ECONOMICS 1503  
RICH AND POOR: DIVERSITY AND DISPARITY IN THE U.S. WORKFORCE  
Fall 2007, MWF 9:00 – 9:50, Course code 0704

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Text: Bradley R. Schiller, The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination (9th edition, Pearson Prentice Hall)  
Course Prerequisite: None  
General Education: This course is in the Societies and Institutions domain of General Education

Office Hours: Mondays Wednesdays, and Fridays 10-10:50 am and Tuesdays 12:00-1:50 pm

Course Description: In this course you will examine the factors which have affected the distribution of income and the rate of poverty in the United States. You will explore such issues as the widening gap between low and upper income groups, the characteristics of the poor and the dramatic changes in the composition of the American labor force. We will also study transfer programs designed to reduce poverty, such as welfare, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and unemployment compensation. We will discuss welfare reform, tax reform, and the proposed reforms in Social Security.

Course Goals and Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students should be able to answer the following questions:

- What are relative and absolute measures of poverty?
- How is the poverty rate calculated in the U.S.?
- Why are poverty rates higher for women than men?
- Why are poverty rates higher for non-whites than whites?
- What are the causes and consequences of poverty?
- What is the relationship between discrimination and poverty?
- Analyze the policy options for eliminating poverty.
- Analyze the changes in income distribution over time.
- What are the sources of income to the wealthy
- Analyze how people accumulate wealth.
- How do government policies affect the accumulation of wealth?
- Is there a relationship between income and happiness?

Exams: There will be four exams. Each exam is worth 100 points and will cover the material from lectures, discussions, and readings since the last exam (i.e., the final exam is not comprehensive). The questions will consist of multiple True/False and short answer.

Make-up Exams: Students are expected to make every effort to take exams when they are scheduled. A make-up exam will be given only if the instructor deems the circumstances extreme enough to justify the student having missed the scheduled exam. All make-up exams are administered only during the last week of the semester.

Grading Policy: The final grades will be based on the following scale:

- 100% - 85% = A;  
- 84% - 75% = B;  
- 74% - 65% = C;  
- 64% - 55% = D;  
- below 55% = F

Attendance Policy: you are not required to attend class. However, you are responsible for any material covered during lectures for and homework that is assigned in class. Class attendance is critical to your success in the course.
Class Participation: You are strongly encouraged to ask questions and participate in class discussions. When someone else is speaking, I expect that you will be quiet and listen respectfully. Sometimes the material in the class is controversial, and everyone has the right to his or her own perspective. I expect that everyone’s right to express his or her point of view will be respected. If there are disagreements, the discourse must remain civil.

Disability Services: If you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. You must be registered with the Disability Services Office and provide a letter of accommodations to verify your eligibility. You can reach the Disability Services Office at (330)941-1372

Academic Honesty: If a student is caught cheating, he or she will be given a failing grade and referred for disciplinary action. See the Undergraduate Bulletin.

SCHEDULE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics*</th>
<th>Reading**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27 – Sept. 19</td>
<td>Views of inequality and poverty, measuring inequality, measuring poverty, labor force participation, the working poor, and age and health</td>
<td>Chapters 1 - 6</td>
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<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>Sept. 24 - Oct. 12</td>
<td>Family size and structure, the underclass, education, discrimination in education, and discrimination in the labor market</td>
<td>Chapters 7-11</td>
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<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>Oct. 17 – Nov. 7</td>
<td>Welfare programs, social insurance programs, employment policies, equal opportunity policies, and future prospects</td>
<td>Chapters 12-16</td>
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<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>Exam 3</td>
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<td>Nov. 14 – Dec. 7</td>
<td>Sources of income of the rich, accumulation of wealth, government policy and accumulation of wealth, income and happiness</td>
<td>Readings to be announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 14, 8-10 am</td>
<td>Exam 4</td>
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*The scheduled topics and exam dates (except for the final exam) are tentative and may be subject to change. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class.

**Additional readings will be assigned.

November 1 is the last day to withdraw from the class with a W.

The University is closed the following days during the fall term: Sept. 3 (Labor Day), Nov. 12 (Veteran’s Day), and Nov. 22-23 (Thanksgiving).
General Education:

ECON 1503 is a Societies and Institutions course in the General Education model. The course meets both goals 11 (the development of theoretical tools useful in analyzing and evaluating social phenomena) and 12 (understanding the importance of social and cultural diversity in the analysis of economic welfare). For the purposes of achieving these goals, we will attempt to:

1) Understand the basic analytical models used to explain economic behavior;
2) Evaluate the ethical and analytical bases of social and economic policies; and
3) Determine and evaluate the impacts of these policies on diverse groups.

Goal 11: “Evaluate the impact of theories, events, and institutions of the social, economic, legal, and political aspects of society.”

In this course you will examine how the market helps to determine the distribution of income. In the U.S. economy, the government intervenes in the market determination of income distribution in part by establishing minimum wages, subsidizing education, and protecting the rights of workers to organize. We will study how the government deals with the problem of poverty within the political constraints of the society. We will also analyze the historical factors that have influenced the current government response to poverty.

Goal 12: “Comprehend and appreciate the development of diversity in America in all its forms.”

We will analyze diversity in the context of income distribution. We will try to answer the following questions: What are the characteristics of the poor and the rich? How do people escape poverty? How does society cope with the difference in income distribution?