

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN AMERICA

UEP 295 and Sociology 295

Wednesdays – 2-4:55 pm – UEPI conference room

Spring 2026

Professor Peter Dreier (dreier@oxy.edu)

Office hours: 12:30-1:45 pm and 5-5:45 pm on Wednesdays
or by appointment. I am also available to talk via Zoom.

What this course is about

This course will explore urgent questions about the social and economic divisions shaping American society and what we can do about them. These are some of the topics we'll focus on, through readings, films, and a few speakers:

- Why does the U.S. have more poverty and inequality than any other wealthy nation?
- What can we learn from these other societies?
- Who benefits and who suffers from high levels of poverty and inequality?
- Who are the poor in America? Who are the super-wealthy?
- How do race, gender, immigration status, work impact poverty and inequality in America?
- What are the major stereotypes about the lives of the poor and the super-wealthy?
- How are the daily lives of Americans influenced by their economic circumstances, including issues of health, criminal justice, education, and housing?
- In what ways do America's rich and poor live in separate worlds?
- In what ways do their lives overlap and intersect?
- Why do rich, middle class and poor people tend to live in places with others like themselves?
- What impact does this geographic segregation by wealth, income, and race segregation have on people's lives and their life chances?
- How have the conditions of the "middle class" changed in recent years?
- What government policies have been effective at addressing poverty and inequality?
- What government policies have made things worse?
- What are the political obstacles and opportunities for addressing poverty and inequality?
- Should our society try to significantly reduce poverty and inequality?
- If so, what can we do?
- Is it reasonable or realistic to imagine a future where the level of poverty and inequality in America is dramatically reduced?

Course format

The course is a seminar, which means learning will take place through class discussion of readings and films. I will only lecture occasionally. Coming to class prepared to discuss the course materials is important. The syllabus includes the topics we'll discuss each week and the readings, videos, films, and graphs/tables for each topic.

You will watch the films on your own time, before the class session, and take notes about things you want to discuss in class.

Because each class session is almost three hours long, we will take a break during the class session.

When you do the reading, watch the videos and films, and examine the tables and charts, consider the following three questions and bring your ideas to class:

- Is there anything I don't understand?
- Is there anything I disagree with?
- Is there anything that piqued my interest and that I'd like to discuss more in class?

Grading

- 50% of your grade will be based on class participation. That includes attendance in class and participation in class discussions. I'll distribute an attendance sheet for each class session.
- 25% of your grade will be based on a paper that involves your review and analysis of the films.
- 25% of your grade will be based on a short paper focusing on how another country addresses the problem of poverty and/or inequality through public policy – i.e. child care, education, housing, taxes, and others – and what the U.S. can learn from that policy OR a review/analysis of Michael Harrington's 1962 book, *The Other America*, focusing on your views about his analysis and how (or if) things have changed since he wrote this best-selling book.

Names

Please let me and your fellow students know what name you wish to be called.

Office hours

My office hours are listed above. I would like each student to meet with me at least once during the first half of the semester, but feel free to meet with me (in person or via Zoom) as often as you'd like.

Disabilities

Please let me know if you have a disability that requires some kind of accommodation.

Required Books

These are all paperback books. I prefer that you purchase the books and bring them to class. You can get used copies on line, but make sure you have the right edition. Or you can participate in Oswald's Essentials and get the books, as rentals, for \$25. Either way, I'd prefer that you have the books with you in class, which makes it easier to discuss them.

- Matthew Desmond, *Poverty, by America* (2023)
- Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America* (2011)
- Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities* (1991)
- Sam Pizzigati, *The Case for a Maximum Wage* (2018)
- Chuck Collins, *Is Inequality in America Irreversible?* (2018)
- Optional -- Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (1962)

Articles and films

Articles, films, videos, and charts as well as the syllabus, are available on the Canvas site for the course. Course website or Canvas site.

The syllabus is long but most of the items on the syllabus are graphs and tables. The articles are mostly newspaper and magazine articles and thus easy to read. There are a few chapters from books.

Workload

This is a 4-unit course. On average, you should expect to spend at least twelve (12) hours a week on this course. This includes about three hours in class in addition to the films, videos, readings, and charts. The workload will vary from week to week.

Student Learning Outcomes

Questions about poverty and inequality are very controversial. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions and I welcome debates and disagreements in class. But people aren't entitled to their own facts. I want you to learn to distinguish facts from opinions. Facts can include statistics, descriptions, and your own experiences. I want every student to be able to see things from different points of view. Your own views may be conservative, centrists, liberal, progressive, radical, or some combination of these, depending on the topic. But I hope you'll be open to making the case for ideas and arguments that you don't agree with. This is sometimes called putting yourself in other people's shoes. One of the hardest things to do is to be a good listener. I hope you will develop that skill. It will be important in various aspects of your life. We'll discuss these issues. in class.

I'd like you to be able to express yourself orally and in writing and the course gives you opportunities to do both.

Topics, Readings, Videos, Films, Graphics/Charts, Speakers

Week 1: January 21

INTRODUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

EXPERIENCING POVERTY

“Poverty in the USA” (52 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f78ZVLVdO0A> (2019)
(Note: This documentary was made by a European filmmaker and refers to costs in terms of Euros. 1,000 Euros is equal to \$1,175 US. 100 Euros is equal to \$117.50 US)

“Growing Up Poor”— just watch the first TWO minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAxQltlGodA> (2020)

Mohan, "Though Far from Poor, A Family Struggles Daily," Los Angeles Times, May 18, 2004

Nazario, "Going to School Hungry" Los Angeles Times, November 20, 1994

Greenhouse, “On Register’s Other Side, Little to Spend” New York Times, November 28, 2013

Mejia, “Hard lives in California's fields: 'The American dream eats us alive,’” Los Angeles Times, November 30, 2025

Mejia, “L.A. hotel workers endure hours-long commutes, car sleeping to afford homes elsewhere,” Los Angeles Times, July 7, 2023)

Esquivel, “These L.A. tenants want to own their buildings. L.A. is collecting millions to help,” Los Angeles Times, November 21, 2024

Smith and Bowman, “With \$600 Unemployment Aid Gone, Homelessness Is What Keeps This Mother Up At Night,” NPR, August 6, 2020

Leland, “When Health Insurance is Not a Safeguard,” New York Times, October 23, 2005

Adelson, Gahan, Keenan, Medrano, Morales, Rao, Simmon, and Williams, “Down to \$1.18: How Families are Coping with SNAP Cuts,” New York Times, November 8, 2025

Week 2: January 28

WHAT IS POVERTY?

Graph: Poverty Thresholds for 2024 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years <https://share.google/eUfBKm6dZX1ju12dc>

Graph: Number and Percentage of People Using the Official Poverty Measure: 2024

Graph: Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate: 1959 to 2023
<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2024/demo/p60-283/figure1.pdf>

Graph: Official Poverty Rates by Age: 1959 to 2023: <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48279>

Graph: Poverty Rate by Race and Hispanic Origins: 1959 to 2019

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/poverty-rates-for-blacks-and-hispanics-reached-historic-lows-in-2019.html>

Graph: Official Poverty Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2023

<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48279>

Graph: State Poverty Rates: 2023 <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48279>

Graph: “Intergenerational Income Elasticities for 9 Developed Countries”

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Intergenerational_mobility_graph-1.jpg

POVERTY AND WORK: BEING POOR IS A FULL-TIME JOB

Ehrenreich, Nickle and Dime

- Watch this 4-minute video before class: “Hard Earned: Survival in the Working Class”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ5wGKbMKG8>

Suneson, “What Are The 25 Lowest Paying Jobs In The US? Women Usually Hold Them,” USA Today, June 7, 2019

Graphic: Share of workers earning poverty-level wages, overall and by gender, 1986–2017

<https://www.epi.org/publication/one-in-nine-u-s-workers-are-paid-wages-that-can-leave-them-in-poverty-even-when-working-full-time/>

Graphic: Workers of color are far more likely to be paid poverty-level wages than white workers, 1986-2017 <https://www.epi.org/blog/workers-of-color-are-far-more-likely-to-be-paid-poverty-level-wages-than-white-workers/>

Graph: Number Unemployed for 27 Weeks & Over: 1948-2025

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/UEMP27OV>

Graph: U.S. Jobs Mix Change: 1950-2020 <https://www.stewart.com/en/insights/2020/07/08/u-s-supersector-employment-changes-from-1950-to-2020>

Week 3: February 4

IDEAS ABOUT POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

- Watch this film before coming to class: “Inequality for All” (1h 30m)
<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.oxy.idm.oclc.org/watch/inequality-for-all-2> (Your Oxy login is required)

- Watch this 4-minute video before coming to class: “How Europeans See America,” New York Times, October 28, 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/28/opinion/europeans-view-americans.html>
- Watch this 4-minute video before class: “Are the Rich Getting Too Much of the Economic Pie?” <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/08/are-the-rich-getting-too-much-of-the-economic-pie/465714/>
- Watch this 6-minute video before class: “Wealth Inequality in America” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM>
- Watch this 2 ½ minute video before class: Milton Friedman on Greed <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BI7VpU3Ccw> (2:30)
- Watch this one-minute statement before coming to class. Senator Ron Johnson on child care (2022) https://www.news8000.com/news/politics/elections/sen-ron-johnson-society-should-provide-opportunities-for-people-to-get-jobs-but-not-responsible/article_97ea69d5-59cb-560e-bbc1-857d093101e3.html
- Watch this 47-second video before coming to class: Ben Carson: Poverty is a State of Mind,” May 25, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejnCB4V7O1o>
- Watch this 5-minute video before coming to class: Senator Bernie Sanders vs Senator Rand Paul (May 11, 2011) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUXwDMqjC-A>
- Watch this 2-minute video before coming to class: Cong. Ron Paul on health care at the Republican presidential debate, September 13, 2011) <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2011/09/13/sot-ron-paul-health-insurance.cnn>
- Watch this 90-second video before coming to class; Cong. Rep. Brooks: Sick people should pay more (May 2, 2017) <http://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/05/02/rep-mo-brooks-pre-existing-conditions-lead.cnn>
- Watch this 13-minute video before coming to class; Jimmy Kimmel reveals details of his son’s birth and heart disease (May 1, 2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmWWoMcGmo0>
- Watch this 30-second clip from the documentary film, “Debs and the American Movement.” Just watch it from 17:40 to 18:10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnTRlp-7Nt4>
- Watch this 6-minute interview of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez with Stephen Colbert, June 29, 2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_1G4_oPt_o

Samuelson, "Indifferent to Inequality?" Newsweek, May 7, 2001

Bernstein, “Ready or Not, You’re On Your Own” from Bernstein, All Together Now: Common Sense for a Fair Economy (pages 1-12) (2006)

Rockwell, “Equality is Incompatible with a Free Society,” in Inequality: Opposing Viewpoints

Galbraith, “A Humane Society Must Compensate for Inherent Inequalities” in Inequality: Opposing Viewpoints

Dreier and Cohen, “It Takes Jamie Dimon 3 Hours to Earn What Some of His Employees Do All Year,” *The Nation*, July 15, 2016

Leonhardt, “FDR Got It. Most Democrats Don’t,” *New York Times*, January 12, 2020)

Dreier, “Are Zohran Mamdani and Katie Wilson Democratic Socialists or FDR Democrats? They Are Both,” *Talking Points Memo*, November 21, 2024

MEASURES OF INEQUALITY

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE ENDS MEET?

Family Budget Calculator: <https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/> Find out what it costs to make ends meet (on a monthly and annual basis) in the county, metropolitan area, and state where you live. (Your home, not Oxy). Do the calculations for different family sizes – adults and children. Bring those calculations to class, including the total amount needed to make ends meet and the cost of different components (like housing or child care). Did these figures confirm what you already knew or surprise you? What other thoughts do you have about these figures?

INCOME

Graph: Real disposable personal income per capita 1959-2025
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/A229RX0>

Graph: U.S. Household Incomes in 2023 <https://www.voronoiiapp.com/money/-Americas-Middle-Class-Earns-Between-53K-and-161K-3207>

Graph: Income Distribution by Quintile in the U.S.: 1974 and 2024
<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/distribution-of-household-income-in-america/>

Graph: The Richest 1% Make Nearly 139 Times as the Bottom 20%
<https://inequality.org/facts/income-inequality/>

Graph: Average Incomes for the Richest Americans Have Skyrocketed 1979-2021
<https://inequality.org/facts/income-inequality/#income-inequality>

Graph: Income Concentration at the Top Since 1970s <https://www.cbpp.org/media/income-concentration-at-the-top-has-risen-sharply-since-the-1970s-5>

Graph: Income Gains at the Top Dwarf Those of Low- and Middle-Income Households: 1979 to 2020 <https://www.cbpp.org/media/income-gains-at-the-top-dwarf-those-of-low-and-middle-income-households-13>

Graph: Family Income Change By Quintile: 1947 to 1979

Graph: Family Income Change by Quintile: 1979 to 2009
<https://media.lanecc.edu/users/martinezp/200/Inequality.html>

Graph: Real Median Household Income by Race and Hispanic Origin 1967- 2024
<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2025/demo/p60-286.html>

Graphic: 2025 Two-Bedroom Rental Housing Wages <https://nlihc.org/resource/18-states-renters-must-earn-more-30-hour-afford-two-bedroom-apartment-fair-market-rent>

Graphic: Renter Cost Burdens Have Increased Dramatically Over the Last Six Decades
<https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/rental-housing-unaffordability-how-did-we-get-here>

Graphic: Cost Burdens Continued to Climb the Income Scale During the Pandemic
https://www.novoco.com/public-media/original_images/novogradac-cost-burdens-income-scale-02052024.png

WEALTH

Johnson, “Richest 0.001% Now Own Three Times More Wealth Than Poorest Half of Humanity Combined,” CommonDreams, December 10, 2025

Collins, “The Geography of Wealth,” in Collins, *Burned by Billionaires*, 2025 (pages 17-27)

Graph: Global Wealth Pyramid 2023
<https://www.ubs.com/content/dam/assets/wm/static/noindex/wm-germany/2024/doodownload/Global-Wealth-Report-2024.pdf>

Graph: Wealth is Even More Concentrated Than Income <https://www.cbpp.org/media/wealth-is-even-more-concentrated-than-income-2>

Graph: “The Ultra Wealth Own Half the Stock Market” <https://inequality.org/facts/wealth-inequality/>

Graph: Share of Net Worth Held by the Top 1% - 1989-2025 – U.S.
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WFRBST01134>

Graph: Shares of gross domestic income: Compensation of employees, paid, 1929-2023
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/A4002E1A156NBEA>

Graph: Nonfarm Business Sector: Labor Share for All Workers: 1947-2025

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PRS85006173>

Graph: Average Family Wealth, by Race and Ethnicity, 1963–2022

<https://apps.urban.org/features/wealth-inequality-charts/>

Graph: Median Family Wealth, by Race and Ethnicity, 1963–2022

<https://apps.urban.org/features/wealth-inequality-charts/>

Graph: Share of Households That Received an Inheritance, by Race and Ethnicity, 1989–2022

<https://apps.urban.org/features/wealth-inequality-charts/>

Graph: Racial Composition of Each Wealth Decile (2022)

<https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2023/10/23/wealth-distribution-in-2022/>

Graph: Homeownership Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, 1960–2022

<https://apps.urban.org/features/wealth-inequality-charts/>

Week 4: February 11

POVERTY AND RACE

Watch this film before the class: “Selma” (2h 8m)

<https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.oxy.idm.oclc.org/oxy336570/play/c4c94081d1be02ca> (Your Oxy login is required)

Kozol, Savage Inequalities (pages 1 – 174)

Martin Luther King, “Our God is Marching On,” speech in Montgomery, Alabama, March 1965

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/our-god-marching>

Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*, June 2014

Krueger, “Economic Scene; Sticks and stones can break bones, but the wrong name can make a job hard to find,” *New York Times*, December 12, 2002

Dreier, “Racism: Caught on Camera,” *American Prospect*, July 11, 2016

Hurricane Katrina – Two Photos (2005)

<https://x.com/NuhuGm/status/902633855110324224/photo/1>

Graph: Stories on Poverty in U.S. Newsmagazines, 1988-92 (from Gilens, Why Americans Hate Welfare, 1999) <https://web.stanford.edu/class/comm1a/readings/gilens-race-poverty.pdf>

Graph: Percent African Americans in Pictures of the Poor by Topic of Story (from Gilens, Why Americans Hate Welfare, 1999) <https://web.stanford.edu/class/comm1a/readings/gilens-race-poverty.pdf>

Graph: How the Poor Became Black (Figure 4.2) (from Gilens, Why Americans Hate Welfare, 1999) <https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472068319-ch4.pdf>

Week 5: February 18

THE ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY

Graph: More Important Factor in Economic Inequality (Just use Table 22. Put December 5-8, 2025 at the bottom of the table)

https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/econTabReport_qLhWxpK.pdf

Matthew Desmond, *Poverty, by America* (pages 3-102)

Week 6: February 25

AMERICA'S CLASS STRUCTURE, THE "UPPER CLASS," AND POLITICAL POWER

"The Biggest Companies in America Every Year since 1955" (What does this graphic tell you about how our economy has changed?) <https://www.1lcattorney.com/images/blog/biggest-companies-every-year-since-1955-4.webp> Optional 5-minute video on the same topic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6MSQ6n-3YA>

"The Global 2000: United States" (Forbes, 2025) (Scroll down the list of the largest 100 American corporations and bring to class a list of those you've heard about and what you know about them. What does this list tell us about the U.S. economy?) <https://www.forbes.com/lists/global2000-united-states/>

"The World's Billionaires List: The Richest in 2025," Forbes, 2025 (Scroll down the list of the wealthiest 100 and bring to class a list of those you've heard about and what you know about them) <https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/>

"A Snapshot of the Highest-Paid CEOs in 2024," Equilar, May 1, 2025 (Just scroll down the list to see what they are earning and how many of them you've heard of) <https://www.equilar.com/reports/116-table-highest-paid-ceos-2025-equilar-100.html>

Graph: CEOs paid 281 times as much as typical workers: CEO-to-worker compensation ratio, 1965–2024, Economic Policy Institute, September 25, 2025 <https://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-pay/#1>

Graph: As union membership declines, income inequality increases: Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917–2019, Economic Policy Institute <https://www.epi.org/publication/unions-help-reduce-disparities-and-strengthen-our-democracy/>

Graph: States with high union density have progressive policies that benefit all workers, Economic Policy Institute <https://www.epi.org/publication/unions-help-reduce-disparities-and-strengthen-our-democracy>

Graph: Billionaire Political Spending Has Skyrocketed: 2000-2024
<https://inequality.org/facts/wealth-inequality/>

Graph: Campaign Donations By Business, Labor, And Other Groups 2000-2024
<https://www.opensecrets.org/elections-overview/business-labor-ideology-split> (Use the graph but change the title)

Dreier, “Meet the People Who Gave JPMorgan’s Jamie Dimon a \$9.5 Million Raise,” Talking Points Memo, January 27, 2014

Domhoff, Who Rules America? (8th edition, 2022) – Chapter 2 (“The Corporate Community,” pages 37-57)) and Chapter 4 (“The Corporate Rich, the Policy-Planning Network, and the Power Elite,” pages 83-110)

Hacker and Pierson, Let Them Eat Tweets: How the Right Rules in an Age of Extreme Inequality (2020) Just read the Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 (pages 1-75)

Dreier, “Whatever Happened to the Power Elite?” New Republic, May 5, 2025

Richarson, “Letter From An American,” January 6, 2025

Theoharis and Sandweiss-Back, “Trump Is Waging War on the Poor,” The Nation, April 25, 2025

Week 7: March 4

PRIVILEGE, PHILANTHROPY, AND CHARITY

- Watch this 2-minute video before coming to class: Gingrich: Food stamps vs. paychecks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXcyX8blbu0>
- Watch this 4-minute video before coming to class: Congressman Luis Guitierrez: “The Food Stamp President”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AnuDkXlX0o>
- Watch this 3-minute video before coming to class: “Life for 46M American on food stamps” (CBS News) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dut-YuNx5A4>
- Watch this 5-minute video before coming to class: “The White House Hates Food Stamps” (from “Full Frontal,” December 11, 2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coSRwhI5KLY>

Graph: The Top .01% Don’t Pay Their Fair Share As They Hoard More Wealth
<https://inequality.org/facts/wealth-inequality/>

Graph: Top Personal Income Tax Rate Has Fallen Significantly: 1945 to 2018
<https://www.cbpp.org/media/top-personal-income-tax-rate-has-fallen-significantly>

Graph: Corporations Are Contributing a Shrinking Share of U.S. Revenue: 1950 to 2019
<https://inequality.org/article/11-charts-tax-wealthy-corporations-inequality/>

Graph: Higher-income families spend more on children's enrichment activities: Per-child expenditures on enrichment activities, 1973–2006, Economic Policy Institute, 2016.
<https://www.epi.org/publication/its-time-for-an-ambitious-national-investment-in-americas-children/>

Collins, “Born on Third Base,” from Collins, Ladd, Seider, and Yeskel, editors, Class Lives: Stories From Across Our Economic Divide (2014)

Burgess, “The Women Who Cared for My Grandparents,” from Collins, Ladd, Seider, and Yeskel, editors, Class Lives: Stories From Across Our Economic Divide (2014)

Ladd, “What Was It Like Growing Up Owning Class?” from Collins, Ladd, Seider, and Yeskel, editors, Class Lives: Stories From Across Our Economic Divide (2014)

Ellinger, “A Privileged Path in a Class-Shattered World” from Collins, Ladd, Seider, and Yeskel, editors, Class Lives: Stories From Across Our Economic Divide (2014)

Vaugh, “Oreo? A Black American Experience” from Collins, Ladd, Seider, and Yeskel, editors, Class Lives: Stories From Across Our Economic Divide (2014)

Orland, “Money Was Never a Worry” from Collins, Ladd, Seider, and Yeskel, editors, Class Lives: Stories From Across Our Economic Divide (2014)

Dreier, “Conservative Author Rod Dreher’s Paradox: Compassion in St. Francisville and Cruelty in America,” Salon, May 21, 2017

Hilfiker, “Justice and the Limits of Charity,” The Other Side, 2000

Ozden, “Protest Movements Could Be More Effective Than the Best Charities,” Stanford Social Innovation Review, April 14, 2022

“The Forbes Philanthropy Score 2023: How Charitable Are the Richest Americans? Forbes, October 3, 2023 (Just skim this) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/phoebeliu/2023/10/03/the-forbes-philanthropy-score-2023-how-charitable-are-the-richest-americans/>

Dreier and Collins, “Traitors to Their Class,” Boston Globe, December 20, 2011

Dreier and Atlas, “The Wire: A Dystopian Fable About America’s Urban Poor?” City & Community, September 2009

MARCH 11 – SPRING BREAK

Week 8: March 18

POVERTY AND PLACE: THE GEOGRAPHY OF INEQUALITY

Kneebone and Holmes, “U.S. concentrated poverty in the wake of the Great Recession,” Brookings Institution, March 31, 2016 <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/u-s-concentrated-poverty-in-the-wake-of-the-great-recession/>;

Cortright, “A Yawning Chasm: Patterns of Neighborhood Distress in US Metros,” City Observatory, June 3, 2024. <https://cityobservatory.org/a-yawning-chasm-patterns-of-neighborhood-distress-in-us-metros/> (Note: Zip codes are larger than neighborhoods, averaging almost 10,000 in population).

Kasakove and Gebeloff, “The Shrinking Middle-Class Neighborhood,” *New York Times*, July 6, 2022. (Note: Middle-class neighborhoods were defined as census tracts where the median family income was within 75 percent and 125 percent of the regional median).

Money, “Official to Low-Income Earners: If You Can't Afford Costa Mesa, Look Somewhere Else,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 2016

Thomas, “Separated by Design: How Some of America’s Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing,” *Connecticut Mirror*, May 22, 2019

Kahlenberg, “A Way Forward on Housing,” *National Affairs*, Winter 2024

THE CONSEQUENCES OF POVERTY FOR THE POOR AND OTHERS

Dreier, Mollenkopf, Strom, and Swanstrom, *Place Matters*, 4th edition, forthcoming 2027. Chapter 3 (pages 1 - 66)

- Jobs and income
- Access to private goods and services
- Groceries
- Banking and credit
- Access to public services
- Housing, homelessness, tenants rights
- Health and Health care
- Physical and social environment
- Weathering and stress
- Crime and criminal justice
- Climate change
- Political engagement and influence

Week 9: March 25

POLICIES TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND INEQUALITY: WHAT WORKS? WHAT DOESN'T WORK? - 1

Watch this film before class: “We Have a Plan” (53 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2vI1rDHNJM>

Optional or just skim: Upton Sinclair’s “The EPIC (End Poverty in California)” for his 1934 campaign for Governor: <https://www.ssa.gov/history/epic.html>

Desmond, Poverty by America (pages 103-189)

Harrington, The Other America (optional)

“What are the major federal safety net programs in the U.S.?” Center for Poverty and Inequality Research, 2025 <https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/article/war-poverty-and-todays-safety-net-0>

Graph: Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes: 2025

<https://tompkinsweekly.com/articles/opinion-green-party-view/>

Graph: Percentage of People in Poverty Before and After Counting Government Assistance and Taxes <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/the-nation-has-made-progress-against-poverty-but-policy-advances>

Graph: U.S. Child Poverty Rate Exceeds Similarly Wealthy Countries After Taxes and Government Benefits <https://www.cbpp.org/media/us-child-poverty-rate-exceeds-similarly-wealthy-countries-after-taxes-and-government-2>

WEEK 10: APRIL 1

POLICIES TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND INEQUALITY: WHAT WORKS? WHAT DOESN'T WORK? - 2

Watch this two-hour film before the class: “Where Should We Invade Next?” Here’s the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1C5cYRLiplY> (Also, the Library has a DVD copy)

WORKERS RIGHTS

Graph: OECD Union Membership Rates

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/how-the-us-compares-to-the-world-on-unionization/>

Graph: Real Value of the Federal Minimum Wage 1938 to 2025

<https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/faq/what-are-annual-earnings-full-time-minimum-wage-worker>

Kilian, “Life’s Harder in Seattle,” *The Tyee*, 13, 2007
<https://thetyee.ca/Books/2007/02/13/Seattle/> (review of Zuberi)

Goodman, Cohen and Chaundler, “European Workers Draw Paychecks. American Workers Scrounge for Food,” *New York Times* July 3, 2020

COOPERATIVES

Holmberg, “Workers on Corporate Boards? Germany’s Had Them for Decades,” *New York Times*, January 6, 2019

Ugarte, “Mondragon Corporation: A Manufacturer of Equality,” *Too Much*, June 30, 2015

- Watch this 22-minute video before class: “Own The Change: Building Economic Democracy One Worker Co-op at a Time” – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8G1-SYMatNc>
- Watch this 7-minute video before class: “Evergreen Cooperatives”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt_ZHUDhKjs
- Watch this 3-minute video before class: “How Evergreen Cooperative is Changing Lives”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axX4RY265rA>

FAMILIES

Graph: Women do almost twice as much unpaid work as men per day
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/gender-equality-in-a-changing-world_e808086f-en/full-report/persistent-gender-gaps-in-paid-and-unpaid-work_cb137837.html

Adema, Fluchtmann, Lloyd, and Patrini, “Paid parental leave: Big differences for mothers and fathers,” *OECD Statistics*, January 12, 2023 <https://oecdstatistics.blog/2023/01/12/paid-parental-leave-big-differences-for-mothers-and-fathers/>

Khazan, “The Secret to Finland's Success With Schools, Moms, Kids and Everything,” *Atlantic*, July 11, 2013

Greenhouse, “If the French Can Do It, Why Can't We?” *New York Times*, November 14, 1993)

SOCIAL HOUSING/VOUCHERS/RENT CONTROL

Dreier, “The Battle Over LA’s Mansion Tax,” *Dissent*, Winter 2025

Thornton, “As rents and evictions rise across the country, more cities and states debate rent control,” *USA Today*, August 21, 2023

Graph: Rent Control Laws By State – National Apartment Association

<https://naahq.org/advocacy/policy/issues/rent-control> (Note: Just use the map and add the title “Rent Control Laws by State”)

Mari, “Imagine a Renters’ Utopia. It Might Look Like Vienna,” New York Times, May 23, 2023

Week 11: April 8

POLICIES TO REDUCE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY - 3

HEALTH CARE

Graph: Large differences in health spending per capita across the OECD

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/society-at-a-glance-2024_08001b73/full-report/health-spending_31f85872.html#indicator-d1e12312-56f23be268

Graph: Women continue to live over 5 years more than men on average across OECD countries: Life expectancy at birth, by gender, in years, in 2021 (or nearest year)

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/society-at-a-glance-2024_08001b73/full-report/life-expectancy_37a61588.html#indicator-d1e11932-56f23be268

Graph: Uninsured in the United States 2008- 2023 <https://econofact.org/the-state-of-health-insurance-in-america>

Graph: Average Family Health Insurance in the United States

https://www.reddit.com/r/Infographics/comments/1oen54f/average_us_family_health_insurance_premium_has/

Huber, “How Did Europe Avoid the COVID-19 Catastrophe Ravaging US Meatpacking Plants?” Mother Jones, June 13, 2020

Pianin, “EPI Pen Making Enters the Pharmaceutical Industry’s Hall of Shame,” Fiscal Times, August 23, 2016

Sanders, “What Can We Learn From Denmark?” Huffington Post, May 26, 2013

Williams, “So, This is Heaven: Norway,” Los Angeles Times, November 8, 2001

WEALTH AND INCOME INEQUALITY

Graph: Most Americans say the gap between rich and poor is either a very big problem or a somewhat big problem

<https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/53821-majorities-americans-say-wealth-inequality-is-problem-want-government-intervention-january-2-5-2026-economist-yougov-poll>

Graph: Far more Americans say the federal government should try to reduce wealth inequality than say it shouldn't <https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/53821-majorities-americans-say-wealth-inequality-is-problem-want-government-intervention-january-2-5-2026-economist-yougov-poll>

Graph: U.S. Corporations Pay CEOs More, Contribute Less Taxes
<https://inequality.org/article/11-charts-tax-wealthy-corporations-inequality/>

Graph: Wealth is more concentrated at the top than income in OECD countries
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/society-at-a-glance-2024_918d8db3-en/full-report/income-and-wealth-inequalities_7ac4178f.html

Graph: Median income varies by a factor eight across OECD countries
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/society-at-a-glance-2024_08001b73/full-report/household-income_3ee61044.html#indicator-d1e8404-8cd0a55a48

Graph: There are large differences in levels of income inequality across the OECD
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/society-at-a-glance-2024_918d8db3-en/full-report/income-and-wealth-inequalities_7ac4178f.html

Graph: There are large differences in levels of relative poverty across the OECD: Percentage of persons living with less than 50% of median equivalised disposable income, by gender, in 2021 (or nearest year) https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/society-at-a-glance-2024_918d8db3-en/full-report/income-poverty_53d4eac1.html#indicator-d1e11105-0ee0a256aa

Graph: Child relative income poverty rate, 2021 or latest available year Relative income poverty rate (%), for the total population and for children (0-17 year-olds) https://webfs.oecd.org/els-com/Family_Database/CO_2_2_Child_Poverty.pdf

Ingraham, “The richest 1 percent dodge taxes on more than one-fifth of their income, study shows,” Washington Post, March 26, 2021

Graph: Individual income taxes make up the largest share of unpaid taxes
<https://www.pgpf.org/article/the-united-states-forgoes-hundreds-of-billions-of-dollars-each-year-due-to-unpaid-taxes/>

Graph: Are Taxes Too High or Low for Billionaires?
https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/econTabReport_qLhWxpK.pdf (Use Table 17. Put December 3-5, 2025 at the bottom of the table.

Graph: Higher Corporate Tax Rate Could Fund Vital Programs
<https://inequality.org/article/11-charts-tax-wealthy-corporations-inequality/>

“Trump and Musk’s proposed IRS cuts would allow ultra-rich tax cheats to steal \$30 million per day through unlawful tax evasion,” Oxfam, April 14, 2025

EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO COLLEGE

Wilgoren, “Education Study Finds U.S. Falling Short,” New York Times, June 13, 2001

Mervosh, “What Declines in Reading and Math Mean for the U.S. Workforce,” New York Times, September 25, 2025

Graphic: Historical Total National Student Loan Debt Balance <https://educationdata.org/total-student-loan-debt>

Graphic: Student Loan Debt-to-Income Ratios by Annual Income Level
<https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-by-income-level>

Abrams and Hounanian, “5 Countries That Know How to Handle Student Debt,” The Nation, August 4, 2016

Dreier, Kahlenberg, and Oliver, “The Path to Diversity at College Now That the Supreme Court Has Struck Down Affirmative Action,” Slate, February 8, 2023 <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2023/02/supreme-court-affirmative-action-wealth-admissions-factor.html>

Binkley, “Without affirmative action, elite colleges are prioritizing economic diversity in admissions,” Los Angeles Times, January 6, 2026

Week 12: April 15

PANEL DISCUSSION WITH ANTI-POVERTY ADVOCATES AND ORGANIZERS

Collins, Is Inequality in America Irreversible?

- Watch this 14-minute discussion between Bernie Sanders and Zohran Mamdani
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe1VXVABW3o>

Week 13: April 22

HOPELESSNESS, FRUSTRATION, ANGER, HOPE, AND PROTEST

Watch this film before the class: “Bread and Roses” (1h 50m)
<https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/oxy336570/watch/6CD495FE8FEBCC42?referrer=direct>
(Your Oxy login is required)

“20TH-Century Timeline,” in Peter Dreier, The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame (2012)

Kelley, “How Long Will This Take?” Newsweek, August 16, 2010

Tribou and Collins, “This Is How Fast America Changes Its Mind,” Bloomberg, June 26, 2015 (Look at the timelines for different movements)

Cooney and Michalowski, “Women’s Suffrage” (from The Power of The People, 1977)

Dreier, “This Economy is a Real Killer,” Huffington Post, April 10, 2009

Hochschild, “My Journey Deep in the Heart of Trump Country,” New York Times, June 9, 2025

Szalai, “Revising Her Hometown. a Journalist Finds Anger, Addiction and Despair” New York Times, October 26, 2025 (Review of Beth Macy, Paper Girl),

- Watch this 7-minute video before coming to class: “Why Socialism Is A Dirty Word in America” (7 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EB5FVvT_jxw
- Watch this 5-minute video before coming to class: “The Decades-Long Republican Strategy of Tying Democratic proposals to ‘socialism,’” Washington Post, June 20, 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ysw8_9NjWvk

Week 14: April 29

WHAT IT TAKES TO CHANGE PUBLIC OPINION AND PUBLIC POLICY

Watch this 85-minute film before the class: “9 to 5: The Story of a Movement” <https://vimeo.com/490922208>

Anderson and Rodrigo, “Ten Inequality Victories of 2025,” Inequality.com, December 17, 2025

Abraham, “How Social Housing Won in Seattle,” Shelterforce, April 21, 2025

Greenhouse, “The Success is Inspirational: The Fight for \$15 Movement Ten Years On,” The Guardian, November 23, 2022

Dreier, “Lessons from the Health Care Wars,” American Prospect, March 28, 2010

Dreier, “Obama's and America's Remarkable Evolution on Gay Rights,” Huffington Post, May 11, 2012

Graph: Americans' Support for Same-Sex Marriage Remains High <https://news.gallup.com/poll/646202/sex-relations-marriage-supported.aspx>

Graph: Wide Gap Continues in Partisans' Support for Same-Sex Marriage <https://news.gallup.com/poll/646202/sex-relations-marriage-supported.aspx>

Pizzigati, *The Case for a Maximum Wage* – just read Chapter 1 (“Defining Excess”) and Chapter 2 (“The Magic of Maximum Multiples”) – pages 18-51)

College policies

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policies

Your work in this course must be solely your own. You are not permitted to consult any outside resources, including AI resources such as ChatGPT. If I have concerns about the quality or authorship of your work, I may ask you to meet with me to explain your responses to the assignments. If you use any outside resources to complete your assignments, you must acknowledge their use. You should be aware that external tools, such as ChatGPT, do not always give accurate information; you are responsible for ensuring the quality of your work. You should acknowledge their use by [e.g., adding a statement about what tools/resources were consulted].

No Personal Technology Policy

The use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and wearable technology for extracurricular purposes during class is highly disruptive to other students and the instructor, thereby interfering with the learning environment. Numerous [experimental studies](#) have shown that use of personal technological devices lead to poor performance not just for the users, but for non-users in the same classroom. All personal technology is prohibited except for specific lists that are online that I will identify. Exemption Policy: Any student may ask for an exemption to the technology ban at any time. Students with exemptions will be expected to use the technology only for learning purposes.

The syllabus on Canvas includes a number of college policies, including the following:. These refer you to different college offices that deal with different issues

Statement of the Shared Academic Integrity Commitment

Civil Rights & Title IX statement dealing with discrimination and/or harassment, and a statement of the role of faculty members as responsible employees

Special Accommodations/Learning Differences

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience

Inclusive Learning Environment Student Academic Support Resources

The College has a wide range of [Student Academic Support Resources](#).

Students who need support with time management, organizational skills, effective study strategies, or navigating the learning management system can schedule a one-on-one meeting with the college's Academic Success Coach. Appointments can be by emailing academiccoaching@oxy.edu. Please include a brief description of what you'd like to work on. The Academic Success Coach will follow up with next steps within a few days.

The Library's Teaching, Learning, and Research Support (TLRS) department offers in-person or virtual [library research consultations](#) by booking in advance. It can also offer chat research support M-F 9am-4pm, no appointment necessary (contact tlrs@oxy.edu for more information).

Peer Tutors are available to assist students with discipline-specific peer tutoring for coursework, content review, and study skills support in a variety of academic departments. Information and schedules for drop-in tutoring in [languages](#) and in [all other subjects](#) can be found on their respective websites linked here.

The Writing Center offers students opportunities to work on all forms of writing for any class as well as personal statements, proposals, fellowships, cover letters, senior comprehensives, and more. It offers peer-to-peer consultations with knowledgeable Writing Advisers and sessions with Faculty Writing Specialists. It is located on the ground floor of the Academic Commons. See the [Writing Center website](#) for more information about drop-in hours and how to sign up for faculty appointments. Please contact the Writing Center Director, Prof. Prebel (jprebel@oxy.edu) for more information on Writing Center resources.

The [Academic Mastery Program](#) provides challenging workshops for students enrolled in general chemistry, organic chemistry, introductory physics, and introductory cellular biology and molecular biology. These workshops are led by upper-level students and provide an opportunity to test knowledge and skills in the context of new and challenging problems. The workshops provide a time to work intensively and collaboratively with other committed students in an atmosphere that is rigorous yet relaxed.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy

I strive to foster an inclusive classroom environment. Consistent with College policy on [discrimination, harassment, and retaliation](#), I seek to maintain an environment of mutual respect among all members of our community. Please come to me with any concerns.

Intercultural Community Center

The [ICC](#) seeks to uplift and center the experiences of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income and/or first-generation students through intersectional programming, individualized support, and identity-based resources. To learn more, contact icc@oxy.edu, or reach out directly to Vanessa Gonzalez-Wright, vgonzalez2@oxy.edu.

Emmons/Student Health

Your health and well-being have always impacted learning and academic success, this reality was only heightened as we endured a pandemic, and learned significantly more about everyday mental health and stressors related towards campus transitions. Symptoms such as anxiety, depression, loss of motivation, difficulty concentrating, strained relationships, and feelings of not belonging can occur. Emmons Counseling staff are committed to supporting the mental health needs of our students through direct services as well as case management for care coordination. Emmons provides ongoing individual therapy, walk-ins, support groups, open drop ins, and consultation in both in-person and virtual formats. Emmons Staff will consult with students to understand their needs and develop a collaborative treatment plan for either Emmons provided therapy or by offering hands-on support in finding local appropriate referrals. In case of an

emergency or a crisis, there are counselors onsite during working hours (m-f from 9-4pm) to assist the Oxy community, for after hours care there is a 24/7 crisis line. All students have access to the 24/7 confidential crisis hotline at (323) 341-4141, and will receive a follow up call from Emmons Counselors on the following business day. To get connected to any of the free, confidential services at Emmons call (323) 259-2657 or schedule an appointment online at <https://myhealth.oxy.edu> using your Oxy login credentials.

Land Acknowledgement

Recognizing the significance of [land acknowledgement](#), Occidental College acknowledges that it occupies the traditional territory and homelands of the Tongva people. Please click through to read more about the [Gabrielino-Tongva tribe](#)

Useful websites about poverty and inequality

- Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
- California Budget and Policy Center
- Economic Policy Institute
- Center on Poverty and Social Policy
- Brookings Institution
- Inequality.org
- Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Oxfam
- UBS Global Wealth Report
- Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality
- U.S. Census
- Institute for Research on Poverty
- United Nations Statistics Division: Income and Poverty
- Congressional Research Service
- Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies
- National Low-Income Housing Coalition
- Feeding America

Other books about poverty and inequality

- Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)
- Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906)
- Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910)
- Michael Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty* (2013)
- Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History Of Welfare In America* (1996)
- Adam Cohen, *Nothing to Fear: FDR's Inner Circle and the Hundred Days That Created Modern America* (2010)
- Jonathan Alter *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope* (2007)
- Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (2006)
- Martha Bailey and Sheldon Danziger, editors, *Legacies of the War on Poverty* (2013)

- Frank Stricker, *Why America Lost the War on Poverty – And How to Win It* (2007)
- Stephen Pimpare, *A People's History of Poverty in America* (2011)
- Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (2018)
- Daniel Okrent, *The Guarded Gate: Bigotry, Eugenics, and the Law That Kept Two Generations of Jews, Italians, and Other European Immigrants Out of America* (2019)
- Paula vW. Dail, *Women and Poverty in 21st Century America* (2012)
- Amanda Freeman and Lisa Dodson, *Getting Me Cheap: How Low-Wage Work Traps Women and Girls in Poverty* (2022)
- Rev. William Barber, *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct American Democracy* (2024)
- Joanne Goldblum and Collen Shaddox, *Broke in America: Seeing, Understanding, and Ending US Poverty* (2022)
- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (updated edition, 2020)
- Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (2017)
- Meizhu Lui, Barbara Robles, Besty Leondar-Wright, Rose Brewer, and Rebecca Adamson, *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*
- Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* (2021)
- Sam Pizzigati, *The Rich Don't Always Win: The Forgotten Triumph over Plutocracy that Created the American Middle Class, 1900-1970* (2012)
- Nicholas Buccola, *One Man's Freedom: Goldwater, King, and the Struggle over an American Ideal* (2025)
- Jeffrey Reiman and Paul Leighton, *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison* (2023 edition)
- Mark Rank, *The Poverty Paradox: Understanding Economic Hardship Amid American Prosperity* (2023)
- Mark Rank, Lawrence Eppard, and Heather Bullock, *Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty* (2021)
- Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (2017)
- Gregg Colburn, *Homelessness is a Housing Problem: How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns* (2022)
- Linda Gibbs, Jay Bainbridge, Tamiru Mammo, and Muzzy Rosenblatt, *How Ten Global Cities Take On Homelessness: Innovations That Work* (2021)
- Saru Jayaraman, *One Fair Wage: Ending Subminimum Pay in America*
- Arline Geronimus, *Weathering: The Extraordinary Stress of Ordinary Life in an Unjust Society* (2023)
- Chuck Collins, *Burned By Billionaires* (2025)
- Cheri Register, *Packinghouse Daughter: A Memoir* (2000)
- Natasha Zapata, *Another World Is Possible: Lessons for America From Around the Globe* (2025)
- Anu Partanen, *The Nordic Theory of Everything: In Search of a Better Life* (2016)
- Steven Greenhouse, *Beaten Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor* (2019)

- Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (1978)
- G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America? The Corporate Rich, White Nationalist Republicans, and Inclusionary Democrats in the 2020s* (2023 edition)
- Hacker and Pierson, *Let Them Eat Tweets: How the Right Rules in an Age of Extreme Inequality* (2020)
- Bernie Sanders, *It's OK to Be Angry About Capitalism* (2024)
- Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Let Them Eat Tweets* (2020)
- Sasha Abramsky, *The American Way of Poverty* (2013)
- Chrystia Freeland, *Plutocrats: The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich and the Fall of Everyone Else* (2012)
- David Freedlander, *The AOC Generation* (2021)
- Joshua Green, *The Rebels: Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and the Struggle for a New American Politics* (2024)
- Ryan Grim, *The Squad: AOC and the Hope of a Political Revolution* (2023)
- Arlie Hochschild, *Stolen Pride: Loss, Shame, and the Rise of the Right* (2025)
- Alissa Quart and David Wallis, editors, *Going For Broke: Living on the Edge in the World's Richest Country* (2023)
- Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (2017)