



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Renison University College
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo
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Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Re-storying Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization Spokescouncil, as well as the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

Fall 2023

Course Code: SOC224R

Course Title: Poverty in Canada and its Social Consequences

Class Times/Location: REN2102

Instructor: Dr. Katie Cook, PhD (pronouns: they/them)

Office: REN0101B

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: katie.cook@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a general understanding of the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological approaches to poverty and its consequences in Canada. We will use a systems-level and intersectional approach to understand how poverty is created and sustained, who is most impacted and how, the politics of poverty, and both political and grassroots responses.

Course Culture and Approach

This course will engage principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in all aspects, including the topics we discuss, the readings we review, and the discussions we have in class. This includes:

1. *Active learning*—“a cooperative learning strategy where students are tasked with working together toward a specific goal and engage in discussion with one another” (Fuentes, Zelaya & Madsen, 2020, p.72). As such, this course will have a lecture component, course discussions, and student reflection.
2. *Intersectional analysis*: Intersectionality asks us to think about the complex ways that our various identities intersect to shape our worldview, both in terms of experiences of privilege and marginalization. As your instructor, I aim to minimize systemic forces of oppression within our class environment, including racism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, (cis)sexism, and weightism. This is an ongoing and collaborative process.
3. *Mutual respect*: I ask that you join me in this commitment to creating a safe and inclusive course environment that is rooted in mutual respect, equity, and generosity.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Understand definitions of and issues related to poverty in Canada.
 - Ability to identify some of the issues related to defining poverty
 - Ability to identify and explain some of the complex issues related to addressing poverty.
- B. Identify key systemic issues that create the conditions of poverty.
 - Ability to articulate how political and economic systems create and sustain poverty in Canada.
 - Comfort with communicating and analyzing systemic issues
- C. Use a critical lens to analyze the intersectional nature of poverty and its consequences across various contexts.
 - Developed understanding of how poverty has unequal impacts across communities.
 - Ability to communicate clearly about how poverty, racism, colonialism, and other systems interact.

Required Text

- Articles posted on LEARN (see content folders for weekly readings).

Course Requirements and Assessment

Please read this section carefully and reach out to me early in the term if you have questions or concerns about any of the assignment deadlines. You are expected to request an extension **before** and assignment's due date, so please plan accordingly.

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Attendance and participation	Ongoing	15%
Media analysis	October 4	15%
Infographic assignment	October 25	20%
Reflexive paper	November 15	20%
Group Presentation	Nov 22 – Nov 29	30%
Total		100%

**All assignment due dates will be subject to the chaos clause wherein if unexpected chaos occurs close to or on a due date, students may submit the assignment up to 24 hours after the deadline with no deduction and without contacting the instructor. If a student requires more than a 24-hour extension, they must contact Dr. Cook to avoid deductions. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours late without prior arrangements will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (see late assignment policy below)

Assessment Descriptions

All written assignments for this course should be completed using APA formatting. Please use an accessible, 12-point font and 1-inch margins for all assignments. Written components of assignments should be double-spaced. All assignments should include a title page and page numbers.

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Students are expected to prepare for each class by reading and thinking about the required materials in relation to their own experiences and observations. Your participation mark is based on a combination of class attendance, participation during class, small group discussions and activities, and online discussions. At the end of the term, you will complete a self-evaluation of your participation in the course, and your final participation grade will be a combination of my evaluation and your self-evaluation grade. We all have different levels of comfort with speaking in class and my goal is to ensure that you have many ways to participate without having to speak in front the entire class. All forms of participation are weighted equally—that is, you will not be penalized if you only participate via small group conversations or online discussion boards.

Each week, I will post one discussion question on LEARN related to the in-class topics. You may engage with your classmates there in addition to/instead of speaking in class if needed. You may also choose to email me directly with your reflexive thoughts and contributions to class discussions.

At the end of the term (by Dec. 4) you will have an opportunity to complete a participation self-evaluation (form to be posted on LEARN). This self-evaluation will help inform your final participation grade.

Assignment 1: Media Analysis (15%)

The purpose of this assignment is to critically reflect on how poverty is represented in the media while developing skills in critical thinking and analysis. For this assignment, you will choose one media item (from a credible Canadian news source OR social media). Your chosen media *must* be disseminating information/news, not merely stating the author/creator's opinion. You will write a 2 - 3-page analysis of the news item, including the following:

- 1) What is the core message of the article/news item? How does it portray poverty, including any imagery? What alternative explanations of poverty are available?
- 2) Who might be harmed by this article/news item? Who might benefit from this article/news item?
- 3) How do you determine the credibility of this news/information?
- 4) Where did this news originate? Who authored/created this piece of news/information?

You may include citations for this assignment, but the only required citation is of the news item itself. Due: October 4th by 11:59pm.

Assignment 2: Infographic (20%) (Weeks 4 – 6)

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your skills related to understanding and communicating key topics related to poverty in Canada. For this assignment, you will choose one key topic related to poverty that we discussed in weeks 4, 5, or 6 of the course. You will then research this topic using both course readings and outside sources (3 – 5 sources total). You will create an infographic that conveys the following:

- 1) What is the topic?
- 2) What is the scope/prevalence of this topic/issue?
- 3) How is this topic/issue being addressed currently?
- 4) How might we better address this issue (if relevant)?

Along with your 1-page infographic, you will create a 2 - 3-page write-up that describes the infographic and includes your citations. You will also include an APA-formatted references page. Due: October 25th by 11:59pm

Assignment 3: Reflexive Paper (20%) (Weeks 7 – 9)

The purpose of this paper is to give you an opportunity to explore a topic (from weeks 7, 8 or 9 of the course) in more detail and to relate your learning to your experiences and/or future career. You may choose more than one course topic for this assignment, as long as your paper has a common thread. For example, you may wish to discuss the interactions between different experiences (e.g., disability and queerness) as it relates to poverty. You must include 5 references, 3 of which must be external to the required course readings. You may cite lectures, but this does not count towards your minimum 5 references. Your completed assignment should be 5 - 7 pages total, not including references or title page.

You may complete this assignment in an alternative format (e.g., poetry, photography, digital story). If you choose an alternative modality for this assignment, you will need to complete a short, written component as well (3 pages), describing your art/product and relating it to course topics, with citations. More information on this assignment will be presented in class and posted on LEARN. Due: November 15th by 11:59pm.

Assignment 4: Group Presentation (30%): Creating a world without poverty

The purpose of this assignment is to learn about existing actions, movements, initiatives, etc. (local, federal, or global) that are working to address poverty. You should choose an initiative that you believe is working well and can be applied to a Canadian context (if it's not already applied in Canada).

You will work in groups of 3 – 4 students to create a 15-minute presentation on a topic of your choosing. Your presentation must:

- 1) Describe the initiative/action/movement; Describe how the initiative works
- 2) Describe how it addresses poverty
- 3) Address how it be improved and how it can be scaled/applied in other contexts (e.g., if it's being used in another country, how can it be applied in Canada? If it's being used in a part of Canada, how can it be applied country-wide?)
- 4) Explain how your initiative relates to topics and ideas we've discussed this term (from course readings, frameworks, in-class discussions, etc.)

Your presentation should include at least one interactive activity, as well as APA citations and references (min. 5). More information about this assignment will be shared in class and on LEARN. Presentations will take place November 22 – 29th.

Course Schedule

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings Due
Module 1: Setting the Context for Understanding Poverty in Canada			
3	Sept 18	Introductions Learning needs and objectives	Statistics Canada (2023). Canada's Official Poverty Dashboard of Indicators
	Sept 20	Defining and measuring poverty in Canada	Employment and Social Development Canada (2018). Opportunity for All: Canada's first Poverty Reduction Strategy. Chapter 1 (pp. 11 – 18) Raphael, D. (2013). The politics of poverty. <i>Social Alternatives</i> , 32(1), p. 5 – 12.
4	Sept 25	The role of capitalism in creating and sustaining poverty. Overview of assignment 1	Harriss-White (2006). Poverty and capitalism. <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> , 1241 – 1246. https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/canada-and-the-crisis-of-capitalism
	Sept 27	Social assistance in Canada <i>Guest lecturer: Dr. Robert Case</i>	Peter, N. & Polgar, J. M. (2020). Social assistance in Ontario: What is the problem represented to be? <i>Journal of Poverty</i> , 23(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.1799285 .
5	Oct 2	Poverty and health	Men, F., Elgar, F.J., Tarasuk, V. (2021). Food insecurity is associated with mental health problems among Canadian youth. <i>Journal of Epidemiological Community Health</i> , 75, 741 – 748.
	Oct 4	Housing and homelessness Overview of assignment 2 Media analysis assignment due by 11:59pm	Wallace, B., Pauly, B., Perkin, K., Cross, G. (2019). Where's the housing? Housing and income outcomes of a transitional program to end homelessness. <i>Journal of Poverty</i> , 23(2). 161 – 178.
	Oct 7 – 15	READING WEEK	
Module 2: Poverty and its intersections			
6	Oct 16	The role of colonialism and racism in perpetuating poverty (white supremacy is *always* implicated) Assignment 2 Q&A	Knight, M., Ferguson, N., Reece, R. (2021). “It’s not just about work and living conditions”: The underestimation of the COVID-19 pandemic for Black Canadian women. <i>Social Sciences</i> , 10 (210).

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings Due
		Choose groups for final presentations	
	Oct 18	Reflexive discussion	No readings
7	Oct 23	Gender and 2SLGBTQ+ inequities and community-driven mutual aid	Daley, A., Kia, H., Kinitz, D., Schneckenburger, S.A., Robinson, M., Reid, J., Mule, N.J., Kayn, F., Duncan, D. & Ross, L.E. (2023). "This is the system we live in": The role of social assistance in producing and sustaining 2SLGBTQ+ poverty in Ontario, Canada. <i>Sexuality Research and Social Policy</i> . https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-023-00852-w
	Oct 25	Reflexive activity Infographic assignment due by 11:59pm	No reading
8	Oct 30	The criminalization of poverty Discuss group presentation topics Overview of assignment 3	Bellsmith, I., Goertzen, O., Neilsen, K., Stinson, O. (2022). Poverty and access to justice: Review of the literature. <i>International Centre for Criminal Law Reform</i> .
	Nov 1	The effects of poverty on early childhood and education <i>Guest lecturer: Mair Gault, retired school principal</i>	Hensley, L. (2019). <i>Here's just how much poverty can hold kids back</i> . United Way Greater Toronto. https://www.unitedwaygt.org/issues/heres-just-how-much-poverty-can-hold-kids-back/ Schandl, C.C. (2018). The double disadvantage: Issues of equity in Ontario's schools. <i>Principal Connections</i> , 22(1).
9	Nov 6	Midterm activity (ungraded)	No readings
	Nov 8	Disability and poverty in Canada <i>Guest lecturer: Dr. Alexis Buettgen</i>	Buettgen, A., Richardson, J., Beckham, K., Richardson, K., Ward, M., Riemer, M. (2012). We did it together: A participatory action research study on poverty and disability. <i>Disability & Society</i> , 27(5). Pp. 603 – 616. Balintec, V. (2023). <i>Financial support to keep people with disabilities housed falls short of what's needed: advocates</i> . CBC News: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/housing-people-disabilities-income-supports-1.6914076 .

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings Due
Module 3: A World Without Poverty?			
10	Nov 13	Grassroots anti-poverty movements in Canada Group work time	Acorn Canada (2023). <i>Pre-budget submission for 2023 by Acorn Canada</i> . Acorn Canada (2023): Video https://acorncanada.org/video/acorns-delivery-to-cmhc-liberal-mp-offices-tenants-demand-an-end-to-financialization-of-housing/
	Nov 15	Reflexive activity Reflexive paper due by 11:59pm	No readings
11	Nov 20	Universal basic income Group work time	Hamilton, L. & Mulvale, J.P. (2019). "Human again": The (unrealized) promise of basic income in Ontario. <i>Journal of Poverty</i> .
	Nov 22	Group Presentations	No readings
12	Nov 27	Group Presentations	No readings
	Nov 29	Group Presentations	No readings
13	Dec 4	Class Wrap-up Participation self-evaluation due	Employment and Social Development Canada (2018). <i>Opportunity For All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy</i> (pp. 51 – 64 only)

Late or Incomplete Work

Late assignments are deducted at 5% per day including weekends (*See chaos clause above). If you anticipate that you will need more time with an assignment (due to illness, family care needs, extenuating circumstances), please get in touch with Dr. Cook **before** the deadline so that we may work out an alternate plan to avoid any late penalties—all extension requests will be met with compassion. Clear and timely communication is a necessary component of making these accommodations.

Coursework Submission Policy

All course assignments must be submitted to the appropriate Dropbox on LEARN. See course schedule above for all due date information.

Policy on Plagiarism

“Policy 71’s glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one’s own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes”...

The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.”

For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. See Waterloo’s policy on [Fair Dealing](#). Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#).

This course will use Turnitin software to detect plagiarism.

Electronic Device Policy

Students who choose to use electronic devices to support their learning may do so provided that the individuals in the class are not disturbed or prohibited from their own learning (e.g., due to noises from devices). Phones should be kept on silent during the class—please feel free to leave the room if you need to take an urgent call or send/receive an urgent text message. Texting/scrolling social media in class is extremely distracting for your instructor and fellow students.

Attendance Policy

See attendance and participation section in assignment description above. Please be respectful of our learning environment and do not attend class if you are feeling unwell or recovering from COVID-19. Your instructor and fellow classmates (and/or their close family members) may be high risk for developing severe symptoms due to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. Please let your instructor know if you need to stay home due to illness and this will not affect your attendance/participation grade. If you need to miss more than a few classes due to illness, we will be sure to come up with an alternative mode of participation so that your grade is not impacted.

Communication Policy

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your

WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

Final Examination Policy

This class does not have a final exam.

Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [Accommodation due to illness](#).

Accommodation Due to Religious Observances

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may seek accommodations on religious grounds. Accordingly, students must consult with their instructor(s) within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which accommodation is being sought. Failure to provide a timely request will decrease the likelihood of providing an accommodation. See [Request for accommodation on religious grounds](#).

Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity](#) websites for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

Discipline: Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions.

[Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) website for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor or academic advisor. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the Department’s administrative assistant, or Academic Advisor, who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo): The website can be found at uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)

- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor’s intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- Health Services – Student Medical Clinic: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off Campus, 24/7

- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Empower Me: Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Email: ok2bme@kwcounselling.com Phone: 519-884-0000

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website.

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe](#) app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

A Respectful Living and Learning Environment for All

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email (mnknox@uwaterloo.ca) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's [Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse](#) policy.