



136149 Poverty and Social Inequalities. Problems and Solutions in Italy and the USA

Teacher in charge: prof. Alessandro Sicora

Date	Schedule	Topics	Room
26/05/2026	09.00 am – 11.00 am	Introduction of participants and overview of seminar format and content. Team building	Meeting room 2 nd Floor
	11.00 am – 12.00 pm	Social Work in Italy (prof. Alessandro Sicora, Università di Trento)	
	12.00 pm – 01.00 pm	Social Work in the USA (prof. Shauna Acquavita, University of Cincinnati)	
	02.00 pm – 04.00 pm	<i>Households' Poverty in longitudinal perspective, trends and determinants</i> (prof. Giorgio Cutuli, Università di Trento)	
	04.00 pm – 06.00 pm	<i>Inequality and opportunities: Insights into education and income disparities</i> (prof. Filippo Gioachin, Università di Trento)	
27/05/2026	09.00 am – 01.00 pm	Field visit	Meeting room 2 nd Floor
	02.00 pm – 04.00 pm	<i>Policies and measures to combat poverty in Italy</i> (Cristiano Gori, University of Trento)	
	04.00 pm – 06.00 pm	Group discussion	
28/05/2026	09.00 am – 01.00 pm	Field visit	Meeting room 2 nd Floor
	02.00 pm – 04.00 pm	<i>Poverty and Inequality in Mediterranean Welfare Regimes: A Comparative and Gendered Perspective</i> (prof. Burcu Yakut Cakar, Independent Researcher and Consultant, Turkey)	
	04.00 pm – 06.00 pm	Lecture on a specific aspect of the seminar topic, delivered online by a faculty member from the University of Cincinnati.	
29/05/2026	09.00 am – 11.00 am	<i>Poverty, Inequality and Social Work in the USA</i> (prof. Shauna Acquavita, University of Cincinnati)	Meeting room, 2 nd floor, plus additional rooms (TBC)
	11.00 am – 01.00 pm	<i>Inequality and Human Rights</i> (prof. Steve Carton-Ford, University of Cincinnati)	
	02.00 pm – 06.00 pm	Student group work to finalize group project and prepare presentation	
30/05/2026	09.00 am – 10.30 am	Presentation and discussion of student group projects Group 1 and 2	Meeting room 2 nd Floor
	10.30 am – 12.00 am	Presentation and discussion of student group projects Group 3 and 4	
	12.00 am – 01.00 pm	General discussion and final evaluation	

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE

The "School" aims to develop students' cross-cultural empathy, critical thinking, and understanding of social work policies and practices in addressing poverty and social inequalities. With the participation of students and faculty from the University of Cincinnati, it also seeks to foster an open-minded approach to internationalization.

TARGET STUDENT

Students enrolled in the Laurea in Servizio Sociale and the Laurea Magistrale in Metodologia, Organizzazione e Valutazione dei Servizi Sociali are the primary target group for the seminar. Secondarily, students enrolled in the Laurea Magistrale in Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale may also participate. Finally, and subject to availability, applications from students enrolled in other Master's programmes within the Department of Sociology and Social Research may also be considered, provided they have a specific academic background or have undertaken studies related to migration.

REGISTRATION

Registration is obligatory and must be done online at <http://www.sociologia.unitn.it/100/seminari-di-credito> by 30/03/2026 (maximum number of enrollees: 12) Please take note of the SANCTIONS PROVIDED for those who do not show up for the first and/or next meeting without having given proper notice. See <http://www.sociologia.unitn.it/100/seminari-di-credito>

ACTIVITY

Upon successful completion of this seminar, the student will be able to demonstrate the following:

Knowledge (learning outcomes)

1. Demonstrate cross-cultural empathy and respect for other cultures.
2. Understand how social policies and welfare practices addressing poverty and inequality are defined and implemented in the USA and Italy, and how these facilitate or hinder the action of social work and social policy.
3. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate with social workers and professionals from different countries.
4. Compare and contrast the roles and strategies of social workers and other related practitioners in responding to poverty and social inequalities in the USA and Italy.
5. Articulate how social work, sociology and related disciplines contribute to reducing poverty, promoting inclusion, and fostering social justice in different national contexts.

Values

1. Develop an appreciation of how different social interventions and policies address poverty and inequality through both individual and structural approaches.
2. Recognize the value of diversity, intercultural dialogue, and mutual learning in promoting more equitable and inclusive societies.
3. Strengthen one's value commitment to social justice, equality, and the reduction of poverty and discrimination as core professional and civic principles.

Skills

1. Ability to recognize and analyze the effects of structural inequality, poverty, and social exclusion at both micro and macro levels in the USA and Italy.
2. Ability to critically evaluate cross-national approaches to poverty reduction, welfare reform, and community-based social work practice.
3. Ability to collaborate with social workers, sociologists and scholars from different countries in developing comparative perspectives on social issues.

Eleven students and two professors from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio (USA), are expected to participate in this Minimester (seminario di credito). Four or five groups will be formed, each comprising both Italian and American students. For the group project, participants will address a central question related to the seminar topic, which includes an ethical dilemma as well as concrete social, material, and policy challenges. These groups will reflect on the question through the lens of their professional social work values and understanding of social welfare.

On the final day of the seminar (May 30), each group will have 25 minutes to present their ideas, followed by a 10-minute question-and-discussion session. Additionally, each group will prepare a four-page summary (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins) of their ideas for distribution to all participants. The questions to be addressed will be shared during the seminar.

Successful completion of the activity will grant students 6 elective credits.

For more details write to: alessandro.sicora@unitn.it