

# ECONOMICS 303

## Poverty & Discrimination

Dr. Clare Battista

Fall 2013

MW 4-6  
Business 201

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we explore poverty, discrimination, inequality, and immigration in the contemporary U.S. macroeconomic context.

We will also move beyond the boundaries of economic theory and examine these topics from an interdisciplinary perspective. This means that we will incorporate economic history, public policy, technological change, legal-institutional environments, as well as social-psychological determinants of behavior into our understanding of these topics.

In this course, we will also approach the material from the vantage point of integration and model building, focusing on understanding and analyzing the problems, brainstorming solutions, making connections across theory and reality, and connecting the dots of a logical argument. In short, we will try to think and act like economists and enlighten others about the way the world works.

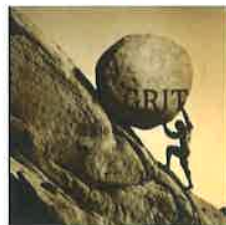


All readings, videos, & assignments will be posted or linked on PolyLearn

### KEYS TO SUCCESS:



Be curious.



PASSION!!!

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

In general, you will leave this course as a more expert and aware learner, a better critical thinker, a more socially responsible member of this community, and, most definitely, a more polished writer. In particular, you should be able to discuss the economic problems we address, explain why (or why not) they are problems, and use economic models and empirical data to understand and analyze these problems (LG1&2). You should also be able to consider and navigate alternative perspectives and their ethical implications (LG3). Finally, you should be able to logically and/or empirically support existing solutions, or critique existing solutions and formulate alternatives.

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	Wading	Snorkeling	Scuba Diving
Students take 303 for lots of reasons, usually variations on "it's required." But... this should not limit what you take away from the course.	You need the basics the outlines, the highlights, the main characters & ideas, the surface-level knowledge	You have a grasp of the basics and are ready to think like an economist and explore what's below the surface	You want to go deeper into the subject, using the cognitive equipment & tools of economics as a focused critical thinker
Think about why someone has decided that learning this material might be essential to your college experience, and what that means for you personally.	There's nothing wrong with staying in the shallows; this approach may work for you if this is likely to be your only economics course, or if you've never taken a course like this one before & it's all new	There's nothing wrong with staying in the shallows; this approach may work for you if this is likely to be your only economics course, or if you've never taken a course like this one before & it's all new	Experienced? You are well aware of some of the controversies and how knowledge or models of the real world are constructed. You actively seek alternative sources, interpretations, and voices.
It is entirely possible to do well in the class without being transformed by your new- found knowledge, but it would be a shame.	"Waders" will tend to assume that readings and professor are mutually reinforcing, telling basically the same story. Waders are mainly concerned with WHAT happened.	"Snorkelers" notice empirical & economic inconsistencies and challenge assumptions. Snorkelers are interested in HOW & WHY things happen(ed).	"Divers" don't take the course's structure or content as inevitable. They see and fill gaps. They are curious, passionate, and concerned with WHY ECONOMICS MATTERS.

**Course Requirements** This course involves reading, writing, thinking, connecting presenting, and group discussion. It is fast-paced; you will need to stay on top of all reading and prep work. You will need to put in consistent effort throughout the quarter.

**Attendance and Participation (10%)** Attendance is mandatory. You should be on time and ready for discussion each day. There's no such thing as an "excused absence" – you're either in class, or you're not. Attendance means showing up. Participating means speaking up in class and practicing active learning. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, substantive, and that you will have done that day's assigned reading before class.

**Daily Work, and Class Writes (25%)** This course uses a flipped classroom model so classes will be more active and hands-on. In-class work may include pop quizzes, discussion questions, in- class short writings, model building, mind mapping, and class participation. These cannot be made up, since they depend on being present in class. Our focus for all writing assignments and discussion will be on integration, i.e., **connecting** the dots.

**Pecha Kucha (15%)** Pecha Kucha is an efficient PPT presentation style, which stipulates 20 slides, 20 seconds per slide, with narration.

**Reading and online Prep Activities (25%)** Since the classroom will be an active learning environment, it is essential that you come to class prepared. These readings and online prep work is designed to get you ready for the activities in class.

**Final Integrated Poster Project (25%)** Since this class will focus on integration, model building, and different modes of thinking, writing and presenting, it only makes sense that your final submission will be a project that integrates all of these elements.

## Grading Schema

Attendance & Participation:	(10%)
Daily Work & Class Writes:	(25%)
Reading & Online Prep	(25%)
Pecha Kucha Presentation:	(15%)
Final Integrated Poster Project:	(25%)
Service Learning (P/F)	

## Course Outline:

A detailed and active Course Schedule will be posted on PolyLearn along with the readings and assignments. Please check it regularly so that you are prepared for every class and do not miss assignment deadlines.

### Module 1:

Biases, Irrationality and Systems of Thinking and Behavior

### Module 2:

Poverty: Misperceptions, Theories, Reality, Stories, Assumptions, Policies, Data, Measures, Solutions

### Module 3:

Theories of Economic Success, Misperceptions, Meritocracy, Hard-work, 10,000 hours, Grit, Resilience, Failure, Marginal Productivity, Returns to MP

### Module 4:

Economic Inequality and Economic Mobility: Reality, Myths, Misperceptions, Data, Historical Trends, Causes, Consequences, Relationships, Linkages to Immigration

### Module 5:

Discrimination: Race, Gender, Class and Ethnicity, Connections across Disciplines, Reading the Data.

## SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

For each class, you will typically have a reading assignment, video clip, and/a PPT or screencast to view. I consider these at-home assignments preparation or "background material," which ensures that you will come to class prepared and ready to be successful. Any in-class assignments, discussions, or quizzes will presume that you are prepared.

As we begin to discuss and develop models in class, some at-home time will be allocated to fine-tuning and polishing these models.

## OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

Any students with learning disabilities should contact DRC so that we can work together to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform in this class. Please advise me of any DRC recommended arrangements or accommodations by the end of the first week.

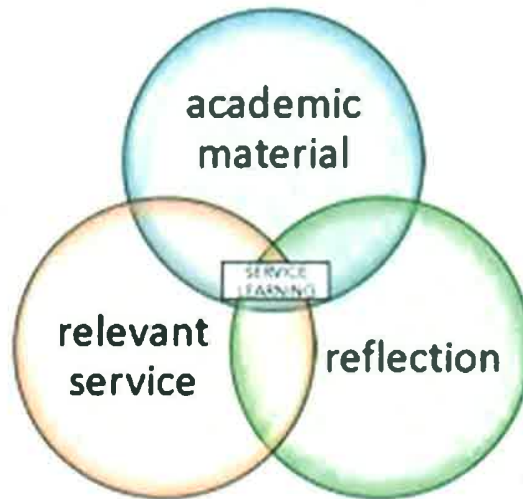


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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Intellectual honesty and integrity are essential attributes of an educated person. It is expected that students in this course will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. It is expected that all work done by students in this class will be done by the individual student. Anyone involved in dishonest academic practices will minimally receive a failing grade on the assignment and, at the instructor's discretion, may possibly receive a failing grade in the course. You are responsible for knowing the University policies.





Econ 303 is a service learning course, affording you the opportunity to connect economic theory to everyday realities through your volunteer work with local agencies, as well as apply the knowledge from real world experience to analyses that we address on a more theoretical level.

Service Learning Requirement:

Over the quarter, you are required to:

1. Attend the Agency Fair and sign up with an agency during the 1<sup>st</sup> class meeting
2. Complete a minimum of 14 hours of service with a local service agency.
3. Attend one 2 hour reflection meeting (during final exam time) where we will discuss and reflect on your service learning experience during the first hour and analyze that experience during the second hour.

In order to receive credit for your SERVICE and the corresponding LEARNING that occurs during that service you must fulfill requirements 1-3 above. There are no make-ups for the reflection meeting. If requirement #2 is incomplete, you will not receive credit for the course.

Questions on efficiency/effectiveness of your agency to consider:

1. What are the goals of the agency that you have been involved with? What specific variables or factors would you use in measuring the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals? How can the program be improved so that it becomes more effective and efficient?
2. Identify the different population groups who benefit from the program(s) offered by your agency. Are the poor and minorities the only ones who benefit? Based on your experience with this agency do you believe the clients you assisted are deserving of aid? From your perspective, what do you perceive as the main reasons why these clients are poor or in need of aid?
3. How does economics relate to these real world problems? Provide examples of how economic theory is use to analyze the problems that you encountered during your service?