University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Curriculum Proposal Form #3

## New Course

**Effective Term:**

**Subject Area - Course Number:** **POLISCI 280 Cross-listing:** **RACEETH 280**

(See Note #1 below)

**Course Title:** (Limited to 65 characters) Politics of Urban Inequality in the U.S.

**25-Character Abbreviation:** PoliticsOfUrbanInequality

**Sponsor(s):** Michael Illuzzi

**Department(s):** Political Science

**College(s):**

# **Consultation took place**: NA Yes (list departments and attach consultation sheet)

Departments: Race/Ethn; Sociology

**Programs Affected:** **NA**

**Is paperwork complete for those programs?** (Use "Form 2" for Catalog & Academic Report updates)

NA  Yes  will be at future meeting

**Prerequisites:** None

**Grade Basis:**  Conventional Letter  S/NC or Pass/Fail

**Course will be offered:**  Part of Load  Above Load

On Campus  Off Campus - Location

**College:**  **Dept/Area(s):** Political Science

**Instructor:** Michael Illuzzi

*Note: If the course is dual-listed, instructor must be a member of Grad Faculty.*

**Check if the Course is to Meet Any of the Following:**

Technological Literacy Requirement  Writing Requirement

Diversity  General Education Option:

Note: For the Gen Ed option, the proposal should address how this course relates to specific core courses, meets the goals of General Education in providing breadth, and incorporates scholarship in the appropriate field relating to women and gender.

**Credit/Contact Hours:** (per semester)

Total lab hours:       Total lecture hours: 48

Number of credits: 3 Total contact hours: 48

**Can course be taken more than once for credit? (Repeatability)**

No  Yes If "Yes", answer the following questions:

No of times in major:       No of credits in major:

No of times in degree:       No of credits in degree:

Proposal Information: ([***Procedures for form #3***](http://acadaff.uww.edu/UCC/Curriculum_Handbook_09/Procedures_form3.docx))

**Course justification:**

Urban inequality has consistently been an intractable problem for politics, leading to inequalities of political voice and inequalities of life chances. Despite the “wars on poverty” of the past, the inequalities faced by many citizens trapped in isolated urban segregation is getting worse, rather than better. Public policy scholars have found that one of the significant impediments to addressing urban inequality is the persistence of negative stereotypes about those trapped in urban poverty. This course addresses this problem by promoting an empathetic understanding that challenges the simple dichotomy between “deserving” and “undeserving” poor, exposing the historical factors, policies, and racial discrimination that helped create this problem.

This course addresses a primary objective of both the department and the university in an innovative and compelling way. The new diversity course will be both appealing to students and suited to promoting an empathetic understanding of the issues of race and poverty in urban environments. To accomplish this goal the course creates a syllabus that integrates the HBO show “The Wire” with accessible and rigorous academic texts.

The course would satisfy the diversity requirement at the university, and would provide a unique way to draw students into serious discussions of the role race plays in contemporary U.S. society. Dr. William Julius Wilson—well-known Harvard professor and one of the most prominent voices in the field of African American Studies—has said of *The* Wire: “it has done more to enhance our understanding of the challenges of urban life, and the problems of urban inequality, than any other media event or scholarly publication, including studies by social scientists.”

Figuring out how to pair the episodes with appropriate academic texts in a semester long class is quite an endeavor. This effort has been aided enormously from the efforts of Dr. Wilson and his staff from which this syllabus is indebted. More and more elite colleges and universities are incorporating “The Wire” in their course offerings. UW-Whitewater would be the second university in the nation with a course on racial inequality using *the Wire*, and the fifth institution to have a course that integrates “The Wire” in a significant way, the other four being Duke University, Middlebury College, UC Berkeley, and Harvard University.

**Relationship to program assessment objectives:**

Relationship to departmental assessment objectives - The course will meet the political science program assessment objective 1: “Issues of diversity and internationalism will be taught across the curriculum wherever feasible.” The course directly provides a new approach to engage students in issues of diversity, especially the role race plays in issues of urban inequality.

Relationship to general education objectives – The course will meet the general education program assessment objectives in the following ways: (1) It will encourage students to think critically and analytically, integrate and synthesize knowledge, and draw conclusions from complex information (General Education Goals 1); (2) It will enhance students’ ability to make sound ethical and value judgments based on the development of a personal value system, on an understanding of the cultural heritage students share, and a knowledge of past successes, failures, and consequences of individual roles and societal choices (General Education Goal 2); and (3) Students will understand and appreciate the cultures of the U.S. both contemporary and historical; appreciate cultural diversity; and live responsibly in an interdependent world (General Education Goal 3).

Relationship to university diversity objectives – The course will meet UW-Whitewater diversity program assessment objectives in the following ways: 1) Students will understand that American society has been and continues to be shaped by the interaction of diverse groups (Diversity Objectives 1); 2) It will enhance students’ ability to reflect on their own perspectives and how these relate to others whom they perceive as different from themselves (Diversity Objectives 2 & 3); 3) Students will become more aware of the varied ways in which race plays a part in the political affairs in the United States (Diversity Objective 4); and 4) the primary focus for the course will be on racial issues with the central concern devoted to African-American and other minorities’ experiences (Diversity Course Guidelines 2).

In terms of its larger significance, the course addresses the reality that career opportunities now and in the future will require individuals who can actively and empathetically respond to changing work environments, continue to learn and grow, and work cooperatively with people of diverse backgrounds (Philosophy of General Education 5).

**Budgetary impact:**

This course will be taught by existing faculty, in regular rotation. One cost will be the purchase of the DVDs for the show. The department library budget will be used to purchase the necessary DVDs.

**Course description:** (50 word limit)

The course offers a sophisticated depiction of systemic urban inequality that constrains the lives of the urban poor. The readings will feature academic books and research articles that describe and analyze the politics and life experiences in inner-city neighborhoods.

**If dual listed, list graduate level requirements for the following:**

1. **Content** (e.g., What are additional presentation/project requirements?)

2. **Intensity** (e.g., How are the processes and standards of evaluation different for graduates and undergraduates? )

3. **Self-Directed** (e.g., How are research expectations differ for graduates and undergraduates?)

**Course objectives and tentative course syllabus:**

**Michael Illuzzi**

**Office: White Hall 312**

**Office hours MW 1-3:30, F 1-2**

**illuzzim@uww.edu**

**Understanding the Politics of Urban Inequality in the United States through *The Wire***

Journalists and media critics around the world have heaped deserved acclaim on *The Wire*, however, many people do not recognize its contribution to social science. Although the series is fictional, not a documentary, it offers a sophisticated depiction of systemic urban inequality that constrains the lives of the urban poor. Impressed by its treatment of these complex issues, instructors were compelled to develop a course drawing on *The Wire*’s portrayal of fundamental principles that have long been the concern of social scientists and policymakers concerned with social inequality.

Students in this seminar will watch, critique and discussed selected episodes of *The Wire* along with assigned readings on urban inequality that relate to these episodes. The assigned readings will feature academic books, research articles, and other readings that describe and analyze life and experiences in inner-city neighborhoods, as well as the social, economic, political, and cultural factors that shape or influence these experiences.

To be clear, this course is not intended to teach students about the show, per se. Even a brilliantly produced television series does not stand in for rigorous scholarship. Rather, we plan to use the show as a thread that integrates the range of topics that form the basis of a thorough understanding of urban inequality—with readings and assignments that relate to the themes addressed in the various episodes.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Weekly Assignments. You will be expected to write a weekly response to the assigned readings and episodes of *The Wire* (600 words).

Unless we ask you to specifically address a particular issue or set of questions, please consider the following in your email responses.

1. **Insight/Idea**: What did you see as the most important insight or idea from the assigned readings and/or episodes?
2. **Reaction**: What are your critical reactions to the readings and episodes (strengths and weaknesses)?
3. **Class Discussion:** What issues would you particularly like to discuss in class?

***These responses must be submitted to the course website no later than 10 AM on the day before class.***

**Class Discussion**. Each member of the class will be expected to participate in class discussion, including a panel discussion on one of the weekly assigned readings and/or episodes. Members of the student panel will provide a summary of the main arguments and a critique of the weekly assignments, not to exceed twenty minutes, and then participate in a general exchange. Panel participants are exempt from submitting the 600-word weekly assignment for that week.

**Take-Home Midterm.** Each member of the class will be required to complete a take-home mid-term exam based on the assigned readings and episodes.

**Final Take-Home Examination**. Each member of the class will be required to write a final take-home examination based on the assigned readings and episodes.

**Grade.** One quarter of your grade will be based on class discussion (including participation in one panel discussion), one-quarter based on the weekly assignments, one quarter on a midterm examination and one quarter on the final take-home examination.

Grading Distribution     
100-93.0 A       
92.99-90.0 A-        
89.99-87.0 B+        
86.99-83.0 B     
82.99-80.0 B-       
79.99-77.0 C+     
76.99-73.0 C  
72.99-70.0 C-  
69.99-67.0 D+  
66.99-63.0 D-     
62.99-60.0 D-   
Below 60 F

All books are on reserve at the Anderson Library.

**CLASS TOPICS AND SCHEDULE**

The first class meeting, which will be brief and devoted to logistics only, will be Wed. September 1, at the normal start time of 2:10pm.

***Season 1* - gangs, war on drugs, crime, policing, incarceration**

**1) September 8**

Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton. Chapters 1-3.

Episodes 1-4.

**2) September 15**

Anderson, Elijah. 1994. “The Code of the Streets.” *Atlantic Monthly*, May: 81-94.

Kotlowitz, Alex, “Blocking the Transmission of Violence.” *New York Times Magazine*, May 4, 2008

Episodes 5-9.

**3) September 22**

Western, Bruce. 2008. “Reentry: Reversing Mass Imprisonment.” *Boston Review* 33(4).

Bobo, Lawrence D. and Victor Thompson. 2010. "Racialized Mass Incarceration: Poverty, Prejudice, and Punishment." Pp. 322-355 in *Doing Race: 21 Essays for the* *21st Century*, edited by Hazel R. Markus and Paula Moya. New York: Norton.

Episodes 10-13.

**Recommended Readings for Season 1:**

Moskos, Peter. 2008. *Cop in the Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore’s Eastern District.* Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sampson, Robert J. and William Julius Wilson. 1995. “Toward a Theory of Race, Crime and Urban Inequality.” Pp. 37-54 in *Crime and Inequality*, edited by John Hagan and Ruth Peterson. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Sampson, Robert J., SW Raudenbush, and Felton Earls, “Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy.” *Science* 15, Vol. 277, no. 5328, pp. 918-924 (August 1997).

Spergel, Irving A. 1990. “Youth Gangs: Continuity and Change.” *Crime and Justice* 12: 171-275.

Sugrue, Thomas. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2002. *American Project: The Rise and Fall of an American Ghetto*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Young, Alford. 2003. *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men: Making Sense of Mobility, Opportunity, and Future Life Chances*. Introduction (“Making New Sense of Poor Black Men in Crisis”) and Chapter 1 (“The Past and Future of the Cultural Analysis of Black Men”).

***Season 2* - work, labor, unions, economic restructuring, labor markets**

**4) September 29**

Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears*: *The World of the New Urban Poor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Part 1, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5).

Harrison, Bennett and Barry Bluestone, 1998. *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 1.

Episodes 1-4.

**5) October 6**

Dudley, Kathryn Marie. 1997. *The End of the Line:  Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-6.

Episodes 4-8.

**6) October 13**

Dudley, Kathryn Marie. 1997. *The End of the Line:  Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 7-10 and Conclusion.

Episodes 9-12.

**Recommended Readings for Season 2:**

Mincy, Ronald B., Charles E. Lewis Jr., and Wen-Jui Han. 2006. “Left Behind: Less-Educated Young Black Men in the Economic Boom of the 1990s.” Pp. 1-10 in *Black Males Left Behind*, edited by Ronald Mincy. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

***Season 3* – urban politics, economic development**

**7) October 20 – Mid-term due in D2L**

Caraley, Demetrios. 1992. “Washington Abandons the Cities.” *Political Science Quarterly* 107(1): 1-30.

Newman, Katherine. 2004. “Newark, decline, and avoidance, renaissance and desire: From disinvestment to reinvestment.” *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Sciences* 594: 34-48.

Hyra, Derek. 2008. *The New Urban Renewal: The Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville*. Chapters 1-3.

Episodes 1-4

**8) October 27**

Kaufmann, Karen M. 2004. *The Urban Voter: Group Conflict and Mayoral Voting Behavior in American Cities*.  Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Introduction, and Chapters 1, 2 and 5.

Thompson, J. Phillip. 2005. *Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy*. Chapters 1-2.

Boyer, Peter J. 2008. “The Color of Politics.” *The New Yorker*, (February 4).

Radio program: This American Life. 1997. “Harold.” National Public Radio, November 21. http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/84/Harold

* A parable of politics and race in America. The story of Chicago's first black mayor, Harold Washington, told two decades after his death.

Episodes 5-8.

**9) November 3**

Wacquant, Loic. 2007. “Dangerous Places,” in *Urban Outcasts,* Chapter 7, pp. 199-226.

Weisburd, David and John Eck. 2004. “What Can Police Do to Reduce Crime, Disorder and Fear?” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 593: 42-65.

Tyler, Tom. 2004. “Enhancing Police Legitimacy.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 593: 84-99.

Rosin, Hanna. 2008. “American Murder Mystery.” Originally published in *The Atlantic*: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/memphis-crime>

Schmoke, Kurt L., “Drug Sanity.” *The New Republic* (April 14, 2008).

Episodes 9-12

**Recommended Readings for Season 3:**

McRoberts, Omar. 2005. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lehr, Dick. 2009. *The Fence: A Police Cover-up along Boston’s Racial Divide*. New York: Harper Press.

Logan, John and Harvey Molotch. 2007. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Goetz, Edward. 2003. *Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

**Season 4 – education, schools, youth**

**10) November 10**

Clark, Kenneth B. 1965. *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. New York: Harper & Row, Chapter 6.

MacLeod, Jay. 1987. *Ain’t No Makin’ It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood.* Westview Press. Chapters 1, 2, 6-8, 11.

Fordham, Signithia and John U. Ogbu. 1986. “Black Students’ School Success: Coping with the Burden of ‘Acting White.’” *Urban Review* 18: 176-206.

Episodes 1-4.

**11) November 17**

Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 46-62.

Neckerman, Kathryn. 2007. *Schools Betrayed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Introduction, and Chapters 1, 2, and 4.

Waters, Mary. 1999. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 7.

Episodes 5-9.

**12) December 1**

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 12.

Gabel, Katherine and Denise Johnson (eds.), *Children of Incarcerated Parents*, pp. 3-21 and 59-88

Comfort, Megan. 2008. *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 4.

Wilson, William Julius. 2010. “The Obama’s Administration’s Proposals to Address Concentrated Urban Poverty.” *City and Community* 9(1): 41-49.

Tough, Paul, “The Harlem Project.” *The New York Times Magazine* (June 20, 2004)

Episodes 10-13.

**Recommended Readings for Season 4**

Fagan, Jeffrey and Deanna Wilkinson. 1998. “Guns, Youth Violence, and Social Identity.” In: *Youth Violence, Crime and Justice*, edited by Michael Tonry and Mark H. Moore.

Sampson, Robert J, Patrick Sharkey, and Stephen W. Raudenbush. 2007. “Durable Effects of Concentrated Disadvantage on Verbal Ability Among African-American Children.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, pp. 1-8.

**Bibliography:** (Key or essential references only. Normally the bibliography should be no more than one or two pages in length.)

Dudley, Kathryn Marie. 1997. *The End of the Line:  Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor.*  Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton.

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and    non-discriminatory learning environment.  It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding [Special Accommodations](http://www.uww.edu/StdRsces/csd/academic_index.php), [Academic Misconduct](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal1.html#Misconduct), [Religious Beliefs Accommodation](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal5.html), [Discrimination](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal6.html) and [Absence for University Sponsored Events](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/legal1.html#Misconduct) (for details please refer to the Schedule of Classes; the [“](../../www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/Legal1.html)[Rights and Responsibilities](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/Legal1.html)[”](../../www.uww.edu/Catalog/02-04/Legal/Legal1.html) section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](http://www.uww.edu/Catalog); [the Academic Requirements](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/Gradpolicies.php#academicinformation) and Policies and the [Facilities and Services](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/Gradpolicies.php#facilitiesandservices) sections of the [Graduate Catalog](http://www.uww.edu/gradstudies/catalog0608/gradcat0608.php); and the “[Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uww.edu/stdhdbk/uwsystem.html) (UWS Chapter 14); and the “[Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures](http://www.uww.edu/stdhdbk/uwsystem.html)" (UWS Chapter 17).

**280: The Politics of Urban Inequality – Response to Diversity Committee concerns**

Well over 70 percent of the course content relates to the experiences of American minorities. In fact, the whole premise of the course is to open a window into the experiences of groups of minorities that find themselves growing up in concentrated urban poverty. The course readings provide analysis of the systematic disadvantages racial minorities in these situations confront and (crucially) traces the historical causes of these discriminations to beliefs, practices, laws, and institutions of the past.

In fact, this syllabus is closely modeled on the William Julius Wilson’s syllabus. William Julius Wilson is one of the foremost authorities in this country on African American studies.

In terms of the integration of the show, the syllabus contains the foremost scholars of racial inequality, including a great deal of Wilson’s own work in addition to works by other giants in the field like Lawrence Bobo, Elijah Anderson, and Loic Wacquant. Furthermore, it is prudent to repeat what is written into the syllabus, the course is not about *The Wire* as a show. *The Wire* serves as a supplement to the academic texts and themes. Nonetheless, it is also crucial to understand that *The Wire* is a powerful source of learning in and of itself. David Simon, the creator of *The Wire*, used Wilson’s book *When Work Disappears*, as the inspiration for the second season exploring the crippling effects of the loss of blue-collar jobs in American and the way this reshaped the racial makeup and economic welfare of urban Baltimore. Quoting *Slate.com*’s interview with Wilson helps reveal the depth of Wilson’s belief that *The Wire* was an appropriate academic source for Harvard University:

Wilson said the show makes the concerns of sociologists immediate in a way no work of sociology he knows of ever has. ‘Although *The Wire* is fiction, not a documentary, its depiction of [the] systemic urban inequality that constrains the lives of the urban poor is more poignant and compelling [than] that of any published study, including my own,’ he wrote in an e-mail.  
For Wilson, the unique power of the show comes from the way it takes fiction's ability to create fully realized inner lives for its characters and combines that with qualities rare in a piece of entertainment: an acuity about the structural conditions that constrain human choices (whether it's bureaucratic inertia, institutional racism, or economic decay) and an unparalleled scrupulousness about accurately portraying them. Wilson describes the show's characters almost as a set of case studies, remarkable for the vividness with which they embody a set of arguments about the American inner city. ‘What I'm concentrating on is how this series so brilliantly illustrates theories and processes that social scientists have been writing about for years,’ he said in an interview.[[1]](#footnote-1)

These are very strong words. Wilson has reiterated his belief numerous times that *The Wire* is a more important academic source than any sociological study of race produced by any scholar, including his own. Wilson is not alone in this view. Ta-Nehesi Coates in his recent campus visit revealed to Dr. Susan Johnson and I that he felt that assigning *The Wire* to students would do more good than having them read his memoir *The Beautiful Struggle,* which I had as a required text for my three sections of Ethnic Politics this semester. Below, I specifically address why the Politics of Urban Inequality meets the requirements for a diversity course.

1. **Understanding that American society has been and continues to be shaped by the interaction of diverse groups.**

The history and politics of urban centers is a large part of the history of American society and its ability to integrate and incorporate (oftentimes quite imperfectly) diverse groups. When my father grew up in urban New York in the 1950s, as a first generation Italian he encountered a New York that was and still is (to some extent) a microcosm of the challenges the larger country faces in being a nation of immigrants. The course explores why many groups were systematically disadvantaged in their pursuits and why many urban areas have a disproportionate makeup of racial minorities. In order to understand the present, we must excavate the past. This course does this. From exploring the causes of urban violence, the racial inequalities of the legal system, to the combination of socioeconomic and racial inequalities of the school system, to the change of the economy from a manufacturing to a service economy and its consequences for racial minorities, to the inequality created by discriminatory U.S. policies such as FHA mortgage practices (e.g. redlining), Social Security, and the discrimination within the GI Bill, the course systematically excavates the causes for urban poverty and explains why this disproportionately falls upon racial minorities. In order to understand diverse others, students have to understand the causes of urban inequalities. The urban center is the best place to gain an appreciation of the how American society has been shaped by the interaction of diverse groups.

1. **Understanding or knowledge of cultures other than one’s own.**

This course fosters an empathetic understanding of cultures. Many of the texts explicitly thematize African American urban experience. From Elijah Anderson’s very influential “Code of the Streets” to Alfred Young’s *The Minds of the Marginalized Black Men*, to the racially diverse characters of *The Wire* the course promotes knowledge of cultures other than students’ own culture. It also explores the intersection between race and class, which helps foster an understanding that many of the challenges urban minorities face are shared by poor whites. In fact, as mentioned above, Wilson’s *As Work Disappears,* explains how many ethnic minorities saw their manufacturing jobs disappear and those who could afford to and had the means to do so fled the city leaving those with the least resources to fend for themselves without any social buffer.

1. **Ability to reflect on one’s own perspectives and how these relate to others who we perceive as different from ourselves.**

The main point of the course is to have students reflect on how they relate to others students perceive as different from themselves. I have found the toughest challenge in doing this in my *Ethnic Politics* class is to have students truly put themselves in the shoes of a person who has grown up facing overt racism, structural racism, and the socioeconomic consequences of these in urban environments. Rather than labeling the people of Baltimore as drug addicted, violent, lazy, or misguided, the class is structured to have students ask themselves what they would be able to do if born in a similar situation.

1. **Understanding of how group differences are expressed, including cultural practices as well as differences in power or access.**

The course will look deeply at the inequalities in access to schooling, in access to political power, in access to health, and in access to equal legal proceedings. The politics of urban inequality is basically the politics of unequal access to resources and opportunities.

1. **Skill/facility/experience working with people who are different from oneself (for example: travel study, guest speakers, experiential learning).** I am working on writing a final project that will have students take the lessons of the course back to their neighborhoods. The goal of the assignment will be to reflect upon how race is understood in their own communities and if there are groups that may have a much more complicated and nuanced story than first appearances suggest.

1. Accessed on September 1, 2010 from [*http://www.slate.com/id/2245788/*](http://www.slate.com/id/2245788/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)