

SOCI 191S
Hunger & Homelessness in a Land of Plenty: Montana & Beyond/SvcLrn
University of Montana
Fall 2015

Course Number: 73157 – SOCI 191S - 01
Day: Mondays & Wednesdays
Time: 9:40am - 11:00am
Class Location: SS 330

Professor: Daisy Rooks
Email: daisy.rooks@mso.umt.edu
Office Phone: (406) 243-2852
Office Location: Social Science 319
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00pm – 4:00pm
Fridays 10:30am – 11:30am
and by appointment

Community Partner: Missoula Food Bank
Volunteer Coordinator: Krystin Gehrich
Email: kgehrich@missoulafoodbank.org
Phone: (406) 549-0543 extension 107
Office Location: 219 S. Third St. West. Missoula, MT 59801

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

In this course, students interrogate the following enduring global question: why do hunger and homelessness exist in lands of plenty? By exploring this question, students will gain insights about the distribution of resources, the effectiveness of social programs, and the political will to eradicate inequality in Montana and beyond.

Students in the course will be exposed to multidisciplinary perspectives on hunger and homelessness. Students will read books, watch movies, and listen to radio stories produced by academics and practitioners in the fields of Sociology, Anthropology, Journalism, Literature, and several others. Students will explore the disciplinary perspectives of these sources by examining the claims, assumptions, evidence and rhetorical devices used by their authors and producers. Students will learn experientially while providing service to people experiencing hunger and/or food insecurity in Missoula. Students in this course will also experiment with several different types of writing including descriptive, personal reflection, and revision.

This course emphasizes interactive, experiential, student-centered learning. Lectures will play a minimal role in the course. Instead, most learning will take place during carefully designed interactive activities, such as in-class exercises, small group discussions, field trips, and structured debates.

Learning Goals

Students in this class will learn to communicate effectively in writing, think critically, discuss and debate sensitive topics, gain insights into the lived experience of hunger and homelessness, and critically assess different types of information.

Learning Outcomes

Communicate Effectively in Writing. By the end of this course students should be able to:

- identify the components of college-level writing;
- develop theses and arguments; and
- identify and select evidence to bolster their theses and arguments.

Think Critically. By the end of this course students should be able to:

- interrogate the assumptions underlying their own views and beliefs;
- formulate arguments with appropriate supporting evidence;
- understand the perspectives of others; and
- discuss sensitive and emotionally-laden topics in a collegial and respectful way.

Understand Hunger and Homelessness in the U.S. By the end of this course students should be able to:

- differentiate between structural and individual causes of hunger and homelessness;
- identify the social, political and economic consequences of hunger and homelessness; and
- describe the diverse experiences of individuals experiencing hunger and/or homelessness.

Integrate Knowledge. By the end of this course students should be able to:

- identify and challenge their assumptions about people experiencing hunger and/or homelessness;
- reflect on their service experience at the Missoula Food Bank using in-class discussions, course readings and written assignments; and
- explain the challenges facing organizations that serve the hungry, poor and homeless;

Become Information Literate. By the end of this course students should be able to:

- distinguish between popular, applied, and scholarly information;
- assess the validity, accuracy and bias of information sources;
- articulate the reasons for citing research sources; and
- understand the importance of academic honesty.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Books

- Nick Flynn. 2004. Another Bullshit Night in Suck City. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Jessica Morrell. 2007. Voices from the Street: Truths about Homelessness from Sisters of the Road. Portland OR: Gray Sunshine Publishing.
- Kath Weston. 2008. Traveling Light: On the Road with America's Poor. Boston MA: Beacon Press.

These books will be available on traditional reserve at the Mansfield library. They can be checked out for 2 hours at a time but cannot be taken outside of the library.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Preparation

Be prepared for class. Always read the assigned material before the class so that you can refer to it during lectures and fully participate in class discussions.

Take careful lecture notes. You should obtain lecture notes from another student if you are unable to attend class. Members of the teaching team will not provide lecture notes or PowerPoint slides to students who miss class.

Participation

All students are encouraged to participate actively during class sessions, which will cover topics that are controversial and uncomfortable. In order to maintain a respectful, open and inquisitive classroom environment, please observe the following guidelines:

- *Explain your views using reasoned arguments*, and provide evidence for assertions of fact. Do everything in your power to avoid endless personal anecdotes and story-telling.
- *Respect others' views and listen.* You do not have to agree with your classmates, but try your best to give them your full attention and consideration during class sessions.
- *Texting, talking on your phone, web surfing, tweeting and emailing* should be done outside of class time. They disrupt your classmates and are disrespectful to your instructor.

Service Commitment

All students are required to volunteer for at least 15 hours at the Missoula Food Bank. You are responsible for arranging your volunteer schedule with the Food Bank's volunteer coordinator and for getting yourself to and from your volunteer commitment each week.

This course has a service learning designation from UM. Service learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students, faculty, and community partners work together to enhance student learning by applying academic knowledge in a community-based setting. Student work addresses the needs of the community as identified through collaboration with community or tribal partners, while meeting instructional objectives through faculty-structured service work and critical reflection meant to prepare students to be civically responsible members of the community. At its best, service learning enhances and deepens students' understanding of an academic discipline by facilitating the integration of theory and practice, while providing them with experience that develops life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.

No student may be required to participate in a service-learning placement that creates a religious, political, or moral conflict for them. If such a conflict arises, please bring it to my attention as soon as possible.

Communication

All students must *maintain a university email account* and check it regularly for class announcements. I will communicate regularly with students via email; you are responsible for

all information contained in these emails. University policy prohibits me from responding to emails sent from personal, non-UM email accounts.

Feel free to contact me via email or come to my office hours with questions that you have about the course. If you email me during the work week, I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours, although I typically do not respond to emails on the weekend. When you email me, always include “SOC1 191” or “GLI seminar” or “Hunger and Homelessness” in the subject line of your email. When I answer a question in class that a student emailed me, I consider the question answered.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php), which is available for review online (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

Accessibility

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommason Center 154 or (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Person-First Language

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to use person-first language in class and in all of their written assignments. Person-first language emphasizes the person before the illness, disability or situation that they find themselves in. For example, we would say “people experiencing homelessness” not “the homeless,” and “people with mental illness” not “the mentally ill.” If you want to learn more about person-first language, see [Child Care plus+ *The Language of Inclusion*](#); Vol. 13 No. 2.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students’ final grades will be based on the following components; in-class participation, five formal writing assignments, and three in-class essays. The weight of each component is as follows:

In-class participation	10%
Assignment 1: Becoming a bus rider paper	10%
Assignment 2: Service reflection paper	10%
Assignment 3: Service reflection paper	10%
Assignment 4: Service reflection paper	15%

Assignment 5: Revision paper
In-class essays (3)

20%
25%

In-class participation

10% of your grade (100 points) will be based on the amount and quality of your participation during class sessions. You must be in attendance regularly to earn these points. If you miss class more than one or two times, with or without the instructor's permission, you will forfeit participation points.

Assignment 1: Becoming a bus rider

10% of your grade (100 points) will be based on assignment 1. For this assignment, students will select a line of the local public bus system, Mountain Line, and ride it from beginning to end. Students will write papers describing their experiences riding the bus. Students' papers should pay close attention to the physical layout and condition of the bus, the riders on the bus, the interactions between riders, the interactions between riders and bus drivers, and the different neighborhoods that the bus serves. Students' papers should be written in formal, academic prose, and should be carefully edited before they are turned in. Students can find information about Missoula's bus system, including route maps and schedules, on the [Mountain Line website](http://www.mountainline.com/) (<http://www.mountainline.com/>). Although students may not ride UM's park and ride buses for this assignment, they are welcome to ride Greyhound and other longer-distance carriers in the region.

Assignments 2-4: Service reflection papers

35% of your grade (350 points) will be based on three short papers that explore your experiences volunteering at the Missoula Food Bank. In assignment 2 students will focus on one thing: objective accuracy. In assignment 3 students will focus on two things: objective accuracy and personal awareness. In assignment 4 students will focus on three things: objective accuracy, personal awareness and intellectual analysis. Students' papers should be written in formal, academic prose, and should be carefully edited before they are turned in.

Assignment 5: Revision paper

20% of your grade (200 points) will be based on a revision of one of your papers. Students will identify one paper that they would like to revise, and then revise with the goal of improving the paper significantly. When submitting this assignment, students will also submit a short revision memo describing what they did to improve the paper, and how the changes that they made address the written feedback that I provided on the original assignment. This assignment will be graded using the following criteria:

- Extent of revisions;
- Responsiveness to instructor's feedback;
- Justification for revision strategy;
- Clarity of prose and organization;
- Conclusion.

In-class essays

25% of your grade (250 points) will be based on three in-class essays. These in-class essays will take place during weeks 6, 10, and 15. Each in-class essay will cover one of the three assigned books for the course. Students will have 45 minutes to respond in writing to a prompt provided by the instructor. This assignment is open book and open note; while writing their essays, students are allowed to reference their books, discussion notes, and any other materials that they prepared.

Extra credit option: SNAP/food stamp challenge and reflection paper

For up to 50 extra credit points, students can take the [SNAP/food stamp challenge](#) and write a short reflection paper about their experience. According to the [Food Research and Action Center](#) “the SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge is a way to gain a personal understanding and raise awareness of what it means to live on SNAP. Participants spend a week living on the average daily food stamp benefit (about \$4 per day) and share their experiences about the difficult choices they have to make.” The daily food stamp benefit for Montana is \$3.91 per day, so students participating in the challenge will agree to live on that amount for 4 days. All students who pursue this option will participate in the challenge from Friday November 20th to Monday November 23rd. The reflection paper will be due on Friday December 4th.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Important dates

Friday September 25	Assignment 1 due @ noon on moodle
Wednesday October 7	In-Class Essay 1: Weston
Friday October 16	Assignment 2 due @ noon on moodle
Friday October 30	Assignment 3 due @ noon on moodle
Wednesday November 4	In-Class Essay 2: Morrell
Friday November 13	Assignment 4 due @ noon on moodle
Friday December 4	Optional extra credit reflection paper due @ noon on moodle
Monday December 7	In-Class Essay 3: Flynn
Friday December 11	Assignment 5 due @ noon on moodle

See next page for detailed course schedule.

Unit 1: What It's Like to Experience Poverty and/or Hunger

Week	Dates	Author	Chapter	Chapter title	Pages
1	Aug 31	Introduction to the course (no assigned reading)			
	Sept 2	Weston	N/A	Author's Note	249-250
			Prologue	Freedom in My Pocket	ix-xii
2	Sept 7	No Class: Labor Day			
	Sept 9	Weston	Intro	It's a Poor Rat That's Got But One Hole	xiii-xxiii
3	Sept 14 & 16	Weston	1	When the Desert Fails to Bloom	3-63
4	Sept 21 & 23	Weston	2	Leaving the City of Cranes	67-118
	Sept 25	Assignment 1 due @ noon on moodle			
5	Sept 28	Weston	3	Going Coastal	119-155
	Sept 30	Class visit to Missoula Food Bank (219 S. 3rd Street West)			
6	Oct 5	Weston	5	Living on Debts and Promises	201-243
	Oct 7	In-Class Essay 1: Weston			

Unit 2: What It's Like to Experience Homelessness and/or Hunger

Week	Dates	Author	Chapter	Chapter title	Pages
7	Oct 12	Morrell	1	I Never Thought That I'd be Homeless	1-19
	Oct 14	Morrell	2	We Were Constantly Hungry. But that was...	21-34
	Oct 16	Assignment 2 due @ noon on moodle			
8	Oct 19	Morrell	3	I Felt Like I Had No One	35-50
			7	I am Not a Lazy Person. I Have Worked All...	105-113
	Oct 21	Morrell	9	It's a Freakish, Freakish Feeling, A lot of...	127-138
9	Oct 26	Morrell	13	No One is Really Asking for Handouts...	191-205
	Oct 28	Morrell	4	You Get Arrested for Freaking Sleeping	51-70
	Oct 30	Assignment 3 due @ noon on moodle			
10	Nov 2	Morrell	15	Just Give Me a Place Where I Can Rest My...	235-265
	Nov 4	In-Class Essay 2: Morrell			

Unit 3: What It's Like to Experience Homelessness and Addiction and/or Mentally Illness

Week	Dates	Author	Section	Pages	
11	Nov 9	Flynn	1	3-59	
	Nov 11	No Class: Veteran's Day			
	Nov 13	Assignment 4 due @ noon on moodle			
12	Nov 16	Flynn	2	63-113	
	Nov 18	Flynn	2	114-164	
	Nov 20-23	Optional extra credit: SNAP/Food stamp challenge			
13	Nov 23	Flynn	3	167-237	
	Nov 25	No Class, Thanksgiving Break			
14	Nov 30	Flynn	4	241-269	
	Dec 2	Flynn	5	273-347	
	Dec 4	Optional: SNAP/Food stamp challenge reflection paper due @ noon on moodle			
15	Dec 7	In-Class Essay 3: Flynn			
	Dec 9	Course wrap-up (no assigned reading)			
	Dec 11	Assignment 5 due @ noon on moodle			

FALL 2015 GLI FRESHMAN LECTURE SERIES

Over the course of the semester, all students in this course are required to attend two lectures that affiliated with the GLI freshman lecture series (see list of lectures below). Once you have selected two lectures that interest you, you should RSVP for them on the GLI Moodle page.

The Look of Silence: a film about survivors of the Indonesia Genocide of 1965

Owen Sirrs, Adjunct Professor, Defense Critical Language and Culture Program, Mansfield Center

Friday, September 18 at 7pm – Roxy Theater (718 S Higgins Ave)

Resilient Agriculture: Farming in a Changing Climate

Laura Lengnick, author of Resilient Agriculture

Wednesday, September 23 at 7pm – UC Theater

Kissinger's Shadow: The Long Reach of America's Most Controversial Statesman

Greg Grandin, Professor of History, New York University

Monday, October 12 at 8pm – UC Ballroom

Collaborative Responses to Sexual Exploitation in our State

Katharina Werner, YWCA Pathways Program Manager and Detective Guy Baker, Missoula Police Department and FBI Safe Streets Task Force

Wednesday, October 14 at 12:10pm – UC 331

Riot or Rebellion? Understanding the Urban Unrest of 2014-15

Tobin Shearer, Professor of History, University of Montana

Tuesday, November 3 at 7pm – UC Theater

What is the Legacy of 1960s?

Michael Kazin, Professor of History, Georgetown University

Friday, November 6 at 8pm – UC Ballroom

Peaceful Islam or Much ado about ISIS

Dr. Abdelilah Bouasria, Arabic Lead Instructor at the Defense Critical Language and Culture Program Wednesday, November 18 at 12:10pm – UC 331

Shakespeare 451: Shakespeare, Ray Bradbury, and Humanities Teaching Today

Marjorie Garber, Professor of English and Visual and Environmental Studies, Harvard University

Thursday, November 19 at 8pm – UC Ballroom