The University of Oklahoma  
College of Continuing Education  
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus

Course Title:  
Special Studies: Poverty, Income Inequality, and Public Policy

Course Number:  
ECON 5990-114

Course Description:  
The United States is an extremely affluent nation, yet there are pockets of persistent poverty and unemployment. High levels of poverty and income inequality have serious economic, social, psychological, and political implications. This course will analyze poverty using economic and sociological perspectives. Topics will include the measurement of poverty, empirical trends in poverty and income inequality, the relationship between human capital attainment and poverty, and the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs. Related issues such as child poverty, racial segregation, access to health care, and discrimination will be addressed.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:  
Dates: November 6-8 & 13-15, 2015  
Location: OCCE, Norman, Oklahoma. Classes are held at the Thurman White Forum Building of OCCE, 1704 Asp Avenue.  
Hours: Friday 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: October 8, 2015

Site Director:  
Bethany Neubauer. Assistant: Carmen Weeks. Phone: 405-325-1263; Fax: 405-325-9148; email: apnorman@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:  
Course Professor: Dr. Aparna Mitra  
Mailing Address: OU Economics Department  
308 Cate Center Drive, 321 Cate 1  
Norman, OK 73019  
Telephone Number: 405-325-5859  
Fax Number: 405-325-5842  
EmailAddress: amitra@ou.edu  
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:  
Student materials are available at the OU Follett Bookstore located at 1185 Asp Avenue; Norman, OK, and can be ordered online, by phone, by email, or by fax. Ordering online at http://www.bksstr.com/oklahomastore/home is strongly recommended – students can track the status of their order within 48 hours. If an order has not been shipped within three days, students can contact the Follett textbook manager by phone (405) 325-3511, (800) 522-0772 (toll-free) or email 0831mgr@fheg.follett.com. Phone orders (ask for the textbook manager and identify yourself as an Advanced Programs student) can be placed 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday (CST). Summer hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (CST). Fax orders can be placed 24 hours a day at (405) 325-7770. Text prices are available online.


4. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Additional readings will be posted several weeks before class starts. Access D2L at http://learn.ou.edu; enter your OU NetID and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

Note: Follett is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through Follett.

**Course Objectives:**

At the end of the course, students are expected to have a thorough understanding of the multidimensional nature of poverty and the complexity of formulating appropriate policies geared towards the reduction of poverty.

**Course Outline:**

This course is not technical but requires extensive reading and writing, therefore it is imperative that you do your readings prior to class. Major emphasis will be placed on discussions, research, and classroom debates. Please consult the following websites frequently to contribute to meaningful discussions in class.

- U.S. Census Bureau: http://www.census.gov
- National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov
- National Poverty Center, University of Michigan: http://npc.umich.edu/about_us/
- Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison: http://www.irp.wisc.edu/

**Please complete all readings prior to each class period**

**Session I**

- Introduction to the Course
- Current statistics on Poverty and Income Inequality - lecture
- Definition and Measurement of Poverty - lecture
- Read “The Price of Inequality,” chapters 1-5

**Session II**

- Demographics of the Poor
- **Articles on D2L:** Please read the following articles for class discussions:
  - “Being Poor, Black, and American”
  - “America’s Children,” and “Children living in poverty by ethnicity”
  - “Homelessness 2014”
  - “Unemployed Disconnected Youth”

**Session III**

- Human Capital, Employment, and Earnings
- Lecture
- Read Savage Inequalities, chapters 1-3
- **Articles on D2L:** Please read the following articles for class discussions
“Are recent college grads finding good jobs?”
“College majors by race and gender”
“New Diverse Majority Update”
“Heckman”

Session IV

- 3 Views of the Labor Market – lecture
- The Secondary Labor Market – lecture
- CEO Compensation in the US – lecture
- Read Nickel and Dimed, chapters 1-3, and Evaluation

Session V

- The Justice System and Income Inequality: lecture
- Inequality and Public Policy – read “The Price of Inequality,” chapters 9, 10
- Read the following articles from D2L:
  - “The Lockdown,” parts 1, 2, and 3
  - “Collateral Costs of Incarceration”
- Short Class Presentations (about 10 minutes each) on any of the above topics

Session VI

Review and Final Examination (please bring some paper and a stapler with you to class)

Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

1. Final Examination –55% - last day of class
2. Class Discussion and short presentation – 15%
3. Post-seminar assignment – 30% due two weeks after last day of class, November 29, 2015. The post seminar assignment involves writing a structured term paper (15 or > pages) on any issue/s related to poverty in the U.S. or across the world. The paper should be divided into different sections such as, Introduction, Background, Analysis, and Conclusion along with a bibliography. The required structure of the paper will be posted on D2L and details will be discussed in class.

Grading:

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

Notice: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc…in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc…; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at http://studentconduct.ou.edu/

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Aparna Mitra, Ph.D.

Education
Ph.D., Political Economy, University of Texas at Dallas

Current Positions
• Associate Professor of Economics, Department of Economics, University of Oklahoma
• Director, Advanced Program in Economics, Department of Economics, University of Oklahoma

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
• ECON 5990 Labor Economics
• ECON 5990 Discrimination in Labor Markets
• ECON 5033 Managerial Economics I
• ECON 5990 Poverty, Income Inequality, and Public Policy
• ECON 5990 Economics and Public Policy

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
• Labor Economics
• Economics of Race and Gender
• Gender and Labor Markets in Developing Countries
• Economics of Aging
• Economic Development in India
• Social Economics

Representative Publications and Presentations
• Indian Gaming in Oklahoma: Implications for Community Welfare,” with Nicholas Moellman, Journal of Socio-Economics, 45, 2013

Conference Presentations
• “Intimate Partner Violence and Women’s Mental Health in India,” Southern Economic Association, November 2013
• “Son Preference in India: Implications for Gender Development,” 14th World Congress of Social Economics, Glasgow, Scotland, June 2012
• “Single Mothers and the Contributions of Nonresidential Fathers,” Southern Economic Association, Washington, DC, November 2011
• “Gender Violence and Women’s Mental Health in India,” 13th World Congress for Social Economics, Montreal, Canada, June 2010
• “Gender Inequality and the Spread of HIV/AIDS in India,” Southwestern Economics Association, Houston, April 2010

Representative Honors and Awards Received
• Presidential Teaching Fellow in Honors
• Patten Award for Outstanding Teaching in the Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, 2013
• Outstanding Undergraduate Economics Professor, Department of Economics, 2011
• Most Inspiring Faculty, OU Athletes, 2011
• Presidential “Dream Course” Award, University of Oklahoma, 2009
• Presidential Distinguished Faculty Mentoring Program, University of Oklahoma, fall, 2008, 2009

Major Professional Affiliations
• Association for Social Economics
• Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics
• Southwest Regional Director, Association for Social Economics, 2010-
• President, Southwestern Economics Association, 2004-2005