

Soc. 130 AC—Social Inequalities, American Cultures

UC Berkeley, Spring 2014

Instructor: Joanna Reed, Ph.D

MWF 2:00-3:00, 2040 Valley Life Sciences Building

Office Hours: Wed. 9:15- 11:15 and by appointment, 479 Barrows
joannareed@berkeley.edu

Course Description:

This course explores the causes and consequences of social inequalities in the U.S. 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 education, labor markets, families, social policies, neighborhoods 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. We will focus on the present period 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**
- To practice analytical and critical 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 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.

Some 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. But I encourage students from all political persuasions to think critically about the course materials and the relationship between empirical 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. Most 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. Readings in the reader are marked with an (R) in the syllabus. I *strongly recommend* that you buy one. 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.

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.

Recommended reading: I’ve posted a list on Bspace for those inclined to pursue further reading about topics we cover in the course. I am always happy to make personalized recommendations—just come to office hours.

Evaluation:

45% papers— (20%) Paper 1 is due in class on **Feb. 24th** . Paper 2 (25%) is due on **April 25th** in class.

5% participation quizzes—throughout the semester, announced in lecture, on Bspace.

20% in-class midterm— **March 21**

30% final exam— **May 13**, 11:30 am—2:30 pm, location TBD

Exams: The midterm and final will be in-class exams consisting of multiple choice and short essay questions, based mostly on course readings. The final will be a longer exam, and have a more extensive essay portion than the midterm. It will focus on material covered after the midterm, but may ask you to incorporate materials from the entire semester.

Papers: You are required to turn in two papers, each between 7-10 pages in length. There are specific instructions for each paper. **See the document on Bspace called “papers” for complete instructions for these assignments.**

Participation quizzes: The purpose of these is to reward people who consistently attend lecture. Quizzes will be randomly announced in lecture throughout the semester. After class, you will have a specified time frame to complete the quiz on Bspace. Questions will be based on the lecture from that day. There will be six of these and we will count your four highest scores. There will be no opportunity to make up these quizzes.

Grading: There will be two or more (depending on enrollment) 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 will be available to discuss your assignments with you after they are returned, either during office hours or by appointment. I am always happy to discuss the reasons for a grade with a student. If you have a problem with a grade, however, 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. If you ask us to consider raising your score, be prepared to make a specific argument as to why you think you deserve more points*, making sure to reference the rubric for the assignment in question. We will use the gradebook function on Bspace to post grades. Be sure to make sure the grade on the hard copy of your paper or exam matches the one online.

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 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. Late papers will be penalized one third of a grade for each day they are late (including weekends). The final must be taken at the assigned time.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. I encourage students to discuss the readings and study together, but 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 unethical. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade 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. I typically do not respond to emails asking for information that is on the course syllabus or the paper prompts, so if you don't hear back from me, try reading these documents.

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 feel that the time you spend in this class is worthwhile. Either come to my office hours, or schedule a meeting. 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.

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

Course Schedule*:

Week 1, Jan. 22, 24 : INEQUALITY FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE-- economic inequality in the U.S., classic theories of inequality

Readings: Reich, R. (2011) "Why Inequality is the Real Cause of Our Ongoing Terrible Economy", Sept. 4, 2011 <http://robertreich.org/post/9789891366>

Murray, C. (2012) "The New American Divide". *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 21, 2012 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204301404577170733817181646.html>

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)

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 (Bspace) (Recommended, not required)

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 (R) (Recommended, not required)

Week 2, Jan. 27, 29, 31: MORE THEORIES OF CLASS AND STRATIFICATION

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 (R)

Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 1, 3 and Appendix B "Theory: Understanding the Work of Pierre Bourdieu", pp. 275-278 (access as electronic resource through OskiCat)

Week 3, Feb, 3, 5, 7: RACE & CLASS—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, 2 (R)

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" (R)

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

Week 4, Feb. 10, 12, 14 : CLASS & RACE & GENDER

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" (R)

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

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)

Week 5, Feb. 19, 21: PUBLIC POLICY, POWER AND INEQUALITY—what(and who) determines public policy? How does public policy influence inequalities?

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" (R)

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 and Ch. 10 "Battle Royale" and "Conclusion" pp. 253-306 (R)

Week 6, Feb. 24, 26, 28 : FAMILIES, INEQUALITY AND POLICY—family structure changes, poverty and parenting

PAPER 1 Due Feb. 24th in class

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

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)

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 (R)

Week 7, Mar. 3, 5, 7: FAMILIES/NEIGHBORHOODS

Readings: Hays, S. (2003). *Flat Broke With Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press USA. Ch., 1-3 (R)

Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. & Mariato, N. (1997). "Poor Families, Poor Outcomes: The well-being of Children and Youth". Eds., Duncan, G. & Brooks-Gunn, J. *The Consequences of Growing Up Poor*, Ch. 1. New York: Russell Sage Foundation (Bspace) [recommended, not required]

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

Furstenberg, F. & Hughes, M. (1997). "The Influence of Neighborhoods on Children's Development: A Theoretical Perspective and a Research Agenda". Eds. Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. & Aber, J.L. *Neighborhood Poverty, Vol. 2.* , Ch. 2. New York: Russell Sage Foundation (R)

Week 8, Mar. 10, 12, 14: NEIGHBORHOODS AND RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION—the "color line"; how do neighborhoods matter?

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

Briggs, X., Popkin, S., & Goering, J. (2010) *Moving to Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty*. Oxford University Press. Ch. 1 & 10 (R)

Week 9, Mar. 17, 19, 21 : EDUCATION—education and achievement gaps; social mobility , class and education in the U.S.

MIDTERM EXAM in class Mar. 21

Readings: 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 (R) [recommended, not required]

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

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

SPRING BREAK March 24-28

Week 10, Mar. 31, Apr. 2, 4 : EDUCATION

Readings: Delpit, L. (1988). "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children". *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, no. 3 pp. 280-98 (Bspace)

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

Owen, S. & Sawhill, I. (2013) "Should Everyone Go to College?" Center on Children and Families, Briefing #50, Brookings Institution (Bspace)

Week 11, Apr. 7,9,11 : EDUCATION/LABOR MARKETS AND WORK—social mobility and labor markets—historical overview; work and communities; gender segregation

Readings: Bowen, W. & Bok, D. (2000). *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College Admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Preface through xxxii, Ch. 9 (R)

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" (R)

Newman, Katherine. (1999). *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, Vintage . Ch. 1, 2 (R)

Week 12, Apr. 14, 16, 18: LABOR MARKETS AND WORK—segmented labor markets; examples of labor market processes

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

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, 6

Kasinitz, P., Mollenkopf, J., Waters, M., & Holdaway, J. (2008). *Inheriting The City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Ch. 2. "The Worlds of the Fathers and Mothers"

Week 13: Apr. 21, 23, 25: LABOR MARKETS AND WORK—globalization and U.S. 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. Ch. 8, 9

PAPER 2 DUE FRIDAY APR. 25 in class

Week 14: Apr. 28, 30, May 2: MASS INCARCERATION

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

Week 15: "RRR" week : Extra office hours, TBA

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday May 13, 11:30 am-2:30 pm, location TBD

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