

Poverty & Inequality - ECON 3883
Department Economics
Acadia University
Winter 2025

Professor Information

Name: Dr. Barry Watson

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Office Location: BAC 343

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00-11:00am & 2:30-5:00pm and Monday & Wednesdays, 1:00pm-5:00pm (or by appointment). I am in my office most days, and so long as my door is open (which it normally is), I am available for drop-in consultations.

Course Information

Course Title: Poverty & Inequality

Course Number: ECON 3883

Location: Higgins Science 147

Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00am-12:20pm

Course Description

Economic inequality and poverty are crucial aspects of the fairness of the world we live in – so trends in inequality and poverty matter enormously. But to know whether things are getting “better” or “worse” we need numbers – and we also need values by which to interpret those numbers. We have to use available data to calculate some index of economic inequality or poverty and we have to evaluate the ethical meaning of changes in that index. Measuring trends in inequality and poverty and assessing their implications thus raise some of the most important, and complex, problems of social science.

Textbook

Green, D. A., Riddell, W. C., & St-Hilaire, F. (2016). *Income Inequality: The Canadian Story: Volume V*. The Institute for Research on Public Policy

The textbook is available at the campus bookstore. Additionally, the first edition will suffice (should you find an earlier copy).

Grading

Participation	10%	
Assignments (3)	30%	(10% each)
Midterm	20%	
Final Exam	40%	

The midterm will be held during class hours and will consist of a series of short-answer questions. Assignments will require that you to access public-use data and interpret (no advanced statistical analytics are required). The final exam will be cumulative, with the exact date set by the Registrar's Office. Like the midterm, questions will be in short-answer format. Finally, participation is important, and you are encouraged to voice your thoughts during lectures.

Grading Scale

Grades for individual course components may fall between 0 and 4.33. Final grades will be reported as a letter grade. The letter grading system is provided below.

Grade	GPA	%	Performance
A+	4.33	90-100	
A	4.00	85-90	Excellent
A-	3.67	80-84	
B+	3.33	77-79	
B	3.00	73-76	Good
B-	2.67	70-72	
C+	2.33	67-69	
C	2.00	63-66	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	60-62	
D+	1.33	57-59	
D	1.00	53-56	
D-	0.67	50-52	Pass
F	0.00	0-49	Failure

Course Topics

1. Economic review
3. Defining & measuring poverty
4. Defining & measuring inequality
5. Defining & measuring economic insecurity & vulnerability
6. Intergenerational rank mobility
7. Inequality of opportunity
8. Discrimination & the determinants of wage
9. Public policy: Methods of redistribution & poverty reduction
10. Course review

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment where the principles of human rights and social justice are paramount. We recognize and respect the diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences of all students. Our collective goal is to create a space where every individual feels valued, heard, and supported.

All students are encouraged to contribute to and uphold an atmosphere of mutual respect and empathy. Discrimination, harassment, or any form of intolerance will not be tolerated. If you have any concerns or require accommodations to ensure your full participation in this course, please do not hesitate to reach out. Together, let's work towards understanding and advancing human rights and equity, both within and beyond the classroom.

Acadia's Human Rights and Equity Office is responsible for the management and implementation of Acadia's Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination. This Policy is underpinned by a commitment to deconstructing the problematic structures of systemic racism and discrimination within the University Community. Acadia upholds a commitment to fostering a culture within the University Community that is welcoming and reflective of the diverse individuals that comprise this community and to fostering cultural safety, anti-oppression and anti-racism within the University Community, making it our goal to achieve a culture where our diversity is our strength.

For more information, as well as resources for those who have experienced (or witnessed) the above, please contact Polly Leonard at equity@acadiau.ca.

Accessibility

The Accessibility Learning Office is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, including those with disabilities. Their office strives to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities and resources. Students who require accommodations to complete coursework, or fully participate in class, are encouraged to contact them directly. Please visit the [Accessible Learning Services website](#) or email them at Accessible.learning@acadiau.ca for more information.

Health & Well-being

Acadia provides a host of services for student health, well-being, and safety. The university's physicians provide services for: medical diagnosis and treatment of health concerns, reproductive health (pap tests, birth control, pregnancy tests), sexual health (confidential testing for all sexually transmitted infections and HIV), and emergency contraception. For more information, please contact studenthealth@acadiau.ca, or visit their [website](#).

The Counselling Centre offers a confidential, safe, and caring place for students to access mental health support. To book an appointment, please [click here](#), or contact counselling@acadiau.ca.

Academic Ethics

Students should familiarize themselves with the Acadia's policy on academic ethics. Plagiarism and other academic offences are not tolerated. Penalties are severe and may result in suspension or expulsion. A complete list of regulations can be found in the [student handbook](#).

Important Dates

Jan 15	Last day to add/change winter courses Last day to withdraw from winter courses without receiving a "W" Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter courses and receive a "W". Any courses withdrawn after today will receive an "F" grade.
Feb 17	Heritage Day – No classes
Feb 18 - 21	Winter study break - No classes
Mar 7	Last day to withdraw and receive a "W"; withdrawals thereafter receive an "F"
Apr 4	Last day of classes
Apr 7	First day of exams
Apr 17	Last day of exams