

Sociology 130AC

Social Inequalities, American Cultures

UC Berkeley, Fall 2016

Tues./ Thurs. 11-12:30, 3 Le Conte

Instructor: Joanna Reed, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment at 479 Barrows. Please sign up on the sheet outside the door for an appointment.

Course Description:

This course explores the causes and consequences of social inequalities in the U.S. as understood by sociologists. We begin by discussing theories and concepts that scholars use to understand different forms of inequality. We then turn to the central institutions and mechanisms that sociologists argue are responsible for creating, reproducing, reducing and changing the structure of inequalities in the U.S. today, including families, neighborhoods, education, labor markets, and the criminal justice system. Within each topic area, we will pay special attention to the significance of race and ethnicity, social class and gender and how they combine to produce different outcomes. We will focus on the present, but place each topic in a broader historical context.

Goals for the course are:

- To introduce students to theoretical and conceptual tools sociologists use for understanding and studying inequalities.**
- To cultivate an understanding of the complexity of current inequalities in the U.S. through exposure to empirical research.**
- For students to be able to apply sociological perspectives to current events and debates around social inequalities.**
- To formulate and effectively communicate a written argument that is supported by evidence.**

The ability to apply sociological concepts, theories and methods to contemporary social issues will help you make sense of the various inequalities in the U.S. today and identify how you are personally embedded in them. Exposure to empirical research about controversial issues is important because it builds deeper understandings of topics that are complex, yet may be presented as very simple in popular media and commentary. Empirical research is necessary for making reliable generalizations about social trends. Many of us have “beliefs” or perceptions about something that may be contradicted by sociological research. Our own “common sense” and experience may turn out to be atypical and biased by our class position, race, gender and other factors. Finally, the ability to build and support a clearly

written argument is a skill that will distinguish you in the future—at work, at school and in life.

Teaching about social inequalities and politics

In the past, students have asked if this is a “liberal” course. Is it? It *is* true that most sociological research findings about social inequalities resonate more with policy positions on the left side of the U.S. political spectrum than with those on the right. It is also the case that it is impossible to separate a course on inequality from politics, as specific government policies directly affect social inequalities by setting the rules for how opportunities and resources are distributed. Examining this process will be a focus of the class. I encourage all students to think critically about the course materials and the relationships between empirical research findings, policies and politics.

Required Readings:

The two books will be available at the campus bookstore, or can be ordered online where you might find a better price. We won't be reading the books until the end of the course, but don't wait too long to buy them—the bookstore will not keep them around the entire semester. Both books are also available as electronic resources online through the UCB library website. Other readings will be posted on bCourses. Most readings will be in a course reader. A hard copy of the reader can be purchased from the Copy Central Store on Bancroft St. and a copy will also be on 2 hr. reserve at Moffitt Library. The reader is like a textbook that I have designed specifically for our class, and I *strongly recommend* that you buy one. Readings not in the reader (and that are not from required books) are noted with a (bC) in the syllabus.

Books:

1. Waldinger, R. & Lichter, M. (2003). *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
2. Western, B. (2006). *Punishment And Inequality In America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Evaluation:

Take-Home Exam on Theories of Social Inequalities: 20% of grade (200 points), due Sept. 22

Race and Class in America Paper: 20% of grade (200 points), due Oct. 14

Neighborhood Project: Bus (or car) Tour Field Notes, Neighborhood Data Profile and Short Essay: 25% of grade (250 points), due Nov. 4

Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 15% of grade (150 points), due Dec. 1

Final Exam: 20% of grade (250 points)

Exams: There will be a take-home essay exam and a final exam for this course. The essay prompts for the take-home exam will be posted about a week before the exam is due, by 9/16 at noon. The exam is due to bCourses by 11:00 am on Sept. 22nd. The final exam may incorporate material from the entire semester. I will post a final exam review sheet to aid with your studying by 3 p.m. on the Monday of RRR week. The final exam will be on Dec. 14th, at 8 a.m.

Papers: In addition to the exams, you are required to turn in three written assignments for this course. One is a more traditional assignment where you will draw on course readings to support your arguments about why Americans from different racial groups view race relations and other issues differently. The second is a project that explores neighborhood differences. The third is a brief proposal for a research paper and annotated bibliography on a topic of your choice related to class. There are specific instructions for these assignments posted on bCourses. **Please read these now so you know what is expected.**

Grading: Graduate student readers, working in close collaboration with me, will do most of the hands-on grading for this course. We try very hard to maintain consistency and fairness in grading. The process for grading is as follows: I develop a rubric for the exams and papers and discuss it with the readers. We then grade several papers/exams together to make sure the grading is consistent, and checking grading averages as grading is underway. We will try to return exams and papers to you within two weeks. Readers may decide to hold regular office hours, or will meet with students by appointment after an assignment is handed back. Please understand that readers are not GSIs and their responsibilities are limited to grading and meeting with students only after assignments are returned.

Grading Problems: While we make every effort to grade fairly and consistently, mistakes in grading do occur. A re-grade is how we address this issue. I will handle all re-grade requests. If you would like to simply discuss the reasoning behind your grade, you can meet with the readers or me during office hours anytime. If you want to request a re-grade, you will need to either verbally or in writing explain to why you think your paper deserves a different grade (referencing the rubric) and submit the original paper or exam to me within two weeks after the assignment was handed back. I will then re-grade your paper and determine the final grade for the assignment. Please be aware that if I re-evaluate your work, it is possible that your grade could go down (i.e. I think the original grade was too generous), so consider these requests carefully.

Course Policies:

Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture, including announcements, and for keeping up with the readings as listed on the syllabus. There is a lot of reading in this course, and I will not be able to cover all of it in lecture. It is your responsibility to keep up and ask questions. You will be expected to integrate materials

from lecture and readings on exams and papers. Do not enroll in this class if you will not be able to (or do not plan to) attend the lectures regularly.

If you need **accommodations** for a disability, university athletics, or have a conflict due to the observance of religious holidays, please email or speak with me early in the semester to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Exams and assignments must be taken and turned in on time. If you have a personal emergency or are ill, contact me at the *earliest opportunity* to discuss alternative arrangements. Unexcused late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day they are late (including weekends). The final must be taken at the assigned time.

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes are an option of last resort for students experiencing true medical or other emergencies that make it impossible for them to complete their coursework on time. To be considered for an incomplete grade, students need to speak with me about it DURING the semester, have completed about half of the coursework, and provide documentation of the reason for the request.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. It is extremely important that everyone do their own work. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the appropriate administrative department and dealt with according to university policies. *Be aware of plagiarism.* Word for word use of even a single sentence from any author (except yourself), publication or website without proper citation is plagiarism and is considered unethical. So is very closely following the structure and wording of another author's work. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam with no opportunity to rewrite, as will any other kind of dishonesty. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, ask during office hours, or consult Ch. 6 of the writing guide "Writing for Sociology", available on the Soc. department website. To discourage plagiarism, I require that students submit all out-of-class assignments to Turnitin (a plagiarism detection tool on bCourses) when turning in assignments online.

Email: Email is a good way to get in touch with me, but keep in mind that I cannot always respond right away. Do not expect a response during evenings or weekends. It is best to ask questions about class materials and assignments before or after class or during office hours.

Office Hours: I urge students to talk with me sometime during the semester, just to say "hi". I enjoy getting to know you and this is a way to make a large class more personal. Please come see me especially if you are having trouble with the course. I can't help you if you don't communicate with me! Please sign up for office hours on the sign up sheet posted outside my office door at 479 Barrows. You are free to drop by, but I'll give priority to people who have appointments. My office is shared, so if you need to speak with me confidentially, please try to let me know ahead of time so I can try to ensure privacy.

Laptops, etc.: Did you know that taking handwritten notes might improve your grade in this class? If you want to use a laptop or tablet to take notes, please sit in the back of the classroom to reduce distractions to other students. Please do not text, check email or social

media, shop, make travel plans, etc. during class. If you do not plan on participating and listening, please do not come to class.

Circulation of Course Materials: Do not copy or distribute course materials or post them on-line or anywhere else. This includes the syllabus, lecture slides, notes, handouts, rubrics, review sheets and exams. As a student in the course, you will have access to everything you need on bCourses.

Course Schedule*:

Part I

Week 1, Aug. 24: ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN THE 21st Century

Readings: Piketty, T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Introduction

Week 2, Aug. 30, Sept. 1 : THEORIES OF INEQUALITY: CLASS AND STATUS

Readings: Gilbert, D. (2011). "Social Class in America". In *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*. Pp. 1-19. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, Sage Publications

PRIMARY SOURCES: Marx, K. "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism" and Weber, M. "Class, Status and Party" in Eds. Grusky, D. & Szelenyi, S. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender* (2007), pp. 32-43. Westview Press: Boulder, CO

Beller, E. & Hout, M. (2006). "Intergenerational Social Mobility: The U.S. in Comparative Perspective." *The Future of Children* 16(2)19-36 (bC)

Week 3, Sept. 6, 8 : THEORIES OF INEQUALITY: STATUS AND CULTURE

Readings: Bourdieu, P. (1986) "The Forms of Capital" in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Ed. J. Richardson, pp. 241-258. New York: Greenwood
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm> (read also my guide to understanding "The Forms of Capital", posted on bCourses)

Neuman, S. & Celano, D. (2012). "Worlds Apart". *American Educator*, Fall 2012 (bC)

Wilson, W.J. (2009) *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: Norton, Ch. 1 pp. 1-24

Week 4, Sept. 13, 15: THEORIES OF PATRIARCHY and RACISM

Readings: Hartmann, H. (1981) "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union", in Ed. Grusky, D. *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (2001), pp. 673-680. Westview Press: Boulder, CO

Pew Research Center, June 27, 2016. *"On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"* (bC)

Omi, M. & Winant, H. (1994) "Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s", in Eds. Grusky, D. & Szelenyi, S. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender* (2007), pp. 197-203. Westview Press: Boulder, CO

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism Without Racists: Color Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the U.S.* Laham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. Ch. 1, 2

Watch: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Episode 3 "The House We Live In", Moffitt Media Resources Center, DVD 3046 (also on youtube, more info. for streaming TBA)

Week 5, Sept. 20, 22: PUBLIC POLICY, POWER AND INEQUALITY—what (and who) determines public policy? How does public policy influence inequalities?

Take-home Exam due Sept. 22nd

Readings: Hacker, J. & Pierson, P. (2010). *Winner Take All Politics*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Ch. 2 "How the Winner Take All Economy Was Made" pp. 41-72

Edin, K. & Shafer, L. (2015). *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Ch. 1 & 5

Week 6, Sept. 27, 29: INTERSECTIONS: CLASS, RACE, GENDER, POLICIES

Readings: Brodtkin, K. (1998). *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Ch. 1 "How Jews Became White Folks"

Conley, D. (2009). *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth and Social Policy in America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 1 and 2

Week 7, Oct. 4, 6: INTERSECTIONS: CLASS, RACE, GENDER, POLICIES

Readings: Zhou, M. (2004). "Are Asian Americans Becoming 'White'?" *Contexts*, 3: 29 (bC)

Massey, D. (2009). "Racial Formation in Theory and Practice: The Case of Mexicans in the U.S." *Race and Social Problems*, 1:12-26 (bC)

Jimenez, T. & Lopez- Sanders, L. (2011) "Unanticipated, Unintended and Unadvised: The Effects of Public Policy on Unauthorized Immigration". *Pathways*, Winter 2011, Stanford Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality (bC)

Part II

Week 8, Oct. 11, 13: FAMILIES, INEQUALITY AND POLICY—family structure changes, poverty and parenting

Race and Class in America Paper Due Oct. 14th by noon to bCourses. (Note that this is on Friday of this week-- not a day our class meets!)

Readings: Carlson, M. & England, P. (2011). "Social Class and Family Patterns in the United States". In Eds. Carlson, M. & England, P. *Social Class and Changing Families in an Unequal America*, pp. 1-9. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

McLanahan, S. & Percheski, C. (2008). "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities". *Annual Review of Sociology* 34: 257-74 (bC)

Duncan, G. & Magnuson, K. (2011). "The Long Reach Of Child Poverty". *Pathways*, Winter 2011, The Stanford Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality (bC)

Week 9, Oct. 18, 20: NEIGHBORHOODS AND SEGREGATION

Readings: Wilson, W.J. (2011). "Being Poor, Black and American: The Impact of Political, Economic and Cultural Forces". *American Educator*, Spring 2011 (bC)

Fox, L. (2015) "Same Income, Different Neighborhood". *Contexts*, (blog) June 28, 2015, <http://contexts.org/blog/same-income-different-neighborhood/>

Patillo-McCoy, M. (1999). *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Introduction and Ch. 1

Week 10, Oct. 25, 27: EDUCATION

Readings: Reardon, S. (2011). "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations". In *Whither Opportunity: Rising Inequality, Schools and Children's Life Chances*. Russell Sage Foundation: New York (bC)

Kirp, D. (2013). *Improbable Scholars*. New York: Oxford University Press. Introduction and Ch. 1

Lopez, N. (2004). "Unraveling the Race-Gender Gap in Education: Second-Generation Dominican Men's High School Experiences". In Kasinitz, P., Mollenkopf, J. & Waters, M. Eds. , *Becoming New Yorkers: Ethnographies of the New Second Generation*, pp. 28-56 . New York: Russell Sage Foundation

Week 11, Nov. 1, 3: EDUCATION

Neighborhood Project Due Nov. 4th by noon to bCourses. (Again, this is a Friday)

Readings: *The College Payoff*, Georgetown Univ.

Rosenbaum, J. (2001). *Beyond college for all: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 3

Arum, R. & Roksa, J. (2014). *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1, 2

Week 12, Nov. 8, 10: LABOR MARKETS AND WORK

Readings: Reskin, B. & Padavic, I. 1994 (2002). *Women And Men At Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, Sage. Ch. 9 “Women, Men and Work in the Twenty-First Century”

England, P. (2005) “Gender Inequality in Labor Markets: The Role of Motherhood and Segregation”. *Social Politics* 12.2:264-288 (bC)

Waldinger, R. & Lichter, M.(2003). *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 1, 2

Week 13, Nov. 15, 17: LABOR MARKETS AND WORK

Readings: Waldinger, R. & Lichter, M.(2003). *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chs. 6, 8, 9

Week 14, Nov. 22: (LABOR MARKETS AND WORK) MASS INCARCERATION

No class Nov. 24th Thanksgiving

Readings: Western, B. (2006). *Punishment And Inequality In America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1, 2

Week 15, Nov. 29, Dec. 1: MASS INCARCERATION

Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due Dec. 1 by 11 a.m. to bCourses.

Readings: Western, B. (2006). *Punishment And Inequality In America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 4, 6

“RRR” week , Dec. 5-9: Extra office hours, TBA

FINAL EXAM: Wed., Dec. 14th, 8 -11 a.m., Location TBD

*The course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.