

FYS: Class, Poverty & Power (TRU 120 - 13)

Fall 2025
BH219, TR 9:00-10:20
Office: MC 227
Office Hours: TR 10:30-noon (and by appointment)

Marc Becker
marc@truman.edu
Phone: x6036
<https://zoom.us/my/marcbecker>

Course Description

We are facing a wide variety of urgent and pressing social problems from Trump's attempts to undermine democracy and Republican efforts to ban access to reproductive rights and transgender care. This class will engage in depth discussions of these and a wide variety of other topics including racism, economic inequality, climate change, immigration, drug abuse, gun violence, housing, and student debt.

Readings

All readings for this course will be posted to Brightspace.

Assignments and grades

Grades are calculated out of a percentage total possible points for the class, and not of the completed assignments: 90-100 percent is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, and 60-69 is a D. Below 60 percent is an F. Successful completion of all assignments, including leading discussion and running stack when signed up to do so, is required to receive credit for this class.

Reading responses: Post a comment, question, response, or reaction for each daily reading to the discussion board on Brightspace by midnight the day before each class period. 1 pt each.

Participation: Physical presence and active engagement with the discussion in the classroom. 1 pt each.

Reflection: After each class period, post to the discussion board on Brightspace an analysis of the classroom discussions for that day. Due by midnight the night before the next class period. 1 pt each.

Class discussion leader: For each class period, one student will sign up to lead the discussion (organize the reading responses in Brightspace into a logical flow). Please share your discussion questions with the instructor before class (and with the entire class if you like). Sign up at. 5 pts.

Running stack. For each class period, one student will sign up to moderate discussion (run stack) to assure that everyone has equal space to speak. This student should also mark off students who have participated actively in class discussion at. Sign up at. 5 pts.

Class schedule: will be posted to Brightspace.

Thursday, September 18: Library workshop. Meet at PL-103 in the library.

Thursday, September 25: Academic planning workshop. Meet at Kirk Building's Training Room (KB 1019).

Thursday, November 6: Career development workshop. Meet at Kirk Building's Training Room (KB 1019).

Final Exam: Thursday, December 11, 7:30 a.m.-9:20 a.m.

Possible topics for discussion (see more at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DXr_bi_AHmb_nVdPiK-5G10XSvPgzTVxMbkRhoRujMg/edit?usp=sharing)

Racism
Inequality
Voting rights
Reproductive rights
LGBTQ/Trans rights
Prison abolition
Gun violence
Substance abuse
Housing/Homelessness
Immigration
Student debt
Climate/Environment
Culture Wars
Israel/Palestine
Unemployment and Underemployment
Malnutrition
Healthcare access
Ageism
Digital Divide
Book bans
AI
School vouchers
Pronatalism
Sexual assault
Death penalty/capital punishment
Vaccines
Banking/credit
Survivalists

Addendum

Also see syllabus resources for students: <https://wp-internal.truman.edu/provost/syllabus-resources-for-students/>.

Credit generation – This is a three-credit course with two weekly 90-minute face-to-face meetings with your professor.

Outcomes – The major outcomes of this class include:

1. Help students identify personal strengths and weaknesses.
2. Provide students with opportunities to develop friendships and personal relationships.
3. Provide a rationale for the value of Truman's liberal arts and sciences mission and how it fosters engagement with the community.
4. Provide students with opportunities to improve and demonstrate their technical and communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening).
5. Provide opportunities to find practical solutions to problems of varying complexity.
6. Provide students with opportunities to understand and appreciate the nuanced ways the individual interacts with society.
7. Provide students with opportunities to explore the tensions between theory and practice.
8. Provide opportunities to meaningfully engage with classmates on topics of interest that enhance students' appreciation for nuance and differing points of view, and requires them to assess personal biases and conflicts of interest.
9. Expose students to examples of systemic and societal biases.
10. Provide opportunities to explore and engage with the diverse cultures, ethnicities, identities, and nationalities from the Truman and Kirksville communities.

Expectations – My expectations of you as students in this class are fairly straightforward and not unlike those of any other college-level class:

1. I expect you to complete the assigned readings before class.
2. I expect you to come to class prepared to think about and discuss these readings.
3. I expect you to be fully present and engaged in class lectures and discussions. This means no inappropriate use of personal technology devices. If we are meeting remotely over zoom, you should have your camera turned on. If there is a reason you cannot or do not want to have your camera turned on, just please let me know.
4. I expect you to complete all assignments, and to turn all of them in on time.
5. I expect all written essays to be your own original work.

If you run into any problems that hinder you from meeting any of these expectations, please let me know. I think you will find that as with most of your professors I can be completely reasonable, but I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me or disappear from class without explanation. Remaining in touch is important. I do want you to excel in this class, and will bend over backwards to do what I can to ensure that you do. But please keep in mind that your instructors are people as well, and we have our breaking points. If I am bent over backwards and you keep pushing, I *will* break and you will not be happy with the consequences because you will fail the class.

Requirements – Our goal is to challenge existing assumptions, engage alternative viewpoints,

and encourage critical thinking. Through the study of history, we seek to empower ourselves to be better citizens, and to provide ourselves with the skills necessary to play a positive and educated role in society. We need to be active constituents rather than mere recipients of our education. To accomplish those tasks, we should strive to create an open and supportive learning environment. Complete reading assignments before class so that you are prepared to carry on an intelligent discussion of the material in class. Lectures and discussions will complement the readings and assume the base level of knowledge that they present, so it is critically important that you keep up with the readings. Please drop me a note if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the class.

Attendance policy – Students are expected to attend all their classes and participate actively in discussions. Poor or irregular attendance will adversely affect the quality of work and the course grade. A student who has to miss class must contact the course instructor and give a clear, valid explanation. Extended absences (for example, medical) should be documented (for example, by a note from the doctor). The student has the responsibility to make up any work missed, with deadlines at the discretion of the instructor. For university guidelines on attendance: http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=801&hl=attendance+policy&returnto=search#Attendance_Policy

Performative assignment – Truman policy and federal regulations require that students demonstrate that they are academically engaged in the courses they take. You must meet this requirement within the first calendar week of the semester. Failure to do so, or to provide an explanation of an extenuating circumstance by that date and time will result in your removal from the course. Under certain circumstances, removal could impact your scholarship eligibility or financial aid. For the purposes of this class, establishing academic engagement requires, at a minimum, attendance at a class session or completion of one of the assignments for the first week of the semester.

Writing Center – The Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.truman.edu/>), in Pickler Memorial Library 107, is open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, and is a good resource for improving your writing. They can help you to brainstorm, adjust style(s), fix grammar, references, citations, and the like. Never be too embarrassed or ashamed to seek out help.

Academic integrity – Personal and scholarly integrity are expected of everyone in the class. Failure to live up to those responsibilities, risks earning a failing grade on the assignment/examination, a failing grade for the course, and/or in serious cases expulsion from the academic program or University. The University policy on academic dishonesty as published in the Student Conduct Code and General/Graduate Catalog applies (http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=1192#Academic_Dishonesty).

The Truman State University Student Conduct Code (8.020.01) defines the term “academic misconduct” to include: 1) cheating, defined as using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information aids in any academic exercise; 2) fabrication, defined as falsification or invention of any information or citation in an exercise; 3) facilitating academic misconduct, defined as helping or attempting to help another in an act of academic dishonesty; and /or 4) plagiarism, defined as representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in an academic exercise. Students who are caught committing acts of academic misconduct in this

course will be subject to the full range of penalties, including failing the assignment and the course. In every case, the Dean of Student Affairs Office and the Vice President for Academic Affairs will be notified; these officials have the power to suspend or expel students for academic misconduct. For more information see these two websites:

http://catalog.truman.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=491#Academic_Dishonesty and <http://www.truman.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2014-Student-Conduct-Code.pdf>.

ADA accommodations for students with disabilities – The university is committed to making every possible effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Services Office (x4478) as soon as possible. Also see <http://disabilityservices.truman.edu/>.

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations students with documented disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Office of Student Access and Disability Services (OSA) as soon as possible. Truman complies with ADA requirements. For additional information, refer to the Office of Student Access and Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.truman.edu/>

You may also contact OSA by phone at (660) 785-4478 or email studentaccess@truman.edu

Notice of Compliance – In compliance with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, age, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission to or employment in its education programs or activities. The University complies with the regulations implementing Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and other state and federal laws and regulations.”

Discrimination and Title IX – Truman State University, in compliance with applicable laws and recognizing its deeper commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion which enhances accessibility and promotes excellence in all aspects of the Truman Experience, does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, or protected veteran status in its programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs and activities. Apparently political ideology is not included, so we can discriminate based on that. Faculty and staff are considered “mandated reporters” and therefore are required to report potential violations of the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policies to the Institutional Compliance Officer.

Title IX prohibits sex harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking and retaliation. Truman State University encourages individuals who believe they may have been impacted by sexual or gender-based discrimination to consult with the Title IX Coordinator who is available to speak in depth about the resources and options. Faculty and staff are considered “mandated reporters” and therefore are required to report potential incidents of sexual misconduct that they become aware of to the Title IX Coordinator.

For more information on discrimination or Title IX, or to file a complaint contact the Institutional Compliance Officer (<https://titleix.truman.edu/>), Title IX and Section 504

Coordinator
Office of Institutional Compliance
Violette Hall, Room 1308
100 E. Normal Ave
Kirksville, MO 63501
Phone: (660) 785-4354
titleix@truman.edu

The institution's complaint procedure can be viewed at <http://titleix.truman.edu/files/2015/08/University-Complaint-Reporting-Resolution-Procedure.pdf> and the complaint form is accessible at <http://titleix.truman.edu/make-a-report/>.

FERPA – Education records are protected by the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result, course grades, assignments, advising records, etc. cannot be released to third parties without your permission. There are, however, several exceptions about which you should be aware. For example, education records can be disclosed to employees or offices at Truman who have an “educational need to know”. These employees and offices may include your academic advisor, the Institutional Compliance Officer, the Registrar's Office, or Student Affairs depending on the type of information. For more information about FERPA, see <http://www.truman.edu/registrar/ferpa/>.

Recording – No recording in the classroom is permitted without the explicit and written permission of the instructor.

Statement on disruptive behavior:

“Behavior that persistently or flagrantly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be asked to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.” *(From Washington State University, suggested by Lou Ann Gilchrist).*

The minimum investment of time necessary by the average student to achieve the learning goals of the course, both in the class sessions and in autonomous learning activities. Apparently either the Missouri state Higher Learning Commission (HLC) or the Truman State University administration has mandated that all syllabi should contain information that documents the activities that warrant the credit hours awarded. For each hour in class, students should expect to devote approximately three additional hours per week to completing the course work. This is true for all classes.

You can access the University's standard attendance policy at <http://policies.truman.edu/policylibrary/attendance-policy/>.



Emergency Procedures – In each classroom on campus, there is a poster of emergency procedures explaining best practices in the event of an active shooter/hostile intruder, fire, severe weather, bomb threat, power outage, and medical emergency.

This poster is also available as a PDF at this link:
<http://police.truman.edu/files/2015/12/Emergency-Procedures.pdf> .

Students should be aware of the classroom environment and note the exits for the room and building. For more detailed information about emergency procedures, please consult the Emergency Guide for Academic Buildings, available at the QR code shown or at the following link: <http://police.truman.edu/emergency-procedures/academic-buildings/>

This six-minute video provides some basic information on how to react in the event there is an active shooter in your location: <http://police.truman.edu/emergency-procedures/active-shooter/active-shooter-preparedness-video/> .

Truman students, faculty, and staff can sign up for the TruAlert emergency text messaging service via TruView. TruAlert sends a text message to all enrolled cell phones in the event of an emergency at the University. To register, sign in to TruView and click on the “Truman” tab. Click on the registration link in the lower right of the page under the “Update and View My Personal Information” channel on the “Update Emergency Text Messaging Information” link. During a campus emergency, information will also be posted on the TruAlert website <http://trualert.truman.edu/>.

Appropriate use of technology – Appropriate use of technology is encouraged and inappropriate use is—well, inappropriate and detrimental to our common learning environment.

Other random things I’m supposed to tell you:

The best way to contact me outside of class is via email and typically I am able respond fairly quickly. If you don’t receive a response from me (like, in more than a day) please try again because the email probably was lost, but first check your spam filter because thanks to Elon Musk my emails *will* go to spam. To avoid this problem, please add marc@truman.edu to the “allow” list at <https://barracuda.truman.edu/>.

I plan to provide prompt feedback on assignments, typically before the next class period.

This class has no prerequisite or enrollment requirements.

It has no expectations for prior knowledge/skills.

It has no special equipment or technology requirements.