Child Development and Poverty

EDHD 751
Wednesdays 9:30 -12:15 pm Room EDU 1108
Spring 2015

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’s 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 well-being? 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 aspect 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:

Readings
1. dense and overlapping; SPR

EDHD 751: SPRING, 2015
Prof. Natasha Cabrera
Benjamin Rm#3304N
Email: ncabrera@umd.edu
Office Phone: 301.405.2801
Readings: Most readings are journal articles that are available online through the UMD library.

Recommended readings:
- Kolotwitz, A. *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in The Other America*

Grading will be as follows:
- Class participation/thought quest (15 pts) (20%) Due: Weekly
- Journal article critique (30 points) (30%) Due: Feb 28
- Final research paper (65 points) (50%) Due: May 17

Grades will be awarded on the basis of total points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>485-500</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>470-484</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>450-469</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>435-449</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>420-434</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>400-419</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>385-399</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>370-384</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>350-369</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>335-349</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>300-319</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;299</td>
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COURSE FORMAT
- 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.
- In addition to the readings assigned for each week, the students who are presenting that week must select one additional journal article relevant to that week’s topic discussion, distribute it to the entire class a week before, and come prepare with a power point to discuss both the assigned chapter/article and the additional article and lead class discussion.
- The presentation of your article should follow a scientific format of critique (see handout for an example)
- This course is comprised of lectures, students’ presentations, discussions, and invited speakers.

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 one reading for a particular day to present to the class and lead discussion (10-15 minute presentation). The discussion should not 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 students’ questions and include questions from the weekly-submitted questions. You can be as creative as you’d like in your discussion.

- Students will be required to submit to ELMS weekly two prepared thought questions. These must be submitted on the day before our class meets. These questions should address key concepts, inconsistencies, or contradictions in the readings rather than clarifications or facts.

Journal Article critique and review (5 pages - 30%). DUE MARCH 4
- Each student will prepare a short analytical critique (5 pages) of four empirical journal articles on a topic of interest to the student. One of these can be an article assigned to class reading
- The critique should provide some synthesis and evaluation of the readings – addressing issues of controversy or inconsistency. Students should end the critique with a short section on implications of this work for policy and programs. (See end of syllabus for a specific format of a journal critique).

Final Paper: Research Proposal (20 pages – 50%): DUE MAY 18
- The goal of this assignment is to design an experiment to advance knowledge in the field of child development and poverty research. The study 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 area (e.g., cognitive, social) you choose to investigate. Your experiment may include multiple methods (e.g., quantitative or qualitative).
- Consider carefully your sample and design – keep in mind the requirement that this study be developmental.
- The paper should be structured like a mini ‘grant’ proposal as follows:
  o Specific Aims – What’s 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.
    a. 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 experiment (e.g., address an inconsistency or lack of knowledge in the literature; test a new experimental paradigm; examine hypothesized mechanisms)
    b. Significance – discuss the importance of your experiment – what will be learned; how will your experiment advance knowledge in the area; what is the theoretical significance; what is the clinical/educational/applied significance?
    c. 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.
d. **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.

e. **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 paper to me for feedback **by APRIL 1**.
- 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.**

*All course assessments are major graded events*

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**CLASS POLICIES**

**Academic integrity:** The University of Maryland, College Park has a student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html). This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The code prohibits students from cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else’s work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without permission, or failing to properly cite information other than your own (found in journals, books, online, or otherwise). Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any sign of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials.

**Special needs:** If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor so necessary arrangements can be made. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University, please contact Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (301.314.7682, or 301.405.7683 TTD) as soon as possible.

**Religious observances:** The University of Maryland policy on religious observances states that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever possible, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, the must contact the instructor before the absence with a written notification of the projected absence, and arrangements will be made for make-up work or examinations.

**Course evaluations:** As a member of our academic community, students have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit course evaluations
each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

**Missed single class due to illness:** Once during a semester, a student’s self-authored note will be accepted as an excuse for missing a minor scheduled grading event in a single class session if the note documents the date of the illness, acknowledgement from the student that information provided in the note is correct, and a statement that the student understands that providing false information is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to attempt to inform the instructor of the illness prior to the date of the missed class.*

**Major scheduled grading events:** Major Scheduled Grading Events (MSGE) are indicated on the syllabus. The conditions for accepting a self-signed note do not apply to these events. Written, signed documentation by a health care professional, or other professional in the case of non-medical reasons (see below) of a University-approved excuse for the student’s absence must be supplied. This documentation must include verification of treatment dates and the time period for which the student was unable to meet course requirements. Providers should not include diagnostic information. Without this documentation, opportunities to make up missed assignments or assessments will not be provided.

**Non-consecutive, medically necessitated absences from multiple class sessions:** Students who throughout the semester miss multiple, non-consecutive class sessions due to medical problems must provide written documentation from a health care professional that their attendance on those days was prohibited for medical reasons.

**Non-medical excused absences:** According to University policy, non-medical excused absences for missed assignments or assessments may include illness of a dependent, religious observance, involvement in University activities at the request of University officials, or circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. Students asking for excused absence for any of those reasons must also supply appropriate written documentation of the cause and make every attempt to inform the instructor prior to the date of the missed class.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
EDHD 751 – SPRING 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan 28</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Review of course objectives</td>
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Feb 4  The lives of poor Americans: What is poverty?
- FCD Child Well-Being Index (CWI) (2010)
- Geography of Poverty by Urban Institute? Brookings

PRESENTERS: ______________________________

Feb 11  Measurement issues in poverty: Who is poor?

PRESENTERS: ______________________________

Feb 18  Sociological and economic perspectives on poverty

PRESENTERS: ______________________________
Feb 25

Developmental and Cultural models


Presenters: ____________________________________

March 4

Poverty, biology, and neuroscience


Presenters: ____________________________________

Journal Article Critique Due

Mar 11

Children in Poverty: Home, child care, and neighborhoods


Presenters:______________________

Mar 18   SPRING BREAK
March 25  
**Effects of Child Poverty and Children’s Development**


**PRESENTERS:** ____________________________

April 1  
**Effects of Child Poverty and Adolescents’ Development**


**PRESENTERS:** ____________________________

**OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

April 8  
**Research and Social Policies: What can we done? What do we do?**


**PRESENTERS:** ____________________________
### April 15

**The Effect of Interventions: Do they work?**

- Gormley, Phillips, & Gayer, 2008)

**PRESENTERS:**

### April 22

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


**PRESENTERS:**

### April 29

**New models for intervention**


May 6  
**Class Presentations**

May 18  
**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: