COURSE DESCRIPTION: From the violent mass displacement in Syria to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, crisis tends to unmask the sharp inequalities between and within nations that structure our social and political world. This course will consider the ways in which inequality is manifested both within and between nations through the lens of disaster, austerity, and migration, paying particular attention to socio-historical constructions of life worth saving and life which is not. Students will be asked to consider the rise of the transnational capitalist class, and how colonial legacies and sustained inequality between nations has given way to economic imperialism and increased inequality within them. In addition, we will discuss inequalities in terms of norms and representations. What kinds of inequalities are deemed acceptable in our society and which are aberrant? How are these norms reproduced in our everyday utterings and interactions? The “global” and the “local” will not be considered as discrete terms, but as two lenses for examining the same inequalities. All inequalities are global, and all inequalities are local. But what do these two lenses bring to light? What do they obscure? Can we use both simultaneously?

REQUIRED TEXTS:

*All other required readings will be made available on Canvas.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance/Participation: 10%
Class Presentation / Discussion: 15%
Two (2) Reading Response Papers*: 20%
Final Paper Proposal: 20%
Final Paper: 35%

*One response paper may be submitted for the same readings as your class presentation.

**Attendance/Participation:** Students will be required to attend all lectures and discussion sections each week. Two excused absences are allowed. Each additional absence will result in a full reduction of the attendance grade (from an A to B, for instance). While this is a large class, it is expected that you come prepared for discussion and in-class activities. Attendance and participation accounts for 10% of the final grade. *Please note that there are no exceptions to this. Your two excused absences are for any and all reasons for missing class, including illness, work, interviews, missing the bus, etc; they are not provided above and beyond other absences for which you have an excuse.

**Class Presentation/Discussion:** Each student will choose one class session to introduce the day’s topics for the course, pose a substantive discussion question, and kick-off discussion. Opening remarks should not exceed five minutes. At that point you will initiate discussion by asking your classmates a discussion question. You will sign up for presentation days on the first day of class. The class presentation/discussion is worth fifteen percent of the final grade.

**Two (2) Reading Response Papers:** Each student will choose two days in the quarter to submit a 4-5 page response paper. These papers will synthesize (not summarize) course readings and offer analysis. What are the main takeaways from the readings? How do they relate to the course more broadly? How does what you learned inform your existing knowledge on the topic? Together, these are worth 20% of the final grade. Response papers are due BEFORE we discuss the readings in class. Papers submitted after that will not be accepted. You must submit one of your papers on the day you lead class discussion. Response papers are worth ten points each, and together make up 20% of the final grade.

**Final Paper Proposal:** The final paper proposal is a two-page proposal of your final paper. The precis will be evaluated based on your presentation of a topic, argument, and evidence using sources from inside and outside the class. We will workshop these proposals in-class on the day they are due. The document and your participation in the workshop will be assessed together and account for 20% of the final grade. Proposals are **DUE IN CLASS ON Monday, February 5.**

**Final Paper:** The final paper will be a twelve to fifteen-page essay on a topic of your choice. You must engage with secondary sources from within and outside the class, and at least one
primary source. This paper will account for 35% of the final grade and is and is DUE ON
CANVAS BY Wednesday, March 21, at 11:59pm.

Late assignments (when accepted) will receive an automatic full grade reduction for each day
they are late (from an A to a B, for example).

A LITTLE NOTE: I rarely excuse absences or late assignments. Also, know that I generally
don’t need an explanation (i.e. if you have a cold or missed the bus). If you need to take a day to
yourself or turn an assignment in late, that is your prerogative and neither I or your teaching
assistant will be personally offended. Just expect to take the consequence (a reduced grade on the
assignment, an absence, etc…). That said, I also have an open door and encourage you to come
to office hours if something comes up. PLEASE do this sooner rather than later. Don’t just
disappear!

COURSE OUTLINE

Monday, January 8 – Course Introduction

Part I: Learning the Language

Wednesday, January 10 – Global Inequality 101

Monday, January 15 – NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Day)

Wednesday, January 17 – Inequality Between Countries: Beyond Modernization Theory
Review of Sociology 40, pp. 77-103.

Monday, January 22 – Inequality Within Countries: Political Economy and Distribution
David Harvey (2005) “Introduction, Chapter 1,” A Brief History of Neoliberalism, Oxford:
Oxford University Press, pp. 1-38.
Frances Fox Piven (2001), “Welfare Reform and the Economic and Cultural Reconstruction of
Low Wage Labor Markets,” The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Poverty,
Politics, and Impoverished People in the United States, Judith G. Goode & Jeff

Wednesday, January 24 – Globalization and Rising Domestic Inequality
Ethnography of Poverty, Politics, and Impoverished People in the United States, Judith
Marc H. Morial (2014), “The Great Divide of Income Inequality: A Domestic Crisis on the
World’s Stage,” Huffington Post.
Lecture/Discussion Link: “20 Facts About U.S. Inequality that Everyone Should Know”

**PART II – Post-colonial Inequalities**

**Monday, January 29 – Mexico: US Hegemony and Labor on the Border**

**Wednesday, January 31 – The Middle East: Inequality and Conflict**

**Monday, February 5 – Sub-Saharan Africa: Aid, AIDS, and Imperialism**

**PART III – Global Capitalism and US Inequality**

**Wednesday, February 7 – Time, Space, and the Structure/Culture Debate**

**Monday, February 12 – Building Inequality In / Low Wage Frontiers**

**Wednesday, February 14 – Transnational Corporations, Local Power**

**Monday, February 19 – Invisible Inequalities**

**Wednesday, February 21 – The Reconstitution of Appalachian Inequality**

**PART IV – Managing Global & Local Inequalities: Borders, Walls, and Bare Life**

**Monday, February 26 – The Global Border Regime**

**Wednesday, February 28 – Enclosure**

**Monday, March 5 – Neoliberal Imperialism at Home and Abroad**

**Wednesday, March 7 – Resisting Inequality**

**THE FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON CANVAS BY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, at 11:59pm.**