Social Inequality in America

Sociology 2110
Fall 2016
T/Th. 2:30-4:00 pm
Seigle L002

Professor: Caitlyn Collins
Email: c.collins@wustl.edu
Office hours: Th. 12-2 pm
Office location: Seigle 218 (in the Sociology Dept. Seigle 213)

TAs: Anna Christensen Sydney Curtis
Email: a.christensen@wustl.edu s.curtis@wustl.edu
Office hours: Tue. 4-5:30 pm Mon. 3-4:30 pm
Office location: Sociology Dept. Seigle 213 Sociology Dept. Seigle 213

Course Description:

Americans face different challenges and opportunities depending on their race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. This class examines these intersecting categories from a sociological perspective – not simply as ways to classify people, but as social constructions that help to explain social inequality. We examine how these systems are justified and how they create privilege and oppression in a variety of institutional contexts, including popular culture, family life, education, the criminal justice system, and the labor force. Introductory level, no prerequisites.

Required Texts:


* Remainder of readings available on Blackboard (https://bb.wustl.edu/).

Students are required to attend all lectures and complete all reading assignments prior to the first class of each topic listed below so that you are well versed in the material we will discuss together. You are assigned to read approximately 30-50 pages per week – it is essential that you complete these because they are the foundation of the course. The readings are engaging and sometimes provocative. I do not expect you to agree with everything you read, but rather to develop the skills to sociologically analyze the readings. Some of the readings for the class are difficult so you should not underestimate the amount of time necessary to finish your assignments. I suggest that you read actively: underline, highlight, take notes, and comment in the margins.
Evaluation:

Exams (2 x 20 points) 40 points
Writing assignments (4 x 10 points) 40 points
In-class participation 20 points

Exams (40 points): Examinations will be short answer format. Make-up examinations will be given only to those absent for university-approved reasons, and must be conducted within one week of the exam date. You must make arrangements for a make-up exam prior to the test date. Exams are Oct. 20 and Dec. 8. The second exam is not cumulative; it covers material for the second part of the course. There is no cumulative final exam for this course.

Writing Assignments (40 points): These will be two- to four-page assignments. Assignments will be posted to Blackboard at least one week before their due date, and must be uploaded to Blackboard by the start of class on the date stated on the syllabus. Assignments submitted after class begins (even one minute later, since Blackboard time stamps submissions!) on their assigned day will be docked one full letter grade, and will continue to be docked another letter grade for each subsequent day they are late. No assignments will be accepted via email; you must upload the file in the proper location on Blackboard for it to be graded. We will grade and comment on your assignments and return them to you via Blackboard.

Effective written communication is one of the primary skills you should acquire at Washington University. If you would benefit from additional assistance (everyone would!), I strongly encourage you to head to the Writing Center on campus (http://writingcenter.wustl.edu/). Your tuition pays for it already, so take advantage of this resource! It’s a great idea to bring copies of your written assignments there before submitting them in order to turn in your very best work.

In-class participation (20 points): This class thrives on the participation of its students, and the quality of our discussions depends on each of you. Participation means attending class, demonstrating that you have read the assigned readings, contributing productively to class discussion, and asking relevant questions. Our discussions are a vital part of this course, so a class cannot be made up simply by copying a classmate’s notes.

Participation Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude / Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Actively supports, engages, listens to peers</td>
<td>Makes sincere effort to interact with peers</td>
<td>Limited interaction with peers</td>
<td>Virtually no interaction with peers</td>
<td>No interaction with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>Arrives fully prepared to every class</td>
<td>Arrives mostly if not fully prepared to class</td>
<td>Preparation inconsistent</td>
<td>Rarely prepared</td>
<td>Never prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>Plays an active role in discussions</td>
<td>Participates constructively in discussions</td>
<td>When prepared, participates constructively</td>
<td>Rarely participates</td>
<td>Never participates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Quality of Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments advance level and depth of dialogue</th>
<th>Makes relevant comments based on assigned material</th>
<th>When prepared, makes relevant comments based on assigned material</th>
<th>Comments vague, rarely connected to assigned material</th>
<th>Never comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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## Overall Contribution

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group dynamic, level of discussion better because of student’s presence</th>
<th>Group dynamic, level of discussion occasionally better because of student’s presence</th>
<th>Group dynamic and level of discussion not affected by student’s presence</th>
<th>Demonstrates lack of interest or group dynamic not affected or harmed by student’s presence</th>
<th>Demonstrates lack of interest or group dynamic not affected or harmed by student’s presence</th>
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**Final grades:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I do not curve individual exams, assignments, or final grades. The grade you receive in this class is the grade you earn. If you are concerned about your grade, meet with me immediately.

**Class Environment:** Our class environment will be one of mutual respect and professionalism between instructor and students. The topics in this course are often controversial, and you will not always agree with the arguments presented in the readings, lectures, discussions, or class activities. You are encouraged to voice your opinions about these issues, but they also needed to be supported with evidence. To ensure a stimulating, tolerant, lively, safe class discussion, please bear in mind the following points:

- We are all knowledgeable in different ways. Each of us has something to learn and something to teach. Respect one another’s knowledge and life experiences.
- Be aware of the particular set of knowledge and assumptions you bring to the classroom, and approach discussions with an open mind.
- Hostile, damaging words and actions will not be tolerated – this includes racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, or ableist language.
- Speak one at a time and refrain from interrupting.
- We demonstrate professionalism and respect for our classmates and the instructor by maintaining our focus on the lectures or discussions. Therefore, cell phones should never come out of your pocket or backpack during class. Laptops may be used for the purpose of taking notes only. I take this point very seriously, and will deduct points from your participation grade when it becomes clear that you are not actively listening during class.
- Appreciate different styles of learning, sharing, and participating. Try to draw out quieter students, but respect people’s comfort levels and appreciate those who are active listeners,
even if they do not participate vocally. Those who are more assertive should practice refraining from dominating the conversation.

- Please ask questions! If one student is confused, others likely are as well. There are no silly questions, and it improves everyone’s understanding when you ask questions.
- Show up on time, and show up prepared. Regular attendance, reading, and note taking are expected. You will be held accountable for all lecture material and I will not provide class notes to absent students.
- The class environment is much more pleasant when we know one another’s names; please make an effort to learn each other’s first names so we can address one another.

**Office Hours:** I and the TAs maintain weekly office hours to meet with you and address any questions you may have about the class. *I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these office hours.* In rare cases you may schedule an appointment to meet with me if you are unable to meet during my regular office hours.

**Using Blackboard:** Students are expected to regularly check Blackboard. Course readings (not found in the textbooks), the syllabus, assignments, grades, announcements, and course documents will be posted here.

**Email Policy:** Please check your email regularly, and write us (the TAs first, then me if they are unable to answer your question) with any questions about assignments or the course material. You can usually expect replies to emails within 24 hours, 9 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday. For example, if you write me at 9 pm on Friday, you can expect to hear from me by 5 pm on Monday. I may not check email in the evenings and on weekends. I will not respond to questions when answers can be found: 1) in the syllabus; 2) in your class notes; 3) from a classmate. This means I won’t respond to emails such as: “What are this week’s readings?”, “When is the next quiz?”, “I was absent last week; what did I miss?”, or “I don’t remember what the theory of intersectionality is – can you remind me?” Emails should be written professionally – with a greeting, your question, and a signature.

**Help amongst Classmates:** Use your fellow classmates as a resource throughout the semester. Please turn to the person seated to your right and left, and exchange names and email addresses here. Contact one another when you need clarification about assignments, missed class and need notes, want to study before exams, etc. Help one another!

Name: ______________________________ Email: ______________________________

Name: ______________________________ Email: ______________________________
Course Schedule (* = posted on Blackboard)

The syllabus is subject to change in order to meet the needs of the course. I will announce changes in class, and it is your responsibility to remain up to date on course assignments, requirements, and announcements.

UNIT 1. THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENCE AND INEQUALITY

Aug. 30: Introduction

Sep. 1, 6, 8: The Sociological Perspective, Manufacturing Identities and Differences
  • Newman, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 pp. 32-42
  • *Fischer et al., “Inequality by Design”
  • Wildman and Davis, “Making Systems of Privilege Visible” (in Ore, pp. 589-594)
  • *Johnson, “Privilege as Paradox”

Sep. 13, 15: The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity
  • Newman, Ch. 2 pp. 42-52
  • Omi and Winant, “Racial Formations” (in Ore, pp. 19-29)
  • *Lee, Bean, and Sloane, “Beyond Black and White”
  • *Tatum, “Defining Racism: ‘Can We Talk?’”

Sep. 20, 22: The Social Construction of Class
  • Newman, Ch. 2 pp. 52-57
  • *Rank, “Rethinking American Poverty”
  • Mantios, “Media Magic” (in Ore, pp. 91-99)
  • Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed” (in Ore, pp. 655-668)

Sep. 27: **Writing Assignment 1 Due** (10 points)

Sep. 27, 29: The Social Construction of Gender
  • Newman, Ch. 2 pp. 57-64
  • Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender” (in Ore, pp. 112-119)
  • *Johnson, “Patriarchy”
  • *Pascoe, “Dude, You’re a Fag”

Oct. 4, 6: The Social Construction of Sexuality
  • Newman, Ch. 2 pp. 64-70
  • *Katz, “The Invention of Heterosexuality”
  • *Levy, excerpts from Female Chauvinistic Pigs
  • *Rupp and Taylor, “Straight Girls Kissing”
  • *Avicolli, “He Defies You Still”
**Writing Assignment 2 Due** (10 points)

**Intersectionality**
- *Hankivsky, “Intersectionality 101”
- *Williams, “The Glass Escalator”
- Wingfield, “Racializing the Glass Escalator” (in Ore, pp. 363-378)

**Expressing Inequalities – Prejudice and Discrimination**
- Newman, Ch. 5 pp. 157-203

**Fall Break, no class**

**FIRST EXAMINATION** (20 points)

UNIT 2. MAINTAINING INEQUALITIES: UNEQUAL SYSTEMS OF PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION

**Media**
- Newman, Ch. 3 pp. 95-112
- Alsultany, “The Prime-Time Plight of the Arab-American” (in Ore, pp. 443-461)
- Thompson, “How the Right Made Racism Sound Fair” (in Ore, pp. 490-499)

**Families**
- Newman, Ch. 4 pp. 114-140
- Rubin, “Families on the Fault Line” (in Ore, pp. 253-263)
- Stacey, “Gay and Lesbian Families are Here” (in Ore, pp. 277-286)

**Writing Assignment 3 Due** (10 points)

**Education**
- Newman, Ch. 4 pp. 141-153
- Kahlenberg, “The Return of ‘Separate but Equal’” (in Ore, pp. 290-296)
- Miceli, “Schools and the Social Control of Sexuality” (in Ore, pp. 318-327)
- *Downey and Gibbs, “How Schools Really Matter”

**Economy and Work**
• Newman, Ch. 6
• Wilson, “Jobless Ghettos” (in Ore, pp. 328-338)
• Pager, Western, and Bonikowski, “Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market” (in Ore, pp. 339-359)

Nov. 22:  **Writing Assignment 4 Due** (10 points)

Nov. 22:  *Law and Criminal Justice*
  • Newman, Ch. 7 pp. 251-293
  • Western and Pettit, “Beyond Crime and Punishment” (in Ore, pp. 400-406)
  • Nguyen, “Separated by Deportation” (in Ore, pp. 623-637)

Nov. 24:  *Thanksgiving break, no class*

Nov. 29:  *Law and Criminal Justice*

UNIT 3. SOCIAL CHANGE: LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

Dec. 1:  *Resistance and Social Change*
  • Newman, Ch. 9
  • Ore, “Resistance and Social Change” (pp. 699-710)
  • Collins, “Toward a New Vision” (in Ore, pp. 711-725)

Dec. 6:  *Wrap-Up and Review*

Dec. 8:  **SECOND EXAMINATION** (20 points)
I have read, understand, and agree to follow the rules and guidelines outlined in this syllabus for Sociology 2110 Fall 2016.

Name _____________________

Signature ___________________ Date ________________________________