

THE MISSION AND THE MINOR

OPEN TO STUDENTS ACROSS DISCIPLINES



...cultivate a “DISCIPLINED sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burden the lives of so many.”—Mission Statement, University of Notre Dame

FACT
20% of US Adult Workforce Can't Read This Blackboard

LITERACY

In the US, more than 20% of adults or 30 million people read at or below a fifth-grade level, far below the level needed to earn a living wage.

Among people with the lowest literacy skills:

- 70% have no job or part-time job
- 43% live in poverty
- 17% receive food stamps

Using the definition "age 15 and over can read and write," the overall world literacy rate is 82%.

In low-income nations

- only one out of two women are literate
- only two out of three men are literate
- Fewer than 50% of children from extremely poor households (Less than \$1 a day) are likely to stay in school past the eighth grade

Source: World Bank and National Adult Literacy Survey

FACT

Signs of Trouble

40

40 million Americans below the poverty line
17 million at half the poverty line.

6

6 million poor children in the US

50

50% of the world's population below the US poverty level.

1

1 billion lacking access to water
3 billion lacking basic sanitation

1/2

China and India home to half the world's extreme poor

\$1

1 billion live on less than \$1/day
3 billion live on less than \$2/day

ALERT!

89 million pushed into extreme poverty due to the global recession.

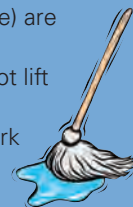
Source: World Bank

FACT

Employment does not guarantee escape from poverty

- Approximately 8 million people (6% of the labor force) are employed but live below the poverty threshold.
- Full time work at the minimum wage (\$7.25/hr) cannot lift families of three or larger out of poverty.
- Adults in all but a small minority of families must work at least 30 hours each week to qualify for cash welfare benefits.

Source: Census Bureau



FACT



One in Six Americans Goes without Health Insurance



US Rank Among 30 OECD Industrialized Nations



Healthcare Spending
1st



Infant Mortality
4th Worst
(Between Poland and Slovakia)



Life Expectancy
23rd
(Between Portugal and Czech Republic)



Teen Birth Rate
3rd Highest
(Between Mexico and Turkey)

- Every single affluent country in the world—except the United States—has found a way to provide health coverage to virtually every citizen.
- Over 80 percent of Americans without health insurance are employed but cannot afford health insurance.
- The consequences of going without insurance are higher levels of insecurity and shorter lives.
- Some 18,000 people died prematurely in 2000 due to lack of health insurance.
- African Americans today have a lifespan shorter than the average American in the late 1970s.

Source: The Measure of America Social Science Research Council

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Food Security

12% of US households did not have enough food for all family members in 2004



"[They] die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death"—UNICEF

- Nearly all of the children in global poverty are in a state of chronic malnutrition.
- 16,000 children worldwide die from hunger each day.
- 65% of the world's hungry life in only seven countries.

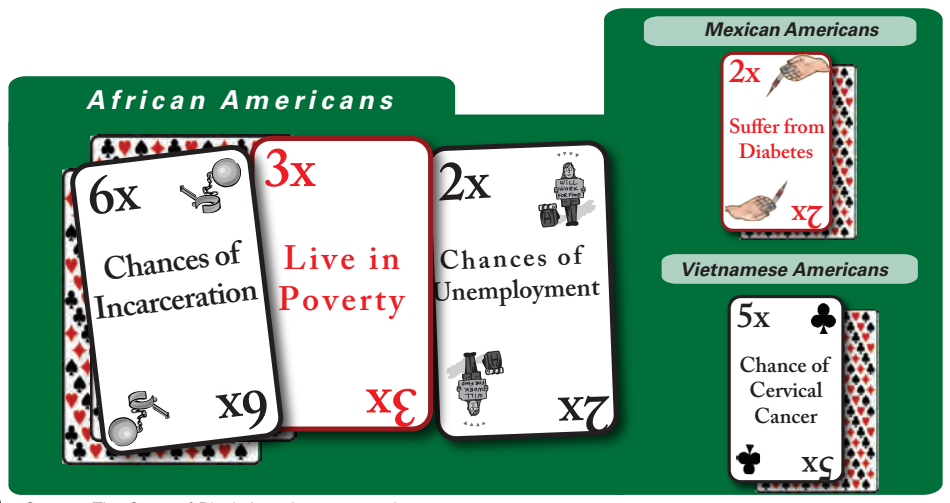


Source: UNICEF and USDA Economic Research Service

"Propaganda, stereotypes and myths govern our thinking about poverty and poor relief much more than the facts do." —Stephen Pimpare, *A People's History of Poverty in America*

LEARN THE FACTS

FACT Race & Poverty: The Odds



Source: *The State of Black America*, 2007 and 2009.

FACT: POVERTY SHORTENS THE LENGTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Health Problems in Children

- Over 30,000 children die each day from malnutrition and disease.
- Over 2 billion women and children worldwide suffer from deficiencies in vital vitamins.
- Poor mothers are twice as likely to deliver low birth weight babies.
- Ironically, malnutrition during infancy may promote obesity in childhood and adulthood.

Source: UNICEF

US Alert!

Poor and Near Poor Children are 67% More Likely to Have Asthma

- African American children have a 500% higher asthma death rate than white children.
- 10,000 children were hospitalized with asthma due to cockroach infestations.

Source: Habitat for Humanity

FACT: Government Programs Make a Difference

- ✓ Reduce the number of poor Americans by almost half (31 million people)
- ✓ Lifted 14 million low-income Americans above the poverty line
- ✓ Covered 11 million children through SCHIP: the rate of uninsured children is at its lowest rate since 1987
- ✓ 59 million receive Medicaid benefits
- ✓ Provided 35 million with food stamps
- ✓ Reduced poverty rates by approximately 40% between 1981 and 2001 in South and East Asia

Source: Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and World Bank

Poverty Poisons the Brain in 3 Ways

Low Birth Weight

Low birth weight babies have weakened immune systems, and lifelong physical and mental disadvantage.—*March of Dimes*

Lead Paint

24 million US housing units have deteriorated leaded paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated house dust. More than 4 million of these dwellings are homes to one or more young children.—*Centers for Disease Control*

Toxic Stress Hormones

"Stress hormone levels tend to be higher in young children from poor families... disrupting the formation of synaptic connections between cells in the developing brain ...literally disrupting the brain architecture."—*Jack P. Shonkoff, "Economic, Neurobiological and Behavioral Perspectives on Building America's Future Workforce" (PNAS, 2006)*

HOUSING

OPTIONS

<p style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-weight: bold;">Eviction Proceed to Shelter With 3.5 Million Americans Without Passing Go</p>	DEPT.. OF PUBLIC HEALTH	CODE ENFORCEMENT	RENTAL AGENCY	?	PUBLIC HOUSING	SUBPRIME LENDER	<p style="font-weight: bold; color: red;">COLLECT MINIMUM WAGE OF \$7.25/HR</p>
	JOIN 1 OUT OF 7 POOR FAMILIES	LIVE IN OVERCROWDED CONDITIONS	RENT AVERAGE TWO BEDROOM APT.		SIGN UP FOR WAITING LIST	FORECLOSURE DUE TO EXCESSIVE INTEREST	
	LIVE WITHOUT HOT WATER, ELECTRICITY, TOILET, OR SHOWER	6.1 MILLION DOUBLE UP IN CROWDED HOUSING	PAY \$15.28/HR OR TWICE MINIMUM WAGE TO AFFORD IT		ONLY 4 MILLION OF 15 MILLION ELIGIBLE RECEIVE HELP	SUBPRIME LOANS TARGET LOW INCOME MINORITY BORROWERS	

Source: Habitat for Humanity

AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM ON POVERTY

Notre Dame has a long-standing tradition of classroom and community based learning courses and seminars addressing poverty. The Poverty Studies Interdisciplinary Minor (PSIM) integrates these initiatives under a single academic umbrella. In cultivating students' understanding of poverty and social injustice, the minor creates an integrated curriculum track to draw together faculty from many disciplines who study often-related aspects of poverty. It seeks to provide students with a cross-disciplinary knowledge of the policies, structures, and systems that cause and alleviate poverty. Concurrently, the minor aspires to engage students in service learning and community based research projects that illuminate anti-poverty strategies.

Quotes

"I have started to learn about the predicament of the poor, and I have come to see with illuminative, sometimes disturbing, clarity that their quandary is a complex one."—Student

"The stereotype I had that the poor are lazy and can work their way out of poverty is incorrect... Hard working and determined [people] cannot find work that pays enough to support themselves in America."—Student

"The cycle of poverty feeds itself. There needs to be a multidisciplinary approach to solving the problem of poverty."—Student

**POVERTY
STUDIES**
nd.edu/~poverty



ASK why one billion people live on less than \$1 a day
ASK why one in seven Americans live below the poverty line despite decades of policies and programs designed to alleviate poverty

EXPLORE who lives in poverty including the millions of uncoun-
ted, among them homeless and undocumented workers

CHALLENGE your assumptions about the causes of poverty
and understand the interlocking causes of poverty

ANALYZE anti-poverty programs and the problems of inadequate
food, shelter, education, healthcare, and economic opportunity

CONSIDER the problem through interdisciplinary scholarship

REFLECT on the issues of social justice

DISCOVER the commonalities between global and US poverty



POVERTY STUDIES



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Program Information for the Poverty Studies Interdisciplinary Minor



There is no margin for error in the lives of the poor