Henry Binford  
History 102-6-20  
**FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR—ANTIPOVERTY CRUSADES**  
Day/Time: MW 3:30-4:50  
Office Address: Harris Hall Room 240  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is in part about poverty, but it is even more about the ways Americans have thought about poverty and tried to combat it. We will explore two periods of U.S. history: 1890-1910 and 1960-1990. In each period we will examine the forces that impoverished individuals and families, the issues raised in explanations of poverty, the range of remedies proposed, and the ways they were justified. In both periods we will try to determine how Americans answered some lasting questions: How is poverty defined? Who among the poor deserves what kind of help? Does helping the poor promote dependence? What are the implications of poverty for the health of the nation as a whole? The primary purpose of the course is to give students experience in some of the techniques employed by historians: close and critical reading of documents; reconstruction of the thinking of past actors and evaluation of their assumptions, motives, and options; and the production of clear, fair, and inclusive analyses of what happened. While the subject matter of the course has obvious relevance to present-day concerns, our primary goal is to think (and write) about the past.

**TEACHING METHOD:** Reading and discussion. Students will take various roles in initiating and leading discussion.

**EVALUATION METHOD:** The final grade will be based on class participation (20%), two short papers (15 and 25%), and a final paper (40%).

**GRADING BASIS:** ANC

**TENTATIVE READING LIST:**  
Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives, 9780393930269.  
Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, 9780451527394.  
Michael Harrington, The Other America, 9780684826783.  
Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed, 9780312626686.  
Photocopy packet including selections from William Graham Sumner, W.E.B. Du Bois, Lyndon B. Johnson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Sargent Shriver, the Kerner Commission Report, and William Julius Wilson, as well as works by various historians.

**INSTRUCTOR PROFILE:** I am an historian of the United States, with particular interests in urbanization, African-American history, and the history of technology. I have served as director of the American Studies and Urban Studies programs. My first book was The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery, 1815-1860. I am currently finishing a book about nineteenth-century slums.