***Nickel and Dimed* Pre- Reading Assignment Sheet**

**Instructions:**

Read the Introduction (*Introduction: Getting Ready*) to *Nickel and Dimed* (p. 1 -10). Then answer the following questions *before* you start reading the first section.*Only after* you have answered these questions (designed to reveal your own preconceived notions and biases regarding poverty, class, and race in America), then read and annotate the first section of the book, entitled *Serving in Florida*.

Turn in your answers to these questions BEFORE the end of class today and return your book to the back of the room. Also, please turn in this assignment sheet back to the teacher before you leave as well.

**Questions (Answer on your Own Paper):**

1. Complete PIGSAC for the *Introduction: Getting Ready*

2. Millions of women entering the workforce can expect to face struggles like the ones Ehrenreich confronted in *Nickel and Dimed*. Have you ever been homeless, unemployed, without health insurance, or held down two jobs? What is the lowest-paying job you ever held and what kind of help -- if any -- did you need to improve your situation?

3. What are your perceptions of blue-collar Americans? What are your notions of poverty and prosperity in America? How do YOU treat waiters, maids, and sales-people?

4. How do booming national and international chains -- restaurants, hotels, retail outlets, cleaning services, and elder-care facilities -- affect the treatment and aspirations of low-wage workers? Consider how market competition and the push for profits drive the nickel-and-diming of America's lowest-paid.

5. Housing costs pose the greatest obstacle for low-wage workers. Why does our society seem to resist rectifying this situation? Do you believe that there are realistic solutions to the lack of affordable housing?

6. Ehrenreich is white and middle class in the “real world.” Do you think discrimination will shape her story? In what ways? Predict how Ehrenreich will experience life among her blue-collar colleagues. Will they get along?

7. Why do you think low-wage workers are reluctant to form labor organizations? How do you think employees should lobby to improve working conditions? Or should they?