

SYLLABUS FOR “POVERTY, BY AMERICA” by Matthew Desmond, 2023

Our task will be to deepen our understanding of American poverty and possible solutions for this vexing problem. We will do this by examining Desmond’s analysis of, and prescriptions for ending, poverty. Class participants are invited to read each chapter with three questions in mind: (1) What data and argument(s) does Desmond use to address the questions posed in each chapter? (2) What do you find convincing/plausible about his thesis? (3) What do you find unconvincing/implausible about his thesis?

We will focus our ten sessions as follows:

September 21- introductions and Prologue

September 28- Chapter One

October 5- Chapter Two

October 12- Chapters Three and Four

October 19- Chapter Five

October 26- Chapter Six

November 2- Chapter Seven

November 9- Chapters Eight and Nine

November 16- Guest speaker, Blake Roberts Crall, Madison Forward Fund

Program Manager

November 23- No class

November 30- Epilogue and conclusions