

**Department of Sociology
Harvard University
Spring 2018**

Soc 24: Introduction to Social Inequality

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Lecture information: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:00, WJH 450

OVERVIEW

Welcome to *Introduction to Social Inequality*. In this course, we will identify the basic contours of the structure and culture of social inequality in the United States and beyond through engagement with sociological research on class, race, gender, and immigration. Through our reading and active participation in lectures, we will develop answers to the central questions that motivate much sociological inquiry into inequality: Who gets what? Who is included and excluded? How and why? Should/can inequality be addressed?

OBJECTIVES

In this introductory course on social inequality, we will:

1. Develop a descriptive and analytical understanding of inequality
2. Explore central concepts through which sociologists investigate inequality.
3. Become familiar with key debates that animate contemporary research on inequality.
4. Consider and critique competing explanations for distribution and recognition conceived as two dynamic dimensions of inequality.
5. Mobilize the analytical tools learned in this course to make sense of your own experience with the various dimensions of inequality (access to resources and (mis)recognition).
6. Consider how you can address the challenges presented by inequality in the current moment (e.g. by lowering stigmatization in your immediate environment, collaborating with various NGOs, etc.).

REQUIREMENTS

In service of our objectives for the course, you are asked to:

1. Attend and contribute to the discussion in class and in section (**10% of final grade**). This means that you have to engage in thoughtful consideration of the texts. It is essential that you complete the assigned reading before each and every class session.
2. Write a response to the assigned reading for five weeks (to be chosen on week 2). Your memo (2 double-spaced pages maximum) should accurately summarize a central

argument in the reading; develop a coherent reaction to that argument; and raise a few analytical questions, which I will refer to in structuring my lectures. The response papers are due on Monday by 4pm, and are graded complete/incomplete, presuming that your paper meets a threshold of quality in the three areas listed above (**15% of your final grade**). You will not have access to the responses written by the other students until after you upload yours on the course website.

3. Write an 8 to 10 page paper (12 font; double-spaced) connecting topics covered in the required readings and lecture (prompts will be offered) (**30% of final grade**). **Due on March 9th**.
4. Take a final examination (**25% of your final grade**). The exam is on **May 12th**.
5. Develop as a small team project a strategy to address inequality, drawing on the lecture on social engagement to be delivered by Amy Schalet on March 29nd. This can take the form of writing an op-ed or a blog, or writing a short policy paper. Each student will write a separate paper and be graded individually (**20% of your final grade**).

Thus, final grades will be determined as follows:

Participation and attendance in lectures and sections: 10%

Reading memos: 15%

Mid-term paper: 30%

Final exam: 25%

Public engagement exercise: 20%

GENERAL POLICIES

To prevent misunderstandings, we agree to the following policies for this course:

1. Late midterm/final papers will be automatically graded lower, at the rate of 1/3 of a letter grade per day (e.g. an A- becomes a B+). Late response papers will receive a grade of incomplete.
2. Students should be aware that in this course collaboration of any sort on the paper assignments is not permitted (except for the public engagement exercise). All work should be entirely your own and must use appropriate citation practices to acknowledge the use of books, articles, websites, lectures, discussions, etc., that you have consulted to complete your assignments (you may find the American Sociological Association Style Guide a useful resource).
3. Many students find it useful to form study groups to prepare for exams; I encourage this sort of preparation if you find it useful.
4. Other guidelines: 1. Be on time. When we take roll, we do so only once— at the beginning of class. 2. Final grades are final. 3. **Students can only use their laptop in class to take notes. Phones are not permitted.** Violation of this policy will strongly affect your participation grade due to the pedagogical importance of the policy and out of fairness to your fellow students. 4. I do not give make-up exams or incomplete grades, except under the most extreme circumstances. If you encounter such an emergency, you should contact me before the test is administered, and you must verify your emergency. 5. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that we receive completed assignments. 6. A great deal of this

course involves class discussion. Please respect the following rules of good discussion: a) be respectful listeners to your fellow students; b) try to focus your discussion on broader society, social theory and course concepts and not personal stories; c) encourage everyone to contribute, not just a few talkative students; d) welcome all political and ideological perspectives and give them fair and critical consideration. 7. I cannot overemphasize the importance of regular class attendance. A substantial amount of the final exam is based on lecture material that is not covered in the readings. 8. Students with disabilities (of any kind) that may affect their ability to participate fully in the class or to complete all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to my attention promptly so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students whose first language is not English should discuss any concerns with me. I will accommodate these or related concerns, but let me know as soon as possible. 9. I will do my best to be straightforward and fair. Please let me know if you encounter any difficulties.

GRADING SYSTEM AND STANDARDS

The course will follow the grading system for Harvard College. The complete Harvard College grading system can be found online in the Handbook for Students and on the course website, but please make sure to review the following, which will be adhered to:

A, A– Earned by work whose excellent quality indicates a full mastery of the subject and, in the case of the grade of A, is of extraordinary distinction.

B+, B, B– Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities.

C+, C, C– Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.

D+, D, D– Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.

E Earned by work which is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.

If you have any problems—understanding the material, completing assignments, attendance, etc.—contact the teaching fellow or instructor as soon as possible. If we know about problems ahead of time we will be better able to solve them.

The Sociology Department's Departmental Writing Fellow is available to meet with students to discuss their papers. Please also remember that the Harvard College Writing Center is available to assist in any stage of the writing process. Information about both can be found online.

WELCOME TO THE CLASS!!! YOU WILL WORK HARD AND LEARN A LOT!!

READINGS

Most readings will be available on the course website. Students can access all required and supplemental course readings on the course website, as accessed through your "My.Harvard" website. Additional readings may be assigned.

I recommend that you buy the following books:

Joan Williams, 2016. *White Working Class. Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*. Harvard Business Review Press.

M.V. Lee Badgett, 2016. *The Public Professor: How to Use your Research to Change the World*. New York: NYU Press.

Week 1 (January 23 & 25)): Introduction: Why Study Inequality in the Current Moment?

In this introductory lesson, we will discuss an overview of the course's objectives, requirements and expectations. We will also start to define key concepts related to the course). We will see why distribution and recognition are important to understand inequality in today's world, including for meritocracy, fairness, solidarity and what may define successful societies. We will also detail the requirements of the course, and how students will be evaluated.

Charles Taylor, 1995. "The Politics of Recognition" in *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 225-256.

Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont, eds. 2009. *Successful Societies: How Institutions and Culture Affect Health*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction. Pp. 1-22.

Nancy Fraser, 2017. "From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump -- And Beyond." *American Affairs*. 1 (4): 346-64.

Recommended:

Wolfgang Streeck, 2017. "The Return of the Repressed at the Beginning of the End of Neoliberal Capitalism." in *The Great Regression*, edited by Henrich Geiselberger. London: Polity Press. Pp. 157-172.

Daniel A. Hojman and Alvaro Miranda, 2018. "Agency, Human Dignity and Subjective Well-Being." *World Development*. 101:1-15.

Week 2 (January 30 & February 1): Neoliberalism and the Growing Inequality in the Distribution of Resources

Bradford De Long, Heather Boushey, and Marshall Steinbaum, 2016. "Introduction: *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Three years Later." In *After Piketty: The Agenda for Economics and Inequality*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Peter Hall and Michèle Lamont, 2013. *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Introduction" Pp. 1-34; Chapter 1: Peter B. Evans and William H. Sewell, Jr., "Neoliberalism: Policy Regimes, International Regimes, and Social Effects." Pp. 35-68

Recommended:

Anthony B. Atkinson, 2015. *Inequality: What Can be Done?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-3

Branko Milanovic, 2016. *Global Inequality: a New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Marshall Steinbaum, 2017. "Why are Economists Giving Piketty the Cold Shoulder." *Boston Review* (May 12). <http://bostonreview.net/class-inequality/marshall-steinbaum-why-are-economists-giving-piketty-cold-shoulder>

World Inequality report <http://wir2018.wid.world/>

Week 3 (February 6 & 8): The Upper Class and the Elite (sections begin)

February 6th: Visit to Harvard university archives in the Pusey Library: Representations of elites in American higher education

Background for visit to the archives: Frank Dobbin, 2006. "Review of Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale and Princeton*." *Administrative Science Quarterly* (December).

Watch the film "Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream – Why Poverty." 59 Minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6niWzomA So>

Lauren Rivera, 2011. "Ivies, Extracurriculars, and Exclusion: Elite Employers' Use of Educational Credentials." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*. 29: 71–90.

Amy J. Binder and Andrea R. Abel, 2018. "Symbolically Maintained Inequality: How Harvard and Stanford Students Construct Boundaries among Elite Universities." Unpublished manuscript, Department of Sociology, UCSD.

Recommended:

Rachel Sherman, 2017. *Uneasy Street. The Anxieties of Affluence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, 2010. "Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States." *Politics and Society*. 38 (2): 152-204. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0032329210365042>

Ruben Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2009. *The Best of the Best: Becoming Elite at an American Boarding School*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 4 (February 13 & 15): The Upper Middle/Middle Classes and Social Mobility

Richard Reeves and Nathan Joo, 2017. *White, Still: The American Upper-Middle Class*. Brookings, October 4th. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social.../white-still-the-american-upper-middle-class/>

Emily Beller and Michael Hout, 2006. "Intergenerational Social Mobility: The United States in Comparative Perspective." *The Future of Children*. 16 (2): 19-36.
https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/16_02_02.pdf

Sean Reardon, 2011. "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations." In Richard Murnane and Greg Dundan, eds, *Whither Opportunities? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-Income Children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Pp. 91-115.

Omar Lizardo, 2014. "Taste and Logic of Practice in Distinction" in *Czech Sociological Review* 5) (3): 335-364. <http://sreview.soc.cas.cz/en/issue/171-sociologicky-casopis-czech-sociological-review-3-2014/3426>

Recommended:

Michèle Lamont, 1992. *Money, Morals and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mary Patillo, 1999. *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Steven Brint, 2017. "The Educational Backgrounds of American Business and Government Leader: Inter-Industry Variation in Recruitment from Elite Colleges and Graduate Programs." *Social Forces* 96(2): 562-590.

Week 5 (February 20 & 22): The Working Class: Education and Politics

Joan Williams, 2016. *White Working Class. Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America*. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review press. Selection

Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton, 2015. *Paying for the Party. How College Maintain Inequality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 7.

Optional: Viewing of the film “I, Daniel Blake” by Ken Loach

Recommended:

Michèle Lamont, 2000. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Annette Lareau, 2011. *Unequal Childhood: Class, Race and Family Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Part 4: Unequal Childhoods and Unequal Adulthoods.

Week 6 (February 27): Black Professionals

Guest speaker: Adia Wingfield, Washington University in St. Louis

Adia Wingfield, forthcoming. *Flat-lining: Health Care Work, Race, and Inequality in the New Economy*. Chicago: University of California Press. Chapter 1.

Weeks 6/7 (March 1 and March 6): The Poor and Social Resilience (no class on March 8th)

Listen to: Chana Joffe-Walt. 550: Three Miles. This American Life. WBEZ, Chicago. 13 March 2015. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/550/three-miles#play>

Sasha Abramsky, 2014. *The American Way of Poverty. How the Other Half Still Lives*. New York: Nation Books. Pp. 1-97.

Michèle Lamont and Mario Luis Small, 2008. “How Culture Matters: Enriching Our Understandings of Poverty.” Pp. 76-102 in David Harris and Ann Lin, eds., *The Colors of Poverty: Why Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Section:

Experiment with the Poverty Risk Calculator which estimates the likelihood that an individual will experience poverty in the future. <https://confrontingpoverty.org/>

Recommended:

Douglas Massey, 1990. "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of an Underclass." *American Journal of Sociology*. 96 (2): 329-357.

Wim Van Oorschot and Loek Halman, 2010. "Blame or Fate, Individual or Social" *European Societies*. 2 (1): 1-28.

Matthew Desmond, 2012. "Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty." *American Journal of Sociology*. 118 (1): 88-133.

Optional: Viewing of documentary film "The Land of the Free" by Vadim Jean

NO CLASS WEEK OF MARCH 12: WINTER BREAK

Week 8 (March 20 & 22): Race and Inequality

March 22: Lecture by Derek Robey on findings from the American Mosaic Project.

<https://cla.umn.edu/sociology/graduate/collaboration-opportunities/american-mosaic-project-amp>

Edward E. Telles and Christina A. Sue, 2009. "Race Mixture: Boundary Crossing in Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 35: 129-36

Fang Gong, Jun Xu and David T. Takeuchi, 2017. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Perceptions of Everyday Discrimination." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. 3 (4): 506-521.

Jason E. Shelton, 2017. "A Dream Differed? Privileged Blacks and Whites' Beliefs about Racial Inequality." *Du Bois Review*. 14 (1): 73-91.

Recommended:

Paul Hanselman, Sarah K. Bruch, Adam Gamoran, and Geoffrey D. Borman, 2014. "Threat in Context: School Moderation of the Impact of Social Identity Threat on Racial/Ethnic Achievement Gaps." *Sociology of Education*. 87 (2): 106-124.

Prudence Carter, 2003. "'Black' Cultural Capital, Status Positioning and Schooling Conflicts for Low-income African American Youth." *Social Problems*. 50 (1): 136-155.

Michèle Lamont, Graziella Moraes Silva, Jessica Welburn, Joshua Guetzkow, Nissim Mizrahi, Elisa Reis and Hanna Herzog, 2016. *Getting Respect: Responding to Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil and Israel*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 9 (March 27 & 29): How to Create Social Change? Public Engagement

Guest speaker (March 29): Amy Schalet, University of Massachusetts- Amherst

M.V. Lee Badgett, 2016. *The Public Professor: How to Use your Research to Change the World*. New York: NYU Press.

Recommended:

Linda R. Tropp, 2017. *Making Research Matter; A Psychologist's Guide to Public Engagement*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Chapter 11: Franco-Zamudo and Regina Langhout, "Teaching and Mentoring: how to Involve Students in Engaged Scholarship."

Week 10 (April 3 and 5): Immigration

Guest speaker (April 5): Steffen Mau, Humbolt University

Douglas Massey and Magaly Sanchez, 2010. *Brokered Boundaries: Creating Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Introduction. Pp. 1-25; Conclusion. Pp. 240-252.

Kristina Bakkaer Simonsen, 2015. "How the Host Nation's Boundary Drawing Affects Immigrants' Belonging." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 42 (7): 1153-1176.

Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, 2015. *The Asian American Achievement Paradox*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 1, 3, 4

Recommended:

Jan Mewes and Steffen Mau, 2013. "Globalization, Socio-economic Status, and Welfare Chauvinism: European Perspectives on Attitudes Toward the Exclusion of Immigrants." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*. 54 (3): 228-245

Frank D. Bean, Susan K. Brown, and James D. Bachmeier, 2015. *Parents without Papers. The Progress and Pitfalls of Mexican American Integration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 2, 8 and 9.

Jean Beaman, 2017. *Citizen Outsider. Children of North African Immigrants in France*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 1-28. Fnt Pp. 113-121.

John Bowen, Christophe Bertossi, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Mona Leno Krook, eds. 2014. *European States and their Citizens: The Impact of Institutions on Perceptions and Boundaries*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 11 (April 10 and 12): Gender and Sexuality

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/01/11/new-analysis-offers-more-evidence-against-student-evaluations-teaching>

Candace West and Don Zimmerman, 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society*. 1:125-151.

Mary Blair-Loy, 2003. *Competing Devotion: Career and Family among Women Executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Introduction. Pp 1-19.

Robert Anderson and Tina Fetner, 2008. "Economic Inequality and Intolerance: Attitudes toward Homosexuality in 35 Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (4): 942-958.

Section:

Ricardo Hausmann, Laura Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi. 2011. *The Global Gender Gap 2011*. Geneva: World Economic Forum. Pp. 1-34.

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf

Recommended:

Cecilia Ridgeway, 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kimberly Hoang, 2016. *Dealing in Desire. Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex work*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Diane Richardson, 2018. *Sexuality and Citizenship*. London: Polity. Chapter 2: "What is Sexual Citizenship." Pp. 25-48.

Week 12 (April 17 and 19): The United States in a Global/Comparative Perspective: How to Create Greater Equality? Solidarity? Justice?

Anthony B. Atkinson, 2015 *Inequality: What Can be Done?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 241-308.

Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, eds. 2017. *The Strains of Commitment. The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies*. New York: Oxford University Press. "Introduction: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies." Pp. 1-60.

Pascale Dufoix, Heliose Nez and Marcos Ancelovici. 2016. "From the *Indignados* to Occupy: Prospects for a Comparison." in *Street Politics in the Age of Austerity*, edited by Dufoix, Nez and Ancelovici. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Pp. 11-42

Section:

Daniel Schraad-Tischler, Christof Schiller, Sascha Matthias Heller and Nina Seimer, 2017. Social Justice in the EU –Index report 2017, pp. 1-79

<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/5501/>

Recommended:

Barbara Hobson, ed. 2003. *Recognition Struggles and Social Movements: Contested Identities, Agency and Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 13 (April 24): Putting it All Together: Boy, the World is Complicated!!

Leslie McCall, 2005. "The Complex of Intersectionality." *Sign: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 30 (3): 1771-1800.

Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, 2014. "The Relational Generation of Workplace Inequality." *Social Currents*. 14 (1): 51-73.

Michèle Lamont, Stefan Beljean and Matthew Clair. 2014. "What is Missing: Cultural Processes and the Causal Pathways to Inequality." *Socio-economic Review*. Pp. 1-36.

Irene Bloemraad, 2018. "Theorizing the Power of Citizenship as Claims-Making." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 44 (1): 4-26.

Final exam: May 12

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!