

**Indv 102:  
Social Issues in  
America**

**Lane Kenworthy**

## *The course has five parts*

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1. Prosperity in America, Part I
2. Prosperity in America, Part II
3. Can Government Help?
4. Politics
5. America and the World

**It's a good time to  
be alive in America**

# *It's a good time to be alive in America*

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Relative peace .....

Life expectancy .....	1940	Today	Nigeria
	63	80	47

Active retirement .....

GDP per capita .....	1940	Today	Nigeria
	\$9,000	\$43,000	\$1,000

## *It's a good time to be alive in America*

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Choice and quality of consumer goods ..... food, clothes, cars, home electronics

Education .....	1940	Today	Nigeria
< HS degree	62%	<25%	
≥ college degree	6%	28%	
Basic adult literacy		99%	68%
Information (internet use ...	1940	Today	Nigeria
per 1,000 people)	0	630	40

## *It's a good time to be alive in America*

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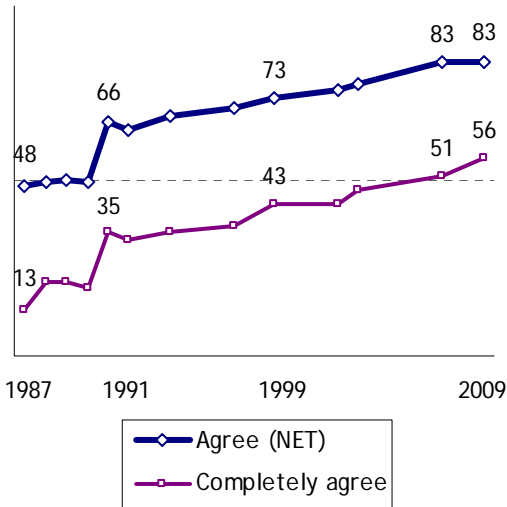
Communication ..... long-distance calling, cell phones, email, twitter, chat rooms, video conferencing

Entertainment ..... iPods, cable TV, high-definition, YouTube

Transportation ..... go anywhere in the world for <\$2,000

Tolerance ..... has increased

# I think it's all right for blacks and whites to date each other



**But things could  
be better**

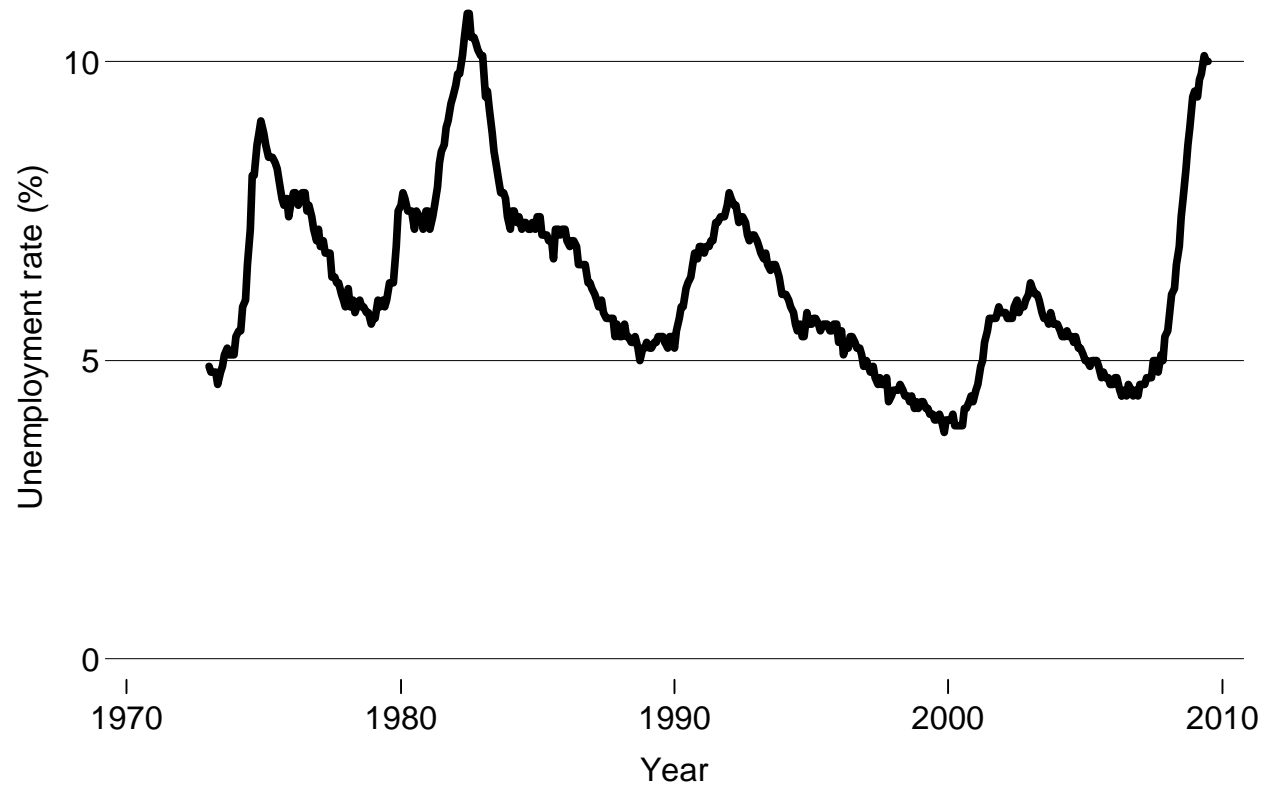
## *Things could be better*

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We're in the midst of the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s

# Unemployment

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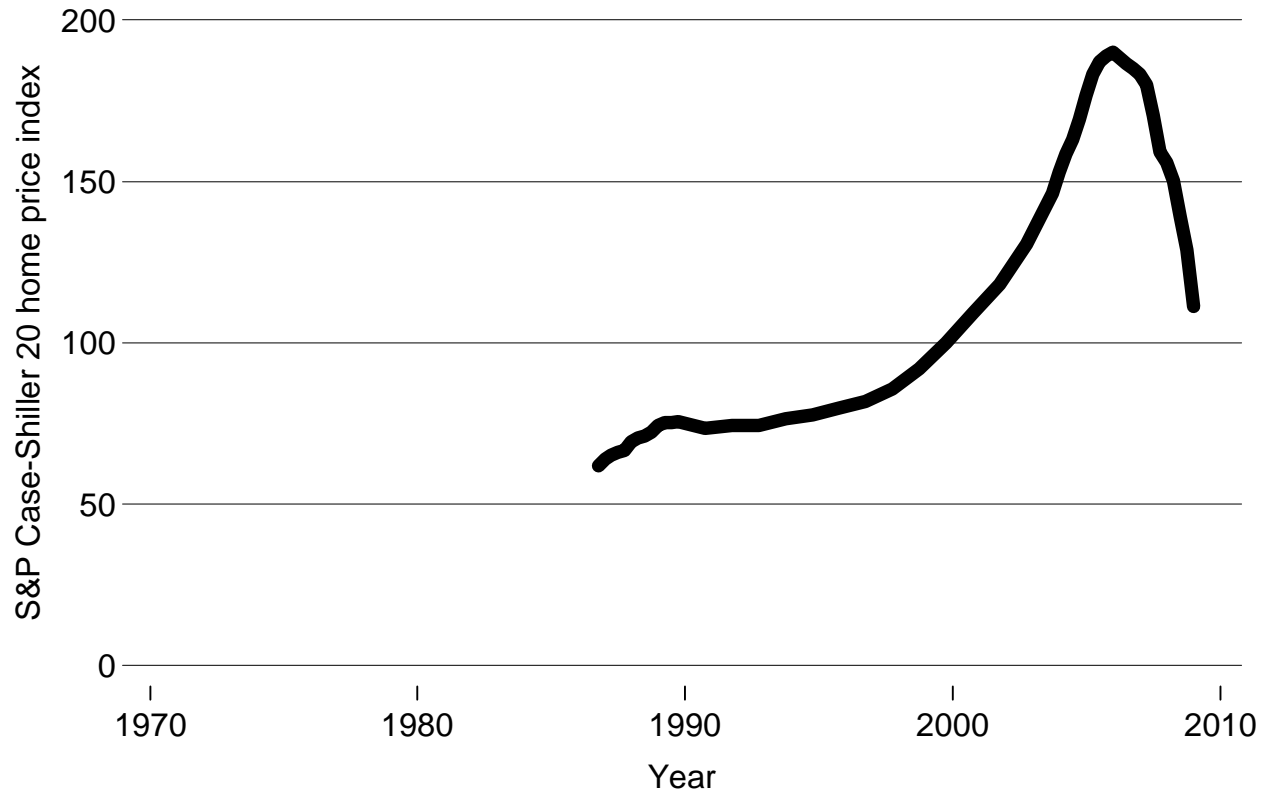


*Note:* Jobless persons as a share of those actively looking for employment. Seasonally adjusted.

*Source:* Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).

# Home values

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*Note:* S&P/Case-Shiller index of housing prices in 20 metropolitan areas. Most recent data are for the second quarter of 2009.

*Source:* [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Case-Shiller\\_index](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Case-Shiller_index).

## The New York Times

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**November 29, 2009**

**THE SAFETY NET**

# Food Stamp Use Soars, and Stigma Fades

By **JASON DePARLE** and **ROBERT GEBELOFF**

MARTINSVILLE, Ohio — With food stamp use at record highs and climbing every month, a program once scorned as a failed welfare scheme now helps feed one in eight Americans and one in four children.

It has grown so rapidly in places so diverse that it is becoming nearly as ordinary as the groceries it buys. More than 36 million people use inconspicuous plastic cards for staples like milk, bread and cheese, swiping them at counters in blighted cities and in suburbs pocked with foreclosure signs.

Virtually all have incomes near or below the federal poverty line, but their eclectic ranks testify to the range of people struggling with basic needs. They include single mothers and married couples, the newly jobless and the chronically poor, longtime recipients of welfare checks and workers whose reduced hours or slender wages leave pantries bare.

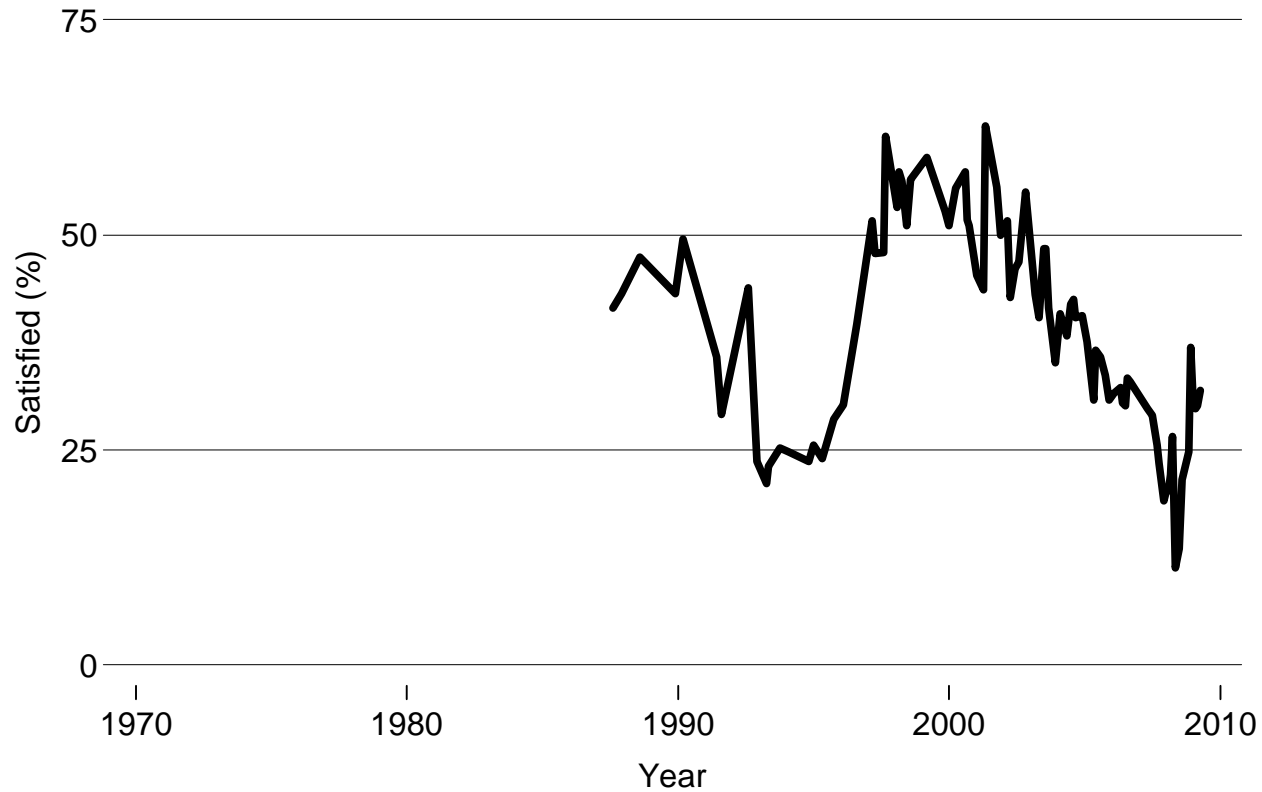
While the numbers have soared during the [recession](#), the path was cleared in better times when the Bush administration led a campaign to erase the program's stigma, calling food stamps "nutritional aid" instead of welfare, and made it easier to apply. That bipartisan effort capped an extraordinary reversal from the 1990s, when some conservatives tried to abolish the program, Congress enacted large cuts and bureaucratic hurdles chased many needy people away.

From the ailing resorts of the Florida Keys to Alaskan villages along the Bering Sea, the program is now expanding at a pace of about 20,000 people a day.

There are 239 counties in the United States where at least a quarter of the population receives food stamps, according to an analysis of local data collected by The New York Times.

# *Satisfaction with the state of the country*

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Note: "All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?"

Source: Pew Research Center, *Trends in Political Attitudes and Core Values, 1987-2009*.



AP

## *Things could be better*

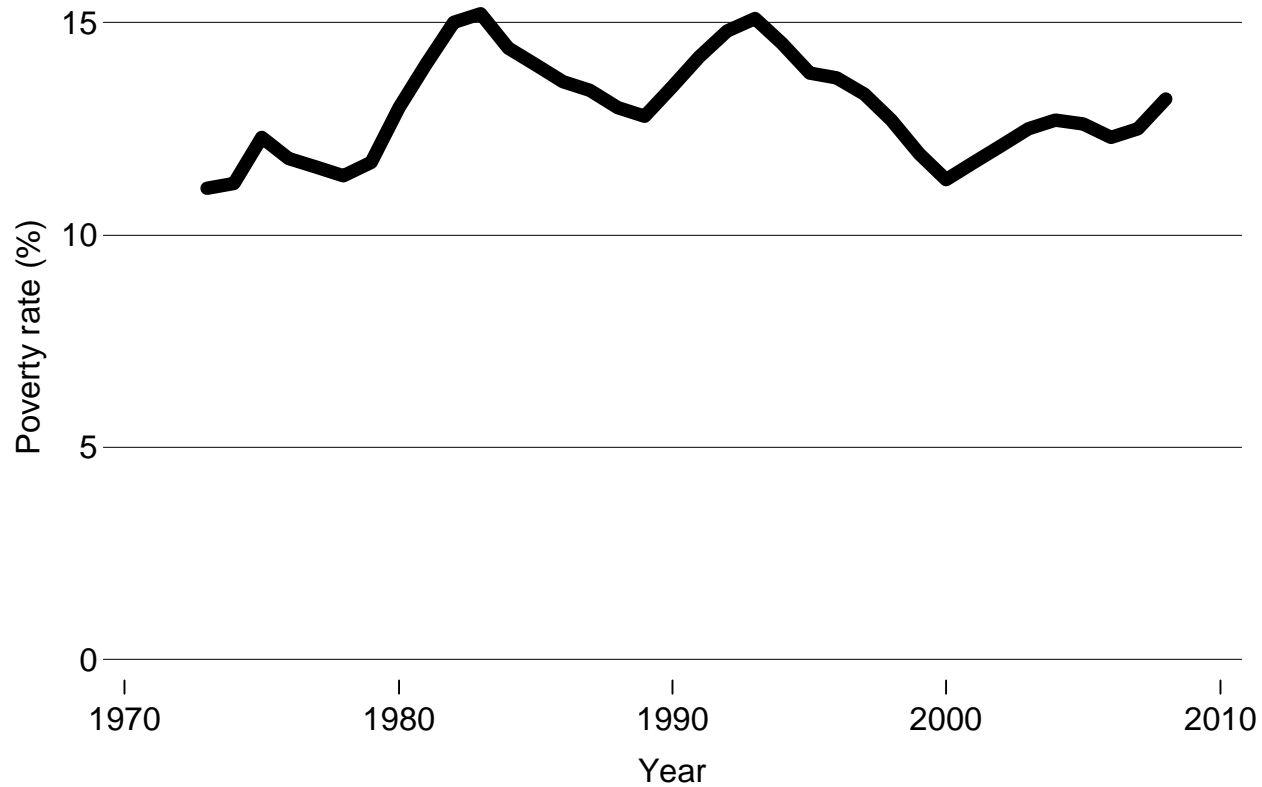
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Even before the crash, not everything was rosy



# Poverty

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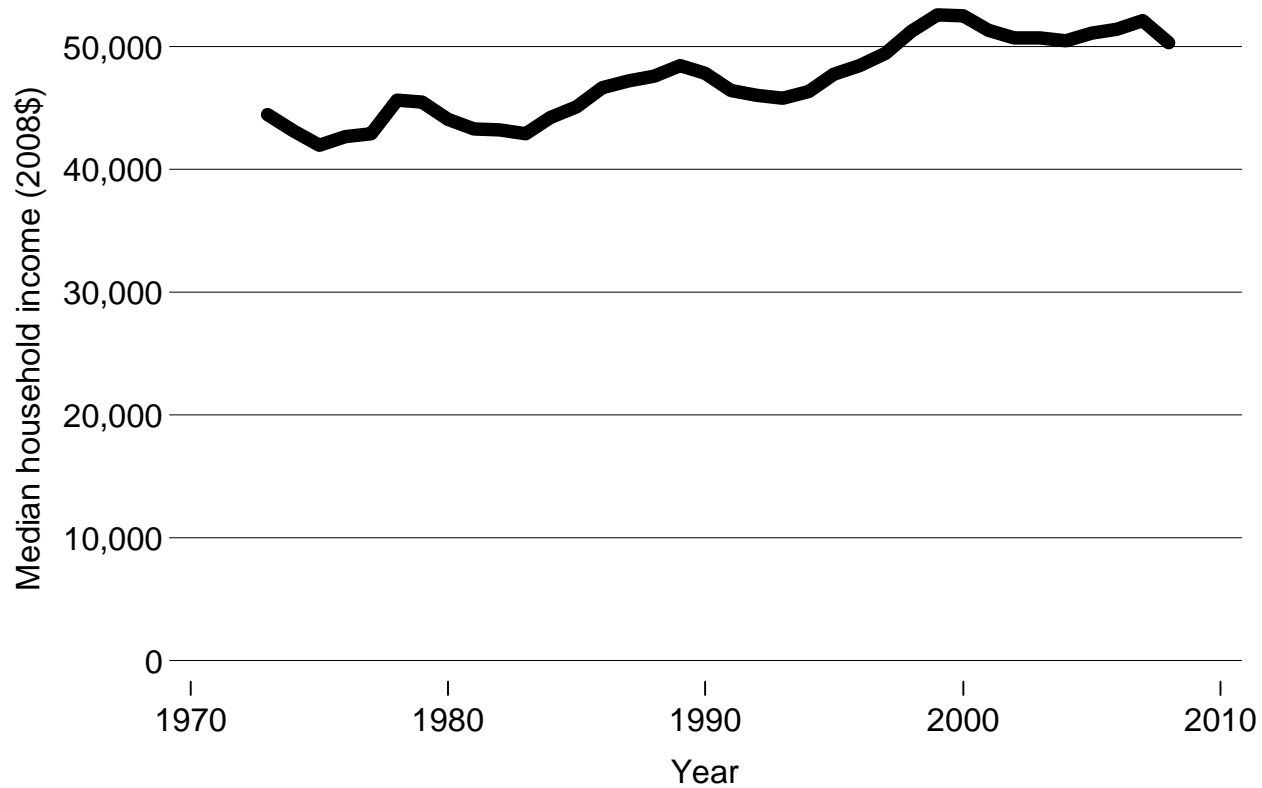


*Note:* Percentage of individuals in households with incomes below the poverty line. Posttransfer-pretax income, adjusted for household size.

*Source:* Census Bureau, [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/perindex.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/perindex.html).

# Household incomes

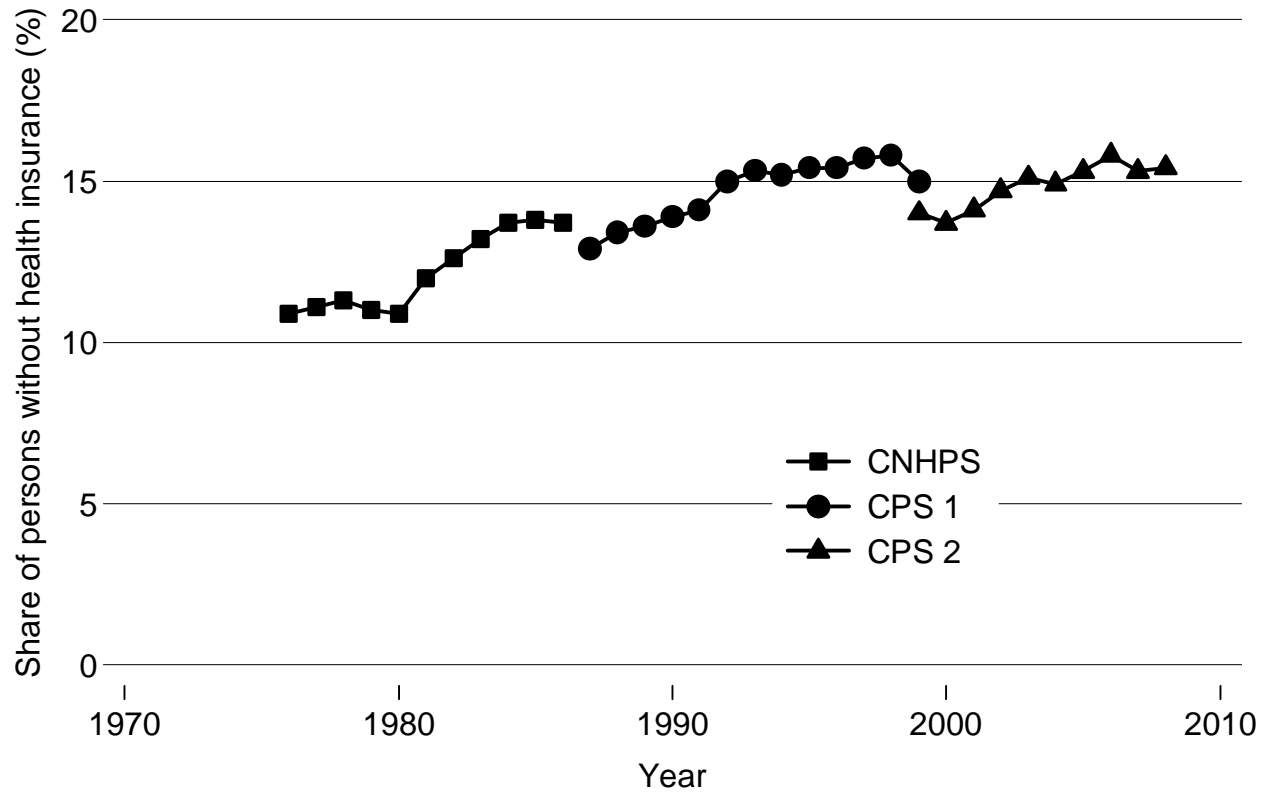
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Source: My calculations using Census Bureau data from [www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/inchhtoc.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/inchhtoc.html).

# Health insurance

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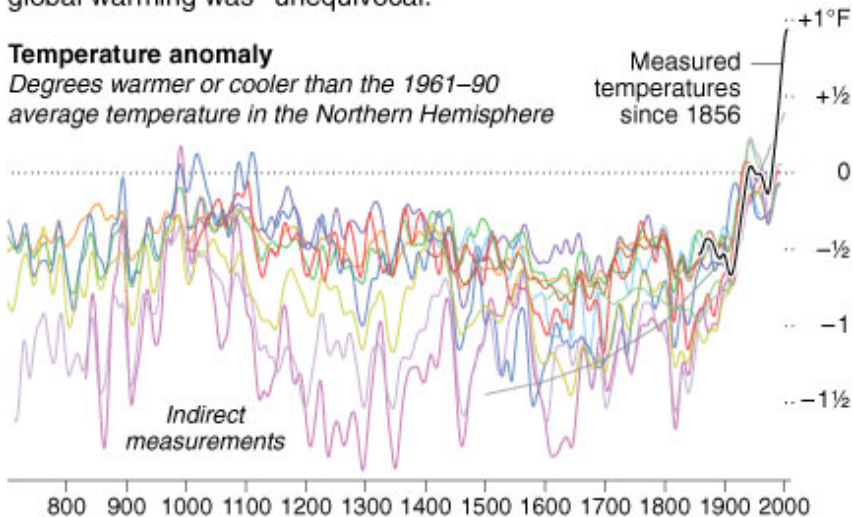
Source: CNHPS: Marc Miringoff and Margue-Luisa Miringoff, *The Social Health of the Nation*, 1999, p. 198, using data from the Center for National Health Program Studies; CPS 1 and CPS 2: Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States 2008*, table C-1, using Current Population Survey data.

# Evidence of a Warming Planet

A 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reviewed multiple reconstructions of temperature over the past 1,300 years (below) based on ice cores, tree rings and other indirect measurements. The panel concluded that evidence for global warming was “unequivocal.”

## Temperature anomaly

*Degrees warmer or cooler than the 1961–90 average temperature in the Northern Hemisphere*



Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

THE NEW YORK TIMES  
The New York Times

# Course nuts and bolts

## *Class sessions*

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This is a lecture course

But feel free to interrupt me with questions

## *Lecture slides*

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There will be lots

They're available for downloading or printing from my webpage (see the syllabus)

# *Readings*

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Readings apply to a section of the course, not to a specific class date

Where to get the readings

Books: UA bookstore or order online

Articles and chapters: my webpage (see the syllabus)

# *Grading*

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5 exams, each worth 20% of the course grade

50 multiple choice and true/false questions

Roughly two-thirds from lecture, one-third from readings

# *Grading*

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## Grading scale for the course

A = 90 and above

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

E = below 60

# *Grading*

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No extra-credit projects or assignments

## *Office hours*

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Kenworthy: Wednesdays 9:00–11:00

Will Hamilton: Wednesdays 10:30–11:30

Amanda Lubold: Mondays 1:00–2:00

## *What you should get out of this course*

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1. Knowledge about some important issues
2. Improved ability to make informed and reasoned decisions about where you stand on these and other issues

## *I have a viewpoint*

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It shapes the issues I think are important and the questions I ask.

But I'm a scientist. My viewpoint doesn't determine the conclusions I reach; evidence does.