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# SW 3T03:

# Poverty and Homelessness

Course Information:

September 6th – December 8th, 2022, Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.  
Instructor: Mary Vaccaro

Email: [vaccarm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vaccarm@mcmaster.ca)

Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistants: Beck Gower - [gowerr@mcmaster.ca](mailto:gowerr@mcmaster.ca)   
 Stephanie Miliken - [milliks@mcmaster.ca](mailto:milliks@mcmaster.ca)

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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

This course will explore contemporary issues relating to poverty and homelessness within Hamilton and across the country. We will seek to critically examine the political perspectives that shape how we come to understand, measure, and respond to poverty and homelessness in Canada.

Throughout this course, we will focus on some of the ways intersecting identity and lived experiences creates systemic barriers that make experiencing poverty and homelessness more likely and resolving it more difficult.

We will spend time examining some specific social policies and programs/responses that are designed to address poverty and homelessness. Particular attention will be paid to learning about local service provision, alternative policy options and activist responses.

## Course Objectives:

* Understand how varying political perspectives on poverty/homelessness shape the ways we understand and respond to poverty and homelessness as a community
* Develop a deeper understanding of the ways poverty/homelessness is measured and how this shapes our response in Canada and locally
* Consider the ways intersecting identities and life circumstances lead to systemic barriers that shape experiences of poverty/homelessness
* Appreciate the importance of designing more responsive policies and programs to respond to people who are unhoused and living in poverty

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the **School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy**:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

## Course Format

This course will be presented through lectures, guest speakers and panel discussions. You will engage with a number of different kinds of of course materials including academic articles, videos, governmental reports, virtual art exhibits and Zines produced by people living unhoused in Hamilton. We will have opportunities for learning from one another through small group discussions, small group activities and class discussions.

## Required Texts:

## No required text books. All course materials will be made available on Avenue to Learn.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

1. Analyzing Perspectives on Poverty & Homelessness – 25%

This assignment asks you to review a news article or watch a short interview with a local service provider - (a list will be provided on Avenue to Learn).

You will be asked to critically analyze the perspectives shared in the article or by the service provider about what causes and what resolves situations of poverty and homelessness. A strong submission will make connections to course content.

Length: 4-6 double-spaced pages or 10-minute Podcast, Video/Presentation, or email Mary to negotiate an alternative format

Due: October 6th, 2022

1. Critical Reflection on Course Content – 25%

This assignment asks you to focus on one week of course content (including all readings/course material and the lecture content). You will be asked to share some of your own reflections on the content including any key lessons learned, aha moments, things you disagreed with and/or lingering questions.

You will be asked to cite all course material from that week and bring in one external, but related publication.

Length: 4-6 double-spaced pages or 10-minute Podcast, Video/Presentation, or email Mary to negotiate an alternative format

Due: One week after the course content was assigned and/or before December 8th

1. Mapping Responses to Poverty and Homelessness in Hamilton - (In Class Group Assignment) – 20%

This is an in-class group assignment focusing on mapping out one sector of the social welfare state that individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness frequently interact with.

You will be assigned to groups based on one of your top three interests in sectors including (but not limited to): Social Assistance, Emergency Shelter, Access to Food/Clothing/Basic Needs, Supportive Housing, Legal Advocacy, Immigration and Settlement Services, Childcare and Supports for Caregivers, the Developmental Service Sector etc.

As a group, you will respond to a series of in-class activities to learn about and document the ways different sectors define and respond to poverty and about the community resources that make up Hamilton’s social service system. These activities will ask you to identify gaps in services, potential barriers to accessing support and recommend amendments to or alternative responses to poverty /homelessness through their sector.

The objective is to learn about how the current social responses to poverty and homelessness are organized in Hamilton.

Students will work in groups during class time on the weeks of October 20th, 27th, November 3rd and November 10th. If you are unable to complete in-class group work, please get in touch with Mary (the Instructor) as soon as possible.

Due: Assignments will be submitted at the end of class on the day it was assigned – and time will be provided during the class to complete it.

1. Final Assignment – 30%

You will have a choice between three different final assignments. To support your success with the final assignment, you will be asked to complete a survey indicating which assignment you have chosen on/before October 27th.

Priority Population Paper

You will write a paper focusing on one of the ‘priority populations’ identified by the National Housing Strategy in Canada. This paper will have three major components including a review of the literature, an analysis of 2 programs that exist in Canada to support this population and your own recommendations for alternative policy and program responses and recommendations.

A strong paper will be well researched and well referenced and will draw on a range of sources and publications.

Length: 10-12 pages

Due: December 8th, 2022

OR:

Complete & Analyze a Training Module

You will complete a training module designed for front-line staff working in the housing and homelessness sector and submit this assignment in two parts – through a *progress reflection* (due on or before November 27th) and a *critical analysis* (December 8th).

A series of training modules have been made available under the ‘Training Module’ folder on Avenue to Learn. If you find a training module you would like to focus on that is not listed – please email Mary (the instructor).

Part One: Progress Reflection

This assignment asks you to provide a synopsis and summary of where you are at in the training module and what you have learned so far. This should be completed when you reach the halfway point of the module.   
Due: November 27th, 2022

Length: 4 pages or 8-minute podcast/video/presentation

Part Two: Critical Analysis

This assignment asks you to critically analyze and reflect on what you learned through completing the training module.

Due: December 8th, 2022

Length: 4 pages or 8-minute podcast/video/presentation

OR:

Gender Based Housing and Homelessness: Developing a local archive

This assignment invites you to contribute to creating an archive on local gender-based housing and homelessness research as a part of a larger project connected to the YWCA Hamilton, the School of Social Work, and the Community Research Platform.

This will focus on gathering, storing, and summarizing contemporary and historical research, news articles and other relative publications focused on the state of gender-based homelessness in Hamilton.

Students who are interested in exploring this as a final assignment are invited to an information session on October 10th.

## Requirement/Assignment Details:

Detailed outlines and rubrics are available for each assignment on Avenue to Learn.

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, and the date. Number all pages (except title page).
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (Times-Roman 12), spacing (double spaced) and margins (minimum of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right of each page) as papers not meeting these requirements will not be accepted for grading.
* Students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments. When submitting, please keep a spare copy of your assignments.

Please email Mary (the instructor) if you are interested in submitting an assignment in an alternate format (a video, Podcast, presentation etc.).

## Avenue to Learn

In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss with the course instructor.

### Submitting Assignments & Grading

### All assignments will be submitted in the drop-boxes on Avenue to Learn unless you arrange an alternate way to submit with the Instructor. Each assignment has an assignment outline and rubric, which you can find under the ‘Assignments’ tab on the Avenue to Learn platform for our course.

You will receive the rubric with comments and your assigned grade. You will also receive some comments and feedback throughout your assignment if it is uploaded as a word document via Avenue to Learn.

As a teaching team, we intend to return assignments back to you with your grade and our feedback within 14 days of your submission.

### Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last five digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

### Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Working Together: Instructor & Student Responsibilities

Students and the teaching team are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students are asked to be present during in class lectures, having read the material and come prepared to engage in class discussions. Your instructor and your marking T.A will be available via email (or by appointment on Zoom, or in person) to answer your questions and provide clarification as we move through the term.

This course will include lectures from guest speakers including service provide from the community and people with lived experience who are impacted by poverty and homelessness. It is important to be mindful when sharing about the content of these lectures with folks outside of the class.

## Course Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you anticipate difficulty with this, please speak with the instructor. Missing a substantial number of classes often results in essential course requirements not being met (these must be met to pass the course). Students who are close to missing 20% of classes must contact the instructor to discuss. Note: It is the student's responsibility to track their own attendance; instructors will only calculate attendance at the end of the course.

*During the weeks of October 20th, October 27th, November 3rd, and November 10th we will be doing in class groupwork. If you already know you will be unable to attend more than one of these weeks, please contact Mary (the Instructor) in advance to negotiate an alternate assignment.*

### Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

### Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g., use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

### Accessibility Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

### Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the recording.
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

## Confidentiality

A cornerstone of professional social work relationships is confidentiality with respect to all matters associated with professional services to clients. Social workers demonstrate respect for the trust and confidence placed in them by clients, communities, and other professionals by protecting the privacy of client information and respecting the client’s right to control when or whether this information will be shared with third parties (CASW Code of Ethics, 2005).

This course will include lectures from guest speakers including social workers from the community and peer workers. We will also have class discussions that may result in students sharing their own lived experiences. It is important to maintain confidentiality when sharing about the content of these lectures with folks outside of the class.

### E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, they may not reply.

### Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### Extensions and Incomplete Courses

Extensions

All instructors understand that life situations sometimes make it very difficult to hand in an assignment on the date it is due. If you need more time to complete an assignment, talk with your instructor – in advance of the assignment deadline! Once you and your instructor have agreed on a new due date, it is your responsibility to submit your assignment on time. If you find yourself unable to meet deadlines in more than one course, please reach out to Tammy Maikawa, Administrator ([millet@mcmaster.ca](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) ) or Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair ([vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)). We are here to support you to think about options (such as reducing your course load) that can take the stress off and contribute to your success in the program overall.

Incomplete courses

If you are not able to complete all of your assignments by the end of term, you have the option of contacting the instructor to request an Incomplete (INC) on the course. If the instructor agrees, (taking into account the amount of outstanding coursework and the time it will likely take to complete), the instructor will enter the grade you have so far in the course (the default grade) and the course will appear in Mosaic as INC (incomplete).

The School’s requirements for completing courses depend on a) the nature of the course (whether it is a foundation course\*, or a social and political context course) and b) when you are hoping to start placement. For example, a student who has an incomplete in a foundation course cannot start placement. Please see the [Policy on Extensions and Incompletes in the BSW Program](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/policy-on-extensions-and-incompletes-november-2019.docx/view) for more details.

At approximately 52-60 days after the end of term, the Mosaic system will automatically change an INC to the default grade. Depending on the default grade, this might affect your standing or progress in the program.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your progress in the program, please connect with Tammy Maikawa, Administrator (*[*millet@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) *) or* *Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair (*[*vengris@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)*).*

## Course Weekly Topics and Readings:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date: | Topics: | Readings: |
| September 8h | Introduction to 3T03   Topics:  Orientation to the course  The Current State of Poverty and Homelessness: Locally and Nationally | No Readings |
| September 15th | Module 1: Political Perspectives on Poverty & Homelessness  Topics: How do we understand what causes poverty and homelessness in Canada?  How do we ‘measure’ poverty and homelessness? How does this shape our national response? | Bradshaw, T.K. (2007). Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development. *Community Development 38*(1), 7-25.  Baker Collins, S. (2005). An Understanding of Poverty from Those who Are Poor. *Action Research 3*(1), pp. 9-31.  Video:  How many people are homeless in Toronto in 2021?  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4EenRB4QH8 |
| September 22nd | Module 1: Political Perspectives on Poverty & Homelessness  Topic: Critically Examining Varying Political Perspectives on Poverty and Homelessness | You will also be asked to review a learning module this week that will be accessible on Avenue to Learn. Video:  What more could be done to reduce poverty in Canada?  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCyVbYUqD14> |
| September 29th | Module 1: Political Perspectives on Poverty & Homelessness  Topic:  Responding to a Crisis: Encampments across Canada during COVID-19  Guest Lecture:  Marcie McIlveen (*Program Manager of Hamilton Social Medicine Response Team and Keeping Six)* | Leilani Farha and Kaitlin Schwan (2020) **A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada.** Accessed at: <https://www.make-the-shift.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/A-National-Protocol-for-Homeless-Encampments-in-Canada.pdf>  **Encampment Injunction Timeline – Keeping Six:** https://keepingsix.org/encampments/  Marcie McIlveen (2021). People in encampments don’t need to be shifted from park to park – they need to be listened to. Published as an Op-Ed in the Hamilton Spectator:  <https://www.thespec.com/opinion/contributors/2021/11/12/people-in-encampments-dont-need-to-be-shifted-from-park-to-park-they-need-to-be-listened-to.html> |
| October 6th | Module 2: Identity, experience and systemic barriers    Topic:  Indigenous Perspectives of Poverty & Homelessness | Homeless on the Homelands: Upholding housing as a human right for Indigenous women, girls two-spirit and gender diverse people. (June 2022) Submission to the Federal Housing Advocate on behalf of the Indigenous Feminist Housing Working Group. <https://womenshomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/Indigenous-Housing-Claim-June-15-2022.pdf>  Thistle, J. (2017.) Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.    <https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHIndigenousHomelessnessDefinition.pdf>  Spotlight: Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction Network  https://www.torontoindigenoushr.com/about  Video:  <https://www.torontoindigenoushr.com/cbc_champions>  Article:  <https://thelocal.to/a-year-of-indigenous-people-helping-indigenous-people/?fbclid=IwAR2GPXuhNpxHqkj9ZQPKurkFOVxbQMAHKZJgEaoaSToVv3QSKMyea8q4gFo> |
| October 13th  No class | Reading Week | Enjoy ☺ |
| October 20th  Mapping Assignment - In Class Group Work | Module 2: Identity, experience and systemic barriers  Topic:  Intersections of poverty, disability and parenting  Guest Speaker:  Dr. Jewelles Smith | Garland-Thomas, R. (2011). **Misfits: A feminist materialist disability concept.** Hypatia vol. 26, no. 3, 591-609.  **UN: Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  Article 19 & Article 23** https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html  **Housing Experiences in Canada: Persons with disabilities.** by Zach Thurston and Jeff Randle.  Released on June 10, 2022  <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/46-28-0001/2021001/article/00011-eng.pdf?st=lHoqIdGE> |
| October 27th  Mapping Assignment - In Class Group Work | Module 2: Identity, experience and systemic barriers   Topic:  Gendered experiences of poverty and homelessness | Mayock, P., Sheridan, S., Parker, S. (2015). ‘It’s just like we’re going around in circles and going back to the same thing . . . ’: The Dynamics of Women’s Unresolved Homelessness. *Housing Studies* *30, (6),* 877-900.  Schwan, K., Versteegh, A., Perri, M., Caplan, R., Baig, K., Dej, E., Jenkinson, J., Brais, H., Eiboff, F., & Pahlevan Chaleshtari, T. (2020). **The State of Women’s Housing Need & Homelessness in Canada: Executive Summary.**Hache, A., Nelson, A., Kratochvil, E., & Malenfant, J. (Eds). Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.  Digital Story Telling Project: Teal’s Story  Video: https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/digital-storytelling-project-teals-story |
| November 3rd    Mapping Assignment - In Class Group Work | Module 2: Identity, experience and systemic barriers  Topic: Advocacy and social change led by lived experience  Panel Discussion:  Keeping Six Peer Workers  *This class may be conducted virtually. TBA!* | Nelson, A. (2020). **Nothing about us without us: Centering lived experience and revolutionary care in efforts to end and prevent homelessness in Canada.** Radical Housing Journal, 2(2), pp. 83-100.  **Keeping Six Quarterly & Unsheltered Zines’** Accessible online:  https://keepingsix.org/zine/ |
| November 10th  Mapping Assignment - In Class Group Work | Module 3:  Policies and programs designed to respond to poverty and homelessness  Topic:  System-level responses to poverty and homelessness  Guest Speaker:  Chase Colver | Pennisi, S., and Baker Collins, S. (2017) Workfare under Ontario Works: Making Sense of Jobless Work. *Social Policy & Administration*, 51: 1311– 1329.  Humans of Basic Income Art Project by Jessie Golem  Article: <https://www.huffpost.com/archive/ca/entry/as-ontario-winds-down-basic-income-photographer-jessie-golem-gives-participants-a-legacy_a_23566124>  Virtual Exhibit:  https://www.jessiegolem.com/humans-of-basic-income/q59r0jb6xjbzlwhfs7z1f1zxwenwwm |
| November 17th | Module 3:  Policies and programs designed to respond to poverty and homelessness  Topic:  Emergency Based Responses to Poverty and Homelessness  vs. Systemic Change/Rights Based Responses | Gaetz, S. (2012). The real cost of homelessness; can we save money by doing the right thing? Toronto: Canadian Homeless Research Network Press. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/costofhomelessness_paper21092012.pdf> |
| November 24th | Module 3:  Policies and programs designed to respond to poverty and homelessness  Topic:  An Overview of Hamilton Programs and Responses  Guest Lecture:  Service Provider Panel  *This class may be conducted virtually. TBA!* | This week you will review a learning module put together by information gathered by the class during the Mapping Assignment.  It will focus on various sectors of Hamilton’s social service sector.  This will be available on Avenue to Learn. |
| December 1st | Module 3:  Policies and programs designed to respond to poverty and homelessness  Topic:  Grassroots, mutual aid and community driven initiatives to respond to poverty and homelessness | CareMongering Hamilton: Surviving the Pandemic Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzZfJO4N8TE>Littman, D. et al (2022). Values and beliefs underlying mutual aid: An exploration of collective care during COVID-19. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research, 13*(1), 89-115. |
| December 8th | Final reflections and Course Wrap Up | No Readings |

## Additional Resources:

#### You will find a collection of additional resources related to our course topics and themes shared on Avenue to Learn. You do not need to engage with all of these materials however they might be helpful as you work the assignments and course content.