

SOCIOLOGY 370: Poverty and Social Inequality

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Department of Sociology
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MWF 10:00-10:50am
Business 228

"Poverty is not a natural

condition of human beings,



it is an artificial imposition."

Course Description and Objectives:

The main objective of this course is to introduce students to a variety of analytical approaches to the study of inequality and poverty. Students will leave the course with a better understanding of the channels through which resources are distributed within and across societies and in turn, how this distribution process affects distinct groups. With that end in mind, the course will introduce students to the study of inequality and poverty through a comparative study focused on the U.S. and Latin America. Through readings and lectures students will be introduced to a number of social problems in each of the aforementioned regions, including: the legacy of colonialism, unemployment, crime, pollution, discrimination, migration, etc. Finally, the course will mainly focus on the United States and Latin America but occasionally it will also address other regions of the world.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Examine major areas of theory, research, social policy and practice which impact on social class issues
2. Analyze how poverty, inequality, and social class are defined
3. Assess the extent, and types, of poverty and inequality
4. Describe the effects of race, ethnicity, gender, and social class on inequality and poverty
5. Examine the structural influences on poverty, inequality, and social class compared to the traditional person-blame explanations
6. Analyze the systems of domination, hierarchy, power, and privilege embedded in fundamental American institutions
7. Develop effective writing skills

Assignments/Exams

Stock Market Investment (10%): At the beginning of the semester students will make a pseudo-investment in the stock market. Each student will invest \$10,000 in the Dow Jones. Further instructions will be given for this assignment the first week of classes.

Exams (30%): Students will take two exams throughout the semester, each worth 15% of their final grade. Exam questions will mainly test students' knowledge of key concepts from the assigned readings but they will also include questions based on supplemental information provided in the classroom discussions and lectures. The mid-term will be a two part exam and will be held on 10/10 and 10/12. The final exam will be held during finals week (time TBA) and it will include a map quiz on Latin America and the Middle East (I recommend students start studying now for this section of the exam).

Participation (25%):

Part I (10%): This class will include both lecture and discussion. That said, emphasis will be placed on the latter. For this reason, it is expected that students *read* the assigned material *before class* so that they can actively participate in classroom discussions. It should go without saying but active participation requires students to be present in the classroom. If a student misses an extensive amount of class (more than 4 classes), his/her participation grade will drop significantly.

Part I (15%): Poverty and inequality are social issues that permeate our daily lives. As a result, most Fridays (9 in all, specific dates highlighted below) I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss and analyze a particular newspaper article through the lens of the particular concept that we are discussing that week (i.e., colonialism, poverty, inequality, etc). For this assignment I expect students to: (1) regularly read a professional news source such

as the New York Times, The Economist, The Los Angeles Times, The BBC, The Denver Post, etc, (2) each week choose an article that fits with the core theme for the class that week, (3) print the article and read it and (4) jot down several discussion questions for the class to consider. In class I will expect each student to *be prepared to* provide a brief review of his/her article and then we will all discuss the *student generated* discussion questions. At the end of class students will turn in their articles along with their discussion questions (be sure to write your name on your article!).

Final Essay (25%): Students will pick a research topic related to the class and write a 6-8 page essay. Each student will also provide an in-class presentation related to their research topic. Details concerning the report will be given to students as the semester progresses.

Final Presentation (10%): At the end of the semester students will be expected to present the main points from their final essay to the rest of the class. Students may present their work in the way that they are most comfortable with so as long as the presentation clearly and concisely conveys their work to the rest of the class.

Extra Credit: For each essay, if you utilize the writing lab I will increase your final grade, for that particular assignment, by 5 percent (you will need to provide edited drafts with your final essay).

Persons with Disabilities: If you have any sort of disability or personal problem which prevents the fullest expression of your abilities, please let me know as soon as possible during the semester - before it interferes with your work - so that I can make a reasonable accommodation to your needs.

Academic Misconduct: Taking the easy way out will have real consequences in this class (check out turnitin.com). Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty will be dropped from the course and formal charges will be brought before the Department Chair.

Date	Topic	Reading
08/22	-Introduction to course	-Syllabus (benjaminjameswaddell.com)
08/24	-Intro to Stock Market Project	-Two worlds scenario (World A; World B) -In-class tutorial on stock markets and currencies
08/26	-Intro to Stratification	-Pollo a la Carta -Manza, Jeff. "Inequality and Society: An Introduction, pg. 1-35 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
08/29	-Sustainable Development	-Kates, Robert W., <i>et al.</i> "What is sustainable development", pg. 367-387 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").
08/31	-Inequality through a global lens	-Korzeniewicz, Roberto Patricio and Timothy Patrick Moran. (2009). <i>Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective</i> . Introduction and Chapter 1. (Website). -Gapminder.

09/02	-Classic Approaches to Inequality and Poverty	-Smith, Adam. "The Division of Labour", pg. 43-54 (in <i>Inequality</i>) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/05	Labor Day	No Class
09/07	Foundations of Socialism/Communism	-Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party", pg. 67-75 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
09/09	Evolution of Citizenship in Europe/U.S.	Marshall, T.H. "Citizenship and Social Class", pg. 148-154 (in <i>Inequality</i>) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/12	The History of Gender Inequalities	De Beauvoir, Simone. "The Second Sex", pg. 126-136 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
09/14	Social Mobility in the 20 th Century U.S.	-Breen, Richard and David Rottman. "Social Mobility", pg. 313-332 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
09/16	The Function of Stratification	-Davis, Kinsley and Wilbert E. Moore. "Some Principles of Stratification", pg. 137-147 (in <i>Inequality</i>) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/19	Inequality Growth in the U.S.	Noah, Timothy "The Great Divergence" (Read Part 1-5, available on website)
09/21	Inequality Growth in the U.S.	Noah, Timothy "The Great Divergence" (Read Part 6-10, available on website)
09/23	Inequality Growth in the U.S.	-Finish up with "The Great Divergence" -Lachmann, Richard. "The Roots of American Decline", 44-49 (Website). -Buffet, Warren. "Stop Coddling the Super-Rich", (Website). *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
09/26	Being Poor in the U.S.	-Federman, Maya and <i>et al.</i> "What Does it Mean to Be Poor in America?" (in <i>Inequality</i>)
09/28	Gender Inequalities	-Blau, Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. "The Gender Pay Gap", pg. 239-245 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
09/30	Racial Inequalities	-Conley, Dalton. "Forty Acres and a Mule", pg. 261-276 (in <i>Inequality</i>) *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
10/03	The Social Psychology of Stratification	-Massey, Douglas. "The Psychology of Social Stratification", pg. 387-396 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
10/05	Structural Explanations for Growing Inequality	Wilson, W. J. "Jobless Poverty", pg. 503-513 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
10/07	Fall Break	No Class
10/10	Exam	-Mid-term exam
10/12	Exam	-Mid-term exam
10/14	Democracy and development	-Barro, Robert J. "Democracy and Growth", pg. 92-98 (Website). *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
10/17	Inequality in the developing world	-Banerjee, Abhijit V. and Esther Dufo. "The Economic Lives of the Poor", pg. 146-167. (Website, Economic Development Reader)
10/19	Effects of Inequality	-Birdsall, Nancy. "Inequality Matters", pg. 135-145. (Website, Economic Development Reader)
10/21	Root Causes of Inequality	-Acemolgu, Daron "Root Causes" (Website, look in "Economic Development Reader") -Overview of Geography of Latin America (map quiz on

		final)
10/24	Latin American in the Colonial Period	-Bakewell, Peter. "Colonial Latin America", pg. 77-85 (Website, look in Latin American History Reader)
10/26	20 th Century Economic Development in L.A.	-Glade, William P. "Latin American Economies Restructure, Again" pg. 101-116 (Website, look in Latin American History Reader)
10/28	Tapping into Capital	-De Soto, Hernando. "The Mystery of Capital", pg. 99-105 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader"). *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
10/31	Squatters' Communities in L.A. Case Study: La Carpio	-La Caprio (In-class presentation)
11/02	Case Study: La Carpio	-View documentary <i>NICA/raguense</i> in class
11/04	Case Study: La Carpio	-View documentary <i>NICA/raguense</i> in class
11/07	Modern Class Structure in L.A.	Portes, Alejandro. "Latin American Class Structure", (Website)
11/09	Women and Development	-Sen, Amartya. "Women's Agency and Social Change", pg. 184-193 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").
11/11	Microfinancing	-Yunus, Muhammand. "Banker of the Poor", pg. 401-411 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader"). -Checkout www.kiva.org and www.grameen.com *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
11/14	Global Inequality in Perspective	Firebaugh, Glenn. "Massive Global Income Inequality", pg. 916-936 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
11/16	The Effects of Inequality	-Jencks, Christopher. "Does Inequality Matter?", 992-1010 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
11/18	Inequality and the Middle Class	-Frank, Robert H. "How the Middle Class is Injured by Gains at the Top", 971-977 (in <i>Inequality</i>) -Discuss two-worlds scenario results *Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles.
11/21	Inequality and Democracy	-Jacobs, Lawrence and Theda Skocpol. "American Democracy in an Era of Rising Inequality", pg. 960-970 (in <i>Inequality</i>)
11/23	Thanksgiving	No Class
11/25	Thanksgiving	No Class
11/28	Stock Market Challenge	-Feldstein, Martin. "Argentina's Fall", pg. 474-479 (Website). -Discuss Stock Market Investments *Bring print out of final portfolio to class *Be sure to convert your final portfolio to your country's currency as well
11/30	Sustainable Development	-Clip from <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>
12/02	The Role of the Consumer in Sustainable Development Case Study: CECOCAFE	-Sustainable Development in Nicaragua: The CECOCAFE Story (In class presentation)
12/05	Final Presentations	10-15 min per presenter
12/07	Final Presentations	10-15 min per presenter
12/09	Final Presentations	10-15 min per presenter
12/12	Final Exam (+ map quiz)	Location and Time: TBA

