

SOCIOL 211
Social Inequality: Race, Class, Gender and Its Intersections
SPRING 2018

Instructor: Lauren Valentino

Day and time: T, Th 2:00-3:50pm

Location: Soc/Psych 141

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Office Hours: T, Th 4:00-5:00pm, Soc/Psych 346A

Overview and Objectives

In this course, we will explore the contours of social inequality in the contemporary United States. We begin by considering the axes of social inequality - how are social groups defined and categorized? We will then attempt to define the three principle kinds of inequality in the United States: race, class, and gender - plus their intersections. Next we will consider the areas of social life in which inequalities play out. Are all inequalities rooted in material resources, or can they be immaterial (i.e. symbolic) too?

To understand why these inequalities occur, we will draw on a variety of theoretical perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory, the social-ecological approach, and the cognitive/cultural approach. We will read classic and contemporary versions of these arguments.

We then chart the extent of social inequality in the U.S. today in terms of race, class, and gender disparities. Although inequalities are prevalent in many aspects of life, we will focus our examination on four key domains: (1) the labor market, the workplace, and the consumer/financial sector; (2) the house, the home, and the family; (3) the school and university; and (4) health and well-being.

As we explore the inequalities in these areas, we will consider modern theories and mechanisms that explain these various inequalities, and how they relate to the four theoretical perspectives on inequality from the beginning part of the course. Are there different explanations for the inequality experienced by different groups, subgroups (race vs class vs gender), and their intersections? Are there different explanations for different domains of inequality? What are the other axes of inequality that exist, and what are the other domains in which disparities occur? We will also cover the methods social scientists use to measure, study, and explain inequality in the United States. As such, the goals of this course are:

- Provide students with factual knowledge about and raise their awareness of the various forms and degrees of inequality in the contemporary United States
- Promote students' understanding of the fundamental concepts and principles regarding social inequality, such as "race," "class," "gender," "intersectionality," "capital," and "privilege"

- Foster students' ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and theories about social inequality to specific forms of inequality (such as labor market disparities, residential segregation, achievement gaps, and health inequalities)
- Encourage students to analyze ideas, arguments, and different points of view about the extent of inequality in modern society and the reasons for the persistence of that inequality
- Empower students to synthesize and integrate knowledge about inequality into 'big picture' ideas that can have implications for government and non-governmental policy, law, medicine and health care, education, and business, among other areas
- Engage students with the methods social scientists use to conduct inquiries about social inequality by critically interacting directly with the scientists themselves when they come to present their research in class
- Facilitate students' capacity to evaluate the merits of ideas and competing claims about the extent and reasons for the existence of inequality
- Enhance students' ability to effectively communicate ideas orally through in-class discussion and group presentations
- Boost students' ability to effectively communicate ideas in writing through written exams and a final research paper

Requirements

You are expected to read, watch, or listen to the course material assigned for that day's course *before that course meets*. This is because we will discuss the material on that day, and I expect you to be personally responsible for knowing and critiquing the information provided about the course topic that day.

In addition to digesting the course material, you are also expected to participate in class discussions. I facilitate discussions, I do not lecture! It is your - and your classmates' - responsibility to present the information from the course material to one another. This means that participation is a very important part of your grade; by participation, I mean your verbal engagement in class by speaking about the readings and responding to other students' responses to the readings through in-class discussion. I will keep track of your presence/absence and your verbal participation each class period using clickers and other methods. Keep in mind that your **in-class participation** comprises 10% of your final grade. (See related section on Attendance Policy).

In order to prepare you for in-class discussions, you will complete a brief reading response each week via the Sakai forum. Each class period for which there will be an in-class discussion (these weeks are marked with an asterisk on the syllabus), you will find a Sakai thread. This thread will contain one big, open-ended question about a central theme behind the readings. You should frame your reading response as an answer to this question based on your synthesis of the readings. The response should be at least 300 words. I encourage you to read others'

responses to the readings, as I will often mention points from students' responses to get the in-class discussion going that day. *The Sakai forum will close at 9 am on the day of that class period, so you must have your reading response for that day posted before then, or you will not receive credit.* Altogether, these **reading responses** comprise 25% of your final grade.

There is a **midterm exam** that will be administered in class before Spring Break. You will be responsible for knowing all the content we have covered in the course up to that point. The exam will contain multiple-choice and short-answer format questions. The midterm exam comprises 15% of your final grade.

There is a **group project** in which you will work with a group of 4 to create a brief informational video that presents an in-depth look at the work/home/school disparities for a type of inequality beyond race/class/gender (e.g. [dis]ability, religion, sexuality). On Sakai you will find a list of the available topics, as well as specific instructions for what is expected in this group project and the rubric by which you will be graded. Your group members will be randomly assigned. We will hold a viewing party the last day of class to watch the videos together. Each group member will evaluate the others' contributions so as to encourage an even distribution of work among group members. You will submit this information via a form on Sakai. This group project comprises 25% of your final grade.

There is a 6-8 page **final paper** due on the day during which our final exam is scheduled (May 4). In this paper, you should conduct a literature review that examines the existing research on a race/class/gender disparity in an area that we have not discussed (e.g. criminal justice, the media, the environment, consumption) There is a list of available topics on Sakai. You are encouraged to select your own topic, but if you go this route, you *must* double-check with me about the topic before you start. The paper should *both* review the scholarly literature on your topic and make an overall argument about what this literature suggests about inequality more generally (i.e. what theoretical perspective[s] it supports). You can find a list of examples of literature reviews, as well as more specific instructions on Sakai for what is expected in this paper, including the rubric that I will use to grade it. This final paper is worth 25% of your final grade.

Grades

Your grade in this course will be based on the following:

- In-class participation - every class period - 10%
- Reading responses - every class period which is starred (*) on the syllabus - 25%
- Mid-term exam - last class before Spring Break - 15%
- Group project - last day of class - 25%
- Final paper - final exam period - 25%

Grading scale:

- A+ 97-100

- A 93-96.9
- A- 90-92.9
- B+ 87-89.9
- B 84-86.9
- B- 80-83.9
- C+ 77-79.9
- C 74-76.9
- C- 70-73.9
- D 60-69.9
- F 0-59.9

Extra credit opportunity: One opportunity for extra credit will be available in this course. This extra credit assignment is optional, but no further chances to improve your grade will be offered. For this assignment, you must attend a talk related to social inequality given by a social science academic. Then you must complete the related summary assignment, which should be approximately 500 words (see Sakai for further details of what is required).

Relevant talks may include presentations in several seminars around campus, including the Sociology Department's [Jensen Lecture series](#), the Sociology Department's [Race Workshop](#), research lectures at the [Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity](#), lectures at the [Duke Population Research Institute \(DuPRI\)](#), lectures at the [Duke Network Analysis Center \(DNAC\)](#), the Sanford school's [distinguished lecture series](#), and the Kenan Institute of Ethics' [Monday seminar series](#).

You may certainly attend a talk which takes place elsewhere (including at UNC), so long as it is academic in nature and relevant to social inequality - check with me if you are unsure. Many lecture series stop well before the end of the semester, so be sure to check the schedules and plan ahead.

Successfully completing this assignment may earn you up to a maximum of 10 points (which may be adjusted depending on total participation points are available in class; basically, it should be enough to bump you from a B- to B, for example, but won't make a C into an A). Summaries that are incomplete, do not deeply engage with material, or relate tangentially to social inequality topics will not receive full credit. All assignments are due by midnight on the last day of classes for the semester.

Attendance and Deadline Policy

This class emphasizes class discussion and participation, meaning attending class is critical. Students must notify the instructor in advance if they will miss class. No absences will be excused without email submission of the forms required as per Duke policies, including the

Notification of Varsity Athletic Participation (NOVAP) form, Religious Observance Form, Short-Term Illness Notification Form (STINF), official notification of a job interview, or other official Duke forms available for emergencies. Further information on Duke's policies regarding missed classes can be found [here](#). Students are responsible for getting materials from missed classes.

Work turned in after posted due dates or missed during unexcused absences will receive a zero. Should students miss an exam, they must provide required documentation for their absence according to the guidelines above and arrange to take a make-up exam outside of class time as soon as possible after the exam date.

Laptop & Phone Policy

We will engage with lots of different kinds of material in this class - such as videos, comic strips, live polls, and interactive websites. This means you will need a laptop, tablet, or phone for class. Please bring one of these to each class period. However, you are permitted to use this technology *during designated times only*. This means that you *may not* use your laptop, tablet, or phone at any other time in class. I will be very strict about enforcing this. Violating this policy will result in a 0 for participation for that day.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to act in accordance with Duke's [Community Standard](#). Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to cheating (intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise) and plagiarism (knowingly representing the words of another as one's own in any academic exercise). Violations of the Duke Community Standard will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Required Texts

- Grusky, David B. and Szonja Szelenyi. 2007. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (NOTE: I refer to this text through the syllabus as "G&S." This text is also available as an [electronic resource](#) through the library).
- Assigned readings which are not in G&S are available on Sakai or as direct links through the syllabus.

Commitment to Diversity

Duke is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse community. This is also a personal commitment that I take very seriously and expect each of you to undertake as well. That means our classroom will be a place where everyone - regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, cultural heritage or nationality; religious or political beliefs; sexual orientation or gender

identity; or socioeconomic, veteran or ability status - has the right to inclusion, respect, agency, and voice. If there is anything I can do to ensure that the course and/or class meets this standard in your case, please reach out to me via email or by visiting me during my office hours.

Course Outline

Introduction

1. Thurs 1/11 - Introducing the Form

- Read syllabus
- Familiarize yourself with the Sakai site
- Fill out “Getting to Know You” survey

2. Tues 1/16 - Introducing the Content

- Watch “Social Construction” video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5U2XAJNazik>
- Persell, Caroline Hodges. 1990. “Becoming a Member of Society Through Socialization.” Pp. 98-107 in *Understanding Society: An Introduction to Sociology*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Rohlinger, Deana A. 2007. “Privilege.” *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. George Ritzer, ed.

Defining the Axes of Inequality

1. *Thurs 1/18 - Achieved versus Ascribed Elements of Status

- Linton, Ralph. 1936. “Status and Role.” Pp. 113-131 in *The Study of Man*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Turner, Ralph H. 1960. “Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System.” *American Sociological Review* 25(6): 855-867.

2. *Tues 1/23 - Categorical versus Continuous Group Boundaries

- Massey, Douglas. 2007. “How Stratification Works.” Pp. 1-6 in *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.
- Blau, Peter. 1974. “Parameters of Social Structure.” *American Sociological Review* 39:615-635. **Focus on the highlighted sections on pp. 616-619.**
- Lamont, Michele, Sabrina Pendergrass, and Mark Pachucki. 2015. “Symbolic Boundaries.” Pp. 850-855 in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. 2nd ed. Vol. 23.

3. *Thurs 1/25 - Material and Nonmaterial Resources

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 46-58 in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York, NY: Greenwood.
- Lin (pp. 594-596) in G&S: "Social Networks and Status Attainment."
- Burt (pp. 597-601) in G&S: "Structural Holes."

Types of Inequality

1. *Tues 1/30 - Race

- Omi and Winant (pp. 222-227) in G&S: "Racial Formation in the United States."
- Mora, G. Cristina. 2014. "Preface." Pp. xi-xv in *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Listen to the podcast *Scene on Radio's* Seeing White series: episode 4 "Citizen Thind." <http://podcast.cdsporch.org/episode-40-citizen-thind-seeing-white-part-10/>

2. *Thurs 2/1 - Class and Socioeconomic Status

- Marx (pp. 36-47) in G&S: "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism."
- Wright (pp. 48-55) in G&S: "Class Counts."
- Weber (pp. 56-67) in G&S: "Class, Status, Party."
- Veblen, Thorstein. 1899. "Conspicuous Consumption." Pp. 64-70 from *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York, NY: MacMillan.

3. *Tues 2/6 - Gender

- Lorber (pp. 318-325) in G&S: "The Social Construction of Gender."
- Martin, Karin A. 1998. "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools." *American Sociological Review* 63(4):494-511.
- Pascoe, C.J. 2007. "Dude, You're a Fag: Adolescent Male Homophobia." Pp. 52-71 in *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

4. * Thurs 2/8 - Intersectionality

- Watch Kimberle Crenshaw's TED talk, "The Urgency of Intersectionality": https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. "The Matrix of Domination." Pp. 221-238 in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman. **Focus on the highlighted sections.**
- McCall, Leslie. 2005. "The Complexity of Intersectionality." *Signs* 30(3):1771-1800. **Focus on the highlighted sections on pp. 1771-1774 and 1784-1791.**

Theoretical Perspectives on Inequality

1. *Tues 2/13 - Functionalism

- Kingsley & Moore (pp. 16-19) in G&S: “Some Principles of Stratification.”
- Parsons, Talcott. 1953. “The Universalistic-Achievement Pattern.” Pp. 182-191 in *The Social System*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Freeman, Richard. 2012. “(Some) Inequality is Good for You.” Pp. 63-87 in *The New Gilded Age: The Critical Inequality Debates of Our Time*. Grusky, David and Tamar Kricheli-Katz, eds. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

2. *Thurs 2/15 - Conflict Theory

- Parkin, Frank. 1974. “Strategies of Social Closure in Class Formation.” Pp. 1-12 in *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*.
- Mills (pp. 100-111) in G&S: “The Power Elite.”
- Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 1976. “The Correspondence Principle.” Pp. 131-141 in *Schooling in Capitalist America*. New York, NY: Routledge.

3. *Tues 2/20 - The Social-Ecological Approach

- Gladwell, Malcolm. 2008. “The Matthew Effect.” Pp. 15-34 in *Outliers*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Co.
- Schelling, Thomas C. 1978. “Sorting and Mixing: Race and Sex.” Pp. 137-147 in *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
- Moro, Andrea. 2009. “Statistical Discrimination.” *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*.

4. *Thurs 2/22 - The Cognitive/Cultural Approach

- Ridgeway, Cecilia. 2011. Excerpts on “Status Characteristics Theory.” Pp. 46-51 in *Framed by Gender*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Listen to NPR story “What Does Modern Prejudice Look Like?” <http://www.npr.org/2016/10/17/498219482/how-the-concept-of-implicit-bias-came-into-being>
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. Excerpts on “Taste.” Pp. 174-178 and 186 in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook. 2001. “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:415-444. **Focus on highlighted section on pp. 415-429.**

Charting Inequalities Across Domains

1. *Tues 2/27 - The Labor Market, the Workplace, and Consumer/Financial Sector I: Getting a Job

- Goldin and Rouse (pp. 351-364) in G&S: “Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of ‘Blind’ Auditions on Female Musicians.”
- Bertrand and Mullainathan (pp. 254-259) in G&S: “Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination.”
- Rivera, Lauren A. 2011. “Ivies, Extracurriculars, and Exclusion: Elite Employers’ Use of Educational Credentials.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 29:71-90.

2. *Thurs 3/1 - The Labor Market, the Workplace, and Consumer/Financial Sector II: Earnings, Income, and Wealth

- Babcock et al. 2003. “Nice Girls Don’t Ask.” *Harvard Business Review*.
- England (pp. 421-425) in G&S: “Devaluation and the Pay of Comparable Male and Female Occupations.”
- Shapiro et al. 2013. “The Roots of the Widening Racial Wealth Gap: Explaining the Black-White Economic Divide.” *Institute on Assets and Social Policy*. Research and Policy Brief.
- Watch “An Introduction to Thomas Piketty’s Capital in the 21st Century.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpGG3_pBHUc

3. *Tues 3/6 - The Labor Market, the Workplace, and Consumer/Financial Sector III: Consumption and Spending

- NYC Consumer Affairs. 2015. “From Cradle to Cane: The Cost of Being a Female Consumer.” **Focus on the Executive Summary (pp. 5-14).**
- Charron-Chenier, Raphael, Joshua J. Fink, and Lisa A. Keister. 2017. “Race and Consumption: Black and White Disparities in Household Spending.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3(1):50-67. **One of the authors of this study will Skype in to be a part of our discussion. Be sure to read the article very carefully and come in prepared with good questions for our guest!**

4. Thurs 3/8 - Midterm Exam

- In class midterm exam

Spring Break - (no class on 3/13 or 3/15)

1. *Tues 3/20 -The House, the Home, the Family I: Residential Segregation, Neighborhoods, and Eviction

- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. “The Construction of the Ghetto.” Pp. 17-59 in *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Watch Raj Chetty on the “Moving to Opportunity” experiment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRv3zGgJk9Q>

- Desmond, Matthew. 2015. "Forced Out." *The New Yorker*.
2. *Thurs 3/22 -The House, the Home, the Family II: Housework and Carework
 - Hochschild, Arlie and Anne Machung. 1989. "Joey's Problem." Pp. 33-58 in *The Second Shift*. New York, NY: Penguin.
 - Bittman et al. 2003. "When Does Gender Trump Money? Bargaining and Time in Household Work." *American Journal of Sociology* 109(1):186-214.
 3. *Tues 3/27 - The House, the Home, the Family III: Parenting Style and Family Structure
 - Lareau (pp. 648-659) in G&S: "Unequal Childhoods."
 - Edin, Kathryn and Maria Kefalas. 2005. "What Marriage Means." Pp. 104-137 in *Promises I Can Keep*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
 4. Tues 4/3 - Library Day
 - We will meet at Perkins (room TBD).
 - We will discuss guidelines and expectations for group projects and final paper.
 - We will assign groups and group project topics.
 - Linda Daniel, resource library for sociology, will share with us how to use the library facilities to look up social science research on inequalities, which you will need to do for the group project and final paper.
 5. *Thurs 4/5 - The School and University I: Achievement Gaps
 - Steele (pp. 276-281) in G&S: "Stereotype Threat and African-American Student Achievement."
 - Oakes, Jeannie. 1986. "Keeping Track." *Phi Delta Kappan* 68(1):12-17.
 - Calaraco, Jessica. 2011. "'I Need Help!' Social Class and Children's Help-Seeking in Elementary School." *American Sociological Review* 76(6):862-882.
 6. *Tues 4/10 - The School and University II: Attainment and Getting in to College
 - Karabel, Jerome. 2005. "The Origins of Selective Admissions. Harvard: The Quota Controversy and the Quest for Restriction." Pp. 86-109 in *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
 - Persell, Caroline Hodges and Peter W. Cookson. 1985. "Chartering and Bartering: Elite Education and Social Reproduction." *Social Problems* 33(2):114-129.

7. *Thurs 4/12 - The School and University III: Disparities in Fields of Study

- Chambers, David Wade. 1983. "Stereotypic Images of the Scientist: The Draw-A-Scientist Test." *Science Education* 67(2):255-265.
- Bottia et al. 2015. "Growing the Roots of STEM Majors: Female Math and Science High School Faculty and the Participation of Students in STEM." *Economics of Education Review* 45:14-27. **One of the authors of this study will Skype in to discuss this paper, so be sure to read it carefully and come prepared with good questions!**

8. *Tues 4/17 - Health and Well-Being I: Morbidity and Mortality

- Scott in G&S: "Life at the Top in America Isn't Just Better, It's Longer"
- House, James S. 2015. "Health, Health Care, and Health Policy in America: A Contradiction Wrapped in a Paradox Inside an Enigma" and "The Lives, Deaths, and Health of Individuals and Populations over Time and Social Strata." Pp. 1-16 and 48-70 in *Beyond Obamacare: Life, Death, and Social Policy*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

9. *Thurs 4/19 - Health and Well-Being II: Mental Health, Well-Being, and Life Satisfaction

- Wilkinson, Richard G. and Kate Pickett. 2009. Pp. 2-45 and 63-72 in *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London: Allen Lane.
- Watch PBS documentary clip "Inequality Hurts: The Unhealthy Side Effects of Economic Inequality" <http://www.pbs.org/video/pbs-newshour-inequality-hurts-the-unhealthy-side-effects-of-economic/>

10. Tues 4/24 - Group Project Viewing Party

- We will celebrate the end of the semester by watching the group videos.