Rethinking Poverty

"We create institutions and policies on the basis of the way we make assumptions about us and others. We accept the fact that we will always have poor people around us. So we have had poor people around us. If we had believed that poverty is unacceptable to us, and that it should not belong to a civilized society, we would have created appropriate institutions and policies to create a poverty-free world."

-Muhammad Yunus

Instructor: Prof. Lisa Manter
Office Dante 300 Office phone: 631-4462
Office hours: W/F 3:30-4:30pm, and Monday by appointment
e-mail: lmanter@stmarys-ca.edu

Course Description:

Most Americans do not see them selves as "the poor." Those in poverty are the "other," not "us," and as such are to be pitied, despised, or ignored (depending on one's experiences and politics). But with the United States economy still in a deep slump and many Americans out of work, it makes sense to take a fresh look at attitudes toward poverty. Have you or someone close to you experienced a difficult financial situation at some point? If not, is it a possibility at some point in your future? What does poverty mean? Is it a sign of a lack of moral fiber, a symptom of poorly structured social institutions, or merely a lack of material resources in the moment? Throughout the term we will be exploring various attitudes toward and approaches to poverty and the poor, both from the past and the present, that affect poverty in 21st-century America. By sifting through a variety of materials including literature, anthropology, sociology, economics, films (documentary and fiction), and journalism, you will develop your own understanding of poverty through readings, class discussions, a short exploratory essay, and a 10-12 page research essay.

In addition to learning about poverty, you will learn about the research methods and writing styles of different academic disciplines. The Research Notebook method described in Hubbell's book will provide a basic guide to help you with not only the essay for this class but all future research projects.
Required Texts:

*At the bookstore:*


*Through the Saint Mary's Library:*


*Other:*


Other reading material will be handed out/available on Blackboard or library reserve as appropriate.

Film Viewings: There will be at least 3 film viewings will be held outside of class (*Roger & Me, Chop Shop,* etc.). If you cannot attend the general viewing time, you will need to see the film on your own before the day the film is discussed.

Service Learning: There is also a service learning component for the class. During the latter half of the term, you will be asked to volunteer at an organization of your choice. The place you select will need to be strongly tied to your research topic as you will be using material from your experience in your essays.

Grading system:

Total possible points: 400

100 points = General classroom performance
50 points = Short written assignments and other miscellaneous assignments
50 points = Short exploratory essay
100 points = Research process
100 points = Final research essay

Class policies:
Attendance: Regular attendance is expected. Mental, as well as physical, presence is required. If you are unprepared (no text, haven’t done the reading, are too sick to participate), stay home and catch up, get better, etc. If you are not engaged, you’ll be considered absent.

If you are going to miss a class, contact me beforehand (lmanter@stmarys-ca.edu or x4462). Special circumstances should be discussed with me as far in advance as possible. Absences do not excuse you from paper deadlines or class responsibilities. You will be held accountable for all work and discussion requirements. I do appreciate being notified of your absence beforehand and will consider those absences (under 3) excused, which means that they will not count against your participation grade as long as you make up any written requirements in a timely manner. If no notification is given, daily assignments will not be able to be made up and essays will be counted 1 class period late.

Any absence will affect your grade, but absences in excess of 3 classes will result in a lowering of your course grade. This is standard SMC policy. Consistent lateness will be counted as an absence. Missing 12 or more classes will result in a failing grade.

Participation: I expect all members of the class to participate sincerely, actively and positively. If you are having trouble with any aspect of the course or the material, please come see me in office hours so we can discuss it together and come up with solutions.

Late papers: In fairness to those who submit their work on time, late essays will be marked down as follows: one grade level (e.g., B+ to B) if handed in by the next class; two levels (e.g., B+ to B-) if handed in between then and one week after the due date; one full grade if handed in beyond one week (e.g., B+ to C+). No essays other than the final one will be accepted after the last day of classes except with prior permission. If due to special circumstances you anticipate a problem with one of the due dates, please contact me by email at least 24 hours beforehand to make special arrangements.

All major assignments must be turned in to receive a passing grade for the course.

A Special Note on Academic Integrity:

According to the SMC academic honor code instituted in 2004, as a member of our community you are responsible for adhering to this high standard of academic integrity. I recommend that you review the code in the student handbook. I assume that you a) have agreed to behave in accordance with the new code b) have educated yourself about what constitutes violations of this code.

In short, academic dishonesty (in the forms outlined in the student handbook) will not be tolerated. It is vital that you produce your own work for this class. All your work is expected to be your own, and if you bring in an idea or language that is not your own, you must cite it appropriately. If you fail to adhere to the code, I am required to bring the matter to the SMC Academic Honor Council.

If you feel tempted, please come see one of us. (Remember, even essays over 1 week late are marked only 1 full grade down and getting an F at least gets you 50% of the points.)
OUTLINE FOR THE SEMESTER

Unit 1: Enduring Attitudes & Engrained Ideologies
  • Short analytical essay: Using given sources

Unit 2: Research Methods for Exploring Poverty: Historical, Anthropological & Sociological
  • Research Interlude: The Research Process & the Researcher’s Notebook

Unit 3: Narrowing One’s Focus – Special Topics
  • Special Topic I: Culture of Poverty or Government Neglect? Urban Centers in America
    o Research Steps: Gathering and Evaluating Evidence (bibliography)
  • Special Topic II: The Working Poor in American Urban Centers
    o Research Step: Drafting the Essay (initial report/literature review)

Unit 4: Making Change: New Paradigms and Visions for the Future
  • Research Steps: Presenting Your Work to an Audience (Class presentations/Peer Workshopping)

Important Dates:
Use the following dates to plan your research work schedule:
  March 1 -- Short Essay (4-6 pages) based on readings in Unit 1
  March 9 -- Working Hypothesis/Research Proposal (2-3 pages) (5 pts.)
  March 17 -- Tentative Bibliography (at least 2 annotations) (5 pts.)
  March 24 -- Revised Bibliography (at least 5 annotations) (5 pts.)
  March 29 -- Optional Rewrite for Short Essay (due in my box by 5 p.m.)
  March 31 -- Final Annotated Bibliography (8 annotations) (5 pts.)
  April 5 -- Initial Reports on Research (10 pts.) & Review of the Literature (5 pts.)
  April 12 -- First drafts of Research Essay (6-8 pp. due in my box by 5 p.m.)(10 pts.)
  April 11, 13 -- Class Presentations (10 pts.)
  May 3 -- Final drafts of Research Essay (8-10 pages, include your 2 stamped Writing Center revisions) (20 pts.)
  May 4, 6 -- Peer Workshopping (3 responses @ 5 pts.=15 pts.)/Visit Writing Center
  Day of finals -- Revised Research Essay (include peer edits & revisions)
  (10 pts. for revisions & 100 pts. for essay)
    -- Sharing of Conclusions
Unit 1: Enduring Attitudes & Engrained Ideologies

When Fact Meets Fiction: Narratives of Individual Responsibility & Systemic Oppression

The First Steps in the Essay Process:
Understanding, Analyzing, and Evaluating Cultural Attitudes and Assumptions

Goals:
- Develop reading skills and note-taking skills (Hubbuch, Section 4)
- Develop analytical skills (asking How? Why? What are the implications?)
- Gain exposure to a variety of approaches and attitudes toward poverty (historical, literary, documentary)
- Become aware of cultural assumptions and ideologies (Hubbuch, Section 2, c-d)
- Become aware of one's own cultural assumptions and ideologies

Means:
- Lecture
- Readings/films with a variety of perspectives
- Discussion
- Short written responses
- Short essay

WEEK 1
Mon. Feb. 7

Introductions
- Research as a way of understanding and writing as a way of learning
  Partner writing: What makes a good essay? What is research?
  What makes for a good research essay?
  Group discussion of college essays, research, and research essays
- Focus of the Course: Rethinking Poverty
  Explanation of syllabus
- Lecture on reading analytically & previewing sources
  (Next class bring One Nation and Creating a World Without Poverty)

Wed. Feb. 9

Reading Critically & Taking Notes: Defining your purpose in reading and previewing your sources
- Group work on determining purpose and previewing of One Nation, Underprivileged and Creating a World Without Poverty
- Exploring Cultural Assumptions Surrounding Poverty - Discussion of Ragged Dick

Reading: Ragged Dick by Horatio Alger, Jr. (1868) [electronic resource] – up to chapter 8 Dick’s Early History and Hubbuch, Section 4.B.1

Fri. Feb. 11

Exploring Cultural Assumptions Surrounding Poverty (cont.)
- Discussion of Ragged Dick based on your short responses
- Lecture and handout on turning assumptions into questions/exercises

Reading: Ragged Dick by Horatio Alger, Jr. (1868) – SMC electronic resource (rest of selection) and Hubbuch, 4.C
Due: Typed discussion of what you think Alger is saying about poverty and the poor? Use Hubbuch 4.C on reading analytically. Include passages that you feel support your claims.
Handout: Turning Assumptions into Questions

Mon. Feb. 14

**Exploring Cultural Assumptions Surrounding Poverty** (cont.)
- Discussion of *A Christmas Carol* + comparing Alger and Dickens
- Lecture and in-class exercises on Evaluating Others’ Arguments with Understanding (Hubbuch, Section 1)

**Reading:** *A Christmas Carol* (through ch. 2)

Due: Typed discussion of passage that you feel represents Dickens’ assumptions + typed analytical questions (How? Why? What are the implications? etc.) based on Friday’s handout/exercises. (1 page)
Handout: Reading Analytically

---

**Roger and Me** (Wildenradt, Feb. 14 at 3:45 or view on your own before Friday)

Questions for film (take notes as you watch – be an active viewer): What is Moore’s working hypothesis? How would you classify his research strategies? What ideologies does he play upon (Algerian or Dickensian or both)? What scenes play on ethos? On pathos? On logos?

---

Wed. Feb. 16

**Exploring Cultural Assumptions Surrounding Poverty** (cont.)
- Discussion of *A Christmas Carol*
- Lecture on Ideology & Logos, Ethos, Pathos

**Reading:** *A Christmas Carol* (through end)

Due: Typed analysis that traces Dickens’s movement from fact, to inference, to judgment in one section of the text. Also include an evaluation of Dickens’s implied hypothesis (restate), assumptions/viewpoint (“reading analytically,” 3.b), and methods (“reading analytically,” 3.c&d). Use concrete examples from the text as the basis for your analysis. (2-3 pages)
Handout: Short essay assignment & Logos, Ethos, Pathos sheet

---

Fri. Feb. 18

**Exploring Cultural Assumptions Surrounding Poverty: Documenting Poverty:** Michael Moore’s *Roger & Me*
- Group discussion of Moore’s arguments and methods

Due: Typed discussion of how Moore uses logos, ethos, and pathos (give scenes/dialogue where he does so)

---

*N.B. SHORT ESSAY DUE on Tuesday, March 1*

---

Mon. Feb. 21

**Beginning to Think Like a Researcher: Questions rather than answers**
- Thesis exercises
Reading: Trimble, Chs. 1 & 2; Hubbuch, Section 1, A-D
Due: After reading Trimble and Hubbuch, come to class with a typed freewrite of at least 3 pages comparing Alger’s, Dickens’s, and Moore’s approach toward poverty and the poor. (Be sure that it is clear that you are using the suggestions of Trimble and Hubbuch in your freewrite. You can build on previous assignments). End your freewrite with at least 3 questions that start with “why,” “how,” or “what are the implications.” We will work in small groups and as a whole class to build specific working thesis questions for individual essays. Our class goal will be to discover what different cultural “narratives” about poverty are presented in our texts so far by asking “why?”, “how?”, and “what are the implications?”. 

Handout: Researcher’s Notebook description

Unit 2: The First Steps in the Research Process-Your Researcher’s Notebook & Beginning the Research Process

Goals:
• Develop reading skills and note-taking skills (Hubbuch, Section 4)
• Develop analytical skills (asking How? Why? What are the implications?)
• Gain exposure to a variety of approaches to poverty (historical, political, sociological, and economic)
• Educate oneself on the complexities of the issue and the current dilemmas
• Learn how to deal with academic materials
• Develop a research question, working hypothesis, and research proposal (Hubbuch, Section 2)

Means:
• Lecture
• Readings from a variety of academic perspectives
• Discussions of variety of approaches to poverty
• Short written responses and exercise, including previewing, outlining, summarizing, assessing implications
• Working Hypothesis/Research Proposal (2-3 pages)

Wed. Feb. 23

Beginning to Think Like a Researcher: Questions rather than answers
• Lecture on how to read academic materials and how to understand, analyze, and evaluate the arguments of others
• Setting up your Researcher’s Notebook
• Going over freewrites

Reading: Hubbuch, Section 2, D & F; Section 4, B.3
Due: Come to class with your researcher’s notebook (3-ring binder with appropriate divisions. Also come with at least 3 pages of freewriting on your short essay – be sure your freewrite explores a why, how and implications questions.
Fri. Feb. 25

A Brief History of Poverty in America
Reading Academic Approaches to Poverty (Historical, Political, Sociological, Anthropological & Cultural Contexts)
- Discussion of Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor* (preview + 1-16)

Reading: Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor* (preview + 1-16)
Due: Typed discussion of what you learned by previewing Katz’s book (1 page) + typed summary (1-2 pages). (Use the sample from Hubbuch 4.G as your guide.)

*February 26: Special Event: Honors Forum on Singer and Harden/Why English 5 Matters*

Mon. Feb. 28

Professional Models of Research: History **** or change to Rank, chapter 2?
- Group presentations on Katz, Chapter 1

Reading: Katz, Chapter 1 (with special focus on your section) and Hubbuch 4.D and 4.F
Due: Your group’s outline of section of Katz (thesis of each paragraph) + analytical question for group discussion; at the top of your outline, put Katz’s bibliographical information in MLA style

SHORT ESSAY DUE by Tuesday, March 1, 5 p.m.
Slide hardcopy under my door and put electronic version up on Blackboard

Wed. March 2

Brainstorming for your Final Essay Topic
The Working Hypothesis: Working toward your initial proposal
Handout on working hypothesis/research proposal
In-class exercise: Develop tentative working hypothesis (write up in section 4 of your Researcher’s Notebook). Follow format on handout.
Due: Bring to class your Researcher’s Notebook. In section 4 (The Working Hypothesis section), have written a list of topics of interest (not necessarily poverty related at this point). Be prepared to share in class.
Handout: Working Hypothesis and Research Proposal Assignment
Sign-up: office meetings

Fri. March 4

Professional Models of Research: Political Science and Public Policy
- Discussion of Rank, Chapter 4

Reading: Rank, Chapter 4 and Hubbuch, 4.H (all, pp. 117-125)
Due: In Reading section of notebook, take notes on Rank’s data, his views, and the views of others he includes. Be sure to record this information separately using Hubbuch as a guide.

Mon. March 7

Professional Models of Research: Cultural Studies
- Discussion of Rank, Chapter 5

Reading: Rank, Chapter 5 and Hubbuch, 4.I
Due: In Reading section of notebook, note Rank's research questions, write his thesis for this chapter in your own words, and outline the structure of his argument. What are the assumptions behind his arguments? What are the implications of his arguments?

Wed. March 9  

Fieldwork: Service Learning, Observations & Interviews, etc.  
Guest: from CILSA  

Academic Honor Council  

Lecture on gathering evidence (read Hubbuch 3)  
Handout: Initial Report and Annotated Bibliography assignment  
Handout: Oscar Lewis article

**Wed., March 9: WORKING HYPOTHESIS and RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE (at beginning of class) (5 PTS.)**

UNIT 3: Narrowing the Focus – Special Topics  
(Research Step: Gathering and Evaluating Evidence)

**Goals:**  
- Find and evaluate evidence (Hubbuch, Section 3)  
- Master proper bibliographic formats  
- Develop a research report and presentation (Hubbuch, Section 5)

**Means:**  
- Library Sessions  
- Tentative Bibliography  
- Annotated Bibliography  
- Final Bibliography  
- Initial Reports on Reading and Research/Literature Review (4-6 pages)

Special Topic I: American Cities: Culture of Poverty or Government Neglect?  

Fri. March 11  

*Implications of the “Culture of Poverty”*  
- Discussion of Oscar Lewis, “The Culture of Poverty” (Anthropology)

Due: In Reading section of notebook, discuss the implications of Oscar Lewis's “culture of poverty”?  
Handout: Amazing Grace (selections)

Mon. March 14  

*Education in the Urban Ghetto*  
- Discussion of Jonathan Kozol, Amazing Grace (selections) (Journalism)
Due: In Reading section of notebook, discuss how Kozol’s text comments on the “culture of poverty.”

**Poverty as a Structural Problem**
- Discussion of Rank, Chapter 3

Due: In Reading section of notebook, discuss Rank’s view of poverty as a structural, rather than personal, failing. (Continue to write notes on readings in your Reading section of your notebook. These will help you with discussion and with your essay.)

---

**Dark Days (Wildenradt, March 16 at 3:30 or view on your own before Monday)**

Questions for film (take notes as you watch – be an active viewer): What is Moore’s working hypothesis? How would you classify his research strategies? What ideologies does he play upon (Algerian or Dickensian or both)? What scenes play on ethos? On pathos? On logos?

---

**Thursday, March 17 TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE (at least 2 annotations)**
Please post on Blackboard by 5 p.m. (5 pts.).

---

Fri. March 18

*Library Day (meet at library)*
- Start working on section 1 of notebook

**Bring Tentative Bibliography with you**

---

Mon. March 21

*Ongoing Urban Homelessness: How to Make a Change?*
- Discussion of Dark Days

Due: Handwritten film notes – quantity, not quality counts here.

---

**Special Topic II: The Working Poor in American Urban Centers**

Wed. March 23

*What are the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens?*
- Discussion of Rank, Chapter 6

Handout: Presentation Assignment/Investigative Groups

---

**Thursday, March 24 : REVISED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY** (at least 5 annotations)
Please post on Blackboard by 5 p.m. (5 pts.)

---

Fri. March 25

*Professional Models of Research: Sociology/Cultural Anthropology*
- Discussion of Katherine S. Newman, *No Shame in My Game* (pp. 36-38 and all of Chapter 2)

Due: In Reading section of notebook, respond to the following questions: What methods does Newman use to gather her evidence? How does she use her evidence to create a vivid picture of urban poverty in NYC?

---

Mon. March 28

*An In-depth, Comparative Case Study: No Shame in My Game*
- Discussion of Newman cont. (Chapter 9 and Epilogue)

Due: In the Reading Section of your notebook, discuss Newman’s possible solutions. Which does she think is best and why? Which do you think is best and why? Be sure to include specific data/passages in your discussion.
Optional rewrite of SHORT ESSAY DUE by Tuesday, March 29, 5 p.m. Slide hardcopy under my door and put electronic version up on Blackboard.

Research Step: Initial Report and Review of the Literature

Wed. March 30
Drafting your Initial Report and Review of the Literature
Reading: Hubbuch, Section 5, A-D, (5.B is optional)
QUIZ on Hubbuch, Section 5

1st meeting with your Investigative Group (share topics, research)
Bring most recent bibliography to class and initial report sheet
1st visit to the Writing Center
Sign-up: Presentations

Chop Shop or Bread and Roses (Wildenradt, Wed., March 30 at 3:30 or watch on your own before Friday)

Questions for film (take notes as you watch – be an active viewer): What is the film’s message about poverty in America? How does it portray its protagonists? What in their situation seems situational? Personal? How do these images differ from Alger and Dickens?

Thursday, March 31: FINAL BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE (all 8 annotations) (5 pts.)
Please post on Blackboard by 5 p.m.; bring hardcopy to Friday’s class.

Fri. April 1
The Individual Caught in the Web of Poverty: Modern fictional images of poverty in the US
• Discuss Chop Shop or Bread and Roses (Class choice)
Handout: Sample student essays

Research Step: Drafting the Essay — Building on what you’ve already done

Mon. April 4
Lecture on drafting your essay
Discuss sample student essays

Tues., April 5: Initial Report on Research (10 pts.) & Review of the Literature (5 pts.)
Please post on Blackboard by 5 p.m. and bring a hardcopy to Wednesday’s class.

Wed. April 6
Investigative Group Day
• Meet to go over Initial Reports with your Investigative Groups
• Work on your group presentations
2nd visit to the Writing Center (take your Initial Report, etc. and freewrites)
Unit 4: Making Change: New Paradigms and Visions for the Future

Goals:
- Write a successful research essay with special focus on thesis, organization, and conclusion (Hubbuch, Section 5)
- Incorporate evidence appropriately with proper documentation (Hubbuch, Section 6)

Means:
- Class Presentations
- Drafts of essay
- Peer editing workshops

Fri. April 8  
*Changing Our Minds/Changing Our World*
- Discuss Rank, Chapter 7

Due: Typed response: After reading Rank, chapter 7, freewrite on how your essay and the essays of those in your Investigative Group deal with diagnosis (analysis of the issue) and remedy (implications of how your diagnosis might lead to specific actions). Where do you arguments build on present paradigms? Where do they challenge these paradigms? Be ready to share in class.

Mon. April 11  
Class Presentations by Investigative Groups

---

**Tuesday, April 12 -- FIRST DRAFTS OF RESEARCH ESSAY (6-8 PAGES)**
Please post on Blackboard by 5 p.m. and bring copies of hard copy to class on Wednesday.

Wed. April 13  
Class Presentations by Investigative Groups (continued)
**Bring enough copies of your essay to share with your group**

Fri. April 15  
Meet to go over drafts with Investigative Groups
**Bring your copies of each person’s essay (read and marked up)**
3rd Writing Center (get stamp)

**EASTER RECESS!!!**

Wed. April 27  
Your Final Draft: How to separate your voice from your sources
Reading: Hubbuch, Section 6
Quiz on Hubbuch, Section 6
Due: Reread student sample essays. In the Reading section of your notebook, note strengths from the samples that you can use for your essay. (Bring YOUR essay draft and the student sample essays to class).
Fri. April 29
*An Outsider's View: Putting American Poverty in Perspective*
Discuss Yunus, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, Prologue, Ch. 1, Afterword
**Due:** In the Reading Section of your Researcher's Notebook, freewrite on how Yunus's approach is different from others we have encountered so far. Be ready to share in class.
**Essay Revision due:** Pick 1 paragraph of your essay that would benefit from weaving in your sources more elegantly (following Hubbuch, ch. 6). Bring a typed copy of both your old version and new version to class.

Mon. May 2
Yunus cont., Ch. 2, 10
**Due:** In the Reading Section of your Researcher's Notebook, summarize the problems that we are dealing with today according to Yunus. Be ready to share in class.
**Essay Revision due:** Pick another paragraph of your essay that would benefit from weaving in your sources more elegantly (following Hubbuch, ch. 6). Bring a typed copy of both your old version and new version to class.
**OR** Type up your essay as a Map of the Territory in full sentences (follow Hubbuch, 5.D.3 sample 3) and bring to class.

**Tuesday, May 3: FINAL DRAFTS OF RESEARCH ESSAY (8-10 PAGES)**
Please post on Blackboard by 5 p.m. and bring hard copies to class on Wednesday (enough for yourself, your investigative group, and me).

Wed. May 4
*Tying It All Together*
Discuss Katz's Epilogue and Yunus, Ch. 11, Epilogue
**Due:** Reading: Katz's Epilogue, and Yunus, Ch. 11, Epilogue
Looking back at our readings, viewings, and your own research, how do you respond to Katz', and Yunus's conclusions about our views of poverty in America?

**Honors Spring Symposium – Papers from this class can be presented**

Fri. May 6
**Peer Workshopping** (Bring your copies of each other's essays)
**Due:** Typed response for remaining members of your group

Mon. May 9
**Peer Workshopping** (Bring your copies of each other's essays)
**Due:** Typed response for at least 2 members of your group

Wed. May 11
**Two Approaches to Change: Rank & Singer**
Discussion of Rank, Chapters 8 (to p. 218, through "Affordable Housing")
Peter Singer's Solution to World Poverty

[reduce reading to 15 pages max)
Fri. May 13  Discussion of Rank, Chapter 8 ("Child Care" to end) and
Rank, Chapter 9 [make optional the class before]
Due: Typed response: Looking back at our readings, viewings, and your
own research, how do you respond to the variety of conclusions about our
views of poverty in America?

Finals Week  Share essays in class by reading intros & conclusions

| REVISED RESEARCH ESSAY (INCLUDE PEER EDITS & 2 STAMPED WRITING
| CENTER DRAFTS) DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS ON DAY OF FINAL |