



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

## **SOCI 341: WELFARE AND SOCIETY**

SPRING 2020

Wednesdays and Fridays 8:40-9:55am

### **Instructor Information**

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Dr. Sarah K. Bruch, MPA  
Associate Professor  
Biden School of Public Policy & Administration  
Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice  
298A Graham Hall  
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Office Hours: by appointment

### **Course Overview**

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This course examines social welfare with a particular focus on poverty and economic marginality, and the role of social welfare policies in addressing these social challenges. In the course, we will explore how we understand poverty and the role of government. We will review current social welfare policies, examine their effectiveness, and explore how these programs are experienced.

### **Course Goals/Learning Outcomes**

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Through this course, students will:

1. Be exposed to sociological theories and understandings of social welfare, poverty, and economic marginalization in US society;
2. Gain knowledge of social welfare policies including how they are designed and how effective they are at mitigating economic marginality.
3. Learn how to think analytically and critically in relation to social welfare and social policy.

### **Course Format**

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This course is not a lecture class. Most of our class time will be devoted to activities and discussions, sometimes working as individuals, sometimes in groups. The instructor will provide background, content, and key ideas interspersed with these activities.

The issues we deal with in this course are often controversial, and you may be exposed to arguments you do not agree with in the readings, discussions, class activities, or lectures. A great deal of learning occurs in the classroom, and as part of this process you are encouraged to voice your opinion about these issues. This is not a class where we all need to agree at the end of the day. In fact, disagreement is a good way to learn because it requires critical thinking and reflection on one's own position.

Together, we need to create a comfortable environment by sharing ideas, observations, and questions respectfully; such an environment is only possible when instructors and students treat each other with mutual respect and listen without interruption. Therefore, we will not tolerate words or actions that result in hostility in the classroom. The following ideas help us create a positive atmosphere:

- We are all knowledgeable in different ways. We all have something to teach and something to learn. A well-rounded understanding of the social world cannot be achieved without the participation of many different perspectives.
- No one is to be blamed for the circumstances of their existence that have been beyond their control. We cannot be blamed for repeating misinformation we have learned in our social locations, but we can hold each other accountable to not repeat misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
- Learn to appreciate different personalities. Try to draw out those who are quieter than others, but respect people's comfort levels and learn to recognize active listening. Those who are more assertive should try to recognize and refrain from dominating the conversation.
- Everyone should be encouraged to rethink the assumptions and knowledge we bring into the classroom; approach learning with an open mind.
- Respect each person's experience, never demean or trivialize another's life experience. It is possible to voice your point of view without offending and alienating your peers.

Each class is a learning community with a unique dynamic. I welcome and will thoughtfully consider critical feedback and constructive suggestions for changes that may enhance the classroom dynamic.

## Course Material/Readings

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The readings for this course are drawn from a wide range of books, articles, videos and podcasts. They include scholarly literature, policy briefs, and journalism.

All readings (with the exceptions of the books listed below) and course material will be available on the Canvas site for the course ([www.udel.edu/canvas](http://www.udel.edu/canvas)).

Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Mariner Books.

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House.

Course announcements will be posted on the Canvas site. If there are urgent messages regarding class, messages will be sent to your UD email accounts.

## Course Requirements

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### 1. IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVITIES (30% course grade)

The class will be more interactive than many classes you might have had in the past. During many of the class periods we will do in-class activities and have discussions that facilitate the learning of different aspects of the course material.

It is essential that you come to class having done the readings. By engaging in activities and discussions, you will be able to learn from one another, develop your ability to clearly articulate your ideas, and build your confidence in discussing issues related to social inequality.

Participation is assessed by observing your engagement in class activities and discussion in lecture and discussion section, as well as through several activities you turn in over the course of the semester.

### 2. SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENTS (50% course grade)

Several times throughout the semester you will complete short (2-3 page) writing assignments related to the in-class activities and material and the course readings. More information about each assignment will be provided.

### 3. RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS (20% course grade)

Twice during the semester you will be asked to do research on poverty and social welfare provision in Delaware. More information on these assignments will be provided.

## Grading Scale

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Final course grades are determined by the assessment of the four course requirements.

| Grade | Interval       | Grade | Interval       |
|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| A     | 94.50 and over | C     | 72.50 to 76.49 |
| A-    | 89.50 to 94.49 | C-    | 69.50 to 72.49 |
| B+    | 86.50 to 89.49 | D+    | 66.50 to 69.49 |
| B     | 82.50 to 86.49 | D     | 62.50 to 66.49 |
| B-    | 79.50 to 82.49 | D-    | 59.50 to 62.49 |
| C+    | 76.50 to 79.49 | F     | Below 59.49    |

## Academic Integrity

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Please familiarize yourself with UD policies regarding academic dishonesty. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an assignment, to re-submit the same assignment for different classes, or to allow or assist another to commit these acts corrupts the educational process. Students are expected to do their own work and neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance. Complete details of the university's academic integrity policies and procedures can be found at <http://www1.udel.edu/studentconduct/policyref.html> Office of Student Conduct, 218 Hulliher Hall, (302) 831-2117. E-mail: [student-conduct@udel.edu](mailto:student-conduct@udel.edu)

## Attendance

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Absences on religious holidays listed in university calendars are recognized as an excused absence. Nevertheless, students are urged to remind the instructor of their intention to be absent on a particular upcoming holiday. Absences on religious holidays not listed in university calendars, as well as absences due to athletic participation or other extracurricular activities in which students are official representatives of the university, shall be recognized as excused absences when the student informs the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the semester of these planned absences for the semester.

## Non-Discrimination

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The University of Delaware does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, disability, religion, age, veteran status or any other

characteristic protected by applicable law in its employment, educational programs and activities, admissions policies, and scholarship and loan programs as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies. The University of Delaware also prohibits unlawful harassment including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

For inquiries or complaints related to non-discrimination policies, please contact: Director, Institutional Equity & Title IX Coordinator- Susan L. Groff, Ed.D. [groff@udel.edu](mailto:groff@udel.edu), 305 Hullihen Hall Newark, DE 19716 (302) 831-8063

For complaints related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact: Director, Office of Disability Support Services, Anne L. Jannarone, M.Ed., Ed.S. - [ajannaro@udel.edu](mailto:ajannaro@udel.edu), Alison Hall, Suite 130, Newark, DE 19716 (302) 831-4643 OR contact the U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights ([wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm](http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm)).

## **Harassment and Discrimination**

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The University of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. As a member of the community, your rights, resource and responsibilities are reflected in the non-discrimination and sexual misconduct policies. Please familiarize yourself with these policies at [www.udel.edu/oei](http://www.udel.edu/oei). You can report any concerns to the University's Office of Equity & Inclusion, at 305 Hullihen Hall, (302) 831-8063 or you can report anonymously through UD Police (302) 831-2222 or the EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline at [www1.udel.edu/compliance](http://www1.udel.edu/compliance). You can also report any violation of UD policy on harassment, discrimination, or abuse of any person at this site: [sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/](http://sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/).

## **Faculty Statement on Disclosures of Instances of Sexual Misconduct**

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If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am obligated to inform the university's Title IX Coordinator. The university needs to know information about such incidents in order to offer resources to victims and to ensure a safe campus environment for everyone. The Title IX Coordinator will decide if the incident should be examined further. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in office hours, I promise to protect your privacy--I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator. For more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and how to reporting information, please refer to [www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct). At UD, we provide 24-hour crisis assistance and victim advocacy and counseling. Contact 302-831-1001, UD Helpline 24/7/365, to get in touch with a sexual offense support advocate.

For information on various places you can turn for help, more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and reporting information please refer to [www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct).

### **Inclusion of Diverse Learning Needs**

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Any student who thinks he/she may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) office as soon as possible. The DSS office is located at 240 Academy Street, Alison Hall Suite 130, Phone: 302-831-4643, fax: 302-831-3261, DSS website ([www.udel.edu/DSS/](http://www.udel.edu/DSS/)). You may contact DSS at [dssoffice@udel.edu](mailto:dssoffice@udel.edu).

### **Accommodations**

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I am eager to hear from anyone who may require accommodations in this class for reasons related to ability or life situation. Please let me know if I can help by modifying seating arrangements, deadlines, or other features of the class so that appropriate arrangements may be made. The earlier you can let me know about anything that is going on that could cause problems for you, the better. If we know about it early on, we can work together to make sure it doesn't create bigger problems for you. All deadlines for this class are firm, and can be changed only at my discretion for individuals who contact me in advance to discuss legitimate reasons for needing extensions. I can be reached most easily through email, because I check it often.

### **Syllabus Modifications**

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This syllabus describes a plan, which like any plan may be revised or updated if it is reasonable and appropriate to do so based upon the experience of implementing it.

### **Electronics Policy**

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Use of laptops or other electronic devices including tablets and cell phones is not allowed during class.

## **Course Schedule**

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### **Week 1**

**February 12 Introduction**

**February 14 The Role of Government**

**Short Writing Assignment #1: Due February 18**

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### **Week 2**

**February 19 Poverty 101**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Watch Poor Kids (link on Canvas site)

**February 21 Child Poverty**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew and Bruce Western. 2018. "Poverty in America: New Directions and Debates." *Annual Review of Sociology* 44: 305-18.

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### **Week 3**

**February 26 Social Policy 101**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Beland, Daniel. 2010. *What is Social Policy? Understanding the Welfare State*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Chapter 1: Social Policy and the Welfare State

**February 28 Role of Values in Policy**

#### **Assigned Readings**

None

**Short Writing Assignment #2: Due March 2**

## **Week 4**

### **March 4 Reducing Child Poverty**

#### **Assigned Readings**

DeParle, Jason. December 16, 2019. "The Tax Break for Children, Except the Ones Who Need It Most." New York Times

### **March 6 NO CLASS – Delaware Poverty Research Project Due March 9**

#### **Assigned Readings**

None

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## **Week 5**

### **March 11 Causes of Poverty**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Brady, David. 2019. "Theories of the Causes of Poverty." Annual Review of Sociology 45: 155-75.

### **March 13 Deservingness**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Mariner Books. Chapter 1

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## **Week 6**

### **March 18 Extreme Poverty**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Mariner Books. Chapter 2

### **March 20 Understanding Economic Marginality**

#### **Assigned Readings**



Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Mariner Books. Chapter 3

### **Short Writing Assignment #3: Due March 23**

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#### **Week 7**

#### **March 25 Safety Net 101**

##### **Assigned Readings**

Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Mariner Books. Chapter 4

#### **March 27 Changing Safety Net Provision**

##### **Assigned Readings**

Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Mariner Books. Chapter 5

### **Short Writing Assignment #4: Due April 6**

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#### **SPRING BREAK (March 30 – April 3)**

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#### **Week 8**

#### **April 8 Measuring Safety Net Effectiveness**

##### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House. Chapters 1-4

#### **April 10 Matching Needs and Policies**

##### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House. Chapters 5-8

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## **Week 9**

### **April 15 Generosity in the Safety Net**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House. Chapters 9-11

### **April 17 NO CLASS – Delaware Social Policy Research Project Due April 20**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House. Chapters 12-16

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## **Week 10**

### **April 22 Accessing the Safety Net**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House. Chapters 17-20

### **April 24 Housing Instability**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. New York, NY: Random House. Chapters 21-Epilogue

### **Short Writing Assignment #5: Due April 27**

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## **Week 11**

### **April 29 Social Services**

#### **Assigned Readings**

Allard, Scott. 2008. Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State. New Haven, Yale University Press. Chapters 1-2

### **May 1 Geographic Inequality in Provision**

## **Assigned Readings**

Allard, Scott. 2008. *Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State*. New Haven, Yale University Press. Chapter 3

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### **Week 12**

#### **May 6 Surveillance in Social Policy**

##### **Assigned Readings**

Fong, Kelley. 2019. "Concealment and Constraint: Child Protective Services Fears and Poor Mothers' Institutional Engagement." *Social Forces* 97(4): 1785-1810.

#### **May 8 Surveillance in Social Policy**

##### **Assigned Readings**

Hughes, Cayce C. 2018. "From the Long Arm of the State to Eyes on the Street: How Poor African American Mothers Navigate Surveillance in the Social Safety Net." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*: 1-38.

#### **Short Writing Assignment #6: Due May 11**

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### **Week 13**

#### **May 13 Where Do We Go From Here?**

##### **Assigned Readings**

None

#### **May 15 Course Wrap-up**

##### **Assigned Readings**

None

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