COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Taking a multidisciplinary perspective, the aim of this course is to cover the theoretical, methodological and empirical literature on the effects of poverty on children’s social and cognitive development. We will cover the following topics: What is poverty? Who is poor? How do poverty conditions shape the environments (home, school, community) in which children grow up? What are the effects of poverty on family-child interactions and children’s wellbeing? What are the pathways by which poverty is linked to adverse outcomes for children? Are the effects of poverty on children’s social, cognitive, and health domains the same across developmental periods? What is the role of public policy and programs in reducing rates of child poverty? We will unpack the “black box” of SES and examine the mechanism by which poverty influences child wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the nature of poverty, including measurement issues
- Knowledge of the ecological aspects of poverty, including families, neighborhoods, social policy
- Understanding of the varying approaches taken to child poverty by various social and behavioral sciences
- Awareness of the idea that the concept and theories we use in the study of human development frame science and its application for public policy and social programs

READINGS

Most assigned class readings are journal articles that are available online through the UMD library. Occasionally, I may assign chapters from the following books (available at the library or loan from me).

Suggested additional readings:
• Edin, K. & Shaefer, H.L. (2016). *$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*

**GRADING**

- Class participation/thought questions (15 points) (20%) Due: Weekly
- Journal article critique (30 points) (30%) Due: March 1
- Final research paper (65 points) (50%) Due: May 17

Grades will be awarded on the basis of total points:

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<th>Grade</th>
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**COURSE FORMAT**

This course is comprised of lectures, student presentations, discussions, and invited speakers. More specifically:

- Students are expected to come to class prepared by reading all the material assigned for that class (see list below).
- At each class, students will be assigned to present and lead the discussion on the assigned readings for that class. Come prepared with a power point to discuss the assigned chapter/articles and lead class discussion.
- The presentation of readings should follow a scientific format of critique for empirical papers (see handout for an example). For nonempirical papers, please present the information in a clear and organized manner.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Class participation and thought questions (20%):

- Students are responsible for **all required** readings and for **participating** in class discussion of these readings (see outline below). Students (maximum 2 per class) will be assigned the readings for a particular day to present to the class and lead discussion during the second half of the class. The discussion should not merely repeat the article. It should be an analysis of the article—present the main ideas,
compare and contrast with other ideas/theories, and engage the class in discussion. The presentation should include relevant student questions for that week. You can be as creative as you’d like in your discussion.

- Students will be required to weekly submit via ELMS two prepared thought questions on the readings/topic of the week. These questions should address key concepts, inconsistencies, or contradictions in the readings rather than clarifications or facts. These questions should be posted on the Tuesday before our class meeting. Students are required to revise these questions prior to class. The students presenting the week’s topic are required to read through all the posted questions, organize them, and select a few for discussion in class.

Journal article critique (5 pages - 30%); DUE MARCH 1
- Each student will prepare a short analytical critique (5 pages) of four empirical journal articles. Up to two of the articles can be drawn from class readings.

- The critique should provide some synthesis and evaluation of the readings—addressing issues of controversy or inconsistency. Students should end the critique with an integrative statement of the findings of the papers reviewed.

Final Paper: Research Proposal (20 pages - 50%); DUE MAY 17
- The goal of this assignment is to design a study to advance knowledge in the field of child development and poverty research. The experiment needs to meet the following criteria: (1) be developmental; (2) be doable (e.g. a person could realistically carry out the experiment); and (3) address your research question in the specific developmental domain (e.g., cognitive, social) you choose to investigate. Your study may include multiple methods (e.g. quantitative and/or qualitative).

- Carefully consider your sample and design – keep in mind the requirement that this study must be developmental.

- The paper should be structured like a mini ‘grant’ proposal as follows:
  - Specific Aims – What is your topic of interest? What are your research questions? Describe the main goal and hypotheses to be tested. Place your study in a relevant theoretical/conceptual framework.
  - Background – Literature review: Your study needs to be grounded in current literature in the area that you have selected and provide the rationale for the proposed study (e.g., address an inconsistency or lack of knowledge in the literature; test a new experimental paradigm; examine hypothesized mechanisms)
  - Significance – Discuss the importance of your study – What will be learned? How will your study advance knowledge in the area? What is the theoretical significance? What is the clinical/educational/applied significance?
  - Methods – All key elements of the methods (participants; procedure and research design; measures) need to be described in enough detail so that a reader could carry out the experiment.
Data Analysis – Include all the relevant dependent and independent variables to be included in your analyses. Describe the main statistical tests to be conducted and how these relate back to your aims and hypotheses.

Interpretation of Findings – Discuss the alternative outcomes you might obtain (both predicted and unpredicted); how these would be interpreted in relation to your hypotheses; relate your potential findings to other literature.

- Students will be required to submit an outline of their research proposal to me for feedback by APRIL 5.

- This is a research paper hence it needs to be properly researched and referenced.

- Students will prepare a 10-15 min power point presentation for the last day of class.

NOTE: ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS MUST CONFORM TO APA WRITING GUIDELINES, 6th EDITION.

Course Policies

Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class session, except in the case of illness or extenuating circumstances.

Academic Dishonesty: It is assumed that all students understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the University of Maryland. If you do not, consult the undergraduate catalog to become familiar with how cheating, fabrication, facilitation of academic dishonesty, and plagiarism are defined by the University. I will bring matters of academic dishonesty to the attention of the appropriate university authorities.

Late Assignments: Assignments will automatically be marked down one letter grade for each weekday that they are handed in late. Only in the case of documented, excusable absences (see University of Maryland policy in the Undergraduate Catalog below) will this policy be modified. Assignments will not be accepted via email.

"The University provides students with excused absences the opportunity to reschedule significant assessments, except in cases where the nature of the assessment precluded the possibility of rescheduling, OR to perform a substitute assignment without penalty. An instructor is not under obligation to offer a substitute assignment or to give a student a make-up assessment unless the failure to perform was due to an excused absence, that is, due to illness (of the student or a dependent), religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period), participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, or compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes." (UMD Assessment and Attendance Policy).
Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented physical or learning disability, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for the necessary accommodations.

*CourseEvalUM* As a member of our academic community, you as a student have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit your course evaluations each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at the University. Please make a note now of the dates for *Spring 2018* and the link at which you can access the submission system ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)). If you submitted all of your evaluations in the fall or are a new student, you can also access all posted results from Fall 2007 forward via Testudo under CourseEvalUM Reporting. To retain this access, you must submit all of your evaluations each semester. If you do not have access right now, you can gain it by submitting all of your Spring 2009 evaluations. More information can be found at: [https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml](https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml).
COURSE SCHEDULE
EDHD 751 – SPRING 2018

Jan 25  Introduction
Review of course objectives and assignment of readings

Feb 1  The lives of poor Americans: What is poverty?
  http://www.srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/spr_263

PRESENTERS:________________________________

Feb 8  Measurement issues in poverty: Who is poor?

PRESENTERS: _______________________________

Feb 15  Sociological and economic perspectives on poverty


**PRESENTERS:** ______________________________

**February 22**

**Developmental and Cultural models**


**PRESENTERS:** ______________________________

**March 1**

**Effects of Child Poverty on Children’s Development**


**PRESENTERS: __________________________________**

**JOURNAL ARTICLE CRITIQUE DUE**

**March 8**

**Effects of Child Poverty and Adolescents’ Development**


**PRESENTERS: __________________________________**

**March 15**

**Children in Poverty: Home, childcare, and neighborhoods**


PRESENTERS: ______________________

March 22  **SPRING BREAK**

March 29  **Poverty, Biology, and Neuroscience**


April 5  **Research and Social Policies: What can we done? What do we do?**


PRESENTERS: ______________________

**OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE**
April 12  **The Effect of Interventions: Do they work?**

**PRESENTERS:**

April 19  **The Effects of Social Policies and Interventions: Are there long-term effects?**

**PRESENTERS:**

April 26  **New models for intervention**


• NAS report chapter 8

May 3 **No class**

May 10 **Student presentations and final research paper due**

**Journal Critique**

Article citation:

Abstract:

**SUMMARY:**
Introduction (Goals)

Methods (Participants and procedure)

Results (Findings)

Discussion (Conclusions: So what?)

**YOUR ANALYSIS:**
Strengths

Limitations

New directions: