GLOBAL AND LOCAL INEQUALITIES (SOCIOLOGY 325)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a broad and interdisciplinary introduction to the topic of inequality by considering historical and global trends in different forms of inequality in addition to the focus on contemporary patterns of economic and social inequality in the United States. We first consider conceptual and normative perspectives on equality/inequality and the historical context of industrialization that gave rise to classical theories of inequality in Western Europe. In this first part we also examine historical trends and contemporary patterns of inequality and poverty in the United States. We then focus on a range of different types of inequality—inequality by education, opportunities for upward mobility, gender, race/ethnicity, and immigrant status. In the last few weeks of the term, we examine inequality in the political arena, such as inequality in political participation and influence. We end with a set of readings that discusses a range of possible ways to understand public policies and other practices that can alter current patterns of social inequality.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course will only be interesting if you actively participate in it. That means attending class and demonstrating that you have read and thought about the readings for the day. I have purposely kept the reading load manageable; in exchange, I expect you to be prepared to discuss the readings in class. Class participation of this kind counts for 20 percent of your grade, with 10 percent for attendance and 10 percent for participation in discussions. An additional 10 percent of your grade will be based on your preparation of a summary and discussion topics and questions for one or two (TBA) class periods over the course of the term. There will also be an exam in the fourth week (worth 25 percent) and a final exam (worth 25 percent). The final 20 percent of your grade will be based on a group project on a form of inequality that is not discussed in class or in the readings in any substantial depth (but must be related to aspects of inequality that are discussed in class and in the readings). More information about all of these assignments will be provided in class.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Manza, Jeff and Michael Sauder, eds. 2010. Inequality and Society: Social Science Perspectives on Social Stratification. W. W. Norton. Referenced as MS below.

These books are available at Norris. All other readings will be available for downloading and printing through the Course Management System.

**CLASS RULES**

No late assignments or make-up exams will be permitted unless there is a note from a dean or some other university official that makes such a request on your behalf.

We start class 5 minutes late so that everyone can make it to class on time. Students should not interrupt class by walking in late or leaving early unless there is an unavoidable conflict.

No electronic and internet devices allowed except for accessing class materials and taking notes.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)**

**WEEK 1, MARCH 29: Theories and Concepts**

**Day 2**

(2) A. Sen, Ch. 60 (MS).

Additional: C. Jencks, Ch. 61 (MS).

**WEEK 2, APRIL 3, 5: Historical and Global Trends**

**Day 1**

(3) Firebaugh, Part I: History and measures (Chps. 1,2,4).
(4) M. Ravillion, “Are there lessons for Africa from China’s Success Against Poverty?”
(5) World Bank Global Poverty Update

**Day 2**

(6) Firebaugh, Part II (Global Patterns, Chps 5,6,8,9) and III (Explanations, Chps 10, 11, Epilogue).
WEEK 3, APRIL 10, 12: Recent Trends in the US

Day 1

(7) T. Piketty and E. Saez, Ch. 11 (MS).
(8) J. Stigliz, “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%”
(9) R. Frank, Ch. 59 (MS).

Day 2

(10) R. Blank Ch. 16 (MS).

Additional: CBO Report (Oct. 2011)

WEEK 4, APRIL 17, 19: Review and Exam

Day 1

Catch Up/Review

Day 2

FIRST EXAM

WEEK 5, APRIL 24, 26: Social Mobility by Income and Education

Day 1

(12) R. Breen and D. Rottman, Ch. 18 (MS)
(13) RSF/PEW Report on Social Mobility

Day 2

(14) G. Duncan and R. Murnane, eds., Whither Opportunity?, Chapter 1

WEEK 6, MAY 1, 3: Gender and the Family

Day 1

(15) C. Goldin, Ch. 35 (MS).

Day 2

(16) S. McLanahan, “Diverging Destinies: How Children are Faring under the Second Demographic Transition.”
WEEK 7, MAY 8, 10: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

Day 1

(18) J. Lee and F. Bean, *The Diversity Paradox*, Selections from Chapters 1, 2, and 10.
(19) D. Massey, “It’s Time for Immigration Reform.”

Day 2

(20) B. Western and B. Pettit, “Incarceration and Social Inequality.”
(21) W.J. Wilson, Ch. 31 (MS).
(22) T. Noah, “Did Immigration Create the Great Divergence?”

WEEK 8, MAY 15, 17: Inequality in Political Participation and Representation

Day 1

(23) J. Manza, Ch. 51 (MS).

Day 2


Additional: R. Freeman, Ch 52 (MS).

WEEK 9, MAY 22, 24: Public Policy and Inequality

Day 1

(27) L. Bartels, “Homer Gets a Tax Cut.”

Day 2

(29) D. Graeber, “Army of Altruists.”

Additional: Buffet, Ayres and Edlin; Wisconsin and Occupy movements.

WEEK 10, MAY 29: Review
WEEK 11: FINAL EXAM
REFERENCES TO PUBLICATIONS NOT IN ASSIGNED BOOKS


(13) RSF/PEW Report on Social Mobility: http://www.russellsage.org/blog/does-america-promote-mobility-well-other-nations.


(22) Noah, Timothy. 2010. “Did Immigration create the Great Divergence?” *Slate.com*.


