

SOCIOLOGY 169: SOCIAL INEQUALITY
University of California, Santa Cruz
Summer 2017 – Session 1 – M/W 9am-12:30pm
Dr. Megan McNamara

Office Hours: generously by appointment (before or after class, or via Skype/phone)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social inequality is simultaneously one of the most intransigent and disruptive features of contemporary life. Seemingly trivial “differences” between people – on the basis of their membership in social categories – code for substantial variation in individuals’ life chances. Sociology, broadly speaking, takes a systematic approach both to understanding the roots of inequalities and to positing solutions to the social problems that they engender. In this course, we will begin by examining the discipline’s key theoretical approaches to social stratification. Then, we will use those theories as a framework through which to analyze a cross-section of prevailing social inequalities in the United States, with special emphasis on institutionalized racism.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow*. New York: The New Press. ISBN: 1595586431

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted*. New York: Crown. ISBN: 978-0-5534-4743-9

Grusky, David B., ed. 2014. *Social Stratification* (Fourth Edition). Boulder, CO: Westview.
ISBN: 978-0-8133-4671-7

Any additional texts will be posted on Canvas. Readings should be read prior to the class date under which each is listed. This course moves extremely quickly, so keeping up on the readings is imperative to your success. If you get overwhelmed by the readings, PLEASE come talk to me so we can work out a strategy to support your learning. I am here to help you!

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

The course will take place primarily in lecture format (approximately 80%), with occasional films, close readings of texts, and/or discussions. You will have access on Canvas to all lecture slides. You are welcome to record lectures if you would like to review them later.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Content Quizzes (4) | 300 points |
| Participation | 300 points |
| Weekly Reflections (4) | 200 points |
| Final Paper | 200 points |
| Total Points for Course | 1000 points |

Final course grades for the class will be calculated in accordance with the following schema:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| A+: 980-1000 | A: 935-979 | A-: 900-934 |
| B+: 875-899 | B: 835-874 | B-: 800-834 |
| C+: 775-799 | C: 735-774 | C-: 700-734 |
| D+: 675-699 | D: 650-674 | D-: 600-649 |

F: 0-599

Content quizzes (4 quizzes X 75 points each = 300 points total; 30% of course grade): Quizzes will take place during the last 30 minutes each Monday starting the second week of class (July 3). Each quiz is worth 75 points, and there are 15 questions per quiz. Quizzes are open-note and open-book. They will cover material that we have read or discussed during the previous week. Quizzes are not cumulative. Content quizzes must be taken the day they are scheduled, and cannot be made up except in cases of extreme, unavoidable emergency. At the end of the course, I will drop your lowest quiz grade and double your highest.

Attendance and participation (10 days X 30 points per day = 300 points total; 30% of grade): Due to the extremely short time span of summer session, attendance is critical (missing one day of summer session is like missing an entire week during a normal quarter). Although I do expect everyone to participate in our group discussions, you will still earn all of your participation points each day as long as you are present and clearly making an effort, through body language and attentiveness, to engage with the class.

Weekly reflections (4 reflections X 50 points = 200 points total; 20% of course grade)

Each Friday at 6pm for the first four weeks of class, you will submit a reflection on Canvas. You can find the prompts and instructions on Canvas. Reflections are 2-3 pages long (500-750 words).

Final paper (200 points; 20% of course grade): The final paper will be due on Canvas on Friday, July 28 at MIDNIGHT. You will be able to access the prompt on Canvas under “Assignments” in mid-July. You will have one earlier due date (Monday, July 24) for your introductory paragraph and outline (to be discussed in greater detail in class).

Extra credit opportunity: I offer one opportunity to get extra credit, which adds up to a possible total of 20 points (2% of your total grade): if you write me a solid couple of paragraphs) to introduce yourself and tell me what you’re up to in life and what interests you outside of school, you will receive 20 points toward your final grade. The prompt can be found on Canvas, and should be submitted there as well. This offer expires on Monday, July 3 at 9 a.m.

CLASS PREPARATION AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Please come to class prepared and on time. “Prepared” means that you have **done the reading on the syllabus for that date**, and you’re ready to engage in course activities and to discuss the readings. Feel free to bring drinks, snacks, etc. – whatever you need to be comfortable for the entire class session. You will be able to download the Powerpoint slides for each day’s lectures prior to the start of lecture (sometimes they may be available the night before, but I cannot promise to post them early on all class dates).
2. Although we will sometimes be discussing the ideas from the readings in class, most of the lecture material that I will present will NOT be in the readings, so coming to class and taking good notes for yourself is the only way for you to reliably learn the all the course material. You are welcome to record my lectures if you wish to review them again later.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are struggling with any aspect of this class, please come talk to me. I know that some of the material is difficult, and I also understand that things happen in life that can make it hard to succeed in school. One of my main purposes here is to be a source of support for you, but I can't help you if I don't know what is going on. If you are having trouble, reach out to me as soon as possible. I am here to help!

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN THIS COURSE:

1. **Set up your Canvas notifications properly:** I send out messages to the entire class using the “Announcements” feature. In order not to miss any messages from me, please go to **Account → Notifications → Course Activities** and then toggle the setting under “Announcements” to “Notify me right away.” This will ensure that you get an email copy of any announcements I send. I will begin using this feature exclusively to communicate with the class after the first day of the quarter.
2. **Keep a hard copy of the syllabus** (or download it onto your favorite device) and put it somewhere that you can easily pull it up on a regular basis. You will need to look at it multiple times each week to see your reading assignments. You will always be able to find the cleanest and most recent copy of the syllabus on Canvas under the “Syllabus” tab.

MISCELLANEOUS HOUSEKEEPING

1. **Make an office hours appointment**, even if you're not struggling. I would love to explore whatever you're interested in having a conversation about! If you are struggling, or are dealing with a challenging situation in your out-of-school life that is affecting (or could affect) your academic performance, please tell me. I do expect compliance with deadlines and requirements, but I am also not inflexible about the complexities of real life.
2. There will not be any quizzes on Canvas, but I will use it regularly as an online grade book for the quizzes. You can check up on your cumulative quiz grade and reflection grade anytime by logging in. You will also find any extra readings, the most recent copy of the syllabus, and any written assignment prompts online. You will submit your extra credit assignment on Canvas, should you choose to complete it.
3. Feel to **be in email communication** about anything, at any time, but please allow 24 hours for a response (and weekends don't count - I *may* get back to you in 24 hours, but I can't promise to). If you don't hear back from me, please resend your email. I get a ton of emails, and once in a while, I miss something.
4. **Self-acknowledgement is both allowed and encouraged.** If you go out on a limb and try something that's scary to you and you're willing to be acknowledged for it, tell me. I will give you a high five and shout, “Yay, you!”
5. **Classroom decorum:** some of our discussions may provoke feelings of discomfort, which can and often do arise when people confront issues of race. Please be attentive to communicating your opinions respectfully, and extend the same courtesy as you consider and respond to your classmates' thoughts and experiences.
6. **Please keep all your graded content quizzes.** In a perfect world, things wouldn't get lost and grade books would always be perfectly accurate...but if this were a perfect world, social scientists would have a lot of spare time on their hands.

7. **Changes to the syllabus:** Sometimes, the pace of an individual course may require me to make changes to the syllabus. If I make changes, I will send post a new version electronically and notify you of its existence.
8. **No visible/audible cellphones are permitted in class.**
9. **No laptops are permitted** without individual permission from me.
10. **If you have DRC accommodations,** please make me aware of them by email no later than Friday of Week 1.
11. **Cheating/dishonesty:** I consider any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating on the quizzes/exams or plagiarizing from the Web in your writing, to be a serious violation of the University's norms of conduct. Students who plagiarize or cheat on exams will receive an F in the course and will be reported to the college administration for further sanctions. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, in-class cheating, out-of-class cheating, plagiarism, knowingly assisting another student in cheating or plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to college staff, faculty, administrators or other officials. Note: plagiarism also includes submitting work that you wrote for another class.

LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS, AND EXAMS (NOTE: dates subject to change)

MONDAY, JUNE 26

Readings: None due prior to the start of the course.

Lecture Topic: Classic and contemporary sociological theories of social inequality; principles of stratification

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

Readings: Grusky: pp. 682-686 (Omi and Winant); pp. 687-695 (Saperstein and Penner)

Lecture Topic: Race and ethnicity; systems of privilege

Reflection #1 due at 6pm on Friday, June 30

MONDAY, JULY 3

Readings: Grusky: pp. 330-338 (Ehrenreich); pp. 347-356 (Wilson)

Lecture Topic: Wealth, poverty, and class

Quiz #1

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

Readings: Grusky: pp. 747-751 (Bertrand and Mullainathan); pp. 757-764 (Pager)

Lecture Topic: Work

Reflection #2 due at 6pm on Friday, July 7

MONDAY, JULY 10

Readings: *Evicted* (entire book)

Lecture Topic: Housing

Quiz #2

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12

Readings: Grusky: pp. 752-756 (Steele); pp. 587-595 (Brand and Xie); pp. 1013-1021 (Laureau)

Lecture Topic: Education

Reflection #3 due on at 6pm on Friday, July 14

MONDAY, JULY 17

Readings: *The New Jim Crow*: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5

Lecture Topic: Mass incarceration and the criminal justice system

Quiz #3

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

Readings: Grusky: pp. 820-830 (Goldin and Rouse); pp. 803-806 (Hochschild); pp. 973-981 (Ridgeway)

Lecture Topic: Gender and sexuality

Reflection #4 due at 6pm on Friday, July 21

MONDAY, JULY 24

Readings: Grusky: pp. 1046-1049 (Siegrist and Marmot); pp. 1050-1055 (Lutfey and Freese); pp. 1056-1065 (Miech et al.)

Lecture Topic: Health; Ability and Disability

Quiz #4

*****Final Paper outline due as a hard copy in class*****

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

Readings: Grusky: pp. 1132-1138 (Stiglitz); pp. 1139-1149 (Firebaugh)

Lecture Topic: Inequality in the global context; the future of inequality

*****FINAL PAPER DUE ON CANVAS BY 6PM ON FRIDAY, JULY 28*****