Author note: This is for an undergrad course on homelessness from spring 2006. I've done that one only once, and would revise it more than the others -- it's also tied to the New York scene. – Beth Shinn

Syllabus

Poverty in the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness, and What to Do About It
P11.0024
Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am - 12:15pm

Professor Beth Shinn

Purpose of Course: The course will attempt to answer five major substantive questions: Who is homeless? How big a problem is homelessness? What are the causes of homelessness? How can the United States end homelessness? How can New York City deal better with homelessness? Throughout, we will consider the methods for answering these questions and the limits of our knowledge. Students will participate in New York's homeless street count or a survey to evaluate it. Then they will pick a particular homeless group (e.g., adolescents, families, adults with mental illnesses), and in a series of individual and group projects consider the causes of homelessness for their group and the policies that could reduce homelessness or ameliorate its effects.

Grades will be based on class participation (10%) and on the assignments below.

Required Book:

Hopper, Kim. (2003). *Reckoning with homelessness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Schedule, Readings, Assignments

Section 1: What is the nature of homelessness -- Who is homeless; what are their characteristics?

- Types of homelessness: literal homelessness, precarious housing, runaway youth
- Populations
  - Single adults: men and women
  - Adults in homeless families
  - Children in those families
  - Adolescents on their own
- ➢ Assignment Due on Feb. 7: Pick a group and describe its characteristics (15%)

Jan 17 Introduction and Course Overview

Jan 19 National survey data on homeless service users

Burt, M. et al. (1999). Homelessness: programs and the people they serve: findings of the national survey of homeless assistance providers and clients. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. [Link on Blackboard]

Jan 24 History and framework

Hopper, pp. 3-53

Jan 26 Ethnographic data: homeless men

Hopper, pp. 57-130

Jan 31 Families, children, and adolescents

Haber, M. G., & Toro, P. A. (2004). Homelessness among families, children, and adolescents: An ecological–developmental perspective. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*. 7(3): 123 – 164. [Link on Blackboard]
**Note: You have to click on the link for full-text to access the article.

Feb 2 Families

Shinn, M., Rog, D., Culhane, D. (2004). *Family homelessness: background, research findings, and policy options.* Washington, DC: Interagency Council on homelessness. [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Feb 7 Individuals with serious mental illnesses

Hopper, K., Jost, J., Hay, T., Welber, S., & Haugland, G. (1997). Homelessness, Severe Mental Illness, and the Institutional Circuit. *Psychiatric Services*. 48: 659-665. [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Section 2: How big a problem is literal homelessness?

- Point, period prevalence
- Methods: shelter records, street counts, service use, phone survey
- ➢ Assignment: Participate in New York City's street count (February 27) or a follow-up survey (Feb 28- Mar 1) and provide oral and written report (15%) Due March 2

Feb 9 Phone surveys

Link, B., et al. (1994). Lifetime and five-year prevalence of homelessness in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*. 84(12): 1907 – 1912. [Link on Blackboard]

Ringwalt, C., et al. (1998). The prevalence of homelessness among adolescents in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health.* 88(9): 1325 – 1329. [Link on Blackboard]

Feb 14 Shelter records

Culhane, D. P., Dejowski, E. F., Ibanez, J., Needham, E., & Macchia, I. (1994). Public shelter admission rates in Philadelphia and New York City: The implications of turnover for sheltered population counts. *Housing Policy Debate, 5,* 107-140. [Link on Blackboard]

Feb 16 Street counts 1

Hopper pp. 131-146

Coalition for the Homeless. (2004). Undercounting the Homeless (Briefing Paper). [Link on Blackboard]
**Note: You need to click on the link to open the 18 page report.

Feb 21 Street counts 2

Hopper, K., Laska, E., Meisner, M., Shinn, M., Wanderling, J., Bainbridge, J., Appel, K., & Iorga, S. (2005). Counting unsheltered homeless people1: a plant-capture method and its results for New York City. Submitted to *American Journal of Public Health.* [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Shinn, M., Hopper, K., & Laska, E. (2005). Counting unsheltered homeless people II: evaluating the coverage of a street count with a next day survey of service users. Submitted to *American Journal of Public Health.* [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Section 3: What are the causes of homelessness?

- Income inequality
- Housing problems
- International comparisons (inequality, social policy)
- The question of race
-

- Mini-Assignment: Look up housing data for one community (5%) Due March 9.
- Assignment: Discuss causes of homelessness for your target group (15%) Due March 23

Feb 23 Overview, income inequality

Koegel, P., Burnam, A., Baumohl, J. (1996). The causes of homelessness. In J. Baumohl, Homelessness in America (24 – 33). Phoenix: Oryx Press. [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Two short articles from: Poverty Research Insights: A newsletter featuring research findings on poverty and policy from the National Poverty Center: [Link on Blackboard]:

Cadena, B. & Sallee, J. (2005) Why did poverty rise in 2004? A preliminary analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty report. pp.1

Danziger, S. (2005). Poverty and low-wage work 40 years after the declaration of the war on poverty. pp. 3.

Feb 28 No class: Participate in New York City's street count/follow-up survey

Mar 2 No reading, bring report on evaluation of Street Count.

Mar 7 Housing problems

Shinn, M., Weitzman, B. C., Stojanovic, D., Knickman, J. R., Jimenez, L., Duchon, L., James, S., & Krantz, D. H. (1998). Predictors of homelessness among families in New York City: From shelter request to housing stability. *American Journal of Public Health, 88*, 1651-1657. [Link on Blackboard]

Mar 9 International comparisons (inequality, social policy)

Toro, P., et al. (2004). Homelessness in Europe and the United States: A comparison of prevalence and public opinion. Prepared for *Journal of Social Issues.* [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Shinn, M. (2006). International Homelessness: Policy, Socio-Cultural, and Individual Perspectives. Prepared for *Journal of Social Issues.* [See Course Documents on Blackboard for Text]

Spring Break

Mar 21 The question of race

Hopper, pp. 147 – 171

Section 4: How can the United States end homelessness? Are the answers different for different groups?

- Prevention – primary, secondary
- Neighborhood strategies
- Advocacy
- Ten-year plans
- Successful programs Pathways to Housing

➢ Group Policy Analysis Assignment: Propose a policy or program to reduce homelessness or mitigate its consequences for your target group. Do oral and written report. (20%) Due April 4, 6, or 11

Mar 23 Prevention

Shinn, M., Baumohl, J., & Hopper, K. (2001). The prevention of homelessness revisited. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 1*, 95-127. [Link on Blackboard]
**Note: You need to click on the PDF Link to get to the 33 page article.

Mar 28 Neighborhood strategies

Culhane, D., Lee, C., Wachter, S. (1996). Where the homeless come from: A study of the prior address distribution of families admitted to public shelters in New York City and Philadelphia. *Housing Policy Debate.* 7(2): 327-365. [Link on Blackboard]

Mar 30 Advocacy

Hopper pp. 175 – 218

Apr 4 Ten-year plans

NYC Department of Homeless Services: United Ten-Year Action Plan
[Link on Blackboard]

Apr 6 Successful Programs: Pathways to Housing

Tsemberis, S., Gulcur, L., & Nakae, M. (2004). Housing first, consumer choice, and harm reduction for homeless individuals with a dual diagnosis. *American Journal of Public Health,* 94(4): 651 – 656. [Link on Blackboard]

Section 5: How can New York City deal better with homelessness?

- Right to shelter
- Shelter intake
- Housing subsidies
- Supportive housing
- Prevention
- Schooling
- Family separation

- Op-Ed assignment: Write an op-ed arguing for a particular action by New York City. Include a back-up document citing sources for factual assertions (20%) due April 27

Apr 11 Right to shelter and shelter intake

Feerick, J.D., Kronenfeld, D., & Noyowith, G. B., (2004). Report on the Emergency Assistance Unit and Shelter Eligibility Determination. Report of the New York City Family Homelessness Special Master Panel. [Link on Blackboard]
Note: You may skip the appendices.

Apr 13 Housing Subsidies

Housing Stability Plus program description from Department of Homeless Services website. [Link on Blackboard]

Coalition for the Homeless. (2004). The Bloomberg Administration's Flawed Homeless Rental Assistance Plan: A Misguided Plan with Opportunities for Effective Change (Briefing Paper).
[Link on Blackboard]
**Note: You need to click on the link to open the report.

Apr 18 Schooling

Rafferty, Y., Shinn, M., & Weitzman, B. C. (2004). Academic achievement among formerly homeless adolescents and their continuously housed peers. *Journal of School Psychology, 42,* 179-199. [Link on Blackboard]

Apr 20 Prevention

Feerick, J.D., Kronenfeld, D., & Noyowith, G. B., (2003). Family Homelessness Prevention Report. Report of the New York City Family Homelessness Special Master Panel. [Link on Blackboard]

Apr 25 Supportive Housing

Coalition for the Homeless. (2002). Supportive housing reduces homelessness and saves taxpayer dollars (Briefing Paper).
[Link on Blackboard]
**Note you need to scroll down to supportive housing and click on the link to open the report.

DHS Press release about New York – New York III Supportive housing agreement.
[Link on Blackboard]

Apr 27 Family Separation

Cowal, K., Shinn, M., Weitzman, B. C., Stojanovic, D., & Labay, L. (2002). Mother-child separations among homeless and housed families receiving public assistance in New York City. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*, 711-730. [Link on Blackboard]

Resources for group policy and individual op-ed assignments:

- Housing Policy Debate 15 (2) on ETIC and other ways to make housing affordable.
- 12 (2) on violence and family homelessness
- 9(4) Housing discrimination
- CCNY on rental assistance (note that this does not include the latest city Housing Stability Plus program) http://cccnewyork.org/publications/Rent%20Assistance.pdf