

Mark Robert Rank, *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Questions (point value determined by teacher [worth up to 100 pts]):

1. In the preface to the book, Rank states that most of the literature on the causes of poverty focus on the inadequacies of the poor. What is the alternative that he offers? Why does he feel that the usual way of discussing poverty is wrong?
2. In Chapter 1, Rank summarizes the arguments in the book's chapters and then lays out a challenge. What is this challenge? Explain what he means.
3. Summarize Chapter 2. How has poverty been measured and defined? Discuss what Rank means by the "human meaning of poverty."
4. In Chapter 3, Rank focuses on the structural aspects of poverty, arguing that these are more important than individual actions. Summarize and discuss the different structural issues that he highlights throughout the chapter. Do you feel that these are more important than individual choice with regards to explaining poverty?
5. In Chapter 4 Rank lays out an argument for why we, as individuals, should care about poverty. Why does he think that it is in our own self-interest to care about poverty?
6. Summarize Chapter 5. How does Rank's ethical argument match what the Church says about poverty? Compare with Pope Benedict XIV's encyclical, *Caritas in veritate* (2009):  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html)
7. Explain how Rank connects citizenship, responsibility and poverty in Chapter 6.
8. In the last third of the book, Rank moves beyond definitions and stating why Americans should care about poverty, entering into a discussion of what should be done. Discuss what he argues is the "old paradigm and the "new paradigm." What are the defining aspects of the "new paradigm"?
9. In Chapter 8, Rank lays out a number of concrete policy initiatives that should be pursued. Summarize each initiative. Since this book was written in 2005, has there been any progress at the federal level in any of these areas?
10. In the last chapter, Rank has a section entitled "what can one person do?". Discuss what he says. Is there anything you can do?

Discuss what you thought of the book.