

Sociology 130AC

Social Inequalities, American Cultures UC

Berkeley, Fall 2018

Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 3 PM-4 PM, A1 Hearst Annex

Instructor: Joanna Reed, Ph.D., 479 Barrows Hall, joannareed@berkeley.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-12 (sign-up) and Friday 10:15-11:15 (drop-in) and by appointment.

Course Description:

This course explores the causes, consequences and extent of social and economic 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 and how these are maintained and reproduced. This first part of the course will focus on answering the following questions: What social categories are most meaningful for explaining contemporary U.S. inequalities? How are these categories stratified, and how are people assigned to them? How are resources distributed across these categories? The second part of the course is devoted to providing a glimpse into how inequalities “work” in practice by examining the institutions sociologists argue are most central to generating and sustaining inequalities in the contemporary United States: families, neighborhoods, education, labor markets and incarceration. These institutions are also the places where we experience social inequalities and their consequences, and we consider them from a life-course perspective. Within each domain, we will pay special attention to the significance of race and ethnicity, social class and gender and how they combine to produce different outcomes and consequences.

This course may be challenging in several ways:

- **There is a lot of reading**, and I expect you to keep up. Some of it may be conceptually difficult, or seem dry or overly technical.

- **The material may challenge some of your common-sense understandings of social inequalities** and lead you to confront your own (and your family's) place in the U.S. stratification system. For some students, being in this course is the first time they recognize the depth of their own disadvantages or the extent of their privilege, all of which may cause discomfort.

- **Your personal experiences may not fit the sociological insights presented** in class or in the readings. This does not mean the insights are wrong, but it is an opportunity for learning and exploration.

- **We will be frankly discussing controversial topics in class. You are likely to encounter viewpoints that challenge your own or that you perceive as ignorant, and hear opinions that you disagree with.** It is crucial that we strive to maintain an atmosphere of open-mindedness and respect for each other's perspectives and experiences. Please respect each other and the class by asking questions and making critiques that are grounded in class topics and materials, and by being tactful and polite. Think before you speak and consider how your position may sound to others. Respond to *ideas* rather than personally attacking or labeling the

person expressing them. Your questions should show some consideration for your audience, and your answers should show some knowledge and context for the topic being discussed.

Goals for the course:

By the end of the semester, you should be able to

- Understand and explain sociological perspectives for how and why people are classified into social categories, and the social categories most consequential for explaining contemporary social inequalities.
- Understand and explain the role of institutions like the family, neighborhoods, education, labor markets and incarceration in structuring contemporary social inequalities.
- Discuss some theoretically and empirically grounded ideas for what might shift current patterns of inequality.
- Apply this knowledge to understanding and contextualizing current events and debates centered around social inequalities, and to your own position in different systems of inequalities.
- Gain experience in collecting and analyzing sociological data through the class neighborhood project.

Required Readings and Reading Schedule:

There is one book and a reader for this course, along with some additional articles posted on bCourses. All of the readings, with the exception of the book, can be found under the “files” tab on bCourses.

Book: Edin, K. & Shaefer, L. (2015) *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

This book is available at the campus bookstore and available as an electronic resource through the UCB library website. Look up the title on “Oskicat” and click on the ebook option.

Reader: The course reader can be purchased at the Copy Central Store at 2411 Telegraph (note that it has moved from its prior location on Bancroft). Material from the reader will also be posted on bCourses. The course reader consists of book chapters that are not freely available from the UC Berkeley library website. Readings in the reader are marked with an (R).

Articles: Journal articles that are available through the library’s website are posted on bCourses. These are indicated with a (bC). You can also look them up and download them yourself, if there is a problem with accessing them on bCourses.

Supplemental References: Each year, the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality publishes a short “State of the Union” volume summarizing different domains of inequality (like labor markets, or racial inequality, for example), usually with a different focus. For example, the 2018

issue focuses on gender inequality across a variety of domains. These are very useful for a very short, up-to-date overview of a topic, and often contain useful graphics. I have included these in the “Supplemental Resources” folder under “Files” on bCourses for your reference. You may also find them helpful to use as supporting information for class assignments. I will be using these in lecture as well.

Reading Schedule: For any given week, please read in the order readings are listed on the syllabus. They are listed for the week (rather than the day) to allow for more flexibility in lecture, but we will generally consider them sequentially. I will provide more guidance on what to read and when, and when readings should be paired together either in class or via a bCourses announcement prior to the week in question. In general though, for any given week, you should make sure to have read at least the first reading listed before Monday’s class, and completed all the reading for that week before Friday’s class.

Evaluation:

Applying Theory Paper: 20%, due Sept. 21st

Take-Home Mid-term Exam: 20% of grade, due Oct. 19th

Neighborhood Project: There is a fieldwork portion of the project that will be completed before the assignment is due. The fieldwork portion consists of a neighborhood visit, field notes and data collection, and is worth 10% of your grade and due Oct. 26th. The assignment itself is worth 20% of your grade and due on Nov. 16th.

Take-Home Final Exam: 20% of grade, due Dec. 11th, 10 pm

Participation and Attendance throughout the semester: 10%

Exams: Both the midterm and final exam will be take-home essay exams. Essay prompts for both exams will be posted one week before each exam is due. The final exam will focus on the second part of the course. The final exam is due at 10 pm. The final exam may be turned in anytime after the exam prompt is released up until the due date.

Applying Theory Paper: In this 4-5 page paper, you will analyze either a current event or other recent social phenomenon according to at least 2 theories/readings we have considered and discussed in class. More information on this assignment is posted on bCourses.

Neighborhood Project and Data Science Module: In this project, you and your fellow students are the researchers. The project incorporates elements of fieldwork, working with data and a

written essay. The “data science module” is the center of the project. It was built and is supported by the Berkeley Institute for Data Science and makes it possible for our class to build a dataset based on our collective fieldwork that we will analyze and map along with census data to discover and analyze social patterns in local neighborhoods. There are specific instructions for these assignments posted on bCourses. Please carefully note the date and time an assignment is due. Please read these now so you know what is expected!

Participation and Attendance: The purpose of devoting a portion of your grade to participation and attendance is to encourage regular attendance at lecture, as well as increase engagement with the class. This portion of your grade will be assessed from a combination of participation in various activities during class, such as pop quizzes, periodic in-class “discussion sections”, and short writing responses as well as random attendance checks. I will keep track of these points during the semester, and the final participation and attendance grade will be entered in the bCourses gradebook after RRR week. Before Thanksgiving break, I will post a spreadsheet showing the tally of points so far. I will drop a few points before assessing final participation and attendance grades to allow for occasional absences. Opportunities to make-up missed points will be announced toward the end of the semester.

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. If you believe a mistake was made on your assignment, and want me to review it, write a short paragraph explaining what you think the mistake was and why you think your assignment deserves a different grade, making sure to reference the assignment rubric. You can email this to me, or give it to me in person. 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, so consider these requests carefully. Please keep in mind that re-grade requests should be made based on the quality and merits of the work submitted, not based on effort, or feeling that you “deserve” a higher grade. All re-grade requests must be made within a week of when an assignment is handed back. Per University policy, no re-grades are possible for final exams.

Course Policies:

Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture, including announcements, and for keeping up with the readings as indicated on the syllabus. 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 require **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 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 assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day they are late (including weekends). Extension requests made on due dates will not be considered unless there is documentation of an illness or other emergency.

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 at least 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 submits their own work. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the office of student conduct and dealt with according to university policies. *Be aware of plagiarism.* Word for word use of even a single sentence from any author, publication or website without proper citation is plagiarism and is unethical and unacceptable. 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 in question with no opportunity to rewrite, as will any other kind of academic dishonesty. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, ask during office hours, and consult Ch. 6 of the writing guide "Writing for Sociology", available on the Soc. department website. To discourage plagiarism, all assignment submissions on bCourses are checked by "Turnitin", a plagiarism detection tool, once an assignment is submitted.

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, weekends or holidays. It is best to ask questions about class materials and assignments before during office hours, in class, or if you can catch me before or after class. Please make sure your question is not answered on the course syllabus before emailing me.

Office Hours: I hope you will come by and introduce yourself sometime during the semester. Ours is a big class, but we can make it more personal if we get to know each other a bit. While office hours are the time to ask questions about course materials or clarify assignments and receive feedback, you can also come by just to say “hi”, either on your own or with a friend. If you are having trouble with the course, make sure to come see me. I can’t help you if you don’t communicate with me! I have both sign-up and drop-in office hours. Please sign up for office hour appointments on the sign up sheet posted outside my office door at 479 Barrows. You are free to drop by during this time as well, 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.

Technology: Did you know that taking handwritten notes might improve your grade in this class? Do you know that reading materials in print form (rather than on a screen) is associated with improved comprehension and retention? Please consider reducing the use of technology when it comes to reading and taking notes. **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. Put your phone away during class, and please do not text, check email or social media, shop, make travel plans, etc. during class. This behavior is distracting and disrespectful to me and to your fellow students. If you do not plan on participating and giving class your full attention, please do not come to class.

Lecture Slides: Lecture slides will be available on bCourses just before class. Please keep in mind that the slides are an outline for what is covered in class, and are not a substitute for your own note taking.

Your Health and Well-Being: Being a college student can be full of excitement and possibilities, but at times may feel overwhelming or be difficult in other ways. Some degree of this is to be expected, but if you are experiencing a lot of distress, anxiety or have a pre-existing mental health issue, there are resources on campus to help. You are not alone; many others share your difficulties. Even if you don’t think you need them, I encourage you to look at these websites now, so you know what is available. There is much more than counseling appointments: there are web tutorials and videos, support groups and mindfulness classes, for example. Counseling center staff have told me these groups and classes can be a great preventative resource, and are a great way to get the semester off to a good start. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), (510) 642-9494, <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>. More general resources on mental health, services are at <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/health-topics/mental-health> .

Course Schedule*:

Part I: Understanding Social Inequalities

Week 1: Aug. 22, 24: Introductions

Readings: course syllabus

Edin, K. & Shafer, L. (2015) *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Introduction and Ch. 4 "By Any Means Necessary"

Keister, L. (2014) "The One Percent". *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 40, pp. 347-367 (focus on "Defining the One Percent" and "Contemporary Income and Wealth Concentration") (bC)

Wood, G. (2011) "Secret Fears of the Super Rich". *The Atlantic*, April 2011

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/04/secret-fears-of-the-super-rich/308419/> (look up online)

Week 2: Aug. 27, 29, 31: Foundational Theories of Inequality and Stratification:

Readings: Marx, K. "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism" 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 (R)

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 (R)

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 (R)

Week 3: Sept. 5, 7: Foundational Theories of Inequality and Stratification

Readings: DuBois, W.E. B. (1903/2003) *The Souls of Black Folk*. Ch. 6, 8, 11. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics (R)

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) (look up online)

Week 4: Sept. 10, 12, 14: More Theories of Inequality and Stratification: Building on Foundations

Readings: Tilly, C. (2000) "Relational Studies of Inequality". *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 6, pp. 782-785 (bC)

Olin-Wright, E. (2008) "Logics of Class Analysis", Ch. 11 in Eds. Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley, *Social Class: How Does it Work?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation (R)

Collins, P. & Bilge, S. (2016) *Intersectionality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. Ch. 1 "What Is Intersectionality?" (R)

Week 5: Sept. 17, 19, 21: Theories of Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Applying Theory Paper due on Sept. 21st, 3 pm.

Readings: Roberts, D. (2011). *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: The New Press. Ch. 1 "The Invention of Race" (R)

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 (R)

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 (Ch. 2 recommended)(R)

Recommended: Pew Research Center, June 27, 2016. "On Views Of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"

Gonzales, A. (2001) "Urban(Trans)Formations: Changes in the Meaning and Use of American Indian Identity". Pp. 169-185 in eds. Lobo, S & Peters, K. *American Indians and the Urban Experience*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press (R)

Week 6: Sept. 24, 26, 28: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Readings: Bobo, L. (2017). "Racism in Trump's America: Reflections on Culture, Sociology and the U.S. 2016 Presidential Election". *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 68, S1 (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)

Portes, A. & Zhou, M. (1993) "Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants", in Eds. Grusky, D. & Szelenyi, S. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender* (2007), pp. 208-220. Westview Press: Boulder, CO (R)

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

Week 7: Oct. 1, 3, 5: Inequality, Politics and Policy

Readings: Hacker, J. & Pierson, P. (2010). *Winner Take All Politics*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Ch. 1 & 2 “How the Winner Take All Economy Was Made” pp. 41-72 (pp. 1-40 recommended)(R)

Gilens, M. & Page, B. (2014) “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups and Average Citizens”. *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (bC)

Edin, K. & Shafer, L. (2015) Introduction and Ch. 1. *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Ch. 1 “Welfare is Dead”

Dreby, J. (2015). *Everyday Illegal: When Policies Undermine Immigrant Families*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 2 “Nervios” (R)

Week 8: Oct. 8, 10, 12: Gender Inequality

Readings: Lorber, J. (2011) “The Social Construction of Gender” in Eds. Grusky, D. & Szelenyi, S. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender* (2007), pp. 318-325. Westview Press: Boulder, CO (R)

Saperstein, A. (2018) “Gender Identification”. *Pathways: State of the Union*. Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, pp. 5-8 (bC)

Ridgeway, C. (2011). *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 1 “The Puzzle of Persistence” (R)

Part 2: How Inequalities Work: Institutions and the Distribution of Resources

Week 9: Oct. 15, 17, 19: Families and Family Structure

Take Home Midterm Due Oct. 19th at 4 pm. No lecture that day.

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 (R)

Cherlin, A. (2014) *Labor’s Love Lost: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class Family in America*. Selection from Ch. 5, “The Fall of the Working-Class Family” (R)

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

Recommended: 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 10: Oct. 22, 24, 26: Neighborhoods

Wed. Oct. 24th: Neighborhood Project data due by noon. Submit as an assignment on bCourses AND to the google form (link and instructions for this will be sent in a bCourses announcement).

Readings: Peterson, R. & Krivo, L. (2010). *Divergent Social Worlds: Neighborhood Crime and the Racial-Spatial Divide*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 3 “Divergent Social Worlds”, pp. 50-70 (R)

Furstenberg, F. & Hughes, E. (2000). “The Influence of Neighborhoods on Children’s Development: A Theoretical Perspective and a Research Agenda”. Ch. 2, pp. 23-47 in eds. Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. & Aber, J.L. *Neighborhood Poverty, Volume 2*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation (R)

Krysan, M., Crowder, K. & Bader, M. (2014). “Pathways to Residential Segregation.” Ch. 2, pp. 27-63 In eds. Lareau, A. & Goyette, K. *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation (R)

Week 11: Oct. 29, 31, Nov. 2: Neighborhoods

Oct. 29th: In-class presentation of the Data Science Module portion of the Neighborhood Project. Bring your laptop or tablet to class, or plan to look on with a classmate.

Readings: Sampson, R.J. & Raudenbush, S. (2001) “Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods— Does it Lead to Crime?” *Research in Brief, National Institute of Justice*, U.S. Department of Justice (bC)

Edin, K. & Shaefer, L. (2015). *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Ch. 3 “A Room of One’s Own”.

Recommended: Hwang, J. & Sampson, R.J. (2014) “Divergent Pathways of Gentrification: Racial Inequality and the Social Order of Renewal in Chicago Neighborhoods.” *American Sociological Review*, 79(4) 726-51 (bC)

Week 12: Nov. 5, 7, 9: Education

Readings: Carter, P. (2016) “Educational Equality is a Multifaceted Issue: Why We Must Understand the School’s Sociocultural Context for Student Achievement.” *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, Vol 2, No. 5, pp. 142-163 (bC)

Reardon, S. & Fahle, E. (2017) “Education”. *Pathways: State of the Union 2017*, Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, pp. 20-23 (bC)

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 (R)

Jimenez, T. & Horowitz, A. (2015) “Whitewashing Academic Mediocrity”. *Contexts*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 38-42 (bC)

Week 13: Nov. 14, 16: Education and Labor Markets

Readings: *The College Payoff*, The Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University (bC)

Mettler, S. (2014) *Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream*. New York: Basic Books. Ch. 1 “Creating Degrees of Inequality” & 2 “Diminishing Returns: The Transformation of Federal Student Aid Over Time” (R)

Kalleberg, A. (2011) *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1, 2 (R)

Edin, K. & Shaefer, L. (2015). *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Ch. 2 “Perilous Work”

Week 14: Nov. 19 (Thanksgiving Break): Labor Markets

Readings: Waldinger, R. & Lichter, M. (2003) *How The Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social Organization of Labor*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction and Ch. 9 (R)

Rivera, L. (2012) “Hiring As Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms”. *American Sociological Review*, 77(6) 999-1022 (bC)

Week 15: Nov. 26, 28, 30: Labor Markets and Mass Incarceration

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

Wakefield, S. & Uggen, C. (2010) “Incarceration and Stratification”. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 36, pp. 387-406 (bC)

Western, B. (2018). *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1, 3, 11 (R)

Reading, Review and Recitation week: Dec. 3-7

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM: Due. Dec. 11th, 10 pm to bCourses. Questions will be available on bCourses one week prior to the exam due date (Dec. 4th by 3 pm). You are welcome to turn in your final exam before the due date.

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