

Colloquium in Community Development: Poverty Alleviation Strategies

Spring 2012
Course #56-834-610-01
Tuesdays 6:00pm-8:40pm

Rutgers University-Camden

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Overview:

In this course we will evaluate various strategies for poverty alleviation at the community level in the US and developing countries. We will begin by assessing the fundamental causes of poverty and the tools the poor possess for survival. We will then address a number of income generating strategies, from encouraging entrepreneurship (microfinance, skills training) to participation in the global economy through manufacturing work. In addition, we will review the role of the state in poverty alleviation, particularly through cash transfer programs (welfare), and the role of education and health care in improving the living standards of individuals. Throughout the course we will focus on case studies to inform our analysis and provide a snapshot of current trends in community development.

As a colloquium, this course is meant to be an interactive learning experience. As such, there will be no formal lectures. Though the reading for this course is extensive, the course is meant to generate discussion rather than provide an exhaustive review of literature on poverty alleviation worldwide. In the first half of the class we will engage with the readings and rely on everyone to come prepared with questions to kick-start our discussions. In the second half of the course, students will work in groups to present assigned topics to their classmates. Through these presentations we will learn the benefits and challenges of various poverty alleviation strategies. Students will then submit an individual research paper.

Required Readings:

Krishna, Anirudh. 2010. *One Illness Away: Why People Become Poor and How They Escape Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Santiago Levy. 2006. *Progress Against Poverty: Sustaining Mexico's Progreso-Oportunidades Program*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Yunus, Muhammad. 2007. *Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism*. New York: Public Affairs Press.

Shipler, David K. 2005. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Vintage.

Lein, Laura, Deanna Schexnayder, Karen Douglas and Daniel Schroeder. 2007. *Life After Welfare: Reform and the Persistence of Poverty*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Iceland, John. 2006. *Poverty in America: A Handbook*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Karlan, Dean and Jacob Appel. 2011. *More Than Good Intentions: How a New Economics is Helping to Solve Global Poverty*. New York: Dutton.

Articles are posted on Sakai or are available online.

Policies

Department Student Learning Policy: This course is designed to contribute to the implementation of the Department's Student Learning Policy. The policy states that students should be able to:

1. Conduct research relevant to public policy and administration,
2. Write clearly and persuasively on public policy and management issues
3. Present information and ideas effectively orally
4. Show experience in working on public policy and administration
5. Apply knowledge and skills in a rewarding position.

The full policy is available on the Department of Public Policy and Administration website.

Disability Policy: Please advise me as soon as possible of any disability that may affect your performance in this course. I will make all necessary accommodations so that your learning, writing, and testing needs may be appropriately met. You are required by the University to provide documentation of the disability to the Student Life Office, Rutgers Learning Center, or Graduate School Dean.

Late Paper Policy: Late papers will be marked down one grade for every day they are tardy. Extensions will be granted only in extreme cases.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this course is mandatory. If you must miss class, you should contact me ahead of time.

Academic Integrity: All students of Rutgers-Camden are required to adhere to the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Violations of the Policy include cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. Should you have any questions regarding behavior that may be defined as a violation of the University's Policy, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me. Please see the following link for further information: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

Course Requirements and Grade Apportionment

1. Reading all assigned materials
2. Group Presentation.....20%
3. Research and Writing Project 1: Background and Evidence.....25%
4. Research and Writing Project 2: Argumentation and Recommendations.....25%
5. Active contributions to class discussions.....20%
6. Presentation of Research Paper.....10%

Group Presentation

Together with one or two classmates, you will lead a discussion on one poverty alleviation strategy. Students will sign up for a date to present on the first day of class. I have provided broad questions for your presentations, but the specific outline of your discussion is up to the group. Presenters should provide classmates with relevant background readings or videos prior to the discussion. You may use PowerPoint or any other teaching method you prefer.

Research and Writing Project:

For this assignment you will consider one strategy for alleviating poverty in a specific community. The choice and definition of "community" is entirely up to you. You may begin with a specific community in mind or your interest in a particular poverty alleviation strategy may direct you to a community in which the strategy

has been implemented. Before beginning this assignment, you should consult directly with me to make sure you are on the right track.

In part one of the paper, you will assess the following questions: 1) How can you describe existing poverty in your chosen community? 2) What are the causes behind poverty in the community? 3) How are people in this community currently surviving/coping? and 4) What current programs or assistance are available to this community? I expect that Part 1 of the paper will be approximately 10-pages in length with appropriate citations. The first part of the paper will be due to me by email on **February 20, 2012 by 2pm**.

In part two of the paper, you will submit your recommendations for specific poverty alleviation strategies in your community. You will need to assess what is or is not currently working and provide an argument for what would work to improve the lives of people in the community. Be direct in assigning specific recommendations to government, non-profit, or private sector actors. You will submit the complete paper to me by email by **May 1, 2012 at 2pm**. I expect that the full paper will be approximately 20-pages in length, including appropriate citations. You will also present the ideas from your paper to the class on either **April 17 or 24 (sign-ups in early April)**.

Participation and Discussion Facilitation:

This course will be conducted as a seminar. Your participation grade depends on your active contribution and preparation for class discussions. In the first half of this class this will include bringing a list of discussion questions for the class to consider. In the second half of the class, I expect active engagement with student presentations.

Schedule and Reading Assignments:

Week 1 – January 17 – Introduction, Review of the Syllabus What do we mean by “poverty alleviation”?

Karlan and Appel: Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: To Work Against Poverty

Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Prize Speech 2006, “Poverty Is a Threat to Peace”:
<http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=88>

Week 2 – January 24 – How is poverty defined in the US and in developing countries?

Iceland: Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Early Views of Poverty in America, and

Chapter 4: Characteristics of the Poverty Population

Sen, Amartya. 1999. "Poverty as Capability Deprivation." Chapter 4 in *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books. (Sakai)

Krishna: Chapter 2: Poverty Flows

Ravallion, M. 2010. "[Poverty Lines across the World](#)." Policy Research Working Paper 5284, World Bank, Washington DC. (Sakai)

Week 3 – Jan 31 – What are the causes behind poverty?

Iceland: Chapter 5: Causes of Poverty and Chapter 6: Why Poverty Remains High, Revisited

Krishna: Chapter 3: The Rising-Falling Tide and Chapter 4: Reasons for Descent: The Health Poverty Trap

New York Times, "Culture of Poverty Makes a Comeback"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/18/us/18poverty.html?pagewanted=all>

Haughton, Jonathan and Shahidur R. Khandker. 2002. Chapter 8: Understanding the Determinants of Poverty" in the *Handbook on Poverty and Inequality*. Washington, DC: World Bank. (Sakai)

Week 4 – February 7 – How do the poor survive in the US?

Iceland: Chapter 7: Poverty and Policy and Chapter 8: Conclusion

Shipler: Introduction: At the Edge of Poverty, Chapter 1: Money and Its Opposite, and Chapter 2: Work Doesn't Work

Review the Voices of Poverty site: <http://thevoicesofpoverty.org/poverty-stories>

Week 5 – February 14 - How do the poor survive in developing countries?

Collins et al. 2009. "Chapter 1: The Portfolios of the Poor" and "Chapter 2: The Daily Grind", in *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Sakai)

TBD Selected Chapters: Fields, Gary S. 2011. *Working Hard, Working Poor: A Global Journey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Sakai)

Week 6 – February 21 – Safety Nets: What role does “welfare” play in poverty alleviation in the US?

Lein et al.: *Life After Welfare: Reform and Persistence of Poverty*

Week 7 – February 28 – What role does “welfare” play in poverty alleviation in developing countries?

Levy: *Progress Against Poverty*

Week 8 – March 6 – Ending poverty through formal sector employment and participation in the global economy

Shipler: Chapter 3: Importing the Third World, Chapter 4: Harvest of Shame, and Chapter 5: The Daunting Workplace

Krishna: Chapter 6: Connecting Capability with Opportunity: Investing in Information

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2001. “Chapter 1: Serving in Florida” in *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books. (Sakai)

Yunus: Chapter 9 Information Technology, Globalization, and a Transformed World

Student Presentation: Is manufacturing or factory work a route out of poverty for citizens in the developing world?

Week 9 – March 20 – Encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting the informal sector

Karlan and Appel: Chapter 4: To Borrow, Chapter 5: To Pursue Happiness, Chapter 6: To Cooperate in Groups, and Chapter 7: To Save

Yunus: Chapter 1: A New Kind of Business, Chapter 2: Social Business: What It Is and What It Is Not, and Chapter 7: One Cup of Yogurt at a Time

Review David Roodman’s Microfinance Open Book Blog through the Center for Global Development: http://blogs.cgdev.org/open_book/ and read the 4-page CGD Brief for his new book *Due Dilligence: An Impertinent Inquiry into Microfinance*.

Student Presentation: Does microfinance lead women out of poverty? How can you measure the impact of microfinance? What is the evidence as to when microfinance improves the income of women?

Week 10 – March 27 – How can health policy and education reduce poverty?

Karlan and Appel: Chapter 9: To Learn and Chapter 10: To Stay Healthy

Elmore, Richard F. 2009. "School Improvement and the Reduction of Poverty."
Chapter 6 in *Poverty and Poverty Alleviation Strategies in North America*, edited by
Mary Jo Bane and Rene Zenteno. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Sakai)

Student Presentation: How do you turn a good education into a good (-paying) job?

Week 11 – April 3 – Housing, Land reform and upgrading informal settlements

Perlman, Janice. 2010. "Reflections on Public Policy." Chapter 10 in *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*. New York: Oxford University Press.

TBD selected chapter from Cisneros, Henry G. and Lora Engdahl, eds. 2009. *From Despair to Hope Hope VI and the New Promise of Public Housing in America's Cities*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Student Presentation: Are people who receive housing benefits better off in the long run?

Week 12 – April 10 - Can Farming and Agricultural Work Pay Off?

Karlan and Appel: Chapter 8: To Farm

Student Presentation: Do rural cooperatives improve the lives of the poor?

Week 13 – April 17 – Presentation of Individual Papers

Week 14 – April 24 – Presentation of Individual Papers