

Economics 4626- The Economics of Inequality and Discrimination
Fall 2006, MWF 9:00-9:50, EDUC 155
<http://www.Colorado.EDU/Economics/courses/mckinnis/econ4626>

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Is the current poverty rate too high or too low? Why is it so hard to design effective welfare programs? Is it better to give things (food, housing) or cash? What is the standard of living of families living on welfare? Why are there so many single mothers? What is the relationship between poverty and health? How do public schools differ between rich and poor neighborhoods?

Course Structure

In-Class Exercises: In-class group exercises will be given frequently. These exercises will be used to promote discussion of the issues we cover and, most importantly, give students practice with the material in preparation for exams.

Attendance: Attendance is absolutely crucial to success in this class. This is a lecture-based, rather than textbook-based course. Student practice will take place through in-class exercises rather than homework. In order to re-enforce the importance of attendance, it will be factored into final grades. **Attendance will be taken regularly and any student missing more than 20% (3 weeks or 9 classes) of the course's scheduled classes will receive a failing grade.** To be clear, these nine absences are intended to cover both valid (illness, car breaking down) and invalid reasons for missing class. Excused absences will therefore not be granted. I reserve the right to record an absence for students who spend substantial class time on non-class activities (e.g. reading the paper).

Exams: Two midterms and a non-cumulative final exam. The first midterm is scheduled for Wed, Oct 4. The second midterm is scheduled for Wed, Nov 1. The University has scheduled the final exam for Wed, Dec 20, 7:30-10:00am

Grades

Grades will be based on:

1/3 first midterm

1/3 second midterm

1/3 final exam

Actual letter grades will be based on a combination of each student's performance relative to others in the class and the performance I would expect from an intelligent and hardworking student.

Some Additional Notes/Policies

Material from a Missed Class: If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining the material you missed. Class handouts and group exercises will be posted on the course web page. You should arrange to obtain notes from a classmate (in advance, if possible), not from the professor. I encourage you to come to my office hours to discuss the material you missed, but you must first obtain the notes and relevant handouts, go over the information for yourself, and prepare specific questions to ask me.

Missed Exams: Make-up exams will not be given. Exam absences will only be excused for compelling circumstances (generally family emergencies or documented illness), in which case the other exams will be re-weighted. Students anticipating conflict with an exam date due to religious observance or over-scheduling (3 or more exams on the same day) must bring these to my attention well in advance of the effected exam.

Special Accommodations: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic

Week 11 (Nov 6-10): Defining Poverty
Textbook: "Poverty . . ."p.78-111

Week 12 (Nov 13-17): Labor Supply and Welfare Programs
Textbook: "Hours of Work" p.164-190

Week 13: (Nov 20-24) Thanksgiving Week

Week 14 (Nov 27-Dec1): Welfare Reform, In-Kind Programs

Week 15 (Dec 4-8): Realities of Poverty: Childcare, Health, Housing

Week 16 (Dec 11-15): Education Policy

Final Exam: Wed, Dec 20 7:30-10:00 am