

Enrollment This course is currently over-enrolled, so I will be taking attendance during each class during the first two weeks, dropping students who miss two consecutive classes without notifying me, and adding in students from the waitlist. This applies to enrolled and waitlisted students, so make sure you sign in!

Soc. 130 AC—Social Inequalities, American Cultures U.C. Berkeley, Spring 2012

MWF 12-1, 159 Mulford

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Course Description:

This course explores the causes and consequences of current inequalities in the U.S. We will begin by discussing theories and concepts that scholars use to understand different forms of inequality and explain its persistence. We will 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 education, labor markets, families and social policies, neighborhoods and segregation 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—the most important stratifiers today—and how they combine. We will focus on the present period but place each topic in a broader historical context.

Inequality is an immense subject, and we are just scratching the surface of the sociological literature on inequality in this course. Invariably, instructors must act like editors—picking and choosing between topics to cover, and then what to present. In this course, I have chosen to focus most of our time on institutions and mechanisms so we can learn about the process of inequalities—that is, how they happen. I have also chosen to focus on the present period – understanding inequalities in the U.S., right now. As a result, we spend much less time on “grand” theories of inequality, and much more on “middle range” theories that try to explain how empirical phenomena (like race, public education and families) work to influence inequalities in different contexts.

Goals for the course are:

- To expose students to some of the central theoretical and conceptual tools sociologists use for understanding and studying inequalities.**
- To cultivate, through exposure to empirical research, an understanding of the complexity of current inequalities in the U.S.**
- To practice critical thinking and analysis in reading and listening, and writing.**

Why?

The ability to apply sociological concepts, theories and methods to contemporary social issues will help you make sense for yourself of various inequalities in the U.S. today and identify those you are embedded in. Exposure to empirical research about controversial issues is important because it builds deeper understandings of topics that are complex, yet may be presented as black and white in popular media and commentary. In addition, 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 often turns out to be atypical and biased by our class position, race, gender and other factors. Finally,

thinking critically about information and perspectives presented to you, and being able to build a written argument that is clear and well supported are skills that will distinguish you in the future—at work and in graduate studies.

A second issue I'd like to quickly address is that of politics. Is this a "liberal" course? It is true that most sociological research findings about inequality (especially economic inequality) resonate more with policy positions on the left side of the U.S. political spectrum than with those on the right. But I encourage students from all political persuasions to think critically about the course materials and the relationship between empirical findings and politics. If this class gets you thinking about that, then I will count that as a success.

Required Readings:

Books will be available at the campus bookstore and Neds, or can be ordered online. Other readings will be in a course reader, on Bspace and online. The reader can be purchased from Copy Central on Bancroft and a copy will be on reserve at Moffitt Library. Most of the readings marked "online" in the syllabus will be posted on Bspace, a few you will need to look up on the internet yourself. This course requires a fair amount of reading. Students often ask how to prioritize the readings; to assist you I have listed the required reading for each week in rough order of importance.

Required 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 (also available for rent at the bookstore)
2. Western, B. 2006. *Punishment and inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
3. DeParle, J. (2004) *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*. New York: Penguin

Recommended reading: The recommended reading list is intended for students interested in delving deeper into a topic, and consists of a mix of academic books and articles and commentary and articles from the popular media.

Evaluation:

25% midterm— in class **March 7**

25% take home final exam—distributed May 4, due **May 9**, 4 pm

5% field trip—Due **April 27**

45% short papers—Due in class **Feb. 17, Mar. 23, and Apr. 20**

Exams: Both exams will be essay exams. The midterm will cover material from the beginning of the course up until the midterm. The midterm will be an in-class essay exam. The final will be a take-home essay exam. It will focus on material covered after the midterm, but may ask you to incorporate materials from the entire semester. About one week before the midterm exam, I will hand out a review sheet with several possible exam questions. The actual exam will consist of questions selected from the review sheet. The midterm will be in class on **Mar. 7**, and the take home final exam will be posted on Bspace by noon on May 4 and due by 4:00 pm on **May. 9**.

Papers: You are required to turn in three short papers, each between 5-7 pages in length. You will respond to a prompt for the first paper. In the second paper you will synthesize and analyze assigned readings from one topic

area of the course. The third paper will consist of a critical analysis of two articles or other items from the popular news media. Please see the document on bspace called “papers” for more complete instructions for these assignments. The first paper is due in class on **Feb. 17**, the second on **Mar. 23**, and the third on **Apr. 20**.

Field Trip: You are required to go on one field trip (on your own, or with other students) during the semester, and write up your experience in 2-3 pages. Specific instructions about field trips will be on Bspace in a document called “field trips”. The field trip report is due on the last day of class, **April 27**. Students are free to suggest their own field trip, as long as they clear it with me first, or choose from the list below:

The Immigration Station at Angel Island State Park

Neighborhood tour on AC Transit

GLBT History Museum, San Francisco

West Oakland food stores

Eastmont Mall

Grading: There will be two graduate student readers for this course who will be responsible for most of the 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. 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. If you have a problem with a grade, you should first discuss it with the reader who assigned the grade. If that does not resolve the problem, then I will discuss it with the reader and meet with you. Please know that if we agree to re-evaluate your work, it will be under closer scrutiny and your grade could possibly go down as a result. We will use the gradebook function on Bspace to post grades.

Course Policies:

Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture, including announcements. You will be expected to integrate materials from lecture and readings on exams and papers. Please do not enroll in this class if you will not be able to attend the lectures regularly. If you must miss, please make arrangements with another student for notes.

If you need **accommodations** for a disability 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, contact me at the earliest opportunity to discuss alternative arrangements.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. While I encourage students to discuss the readings and study together, everyone must 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 another author, publication or website without citation is plagiarism and is considered unethical. Plagiarism will result in a 0 on the paper with no opportunity to rewrite. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, I am happy to address this during office hours.

Email: Email should not be used for questions about class materials—these questions should be asked in class or during office hours. I don't check email more than once per day, and cannot always respond right away, so talk to me before or after class, or during office hours if you have an important issue.

Office Hours: I urge students to talk with me sometime during the semester, just to say "hi" and especially if you are having trouble with the course. I want you to do well. Either come to my office hours, or schedule a meeting. I can't help you if you don't communicate with me!

Laptops: Laptops will be provisionally allowed; I prefer that you take written notes. Please put away all phones and refrain from checking them during class.

Circulation of Course Materials: DO NOT reproduce course materials or post them on-line or anywhere else. This includes the syllabus, lecture slides, notes, review sheets and exams. As a student in the course, you will have access to everything you need on Bspace.

Course Schedule*:

Week 1: Jan. 18, 20 INTRODUCTION—the course and concepts, overview of economic inequality in the U.S.

Readings: Neckerman, K. & Torche, F. 2007. "Inequality: Causes and Consequences". *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33:335-57 (online)

Recommended: Jencks, C. 2002. "Does Inequality Matter?" *Daedalus* 131:49-65 (Winter 2002) (online)

Scott, J. & Leonhardt, D. 2005. "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide". *New York Times*, May 15, 2005 Article 1 of the "Class Matters" series (ONLINE)

Week 2: Jan. 23, 25, 27 INEQUALITY FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE—theories of class and stratification

Readings: Weber, M. in *The Essential Weber, a Reader*. Ed. Sam Whimster. (2004). "Status Groups and Classes" and "The distribution of power in society: classes, status groups and parties." Pp. 176-194

Marx, K. 1968 (1848). "Manifesto of the Communist Party". In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second Edition, Ed. Robert C. Tucker. Pp. 473-486. New York: Norton

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press. Pp. 128-29; 169-175; 190-193

Blau, P. & Duncan, D. 2001(1967) "The Process of Stratification" pp. 390-403 in *Social Stratification in Sociological Perspective*, 2nd Edition. Ed. Grusky, D. Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Recommended: Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Portes, A. 2000. "The Two Meanings of Social Capital". *Sociological Forum* 15, 1:1-12 (online)

Week 3: Jan. 30, Feb. 1, 3 CLASS, RACE & GENDER—race as a social construct; history of race in the U.S.

Readings: 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. 1,3,4

Bodkin, 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"

Recommended: Omi, M. & Winant, H. 1994. *Racial Formation in the U.S.: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge

Week 4: Feb. 6, 8, 10 CLASS, RACE & GENDER—U.S. social classes; relationships between race and class; gender stratification

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

Crittenden, A. 2001. "The Mommy Tax" Ch. 5 (and a few pages of Ch.6), pp. 87-115 in *The Price of Motherhood*. New York: Owl Books

Portes, A. & Rumbaut, R. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Berkeley, CA : University of California Press. Ch. 3

Recommended:Steinhauer, J. 2005. "When the Joneses Wear Jeans." *New York Times*, May 29, 2005 (ONLINE, Class Matters Series)

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

Week 5: Feb. 13, 15, 17 PUBLIC POLICY, POWER AND INEQUALITY—what(and who) determines public policy? How does public policy influence inequalities?

PAPER 1 Due 2/17

Readings: Fischer, C. et al. 1996. *Inequality by design: Cracking the Bell Curve myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch 6 "How Unequal? America's Invisible Policy Choices"

Wacquant, L. (2008) "The State and Fate of the Dark Ghetto at Century's Close", Ch. 2 pp. 43-91. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

Domhoff, G.W. (2002) "The Policy-Planning Network"Ch. 4, pp. 69-98 in *Who Rules America? Power and Politics*. New York: McGraw Hill

Recommended: Freeland, C. 2011. "The Rise of the New Global Elite". *The Atlantic*, Jan./Feb. 2011 (online)

O'Connor, A. 2001. *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in 20th Century U.S. History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Week 6: Feb. 22, 24 LABOR MARKETS AND WORK—social mobility and labor markets—historical overview; work and communities; gender segregation

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. 1,2

Wilson, W.J. *When Work Disappears*. New York: Vintage Books. Ch. 3, "Ghetto-Related Behavior and the Structure of Opportunity", pp. 51-86

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

Recommended:Peck, D. 2010. "How a New Jobless Era will Transform America". *The Atlantic*, March 2010

Newman, K. 1999. *Falling From Grace: Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence*. Berkeley, CA.: UC Press

Aronowitz, S. & DiFazio, W. 2010. *The Jobless Future*. Minneapolis, MN.: University of Minnesota Press

Week 7: Feb. 27, 29, Mar. 2 LABOR MARKETS AND WORK—segmented labor markets; examples of labor market processes

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

Portes, A. & Rumbaut, R. 1996. *Immigrant America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 3 "Making it in America: Occupational and Economic Adaptation"

Week 8: Mar.5, 7, 9 LABOR MARKETS/EDUCATION—globalization and U.S. labor markets; Why do we have public education?

MIDTERM in class Mar. 7

Readings:Waldinger, R. & Lichter, M. 2003. *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 11, 12

Adams, D. (1999) "Excerpts from Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928" pp. 20-58 in *American Families, A Multicultural Reader*, Eds. Coontz, S., Parson, M. & Raley, G. New York: Routledge

Week 9: Mar.12, 14 ,16 EDUCATION—education, social mobility and social class in the U.S.; achievement gaps

Readings:Kao, G. & Thompson, J. 2003. Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, pg. 417 (ONLINE)

Lareau, A. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 1, 3

Farkas, G. 2004. "The Black-White Test Score Gap". *Contexts*, Vol. 3, no. 2. (ONLINE)

Recommended: Bowles, S., Gintis, H., & Groves, M. ,Eds. 2005. *Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success*. New York: Russell Sage Foudation

Lucas, S. 1999. *Tracking Inequality: Stratification and Mobility in American High Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press

McLeod, J. 2004. *Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood*, Revised Edition. Boulder, CO.: Westview Press

Week 10 : Mar. 19, 21, 23 EDUCATION—Higher education

Paper 2 due Mar. 23

Readings: Hout, M. 2011. "Social and Economic Returns to College Education in the United States". *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, forthcoming (online)

Rosenbaum, J. 2001. *Beyond college for all: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 3, 12

Recommended: Lemann, N. 2000. *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux

Bowen, W. & Bok, D. (2000) *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College Admissions*. Princeton University Press

Leonhardt, D. 2005. "The College Dropout Boom". *The New York Times*, May 24, 2005 (ONLINE Class Matters series)

Golden, D. 2007. *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way Into Elite Colleges and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*. New York: Three Rivers Press

SPRING BREAK

Week 11: Apr. 2, 4, 6 CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM—mass incarceration

Readings: Western, B. 2006. *Punishment and inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1-4, 6

Recommended: Pager, D. 2003. The mark of a criminal record. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 108. no. 5:937-75

Comfort, M. (2008) *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. Chicago:University of Chicago Press

Week 12: Apr. 9, 11, 13 NEIGHBORHOODS AND RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION—the "color line"; how do neighborhoods matter? Segregation in California today

Readings: Massey, D. & Denton, N. 1993. *American Apartheid*. Ch. 4

Klinenberg, E. (2002) *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Ch. 2 Pp. 79-128

Patillo-McCoy, M. 1999. *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the Black middle class*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1,5

Recommended: Rubinowitz, L. & Rosenbaum, J. 2000. *Crossing the Class and Color Lines: From Public Housing to White Suburbs*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press

Briggs, X., Popkin, S. & Goering, J. (2010) *Moving To Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty*. Oxford University Press

Kotlowitz, A. 1991. *There are no children here*. New York: Anchor Books

Li, W. (2009) *Ethnoburb: The New Ethnic Community in Urban America*. University of Hawaii Press

Week 13: Apr. 16, 18, 20 FAMILIES, INEQUALITY AND POLICY—family structure, race and class; poverty, race and welfare; welfare reform

Paper 3 Due Apr. 20

Readings: DeParle, J. 2004. *American Dream*

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

Hays, S. 2003. *Flat Broke With Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA

Week 14: Apr. 23, 25, 27 FAMILIES, INEQUALITY AND POLICY

Readings: Gilbert, N. 1998. "Working Families: Hearth to Market" Ch. 9 pp. 193-216 in Eds. Mason, M., Skolnick, A., Sugarman, S. *All Our Families: New Policies for a New Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

DeParle, J. *American Dream*, finish

Recommended: Piven, F. & Cloward, R. 1971. *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*. New York: Pantheon

Week 15: "RRR" week : TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: Distributed on bspace by noon on May 4. Due by 4 pm to box in 410 Barrows Hall on May 9.

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