CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
ECONOMICS 303
ECONOMICS OF POVERTY and DISCRIMINATION
FALL 2013

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Required Materials: All required readings or links to those reading will be posted on PolyLearn under the relevant topic. Readings will be posted under the active weekly outline.

Prerequisites and Graduation Requirements: Prerequisites for Econ 303 are completion of GE Area A and D1 plus Econ 222 & Econ 221 or Econ 201, or equivalent coursework. Econ 303 meets the GE Area D5 and USCP requirement for most majors, and serves as an upper-division economics elective for majors in Business and majors & minors in Economics. It does not meet GE D5 for Econ majors. It meets technical elective for CM majors.

Description: Econ 303 will provide you with an interdisciplinary approach to analyses of poverty, discrimination, inequality, and immigration in the contemporary U.S. macroeconomic context. It will extend beyond the boundaries of economics theory and analyze economic history, politics, and public policy. It will focus on critical thinking skills as they relate to poverty, race, class, inequality, gender, ethnicity, and immigration.

Econ 303 is an upper-division economics course and will build on the skills and competencies developed in the economics prerequisites (LG1). Econ 303 is also an upper-division GE, which will integrate knowledge from lower division GE classes you may have taken with knowledge from the discipline of economics.

Learning Outcomes: In general, you will leave this course as a more expert and aware learner, a better critical thinker, a more socially responsible member of this community, and, most definitely, a more polished writer. In particular, you should be able to discuss the economic problems we address, explain why (or why not) they are problems, and use economic models and empirical data to understand and analyze these problems (LG1&2). You should also be able to consider and navigate alternative perspectives and their ethical implications (LG3). Finally, you should be able to logically and/or empirically support existing solutions, or critique existing solutions and formulate alternatives.

An important goal of this course is to increase our knowledge and understanding of issues related to poverty, discrimination, inequality, and immigration. Other important goals of this course are to become more critical thinkers, critical readers, critical discussants, and critical writers. As such, it is not only important to read about a particular topic but also to reflect on, write about, and discuss the topic. The expectations for this course reflect these objectives.
Expectations:
In this course you are expected to:

1) Show up to class on a regular basis and be prepared to make a positive contribution to the learning environment.
2) Study the assigned readings before coming to class and be prepared to speak and write to the readings.
3) Apply economic models and theory to the study of issues relating to poverty, discrimination and immigration.
4) Formulate "informed opinions" about poverty, discrimination, inequality and immigration based on quantitative and qualitative data and your knowledge of economics and other disciplines.
5) Communicate your "informed opinions and conclusions" through discussion and writing assignments.
6) Respect the right of your classmates to express their own opinions and perspectives.

Econ 303 is a writing intensive course in which the major portion of your grade will depend on writing assignments, designed to make you more fluent writers. It is not a writing instruction course given that a prerequisite is completion of GE Area A.

Prep Writing (PW) Short assignments that help you master argumentative and analytic writing skills.

- **Summary** - A summary summarizes the content of the article, making sure to identify the author's arguments/claims. NO opinion or commentary.
- **Analysis** - An analysis identifies the central argument/claim(s), and then critically evaluates and assesses the argument/claim(s). You want to be sure not to confuse strengths/weaknesses in an argument with your taste/distaste for the argument.
- **Level I Synthesis** - A level I synthesis weaves together (synthesizes) the central ideas of two or more authors on a particular subtopic. A synthesis may focus on the similarities and/or differences between two sets of ideas but your goal is to discuss these ideas fluently under one topic. NO opinion or commentary.
- **Level II Synthesis** - A level II synthesis weaves together (synthesizes) the central ideas of one or more authors with your own ideas or understanding of the subtopic. Your voice must come through and be seamlessly weaved with the ideas of others writing on the same sub-topic.
- **Free Write** - A free write is a reflection/reaction to the reading, designed to capture your uncensored thinking on the subject. It is “free” so it need not conform to rules of grammar.
- **Reading Response** - A reading response is a response to a specific prompt or question regarding the reading. The objective is focus and correctness. Your writing must stay riveted on the prompt and answer the question correctly.

**PWs comprise 30% of your final grade and will be both in-class and take-home assignments. Hard copy or electronic assignments are due at the beginning of class.**
**PW Evaluations** are based on the following criteria: meeting the objectives of the assignment, correctness, and writing quality, using a scale from A-F. A (95%), A- (90%), B+ (87.5%), B (85%), B- (80%), C+ (77.5%), C (75%), C- (70%), D+ (67.5%), D (65%), D- (60%), and F (0%, non-submission). “A range” grades indicate that you fully met the objectives of the assignment and produced a high quality, well-written and correct response. In short, “A” quality work is excellent in all areas. “B range” grades indicate that you met the objectives of the assignment, and writing quality and/or correctness are above average but not excellent in all areas. “C range” grade indicate that you did not fully meet or strayed from the objectives of the assignment and/or writing quality and correctness meet but do not exceed expectations for the assignment. “C” quality work is average. “D range” grades indicate that you did not meet the objectives of the assignment and/or writing quality and correctness were poor and below the average expectations. An F is for non-submits and translates into “0.”

**Final: Argumentative Essay:** Over the course of the term, you will develop one argumentative essay. Along the way, you will submit outlines and multiple drafts. This ensures that your final submissions are a concise, polished version of your argument. Specific instructions will be posted electronically when we get to the inequality/mobility section. All preliminary outlines and drafts will be assigned a grade of A-F to give you a good sense of the quality of your work. All preliminary outlines and drafts, combined, will comprise 5% of your final grade. The final, polished copy of your essay will comprise 35% of your final grade, and evaluated using the attached rubric. The grading criteria is similar to that for PWs (outlined above) but “correctness” is a function of how well you argue your position.

**All assignments are due by the designated due dates and time. No exceptions!**

**Writing Rubric:** The University writing rubric (attached) is attached and will be used to evaluate your essays. It accounts for the following properties:

- **Purpose:** Does the writer address the assignment and write with a purpose that is clear to the reader? Is there an identifiable thesis? Does the writer cater the prose to meet the audience’s expectations?
- **Synthesis:** Does the writer make connections between (un)related ideas, texts, experiences, etc., to construct a cohesive depiction of the topic? Is the paper organized both locally (within paragraphs) and globally (as a whole)? Does the organizational strategy best express the purpose?
- **Support:** Is the thesis fully supported with relevant evidence or does the essay rely on broad and general assertions? Is repetition mistaken for development? Are there errors in logic?
- **Style:** Does the writer make effective stylistic choices in terms of paragraphing, sentence structure, word choice, tone, introductions, conclusions, etc?
- **Mechanics:** Is the essay free of errors - spelling, punctuation, grammar - that consistently impede or even distort meaning?
Midterm: The midterm will be an in-class essay exam, which will focus on a particular set of readings from the beginning of the course and ask you employ different writing skills.

Discussion: Your quality participation in blogs and out-of-class discussions will comprise 10% of your final grade. There are no make-ups for participation! Please follow the specific instructions posted for each assignment.

Grading: The final course grade will be based on the following results:

- **Prep Writing (PW)**  (35%)
- **Final: Argumentative Essay**  (35%)
- **Outlines & Drafts**  (5%)
- **In-class Participation/Citizenship**  (10%)
- **Blogs/Outside Discussion**  (15%)
- **Service Learning (CR/NC)**

Course Policies:

1. All individuals must follow the course policies. There is no special treatment!
2. Late assignments are not accepted! No exceptions!
3. Missed assignments, posts, or discussions cannot be replaced. No exceptions!
4. No lap top computers! No exceptions!
5. **Electronics:** Please turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices prior to entering class. If you are found messaging, emailing, surfing, or using any electronic devices during class, you will be asked to leave and you will be required to meet with Adrienne Miller, Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities, before returning to class. She can be reached at 756-2784. **If you cannot abide by this policy, you are invited to take this course from a different instructor later in your academic career.**
6. **Attendance:** Attendance is required for every student, whether enrolled or on the waitlist, for the first week of the term. If you do not attend, you will be dropped.
7. **Basic Etiquette.** Come to class on time. Stay until the end. No talking, no sleeping, no reading. Do not start packing your belongings before class is over; the conclusions of lectures and discussions are often the most important parts!
8. I do not discuss grading via email. Please come to Office Hours if you do not understand the grading criterion used.
9. If you have any disagreements about a grade, please outline your position in writing.
10. It is understood that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.
**Outside Assistance**
Any students with learning disabilities should contact DRC so that we can work together to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform in this class. Please advise me of any DRC recommended arrangements or accommodations by the end of the first week.

**Academic Integrity**
Intellectual honesty and integrity are essential attributes of an educated person. It is expected that students in this course will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. It is expected that all work done by students in this class will be done by the individual student. Anyone involved in dishonest academic practices will minimally receive a failing grade on the assignment and, at the instructor's discretion, may possibly receive a failing grade in the course. You are responsible for knowing the University's policies.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

* A detailed and active Course Schedule will be posted on PolyLearn along with the readings and assignments. Please check it regularly so that you are prepared for every class and do not miss assignment deadlines.

**Week 1-2:** Civic Engagement, The Nature of Bias

**Week 2-3:** Theories of Poverty/Theories of Success

**Week 3-4:** Poverty, Homelessness

**Week 4-5:** Welfare Reform, Low Wage Work

**Week 5-6:** Low Wage Work, Meritocracy

**Week 6-7:** Meritocracy, Intro. Economic Inequality and Mobility

**Week 7-8:** Economic Inequality/Economic Mobility/Immigration

**Week 9:** Discrimination (Race, Gender, Class, Ethnicity)

**Week 10:** Discrimination, Immigration
“Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich, 2000: Civic Responsibility in Higher Education).

Econ 303 is a civic engagement course, affording you the opportunity to connect economic theory to everyday realities through your volunteer work with local agencies, as well as apply the knowledge from real world experience to analyses that we address on a more theoretical level.

Service Learning Requirement:
Over the quarter, you are required to:

1. Attend the Agency Fair and sign up with an agency during the 1st class meeting.

2. Complete a minimum of 14 hours of service with a local service agency.

3. Attend one 2 hour reflection meeting (during final exam time) where we will discuss and reflect on your service learning experience during the first hour and analyze that experience during the second hour.

In order to receive credit for your SERVICE and the corresponding LEARNING that occurs during that service you must fulfill requirements 1-3 above. There are no make-ups for the reflection meeting. If requirement #2 is incomplete, you will not receive credit for the course.

Questions on efficiency/effectiveness of your agency to consider:

1. What are the goals of the agency that you have been involved with? What specific variables or factors would you use in measuring the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals? How can the program be improved so that it becomes more effective and efficient?

2. Identify the different population groups who benefit from the program(s) offered by your agency. Are the poor and minorities the only ones who benefit? Based on your experience with this agency do you believe the clients you assisted are deserving of aid? From your perspective, what do you perceive as the main reasons why these clients are poor or in need of aid?

3. How does economics relate to these real world problems? Provide examples of how economic theory is use to analyze the problems that you encountered during your service?