Course Syllabus  
Homelessness: Its Causes, Consequences, and Policy Solutions  
Sociology 137/237  Wednesdays 1:15 – 3:05  
Donald Barr, M.D., Ph.D.  
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Office hours: Tuesday afternoons  
Office hour sign-ups posted outside my office – Building 100, Room 101G

This is a new course that will adopt a Service-Learning approach to examine the issue of homelessness. It will be in a seminar format with two principal components:

1. Discussion of recent literature and research data regarding the issue of homelessness;
2. Creating teams of students to work with community agencies to design research projects that will identify and answer important questions pertaining to the provision of services to the homeless.

The class will be limited to approximately 12 students. Thus every student is expected to be an active participant in both phases of the class. Students’ responsibilities will include:

a) Doing the assigned reading each week in preparation for the in-class discussion;
b) Being an active participant in those discussions;
c) Meeting regularly with a small team (3-4 students) that will discuss with local service agencies issues in the delivery of services to the homeless;
d) Based on these discussions and your own supplemental reading, develop a written design for a research project, and present that design to the class for discussion;
e) Submit a final written research proposal at the end of the quarter. This proposal will come from the student research team; the grade for the proposal will be given to each member of the team.

Grading for the class will be based on the following:

- Preparation for class and participation in class discussions – 50%
- Presentation of research proposal to class – 25%
- Final written research proposal – 25%

Assigned readings and other course materials will be available on CourseWork. The readings for the first week of class are available now, and subsequent readings will be added prior to the week in which they are assigned.

Prof. Barr will be assisted in this class by Stan Wanat, PhD (wanat@stanford.edu). Dr. Wanat will take principal responsibility for consulting with the research teams regarding research design and working with community agencies.
Course Schedule

Week 1 – September 28
Introduction to the class; class structure; personal introductions; how I got involved with homelessness

Assigned Readings:
Donald Barr and Lars Osterberg – results of needs assessment survey of the homeless population of the mid-Peninsula
The 2004 Santa Clara County Homeless Survey – pp. 38-62

Week 2 – October 5
The demographics of homeless: Who are the homeless? Why are they homeless? What are the characteristics of the homeless (education, disability, etc.)? Do these answers differ depending on which homeless population you address?

Week 3 – October 12
Health problems among the homeless and approaches to providing health care

Week 4 – October 19
Alternative models of providing housing and services to the homeless: Shelters vs. housing; zero-tolerance vs housing-first; the concept of supportive housing; 10-year plans to “end homelessness”

Week 5 – October 26
Homeless families and children: How are they different from the population of homeless single adults? Do they have the same causes for their homelessness? Do they need special types of service programs and housing?

Week 6 – November 2
Disabilities among the homeless and programs targeted to them: Mental health; substance abuse; physical and developmental disability. Federal and state programs for homeless persons with disabilities

Week 7 – November 9
Legal issues in homelessness: Arrest and incarceration; assault and personal safety; the civil rights of homeless persons; housing and the American With Disabilities Act

Week 8 – November 16
Student research presentations

Week 9 – November 30
Student research presentations

Week 10 – December 7
Student research presentations

Final written research proposals due Wednesday December 14, 5pm