

## **Soc 373: Social Inequality**

**CRN:41736**

**Fall 2018**

Lectures: Monday / Wednesday / Friday, 1:00-1:50pm  
1090 Lincoln Hall

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### **Course Description**

Who gets what, and why? How are power, privilege, and prestige distributed across individuals and groups, and why is it that some enjoy more than others? We consider how different dimensions of inequality have evolved over time, with special focus on inequalities across race, class, and gender. We assess how inequality shapes the lives of individuals in society, how and why inequality persists, and how people have worked to both challenge and reproduce their places in society.

We approach social inequality from a variety of angles, developing an understanding of how inequality works in and through schooling, labor markets, employment, identity and prejudice, social mobility, and the role of major social institutions such as work, family, education, politics and law. We examine core statements of social stratification from sociology and engage with contemporary theories from sociology, psychology, political science, and economics. By the end of this course, you will have a clearer understanding of the types of inequality that exist in society, how inequality operates through the broader social context, and the constraints and opportunities faced by individuals in different positions in society.

### **Course Objectives**

- Master the “facts on the ground” of contemporary social inequality, as well as the major concepts social scientists use to make sense of social inequalities
- Understand the relationships between the causes and consequences of inequality across the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels
- Assess competing theories used to explain social inequality
- Evaluate claims made in society about social stratification
- Communicate social scientific information and theories clearly through writing

### **Required Materials**

Grusky, David B. and Hill, Jasmine. 2018. *Inequality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Reader*. Westview Press.

This text is available for purchase at the Illini Union Bookstore and one copy is on reserve at the undergraduate library.

There are additional required readings available on the Moodle website, <https://learn.illinois.edu>. Please contact me immediately if you are unable to access the course Moodle website.

You will need an *I-Clicker* for this course. Bring the I-Clicker to every class. You can register your I-Clicker for our class on the Moodle course website.

I-Clicker support is provided by the campus Technology Services Help Desk. If you are experiencing difficulties with your I-Clicker, e-mail, or call the Technology Services Help Desk (<https://techservices.illinois.edu/get-help/help-desk>) or visit the I-clicker support site (<http://support.iclicker.com/>).

## Evaluation

### *Class participation*

You are expected to attend lectures, participate in class discussions, have completed the required readings prior to class, and be engaged.

15% of your final grade reflects your class participation. Each lecture will include participation worth 5 points. Participation will primarily be assessed through the answering of I-Clicker questions but will also be assessed through in-class discussion and responses to questions posed in class. Fridays will be largely devoted to class discussion. Students are expected to turn in writing exercises conducted in class on these days (additional details will be provided in class) and are expected to be engaged during these class sessions. Inadequate engagement will result in the removal of the day's I-Clicker points.

### *Exams*

There will be three exams which cover topics discussed in class as well as in the readings. Further details of these exams will be provided closer to their dates of administration. Exams are on the following dates:

	<b>Date</b>
Exam 1	September 28 (Friday)
Exam 2	November 2 (Friday)
Exam 3	December 12 (Friday)

### *Response papers*

Throughout the course, you are responsible for **10** response papers to the course readings. Response papers are to be no shorter than 250 words and no longer than 350 words. In these response papers, you are responsible for two covering two parts. [1] *Summarize*. Summarize the main points of the readings. If there are multiple readings for a particular course session, synthesize the main points across the readings, rather than laying out the main points, reading by reading. [2] *Discuss*. Critically engage with the readings. This could involve (i) connecting themes from this day's readings to those of a previous days' (ii) pointing out theoretical or methodological problems in the readings (iii) raising questions that were left unanswered by the readings (iv) connecting the readings to issues outside the classroom, either in your personal life, local news, or national news.

Reading responses are due the day that the readings are due, **by 9:30am**. For example, if you are interested in responding to the Freeman and Krueger readings assigned for August 31, you must turn in your response paper on or before August 31, 9:30am. A reading response for a day that has multiple readings needs to respond to all readings.

Response papers can receive a grade of ✓+ (20 out of 20 points), ✓ (16 out of 20 points) or ✓- (12 out of 20 points). Any student, for whatever reason, can turn in an 11<sup>th</sup> response paper for a possible 15 additional points.

It is your responsibility to determine when you will turn in all ten reading responses. If you have not turned in any reading responses and only 8 lectures remain in the semester, you will only be able to receive credit for eight reading responses. Reading responses can not be turned in for previous lectures.

***Extended Paper***

For one of the weeks, you will extend your response paper to 750 words. More details on the paper will be made available on Moodle during the first two weeks of class.

**Final Grade Calculation**

In total, there are 1,000 points available over the course of the semester. They are distributed as follows:

<b>Final grade calculation</b>		
	Points	Percent of grade
Participation	150	15%
Response papers	200	20%
Extended paper	125	12.5%
Exam 1	175	17.5%
Exam 2	175	17.5%
Exam 3	175	17.5%
<b>Total</b>		100% (1,000 points)

Letter grades will be assigned to the following numeric scores:

<b>Final Score</b>	<b>Letter grade</b>
930-1,000	A
900-929.9	A-
870-899.9	B+
830-869.9	B
800-829.9	B-
770-799.9	C+
730-769.9	C
700-729.9	C-
670-699.9	D+
630-669.9	D
600-629.9	D-
0-599.9	F

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance Policy**

I expect you to attend class, to have completed listed readings in advance of the day they are listed, and to be active participants in the classroom.

You may miss up to **4** class sessions. It is not necessary to provide a reason for these absences. After these missed class sessions, points will be deducted from the attendance/participation grade, for any reason. The only exception to this rule is if you miss class for a university-sanctioned event. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student.

If you need to miss class for university-sanctioned events, such as religious holidays or sporting events, you must notify me within the first two weeks of class. I will make special arrangements with you to make up any activities in a way fair to all students. As with any absence, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student.

### **Readings**

Please complete the assigned readings prior to the class. The assigned readings provide the foundation for lectures, discussions, and in-class activities. You are responsible for materials even if they are not covered in lecture.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to abide by the University of Illinois' code of academic and personal misconduct (<http://studentcode.illinois.edu/>). You are expected to turn in your own work. I will follow the procedures and sanctions outlined in the student code of any instance of student misconduct, including plagiarism.

### **Student Code**

As a student at the University of Illinois, you have agreed to abide by the Student Code. The Student Code enjoins and supports Academic Integrity in a variety of ways, including by prohibiting cheating, plagiarism, fabrication and actions that facilitate violations of academic integrity.

### **Accommodations**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the University of Illinois seeks to provide reasonable accommodations so that students with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of college life. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) ([www.disability.illinois.edu](http://www.disability.illinois.edu), 217.333.4603) and the instructor about any needed accommodations. Requests for accommodations should include university documentation. Please get in contact with me about accommodations as early as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class.

Physical or mental conditions that interfere with your ability to complete coursework as scheduled in a syllabus constitute circumstances in which you should consult the campus office of Disability Resources and Educational Services.

### **Late Policies**

Assignment turned in late will immediately receive a **10% penalty**. An additional 10% penalty will be added every 24 hours that the assignment is not turned in. Late refers to any time after the due date. For example, an assignment due at 11:59pm turned in at 12:00am is late. I generally do not grant extensions

for assignments or exams. In unusual situations, students must contact me **prior** to the due assignment or exam date, and students will need to punctually provide documentation. In these events, to be considered for a special accommodation, you must provide an official absence letter from the Student Assistance Center (SAC). Emergencies that the SAC recognizes include events like your own severe illness or the death of a parent.

### **Required Absences**

If you must miss an examination for a University-sanctioned athletic competition, religious holiday, or other non-emergency event such as a job interview, you may arrange to take the examination early. In order to do so, you must contact me about missing the scheduled exam date as soon as you are aware of your planned absences, and no later than at least **seven days** before the regular scheduled examination date listed in the syllabus. Any due assignment falling on a University-sanctioned absence must be turned in at or before the due date. There are no exceptions to this policy.

### **Incompletes**

Incompletes will not be given except in highly unusual and documented circumstances.

### **Decorum**

Your input, attitudes, and behavior are crucial for how this course will go. It is very important that you treat your peers, your instructor, your teaching assistant, and yourself with respect. In this class, we will frequently be dealing with controversial and sensitive topics. In all our discussions, we will make an important distinction: we can disagree with ideas and arguments, but we will not disagree with the *people* verbalizing them.

Please be sure to ask questions when you have them. If you have a question about a concept or topic, it is very likely that many of your peers do as well!

### **Electronic Devices**

Cellphones are to be turned off and silenced during lectures. Of course, I realize that emergencies and extenuating circumstances happen. If you need your phone on, please get in contact with me **before** the scheduled class. If you need to use an additional electronic device as part of a special accommodation, you must get in contact with me and provide documentation as early in the course as possible.

Laptops and electronic devices are not allowed during class. Research is fairly settled on the negative consequences of using laptops in lectures. You get little benefits compared to the negative influence laptops typically have on learning. Furthermore, if you are using laptops for anything other than notetaking, you are likely distracting your peers and making their class experience worse.

If you disagree with this policy, you are allowed to write a **500 word** argument in support of your use of an electronic device. This must be submitted by September 7, the Friday of the second week of class. If I agree with your argument, then you are allowed to use a laptop in class. In this case, you must email me your notes 15 minutes after the end of every class session. I will review your notes to ensure their content. If I view your notes as insufficient, I will revoke your laptop usage and the default class policy will apply to you again.

### **Email**

Please begin email subject lines to me with SOC373 so that we can easily sort emails for this course. Emails without this subject line will not be read.

I am happy to correspond with you via email or in person if you have questions, thoughts, or concerns about the course or its materials. I will do my best to respond to your email in a timely manner. If I have not responded to you within 24 hours, please simply resend your email and ensure that it is properly titled. I will not respond to email after 6:00pm. I do not respond to emails on the weekend.

Please note: I will not reply to email requests for information that you can get from the course syllabus or Moodle announcements. If I do not reply to your email within 24 hours, please ensure that your request cannot be answered by reviewing course materials.

Do not use any other messaging systems to contact us. Contact me directly via the email address at the top of the syllabus.

### **Student Counseling**

The Counseling Center (<http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu>) is available to help students who experience a wide variety of personal, academic and relationship concerns. Center services are free to students, because students have already paid for them through the student Health Services Fee. Contact: 217-333-3704 (Monday – Friday 8 am – 5pm); 217-359-4141 (after 5:00 pm and on weekends).

### **Schedule Modification**

I reserve the right to modify the schedule during the semester to accommodate unanticipated events and developments.

Tentative course schedule for SOC 373  
 Please complete readings before the listed date  
 \*: From Grusky reader, # Reading on Moodle  
 ! Indicates a due assignment

**Week 1: Introduction materials**

M, Aug 27	No readings
W, Aug 28	*6. Saez. "Striking it Richer." # Economist "Does Inequality Matter" and "For Richer, For Poorer"
F, Aug 31	*12 Freeman "(Some) Inequality is Good for You" # Krueger "Inequality, Too Much of a Good Thing"

**Week 2: Facts on the Ground, Main explanations**

M, Sep 3	<b>Labor Day. No Class.</b>
W, Sep 5	*8 Goldin and Katz. "The Race Between Education and Technology" # Autor "Skills, Education, and the Rise of Earnings Inequality Among the 'Other 99 Percent'"
F, Sep 7	*9 Frank "Why is Inequality Growing?" *10 Hacker and Pierson. "Winner Take All Politics"

**Week 3: Theory**

M, Sep 10	*2. Marx "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism"
W, Sep 12	*3 Weber "Class, Status, Party"
F, Sep 14	*4 Du Bois "The Conservation of Races" # Davis and Moore. "Some Principles of Stratification"

**Week 4: Education**

M, Sep 17	*28 Reardon "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor"
W, Sep 19	*34 Torche "Does College Still Have Equalizing Effects?"
F, Sep 21	*69 Heckman "Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children"

**Week 5: Networks**

M, Sep 24	*38 Granovetter "The Strength of Weak Ties"
W, Sep 26	# Salganik et al. "Experimental Study of Inequality and Unpredictability in an Artificial Cultural Market"
F, Sep 28	<b>! Exam 1</b>

**Week 6: Poverty**

M, Oct 1	*18 Edin et al. "Low Income Urban Fathers" *20 Shaefer and Edin "The Rise of Extreme Poverty in the United States"
W, Oct 3	*26 Desmond "Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty"
F, Oct 5	*21 Shonkoff "Poverty and Child Development" # Kenworthy "How Rich Countries Lift Up the Poor"

**Week 7: Elites**

- M, Oct 8           \*13 Mills “The Power Elite.”  
 W, Oct 10         \*16 Khan “Privilege”  
 F, Oct 12         # Sherman “Uneasy Street”

**Week 8: Race and ethnicity**

- M, Oct 15         \*43 Omi and Winant “Racial Formation in the United States”  
                       \*51 Frank et al. “How Do Latino Immigrants Fit into the Racial Order”  
 W, Oct 17         \*47 Bertrand and Mullainathan “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than  
 Lakisha and Jamal”  
 F, Oct 19         \*52 Patillo “Black Picket Fences”  
                       \*53 Lee “Tiger Kids and the Success Frame”

**Week 9: Gender**

- M, Oct 22         \*54 Lorber “The Social Construction of Gender”  
                       \*63 England “The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled”  
 W, Oct 24         \*59 Goldin and Rouse “Orchestrating Impartiality”  
                       \*60 Correll et al. “Getting a Job”  
 F, Oct 26         \*64 Ridgeway “The Persistence of Gender Inequality.”

**Week 10: Incarceration**

- M, Oct 29         \*27 Western and Pettit “Incarceration and Social Inequality”  
 W, Oct 31         \*48 Pager “Marked”  
 F, Nov 2           **! Exam 2**

**Week 11: The precarious and the insecure**

- M, Nov 5           # Kalleberg. “Good Jobs, Bad Jobs”  
 W, Nov 7           # Silva. “Coming Up Short”  
 F, Nov 9           # Viscelli. “The Big Rig”

**Week 12: Culture**

- M, Nov 12         # Rivera. “Hiring as Cultural Matching.”  
 W, Nov 14         # Calarco. “I Need Help!”  
 F, Nov 16         No class

**Week 13: Thanksgiving – no class**

- M, Nov 19         No class  
 W, Nov 21         No class  
 F, Nov 23         No class

**Week 14: Labor unions**

- M, Nov 26         \*11 Western and Rosenfeld “Unions, Norms, and the Rise of US Wage  
 Inequality”  
 W, Nov 28         \*41 Rosenfeld “Little Labor”  
 F, Nov 30         # Brady et al. “When Unionization Disappears”

**Week 15: Mobility**

M, Dec 3           \*33 Chetty et al. “Economic Mobility”  
W, Dec 5           \*36 MacLeod “Ain’t No Makin’ It”  
                      # Sampson. “Legacies of Inequality.”  
F, Dec 7           # Reardon and Bischoff. “Income Inequality and Income Segregation”

**Week 16:**

M, Dec 10         No class  
W, Dec 12         **! Exam 3**