Econ 248: Economics of Poverty and Discrimination

(This is a generic form of the syllabus for Econ 248 without specific dates.
Please contact me for a syllabus for a particular semester.)

Instructor Information:
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Objectives of the Course:
This course explores how the discipline of economics can explain and analyze the causes and effects of poverty and discrimination on various parts of the population. Students will be introduced to economic theories of poverty and discrimination, ways to measure each (and the problems associated with these measures), and a description of the success and failures of public policies designed to curtail discrimination in the US. Note that this course (partially) satisfies credit needed for the UWM Cultural Diversity requirement and is cross listed with the Center for Women's Studies.

Class Resources:
• There will also be several readings found on e-reserve. Information on how to access e-reserve readings from on campus can be found at: http://www.uwm.edu/Libraries/guides/celershandout.pdf and from off campus can be found at: http://www.uwm.edu/Libraries/guides/offcampushandout.pdf.
• In this class, I will be implementing the 'Clicker' Student Response System. Clickers are designed to increase student participation as well as give the instructor feedback on the transfer of concepts from instructor to student. This means that you must purchase a TurningPoint Clicker from the Bookstore (around $40 new or $25 used) and register it for this class. Details on this are given in the Clicker handout, available at the back of this syllabus or on the D2L website.

Evaluation of Performance:
• Exams: There will be three exams during the course of this class. The two term time exams and the final are each worth 25% of your final grade each.
• Quizzes: There will be a series of take-home quizzes. The quizzes will be posted on the website approximately a week before they are due. Note that you are encouraged to use your books and notes to answer the questions, but DO NOT DISCUSS ANY PART OF THE TAKE HOME QUIZZES WITH ANYONE ELSE. If I find any evidence of cheating, you will receive a failing grade for the entire quiz portion of the final grade. Combined, these are worth 25% of your final grade.
• Extra Credit 1: Write a short (2-3 page) essay evaluating one of the two articles on the D2L website about poverty. Details will be given in a separate sheet. Worth up to 10 points. (Only one essay can be submitted for extra credit.)
• Extra Credit 2: You will be given extra credit for the use of your Clicker in response to questions asked in class. You will be given one extra point for each ten percent of questions that you answer in class. For example, if you answer 1-10% of the questions asked in class, you will receive 1 extra point; if you answer 11-20% of the questions, you will receive 2 extra points; etc. See the Clicker handout for more information.
• **Grading scale**: Given in terms of percentage of points earned out of the total. A: 92-100%; A-: 90-91%; B+: 88-89%; B: 82-87%; B-: 80-81%; C+: 78-79%; C: 72-77%; C-: 70-71%; D+: 68-69%; D: 62-67%; D-: 60-61%; F: less than 60%.

• **Make-up policy for missing exams**: If you know that you are going to miss an exam due to an excused absence, you must see me to set up a time to **take the exam before** the exam date. If you miss the exam due to an *excused* illness or other *excused* unforeseen absence, the potential points for the missed exam will be added to the final.

Please note: Information on the Economics Department’s policies on participation by students with disabilities, accommodation for religious observances, academic conduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures and other standing policies (e.g. sexual harassment, incompletes) is available in the Economics Department office (868 Bolton Hall). **Students with special needs of any sort should contact me** after class, by phone, by email, or in the office during the first two weeks of class.

**Course Outline**. Readings for each lecture are in parentheses. Go to the D2L site to access prelecture notes (outline, data, etc) that will be part of the lecture. Print these out and bring them to class. Powerpoint lecture notes are available on D2L **after** the lecture is given.

**Part 1: Poverty and Inequality**
- Overview of Poverty and Inequality (EPD, Ch. 1)
- Inequality (EPD Ch. 2)
- Issues in Measuring Poverty (EPD Ch. 3, UPF Ch. 2 [pp.11-20, 28-34])
- Global Poverty and Inequality (EPD Ch. 4)
- Some Monetary Causes of Poverty (EPD Ch. 5-6, UPF Ch. 2 [pp. 20-28])

**Part 2: Economic Theories of Discrimination**
- Basics of Discrimination (EPD Ch. 11, pp. 187-192; Reynolds Chapter 8, pp. 208-211 on e-reserve; UPF Ch. 1)
- Basic Economics Concepts (UPF Ch. 3; Parkin Chapter 4, 'Demand and Supply' on e-reserve)
- Basic Labor Market Concepts (UPF Ch. 4)
- Neo-classical Economic Theory of Discrimination (UPF Ch. 5, pp. 76-88, 92-100)
- Basics of Political Economy Theory (UPF Ch. 6)
- Work and Wages in Political Economy Theory (UPF Ch. 7)
- Political Economy Model of Discrimination (UPF Ch. 8)

**Part 3: Evidence and Public Policy**
- Measuring Labor Market Discrimination (EPD Ch. 12; UPF Ch. 5, pp. 89-92)
- Anti-Poverty Government Programs (EPD Ch. 13-15)
- Anti-Discrimination Government Legislation and Policies (Reynolds, chapter on e-reserve, EPD Ch. 16)