INEQUALITY IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
SOAN 115
Spring 2014
Tu / Th, 3:10-4:55, Leighton 236

Professor: Daniel Williams
E-mail: dwilliams@carleton.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30-2:30, and by appointment
Office: Leighton 232

This course examines the emergence and persistence of inequality in the contemporary United States. We will examine how institutions, ideas, interactions, and practices contribute to the making of inequalities in education, employment, and other major social institutions of society. In doing so, we will pay particular attention to how race, gender, class, and other social constructs operate in stratification systems to produce inequalities. We will also consider how various theoretical traditions in sociology explain inequality. Finally, we will look at strategies for resistance and challenging inequalities.

This course fulfills the Social Inquiry and Intercultural Domestic Studies requirements.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learn the different ways that sociologists study inequality, and the different kinds of inequality they study.
- Learn how categories of difference such as gender, class, race, sexuality, and others shape and inform social life, practices, and institutions, and social policies.
- Reflect on your own social location and identities and how your own life and experiences are part of the inequality story.
- Consider how inequalities can be challenged and resisted, as well as the barriers to doing so.

COURSE TEXTS

Ore, T. 2002. *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality.* 5th Edition.

Lareau, A. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life.* 2nd Edition.

Other Readings available through e-Reserves and on the course Moodle.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Contacting Me

E-mail is the most efficient way to contact me outside of class. I will usually respond within 24 hours and often sooner. ***Please put 'SOAN 115' somewhere in the subject heading*** of your first e-mails. This will make it easier for me to respond to you.

Accommodation for Disabilities

Students who require an accommodation due to the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. The office of Disability Services for Students will also help coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please visit this URL to learn more: https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/wellness/disability_services/

Academic Honesty

As stated in Carleton's academic procedures and regulations: "It is assumed that a student is the author of all course work (quizzes, problem sets, online contributions, tests, papers, lab work, etc.) that he/she submits, whether for a grade or not, and that the work has not been submitted for credit in another class without the instructor's permission. Images, ideas, data, audio clips, or phrases borrowed from others should be fully identified by standard procedures for making such acknowledgment. All permitted collaboration with others must still be acknowledged. *Academic Honesty in the Writing of Essays and Other Papers* is one source for information on proper citation."

Any act of academic dishonesty will be referred for appropriate action to the Academic Standing Committee (ASC) via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College. Further details can be found here:
http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/asc/academic_regs/?policy_id=21359.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

All written work should include your *name, this course number, assignment type and number,* and be *page numbered* and *stapled* if necessary.

Participation (5%). This course is requires your active participation. It is critical that you read *all assigned readings* in order to participate actively in class.

Reflection Papers / Moodle Posts (7.5%; 3 @ 2.5% each). You will be required to write three reflection papers to any single reading from any particular class meeting. Each reflection paper should be posted on Moodle by 7 pm the evening prior to the class reading it is written for.

You should do three things in your reflection paper:

- *Summarize the main points of the reading.*
- *Reflect on / critique the reading.*
  Do you agree and/or disagree with any points made in the article or its overall argument? Was there anything in or about the reading that was new or especially interesting to you? What does the reading present that is important to understanding inequality in American society?
- *Pose a discussion question based on the topic, findings, or argument that the article presents.*
- ***DUE dates: One before the midterm.***
- ***Length:* Minimum 1-page single-spaced.**

Inequality Journals (7.5%; 3 @ 2.5% each).
Each of you will turn in three inequality journal entries during the trimester.
These entries may be based on a) an example of inequality you find covered in media, such as current events or popular culture; or b) an example of inequality you have observed and become aware of in your own everyday life or social sphere.
For each journal you should:

- Connect your observations to at least one reading from class.
- You will present one of your journals in class.
- ***DUE Dates:* April 17th, May 1st, May 22nd**
- ***Length:* Minimum 1-page single-spaced.**

Exams (60%; 2 @ 30% each).
There will be two take-home exams, the first due on **Friday, May 9th,** and the second due on **Monday, June 9th**. These will be largely or entirely essay-based.

Final Paper (20%).
Each of you will write a research paper on a topic of your interest and choice, in consultation with me. Essays will be due on the last day of class, **Tuesday, June 3rd.** Papers are expected to be **8-10 pages** in length and use sources outside of course readings. Other expectations and details to follow.

SCHEDULE of READINGS and TOPICS*

* Assigned readings and due dates may change with advanced notice.

[R] = Reading on e-Reserve or Moodle.

All other readings in *Social Construction of Difference and Inequality* or other books as noted.

I. Inequality and the Sociological Perspective

Week 1 *Sociological Thinking*

Apr 1 **Introduction to the Course**

Apr 3
- **[R]** Fischer et al, "Inequality by Design," pp. 18-22
- **[R]** Massey, "How Stratification Works," pp. 1-27
- "Constructing Differences," pp. 1-18
- NY Times, Obama on Inequality and Opportunity, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/us/politics/obama-moves-to-the-right-in-a-partisan-war-of-words.html?_r=0

Week 2 *Inequality and Difference*

Apr 8 **Class and Race**

- **[R]** Loewen, "The Land of Opportunity," pp. 317-326
- **[R]** "The Saints and the Roughnecks," pp. 302-315
- **[R]** Domhoff, "Who Rules America?" (pp. 99-104)
- "Racial Formations," pp. 19-28
- **[R]** "White Privilege," pp. 99-104
- "Race, Racialization, and Latinos in the U.S."

Apr 10 **Gender and Sexuality**

- "The Social Construction of Gender," pp. 113-121
- **[R]** Pascoe, "Guys Are Just Homophobic," pp. 73-79
- **[R]** Woods, "The Black Male Privileges Checklist," pp. 27-37
- **[R]** Han, "The Darker Shades of Queer," pp. 255-261

Film: *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*

II. Inequalities in Education and Childhood

Week 3 Education

April 15

- "Maintaining Inequalities: Systems of Oppression and Privilege," pp. 214-239
- **[R]** Mickelson, "Can Education Eliminate Race, Class, and Gender Inequality?" pp. 407-415
- **[R]** Steele, "Stereotype Threat and African-American Student Achievement," pp. 252-258
- "Schools and the Social Control of Sexuality," pp. 343-352

April 17

- Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-31, Unequal Childhoods

Journal #1 Due

Week 4 Education and Family Life

April 22

- Ch. 3, pp. 33-65, *Unequal Childhoods*
- *Skim* Ch. 4, pp. 65-81
- Ch. 5, pp. 82-105, *Unequal Childhoods*

Film: *People Like Us*

April 24

- Ch. 6-7, pp. 105-160, *Unequal Childhoods*

Week 5 Education and Family Life

April 29

- Ch. 8, pp. 161-182, *Unequal Childhoods*
- Chs. 10-11, pp. 198-233, *Unequal Childhoods*
- Bettie, *Women without Class*

May 1

- Ch. 12, pp. 233-258, *Unequal Childhoods*
- Lee, *Up Against Whiteness: Race, School, and Immigrant Youth*

Journal #2 Due

Week 6

May 6
- Excerpts from Ch. 13, pp. 263-312, Unequal Childhoods

May 8
- **NO CLASS**

FRIDAY, May 9 MIDTERM DUE by 5:00 PM

III. Income and Wealth Inequalities

Week 7 Workplace Inequalities

May 13
- "Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America," pp. 711-725
- "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the 'Female' Professions," pp. 389-400
- **[R]** Reskin, "Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work," pp. 277-290

May 15
- **[R]** Hodagneu-Sotelo, "Doméstica," pp. 352-359
- **[R]** Brodkin, "How Jews Became White Folks," pp. 41-51
- "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market," pp. 364-388
- *The Hidden Cost of Being African American,* Intro, pp. 1-18, Chs. 2, pp. 42-87

Week 8 Wealth Inequalities

May 20
- *The Hidden Cost of Being African American,* Ch. 4, pp. 87-105, Ch. 5, pp. 105-128

Film: *Race: Power of an Illusion Part 3*

IV. Public Policy and Legal Inequalities

May 22
- *The New Jim Crow,* excerpts

Journal #3 Due

Week 9 Public Policy Inequalities

May 27
- *The New Jim Crow,* excerpts

May 29
- *The New Jim Crow*, excerpts

V. Redressing Inequality and Social Change

Week 10 Redressing Inequalities and Resistance

June 3
- Resistance and Social Change, pp. 747-759
- **[R]** Domhoff, "Diversity in the Power Elite," pp. 337-342
- **[R]** Morris, "The Genius of the Civil Rights Movement," pp. 397-403
- **[R]** Gans, "Uses of the Underclass in America," pp. 248-260
- Occupy and the 99%. Readings TBA

LAST DAY OF CLASS
FINAL PAPER DUE

June 9th - FINAL EXAM DUE

DUE DATES

Due date	Assignment	Worth
-	*Participation/ Attendance*	5%
Your choice; One before midterm	*Reflection Papers/ Moodle Posts*	7.5%
April 17 (Thu)	*Inequality Journal*	2.5%
May 1 (Thu)	*Inequality Journal*	2.5%
May 9 (Fri)	*Midterm*	30%
May 22 (Thu)	*Inequality Journal*	2.5%
June 3rd (Tue)	*Research Paper*	20%
June 9th (Mon)	*Final Essay*	30%