

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - KANSAS CITY  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
ECON 395G THE ECONOMICS OF POVERTY

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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*Please feel comfortable in contacting me at any of these addresses for any problems or questions that may arise.*

This course examines poverty from a socioeconomic perspective. We begin with a look at the human side of poverty, utilizing a novelistic presentation in The Tortilla Curtain. Next we address the causes of poverty and the structure of the American economy. Nickel and Dimed offers a journalistic view of American poverty. In the third meeting we will investigate some of the liberal and conservative views of the economy. The course is concluded with an examination of poverty in the global economy.

**GRADING:**

There will be two examinations of equal weight. There will be two topic sheets, one for each meeting. These consist of one typed page backed by source material references. These topics will be a focus for class discussion and are meant to be a guide to student participation. Each topic sheet will be worth 50 points, which includes student discussion.

2 tests @ 100	200 points
2 topic sheets @ 50	<u>100 points</u>
Total Points	300 points

**COURSE MEETINGS**

The class meets for four sessions on Friday evenings:

1. 9-19, 6 to 9:45
2. 10-10, 6 to 9:45
3. 10-31, 6 to 9:45
4. 11-21, 6 to 9:45

**READING RESOURCES**

Texts: The Tortilla Curtain by T. Coraghessan Boyle.  
Penguin Books, 1995.

Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich. Owl Books,  
2001.

Other resources will be handed out in class or assigned.  
It is expected that you will be abreast of current events by  
reading newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal and  
magazines like Business Week. CNN and network news are also  
important sources of information.

#### TENTATIVE OUTLINE

**MEETING ONE** 9-19  
Introduction

**MEETING TWO** 10-10  
Topic for student research (done before class): **The Human Side of Poverty**. Read all of The Tortilla Curtain. Bring examples (shown on your topic sheet) of the human side of poverty. These may include personal observations but should also include examples of poverty you have read about in current periodicals. If you have remembrances of examples in literature, they would be an important contribution.

**TEST 1**  
10-10

**MEETING THREE** 10-31

Topic for student research (done before class): **Liberal and Conservative views**. Read and be able to discuss Nickel and Dimed.

**MEETING FOUR** 11-21

View of poverty in the global economy. Wrap up.

**TEST 2**  
11-21