Course Description

This course explores the extent, causes, and consequences of social and economic inequality in the U.S. The course begins with a discussion of key concepts and metrics that we will use to discuss and measure inequality. We then follow a life-course perspective to trace out the institutions through which inequality is structured, reproduced, and experienced in the contemporary United States. We examine the family, the neighborhood, the educational system, labor markets, and the criminal justice system, attending to the roles of race, class, and gender as axes of stratification in these domains.

Required Readings

There are no required books for purchase. All of the course readings are posted on the bCourses site as .PDF files.

Discussion Section

This course has mandatory once-per-week discussion sections. These sections will be led by the GSIs, Carmen Brick and Orestes Hastings. Sections will meet on Wednesdays (contrary to the online schedule of classes we will not have section on Mondays). Attendance and
active participation in section is very important. During some weeks, section will be used for student-centered discussion of the current week’s lectures and readings. During other weeks, the GSIs will teach you the skills you will need to successfully complete the two major writing assignments for the course. This instruction will be in how to conduct a qualitative interview, how to use Census data to create a neighborhood profile, and how to successfully conduct a neighborhood observation. Finally, section will also be used to allow students to work in pairs to advance their work on the two major writing assignments.

Course Assignments

Students will be evaluated and graded based on two examinations, two research and writing assignments, and their participation and attendance at lecture and in discussion section. The table at the end of this section notes the due dates for each assignment and the percentage of the final grade that each assignment is worth.

Exams

There will be two in-class examinations. The mid-term examination will be held on Friday, October 16th during the normal class time (10AM - 11AM) in our normal classroom. The mid-term will include a mix of short answer and short essay questions, based on the readings and lecture. The final will be a somewhat longer exam and will have a longer essay-based portion. The final will be held on Monday, December 14th from 8AM-11AM (location TBD). The final will also cover material from lecture and readings. It will focus on the topics covered after the mid-term, but all course material is eligible for inclusion.

Participation

While the class is primarily in lecture format, your participation during the lectures, through thoughtful discussion and asking good questions, is encouraged and rewarded. This course also has a weekly discussion section. You are required to attend and strongly encouraged to participate. Your participation grade will be based on your participation in class and section as well as visits to my and/or the GSI’s office hours.

Mobility Paper

In the first half of the course, you will conduct an interview with a person of your choosing to collect information on his or her experience of social mobility. We will provide you with a list of suggested questions and one discussion section meeting will be devoted to learning about qualitative interviewing. Based on these materials and instruction, you will construct your own interview guide, conduct the interview, and transcribe the interview. You will then write a 5-7 page paper that describes your findings and then conducts a sociological analysis of this data, relating your interview results to the course readings on intergenerational mobility as well as on occupation, education, income, wealth and the social institutions that shape mobility. The transcript will be worth 3% of your course grade and the paper will be
worth an additional 20% of your course grade. A detailed description of the assignment and the evaluation rubric are posted on bCourses.

Transcript Due: In Section, Wednesday, October 7th
Paper Due: In Class, Wednesday, October 28th

**Neighborhoods Paper**

In the second half of the course, following the mid-term, you will create a statistical profile of one of three East Bay neighborhoods and then conduct a neighborhood visit and observation of the same neighborhood. We will provide you with a set of three neighborhoods from which you may select one and will provide instruction on how to create a neighborhood statistical profile. Based on this instruction, you will analyze data on your neighborhood and write-up a short brief (2-3 pages) that describes the neighborhood and presents a table and figure. You will then visit the neighborhood to conduct some social observation. We will provide you with some guidance for things to look for and you will write-up a set of field-notes that will be discussed in section. You will then write a 5-7 page paper that integrates the statistical profile, your field observations, and the course readings to describe the neighborhood and explain how, as argued by the neighborhood effects literature, this neighborhood might affect residents’ wellbeing. The statistical profile will be worth 5% of your course grade and the paper will be worth an additional 20% of your course grade. A detailed description of the assignment and the evaluation rubric are posted on bCourses.

Statistical Profile Due: In Class, Friday, November 6th
Paper Due: In Barrows 410, Monday, December 7th (by 4pm)

**Key Assignment Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Questionnaire</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Bring to Section Wednesday, September 16th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Interview Transcript</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Bring to Section Wednesday, October 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>In Class Exam Friday, October 16th (10AM - 11AM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Due In Class Wednesday, October 28th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistical Profile</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Due In Class Friday November 6th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Field Notes</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Bring to Section Wednesday, November 18th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Due in 410 Barrows Monday, December 7th (4PM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>In Class Exam Monday, December 14th (8AM - 11AM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Based on semester-long lecture and section participation</td>
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**Course Policies**

**Readings and Lecture**

Students will be responsible for both material in the readings and material covered in lecture. I will post slides from lecture on the bCourses site. However, these slides are designed to be rhetorical aids and not comprehensive records of all that was said in class. Please do all of the readings in a timely fashion. Each lecture date has one or two readings associated with
it. You will get the most out of lecture if you do these readings before the class for which they are assigned.

**Accommodation**

I will provide accommodation to any student who provides me with a written letter from a DSP Specialist. Please speak with me after class, send me an email, or come to office hours so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Please do so as early in the semester as possible. I will also provide accommodation for observation of religious rituals. University policy is that such requests should be made by the second week of the semester. Please submit them by email.

**Late Work**

There are several written assignments for this course. The precise due dates and where the assignments should be handed in are noted above. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one third of a letter grade for every day late (e.g. one day late makes a B a B-). If you have a real emergency, email Professor Schneider and your GSI about it at least 24 hours before the deadline. Exams will be given on the posted dates (October 16th and December 14th). If you know now that you will have a conflict with the scheduled exam times, either do not take this course or speak with me as soon as possible so that we can work out an accommodation. If you have a true unforeseen emergency that prevents you from attending the exam, contact Professor Schneider as soon as possible to discuss an accommodation.

**Grading Policy**

If you wish to contest a grade, please first speak with your GSI for the course and outline in writing (1) what assignment you are contesting, (2) the grade you received on the assignment, and (3) the reason(s) why you believe the grade you received is unfair. The GSI will consider your appeal and, in consultation with Professor Schneider, may decide to re-grade your assignment. Please note, a re-grade likely involves closer scrutiny of the work and so may result in an increase or a decrease in your grade. Whatever the outcome, the score from the re-grade will be final. The grade appeals process should be initiated within 2 weeks of receiving the grade in question.

**Academic Honesty**

The UC Berkeley Honor Code states that, “As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others.” (http://asuc.org/honorcode/index.php). I expect that you will adhere to these principles in your conduct in the course. You may not copy specific text or ideas from others, whether from fellow students, from authors of our readings, or from authors of material you find on the internet, without specific attribution. To do otherwise is to plagiarize. You may not cheat on any of the exams by bringing in

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1Text is adapted from the ASUC honor code guide.
outside material, copying from fellow students, or engaging in other dishonest practices. You may of course discuss the lectures and readings with your fellow students. But, the assigned papers and your written responses to exam questions must reflect your own independent work. Violations of these rules will result in a failing grade on the assignment and possibly on the course and may result in you being reported to University authorities.

Email

Email should not be used for substantive questions about the reading or course materials. Please ask such questions in class or sign-up for office hours. I will endeavor to respond to other email messages within 24 hours.

Office Hours

I very much encourage you to sign-up for office hours at least once during the semester. You may also just “stop-by” my office during office hours and if I don’t have another student scheduled, I’ll be happy to talk with you. Office hours are a good time to just introduce yourself, to talk about ideas that you find particularly engaging or difficult, or to discuss problems that you may be having in the course.

Technology Policy

You are permitted to use a laptop during class for the purpose of note taking or consulting the readings. Please do not use your cell phone during class. Please do not text, chat, surf the web, read the news, or watch videos during class!
Course Outline and Weekly Readings

Introduction
Overview of the Course & Logistics (Wed 8/26)

Dimensions of Socio-Economic Status
Occupation (Fri 8/28)

Education (Mon 8/31)

Income: Poverty (Wed 9/2)

Income: Inequality (Fri 9/4)

Labor Day - No Class (Mon 9/7)

Wealth: Black-White Gap (Wed 9/9)


Wealth: Inequality (Fri 9/11)
Intergenerational Mobility (Mon 9/14)


Intergenerational Mobility (Wed 9/16)


Intragenerational Mobility (Fri 9/18)

Race/Ethnicity (Mon 9/21)


Race/Ethnicity (Wed 9/23) and (Fri 9/25)
FILM: Race - The Power of an Illusion

Gender (Mon 9/28) and (Wed 9/30)


Institutions of Inequality and Mobility

The Family

Family Structure: Trends and Inequalities (Fri 10/2)

Family Structure: Explanations for Change (Mon 10/5)


Family Structure: Effects on Wellbeing (Wed 10/7)

Parenting and Class (Fri 10/9)


Parenting, Class, and Culture (Mon 10/12)

Mid-Term Exam

Review Session for Mid-Term (Wed 10/14)

In Class Mid-Term Exam (Fri 10/16)
Institutions of Inequality and Mobility Cont...

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods: Segregation (Mon 10/19)


Neighborhoods: Contextual Effects and Mechanisms (Wed 10/21)


Neighborhoods: Mechanisms and Interventions (Fri 10/23)


Schools and Higher Education

Achievement Gaps (Mon 10/26)

School Inequality (Wed 10/28)


Family Background and Early Intervention (Fri 10/30)
Inequality in Higher Education (Mon 11/2)


The Effects of Higher Education (Wed 11/4)

The Costs of and Returns to Higher Education (Fri 11/6)

Work and Employment

Low-Wage and Insecure Work (Mon 11/9)


Veteran’s Day - No Class (Wed 11/11)

Low-Wage and Insecure Work (Fri 11/13)
FILM: Waging a Living

Gender Pay Gap (Mon 11/16)

Gender Pay Gap: Segregation (Wed 11/18)


Gender Pay Gap: Motherhood (Fri 11/20)

Housework (Mon 11/23)


Thanksgiving - No Class (Wed 11/25) and (Fri 11/27)

Incarceration
Mass Incarceration: Contours (Mon 11/30)

Mass Incarceration: Causes (Wed 12/2)

Mass Incarceration: Consequences (Fri 12/4)


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**RRR Week**

No Class (Mon 12/7)

Review Session (Wed 12/9)

No Class (Fri 12/11)

**Final Exam (Mon 12/14)**