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:


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


Jan 24 History and framework

Hopper, pp. 3-53

Jan 26 Ethnographic data: homeless men

Hopper, pp. 57-130

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
Jan 31  Families, children, and adolescents


**Note: You have to click on the link for full-text to access the article.**

Feb 2  Families


Feb 7  Individuals with serious mental illnesses


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


Feb 14  Shelter records


Feb 16  Street counts 1

Hopper pp. 131-146


**Note: You need to click on the link to open the 18 page report.**

Feb 21  Street counts 2

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
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


**Note: You need to click on the PDF Link to get to the 33 page article.**

Mar 28 Neighborhood strategies


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


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


Note: You may skip the appendices.

**Apr 13**

Housing Subsidies

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


**Note: You need to click on the link to open the report.**

**Apr 18**

Schooling


**Apr 20**

Prevention


**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


**Resources for group policy and individual op-ed assignments:**

5
- 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](http://cccnewyork.org/publications/Rent%20Assistance.pdf)