Group 4 - Last names Po-Z

Week 6: The End of Welfare as We Knew It

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 4 - Nadasen, Premilla, Jennifer Mittelstadt, and Marisa Chappell, eds. Welfare in the United States: A History with Documents, 1935–1996. Routledge, 2013.
- Tressie McMillan Cotton - The Poor Can't Afford Not to Wear Nice Clothes
- Discussion Group 1 - Last names A-D

Week 7: The Criminalization of Poverty

Weekly Readings:

- Introduction and Chapter 1 - Edelman, Peter. Not a crime to be poor: The criminalization of poverty in America. The New Press, 2019.
- Discussion Group 2 - Last names E-Ma

Week 8: The Criminalization of Welfare

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 6 - Edelman, Peter. Not a crime to be poor: The criminalization of poverty in America. The New Press, 2019.
- Discussion Group 3 - Last names Mi-Pe

Midterm 2 Posted March 4th

Part 3 – Today's Crises, Part 1

Week 9: Technology and Automation

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 2 - Eubanks, Virginia. Automating inequality: How high-tech tools profile, police, and punish the poor. St. Martin's Press, 2018.
- Discussion Group 4 - Last names Po-Z

Week 10: Disability and Immigration

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 4 - Edelman, Peter. Not a crime to be poor: The criminalization of poverty in America. The New Press, 2019.
- Bernstein et al. Safety Net Access in the Context of the Public Charge Rule: Voices of Immigrant Families
- ***Discussion Cancelled***

Week 11: Spring Break

Week 12: Education

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 7 - Edelman, Peter. Not a crime to be poor: The criminalization of poverty in America. The New Press, 2019.
- "You are Running a De Facto Segregated University: Racial Segregation and the City University of New York: 1961-1968" in The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North. NYU Press.
- Eve Ewing - We Shall Not be Moved
- Discussion Group 1 - Last names A-D

Midterm 3 Posted April 1

Part 4: Today's Crises, Part 2

Week 13: Housing

Weekly Readings:

- Chapter 8 - Edelman, Peter. Not a crime to be poor: The criminalization of poverty in America. The New Press, 2019.
- Discussion Group 2 - Last names E-Ma

Week 14: Labor and Inequality (+wage and time theft)

Weekly Readings:

- Ahlquist, John S. "Labor unions, political representation, and economic inequality." Annual Review of Political Science 20 2017: 409-432.
- Discussion Group 3 - Last names Mi-Pe

Week 15 - Health Care

Weekly Readings:

- Zewde, Naomi, and Christopher Wimer. "Anti-poverty impact of Medicaid growing with state expansions over time." Health Affairs 38, no. 1 2019: 132-138.
- Jones et al. 2020. COVID-19 Abortion Bans and Their Implications for Public Health
- Discussion Group 4 - Last names Po-Z

Week 16: Social Movements

Weekly Readings:

- Introduction and Chapter 5. Orleck, Annelise. Storming Caesars palace: How black mothers fought their own war on poverty. Beacon Press, 2005.
- Discussion Group - Everyone

Midterm 4 Posted April 29

Other policies and resources

Academic Misconduct: Instances of academic misconduct by students will be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy.

Attendance: Attendance is key to success in this class and is an important part of the grade. Exams will be based on material from lecture and readings, and lectures will help students interpret and contextualize readings. I will not take attendance at every class session. But when I do, students will be allowed to miss once for any reason (no medical or other reason required). If you have a serious barrier to attendance, please contact me.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who require accommodations for full access and participation in UIC programs should make an appointment with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) <https://drc.uic.edu/>. Please contact DRC at 312-413-2183 or 312-413-0123 (TDD) for assistance. Please discuss any accommodations with the professor. Whether you are registered or not, I also encourage you to discuss with me any potential accommodations, barriers or ways to improve your participation and learning in the class. You do not need formal documentation to come talk to me.

Additional Support: If you find yourself having difficulty in the class, please ask for help. I am committed to helping students reach their full potential in this course. If you have an issue beyond this class, please contact your college advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus. You can get a referral to the right place, or help on the spot, from advisors in the Undergraduate Success Center (USC) at usc@uic.edu

Counseling Services: You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center www.counseling.uic.edu. The Counseling Center is located in the Student Services building. You may contact them at 312-996-3490. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline from 6:00 pm – 10:30 pm. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis interventions at 312-996-5535.

Office Hours: Office hours refers to a student's chance to meet with the Professor in a one on one or small group setting. These are an opportunity for you to ask questions about the lectures, readings, the course, or other relevant issues. You have a right to the time blocked off for office hours, and I encourage you to take advantage of it by visiting office hours (at BSB 4050D) this semester. If you cannot make the times marked out, please let me know and we can make alternate arrangements.

Sexual Misconduct: If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources by contacting the Office for Access and Equity, <http://oae.uic.edu/>, 312-996-8670. Please note: Faculty, teaching assistants, and other university employees are mandated reporters of any specific incidents of sexual or gender-based violence or harassment. Thus, any disclosures of sexual or gender-based violence or harassment on or off campus made to faculty or teaching assistants, or other university employees would be forwarded to the

Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Office will then contact you regarding your rights, your option to participate in the investigation, interim safety measures and/or academic accommodations, and the need to proceed with an investigation (even if none is requested). Your participation in the process is voluntary. To make a report to UIC's Title IX office, contact Rebecca Gordon, EdD at TitleIX@uic.edu or (312) 996-5657

Religious Holidays: Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the faculty member by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the faculty member at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize the student for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give the student an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. If the student feels aggrieved, he/she may request remedy through the campus grievance procedure. <http://oae.uic.edu/docs/ReligiousHolidaysFY20152017.pdf>

Grievance procedure: UIC is committed to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity involving students and employees. Freedom from discrimination is a foundation for all decision making at UIC. Students are encouraged to study the University's "[Nondiscrimination Statement](#)". Students are also urged to read the document "[Public Formal Grievance Procedures](#)". Information on these policies and procedures is available on the University web pages of the Office of Access and Equity: <http://oae.uic.edu/>.

University Policies

- [Student Policies](#)
- [Student Handbook](#)
- [COVID-19 Policy Updates](#)

Student Resources

- [General UIC Resources](#)
- [Office of the Dean of Students](#)
- [COVID-19 Student Resources](#)
- [Disability Resource Center](#)
- [Wellness Center](#)
- [Campus Life Resources](#)