Rising income inequality is undermining the ability of public K-12 schools to meet a foundational goal: to provide children from impoverished areas the opportunity to succeed. This course focuses on the societal forces that have translated the growing income gap into a growing education gap. We will examine primary research from various fields that details how poverty affects multiple levels starting with developing children, then families, neighborhoods, and finally schools. We will also consider how interventions strategically targeted at these systems can improve the educational success of children growing up in poverty as well as how these levels interact with one another.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

(1) interpret, explain, and critically analyze interdisciplinary research about how the forces of inequality affect education.

(2) understand the ways in which the multiple levels affected by poverty (i.e., child, family, neighborhood, schools) interact with one another.

(3) consider promising areas for research-based intervention.

(4) propose a project that would help society understand or mitigate the impact poverty has on education.

There is no textbook for this class. The majority of readings are research articles that have been carefully selected because they ask and answer a very specific question. Together, in class, we will build an understanding of how the research articles come together to address larger questions about how poverty affects children, families, neighborhoods, and/or schools in ways that go onto affect educational outcomes. The articles can all be found on the course Canvas site.

We will also read a memoir to provide a voice to research findings and insight into the ways rural and urban poverty are distinct. The books are widely available at book retailers.


iv. ASSESSMENTS

Participation and Discussion Board Posts (10%)

Copious research shows participation benefits learning. We will use the Discussion Board on Canvas to encourage participation above and beyond live participation during class hours. You will need to make four comment posts and four response posts by the end of the term.

Comment posts: Four days this term you will need to post a comment about one reading assigned for that day. Your comment can include questions, critiques, links to other topics, and/or suggestions about follow ups. Comment posts must be made before class begins (i.e., before 10:10 am). My motivation here is to help you stay on top of the readings.

Response posts: Four other days, you will need to post a thoughtful response to someone else’s comment using the ‘reply’ button on the Canvas Discussion Board. Response posts must be posted within one week of when the original comment was made. My motivation here is to have you engage in actual conversation.

Other than the aforementioned guidelines, I am giving you the autonomy to decide which days you do your comment posts and which day you do your response posts. The quality of your comment and response posts will count towards your participation grade.

Simulation Reflections (2 each%)

During two classes this term, we will participate in simulations to help understand the complex ways the multiple levels affected by poverty interact with one another. Research has shown that simulation activities provide an ideal tool to achieve this goal, as they allow you the opportunity to experience aspects of a phenomenon for yourself and, in turn, reduce prejudice, promote perspective taking, and increase self-reflection. After each simulation, you will be asked to provide a brief (2-page) reflection statement about the experience. Detailed instructions about the requirements for the reflections are posted to Canvas.

Simulation 1: The Brain Architecture Game

The Brain Architecture Game was created through a partnership between The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the USC Creative Media & Behavioral Health Center, and the Clinical & Translational Science Institute at the University of Pittsburgh, and the FrameWorks Institute. See https://dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com

The Brain Architecture Game is a tabletop game experience that builds an understanding of the powerful role experiences have on early brain development—what promotes it, what derails it, and with what consequences for society. The goal is to build a brain that is as tall as possible, which represents functionality, and as sturdy as possible, which represents the ability to withstand stressors. In small groups you will work together, drawing Life Experience cards to gain materials for brain building. Positive experiences earn a pipe cleaner and a straw for support. Negative experiences? Pipe cleaner, but no straw. After the initial period of early childhood brain development, weights must be hung from the structure of the brain when life hands out stressors. Will the foundation withstand these weights, or will it collapse? Afterward, we will discuss the experiences that strengthened or weakened the architecture of the developing brains and unpack how the simulation aligns with what we covered in class about neurocognitive development. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.
Simulation 2: The Game of Social Life
This simulation activity was designed in part by a 2014 grant from the Teaching about Diversity Fund through the Learning and Teaching Office at Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. See http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/the-game-of-social-life-poverty-simulation/

The simulation is designed to motivate you to reflect on and discuss concepts of social stratification based on multiple dimensions of poverty. Prior to class, you will 1) be assigned character resources at random and 2) complete a budget exercise to determine the resources that you will have available to them during game play. In class, we will break into small groups for game play. The first part of the board game represents childhood, with the goal of remaining healthy and accumulating education credits. In the second part of the game, representing adulthood, education credits earn prestige and wealth (or lack of prestige and wealth) in the form of occupational opportunities. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

Book Verification Quizzes (2% each)
During the term, you will read two books. Hillbilly Elegy is a memoir written by J.D. Vance about his childhood growing up in poor in rural Appalachia. A Hope in the Unseen written by Ron Suskind is about Cedric Jennings, who grew up in an inner-city project on the southeast corner of Washington, DC. There will be a brief quiz on each book with short essay questions.

Rural vs Urban Poverty Paper (14%)
The lives of J.D. Vance and Cedric Jennings as portrayed in Hillbilly Elegy and A Hope in the Unseen bear striking similarities. There are also striking differences. Some of the differences have to do with the fact that one was raised in an impoverished rural context and the other in an impoverished urban context. In a five-page (double-spaced) paper, you will need to discuss one similarity that exists between J.D. and Cedric. You must discuss how this similarity links to research related to a topic we cover in class. You must cite at least two research articles when discussing the similarity. You must also discuss one difference that exists between J.D. and Cedric. You must explicitly discuss if and how you believe this difference relates to the fact that J.D. grew up in a rural context and Cedric grew up in an urban context. You must cite at least three research articles when discussing the difference. Detailed instructions are available on Canvas.

Small Group COI Analysis Report (4%)
You will be randomly assigned to a small group and you will work together to improve your understanding of the Child Opportunity Index (COI), a measure of the quality of resources and conditions that matter for children to develop in the neighborhoods where they live. Explicit directions about how to use the COI and what to include in your analysis report are posted on the Canvas site. In the end, your group will submit one analysis report on Canvas. You will all receive the same grade on your report.

Grant Proposal (20%)
Assume you have the opportunity to compete for a $50,000 grant to conduct a research project that addresses a research-based problem associated with poverty and education. You will write a 10-page (double spaced) grant proposal to convince a grant review panel (myself and your classmates) that your project is worthy of funding. Your proposal should include a(n): abstract, rationale, statement of purpose, methods, timeline, budget justification, and reference list. Explicit directions and a grading rubric are posted to the Canvas site. Before the full proposal is due, you will be asked to give the class a (timed) 45-second pitch of your proposal; we will vote on 5 proposals that we, as a class, feel are the most worthy of the $50,000 (based on the pitches). Instructions about the pitches are available on Canvas.

Note: There will be Grant Proposal Writing Workshops held during the x-hour time slots of Week 6, 7, 8, & 9.
During these workshops you will have the opportunity to work with me and peers in your class to brainstorm, improve, and finalize your grant proposal. Each workshop will have a specific focus and will be semi-structured. Attendance is optional, but it is strongly encouraged that you attend at least one workshop. (Students who have taken this course in the past have found these workshops very useful.)

**Midterm Exam (20%)**
The midterm exam will include a variety of question types including multiple choice, short answer, and short essay. It will cover material from articles, lectures, and in-class discussions, but not material from simulations or books.

**Final Exam (24%)**
The final exam will also include a variety of question types including multiple choice, short answer, and short essay. It will be cumulative.

**v. GRADE BREAKDOWN**
Discussion Posts: 10%
Simulation Reflection 1: 2%
Simulation Reflection 2: 2%
Book Quiz 1: 2%
Book Quiz 2: 2%
Rural vs Urban Poverty Paper: 14%
Small Group COI Analysis Report: 4%
Grant Proposal: 20% (includes in-class pitch)
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 24%

**vi. POLICIES**

**Late policy**
With the exception of quizzes and exams, all assignments must be uploaded onto the Canvas site by 11:59 pm EST on the due date noted on the Canvas site. You may upload things early, but not more than two weeks early. I will not begin to grade anything until the official due date, so if you do post something, you may remove it and repost it anytime prior to 11:59 pm EST the day it is due. Any assessment handed in after 11:59 pm EST on the day it is due will be counted as one day late. (This includes 12:01 am EST!) Ten percent will be deducted the first day an assignment is late and an additional five percent will be deducted for each additional day that passes.

The Canvas Discussion Board posts follow a slightly different policy. Please make you comment posts before the start of class that covers the topic on which you are commenting. (They are time stamped so I will know when you make them.) Please make your response posts within one week of the original comment posted. If your comment and peer response posts are late, it will negatively impact your grade, albeit in a slightly more subjective way.

Typically, my late policy is a no exceptions policy and I hold firm to it because I believe it is inequitable to do otherwise. Typically, I find that extensions benefit only a select group of students, specifically those who have more extroverted personalities and are comfortable approaching me to ask for an extension. Therefore, I will hold firm to this policy, unless you experience extenuating circumstances. Should this be the case, please email me before the due date and we will come up with a comprehensive
revised timeline for you the rest of the term. All of this said, we’re still(!) in a pandemic and if you experience difficulty getting things in on time due to COVID related difficulties, do reach out; we’ll make a plan.

**Classroom Climate**
Due to the nature of the topics covered in this course, we will discuss issues that are value-laden and sensitive. It is critical that each member of the class feels comfortable expressing his or her individual viewpoint. Remember that it is our privilege to be exposed to diverse perspectives.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (Getting Started with SAS webpage; Links to an external site, student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its Testing Center may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

**Academic Honor Principal**
I take the Academic Honor Principle seriously. I expect you to familiarize yourself with it and uphold it. It stated clearly at http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/index.html. For this course, you may not receive or provide assistance on any quiz or exam and you may not plagiarize. Plagiarism is the submission or presentation of work, in any form, that is not your own, without acknowledgment of the source. For this course, cite all sources according to the formal APA guidelines. If you have any clarification questions about how the Academic Honor Principal applies to this course, please ask me- and please do so before submitting an assignment. Any violation of the Academic Honor Principal will result in a zero on the assignment and a referral to Judicial Affairs.

**Religious Observances**
Some of you may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible, or before the end of the second week of the term—at the latest, to discuss appropriate adjustments. Dartmouth has a deep commitment to support students’ religious observances and diverse faith practices.

**Mental Health**
I recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including:

- Undergraduate deans (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/)
- Counseling and Human Development (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/)
- Student Wellness Center (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/)

I encourage you to use these resources, and come speak with me, to take care of yourself throughout the term.

**Consent to Recording of Course and Group Office Hours**
(1) Consent to recording of course meetings and office hours that are open to multiple students.
By enrolling in this course,
1.  a) I affirm my understanding that the instructor may record meetings of this course and any associated meetings open to multiple students and the instructor, including but not limited to scheduled and ad hoc office hours and other consultations, within any digital platform, including those used to offer remote instruction for this course.

2.  b) I further affirm that the instructor owns the copyright to their instructional materials, of which these recordings constitute a part, and my distribution of any of these recordings in whole or in part to any person or entity other than other members of the class without prior written consent of the instructor may be subject to discipline by Dartmouth up to and including separation from Dartmouth.

(2) Requirement of consent to one-on-one recordings

By enrolling in this course, I hereby affirm that I will not make a recording in any medium of any one-on-one meeting with the instructor or another member of the class or group of members of the class without obtaining the prior written consent of all those participating, and I understand that if I violate this prohibition, I will be subject to discipline by Dartmouth up to and including separation from Dartmouth, as well as any other civil or criminal penalties under applicable law. I understand that an exception to this consent applies to accommodations approved by SAS for a student’s disability, and that one or more students in a class may record class lectures, discussions, lab sessions, and review sessions and take pictures of essential information, and/or be provided class notes for personal study use only. If you have questions, please contact the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
# vii. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND DUE DATES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to the Course and Status of Poverty and Education</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty at the Child Level</strong></td>
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<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; Neurocognitive Development</td>
<td>Student Survey</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Simulation #1: The Brain Architecture Game</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; PreK</td>
<td>Simulation Reflection 1</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; K-12 Educational Outcomes</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty at the Family Level</strong></td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Poverty, Family Structure &amp; Investments in Children’s Learning</td>
<td>Book Quiz 1</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; Parenting: Influences on Education</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty at the Neighborhood Level</strong></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; Neighborhood: Influences on Education</td>
<td>Book Quiz 2</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; Local Employment: Influences on Education</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty at the School Level</strong></td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; School Mobility</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Workshop (optional)</td>
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<td>x-hour</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Workshop (optional)</td>
<td>Rural vs. Urban Poverty Paper</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Poverty &amp; Teachers</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>SIMULATION: The Game of Social Life</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Pitch</td>
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<td>x-hour</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Workshop (optional)</td>
<td>Small Group COI Analysis Report</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Poverty, Crime, &amp; Safe Schools</td>
<td>Simulation Reflection 2</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Pitches</td>
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<td>x-hour</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Workshop (optional)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Poverty, Segregation, &amp; Desegregation of Schools</td>
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<td><strong>Promising Interventions</strong></td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Child &amp; School Level Interventions</td>
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<td>x-hour</td>
<td>Grant Proposal Workshop (optional)</td>
<td>Grant Proposal</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Family &amp; Neighborhood Level Interventions</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Summary, Reflections, &amp; Moving Forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Final Exam @ 11:30 a.m. Saturday June 4</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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viii. DAILY SCHEDULE OF READINGS

**Introduction to the Course**


**Poverty & Neurocognitive Development**


DUE: STUDENT SURVEY

**Simulation #1: The Brain Architecture Game**

Watch the following four videos about brain development in preparation for the in class:

How Brains are Built (2022). Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmVWOe1ky8s

Experiences Build Brain Architecture (2022). Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9Ikws

Serve and Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry (2022). Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_5u8-QSh6A

Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development (2022). Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw
Poverty & Pre-K


DUE: SIMULATION #1 REFLECTION

Poverty & K-12 Educational Outcomes
Reardon, S. (2013). The widening of the income achievement gap. Educational Leadership, 70(8), 10-16.


Poverty, Family Structure, & Investments in Children’s Learning


DUE: BOOK QUIZ 1 (given in class)
Poverty & Parenting: Influences on Education


Poverty & Neighborhood: Influences on Education


DUE: BOOK QUIZ 2 (given in class)

Poverty & Local Employment: Influences on Education


Midterm

DUE: MIDTERM EXAM (given in class)

Poverty & School Mobility


**Poverty & Teachers**


**DUE: RURAL VS. URBAN POVERTY PAPER**

**Simulation**

In class simulation: *The Game of Social Life*

**Poverty & Safe Schools**


**DUE: SIMULATION #2 REFLECTION**

**Grant Proposal Pitches**

DUE: GRANT PROPOSAL PITCHES (presented in class)
Poverty, Segregation, & Desegregation of Schools


DUE: SMALL GROUP COI ANALYSIS REPORT

Child & School Level Interventions


Family & Neighborhood Level Interventions


**DUE: GRANT PROPOSAL**

**Summary, Reflections, & Moving Forward**


**Finals week**

DUE: FINAL EXAM