The Institute of Government and Politics, Department of Political Science and Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations present

Expecting Poverty and Violence: How Expectations Shape Underclass Youth

Dr. John M. Bolland, Univ. of Alabama
April 7, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
Fetzer Center, Putney Auditorium

The public is invited to this talk!

Dr. Bolland will discuss two types of expectations underclass youth have: (1) feelings of hopelessness and the expectations about the future they generate; and (2) expectations about the inevitability of violence in impoverished neighborhoods. Both of these expectations strongly predict risky behaviors among underclass youth in America. What can be done? Dr. Bolland discusses the effectiveness of two factors that might reduce risk behaviors: a public program designed to reduce those behaviors, and the “natural experiment” of President Obama’s election. The talk and its results are based on Dr. Bolland’s own 1998-2014 Mobile Youth Survey, a complex study of the relationship between poverty and adolescent risk conducted in impoverished neighborhoods in Mobile, Alabama. More than 12,000 adolescents were surveyed multiple times over 14 years to assist in understanding this complex and important set of problems.

John M. Bolland (Ph.D., Ohio State 1979) is Professor Emeritus at University of Alabama. He has held faculty positions at the University of Kansas (political science), the University of Alabama (social science research, human development and family studies), and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (public health). All of his research has been conducted in urban settings, with an emphasis on how the urban environment affects behavior. Since 1992, his research has focused on urban poverty and risk, supported by more than $15 million in grants from federal agencies. This research has resulted in dozens of publications in journals in political science and urban affairs, social work and criminal justice, social psychology, social psychiatry, and public health.

For more information please contact Dr. Peter Wielhouwer, Director, Institute of Government and Politics (269-387-5685, peter.wielhouwer@wmich.edu). For a campus map and parking information, please consult www.pp.wmich.edu/maps.