# SOCIOLOGY 370: Poverty and Social Inequality

**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 United States (U.S.) and Latin America (L.A.). 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. The course will mainly focus on the U.S. and L.A. 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.

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Adams State University
Department of Sociology
Fall 2013
TR 2:30-3:45pm
MCD 317

**Textbooks:** Jeff Manza and Michael Sauder. (2009). *Inequality and Society: Social Science Perspectives on Social Stratification.* Norton & Company, Inc.

## Assignments/Exams

**Stock Market Investment/Reflection (10%):** At the beginning of the semester students will make a pseudo-investment in the stock market. Each student will invest $100,000 in the market. Further instructions will be given for this assignment the first week of class and will subsequently be available on the course website.

**Quizzes (20%):** Four unannounced quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. Quizzes will address material covered in the previous three class periods plus the material assigned for that particular day.

**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 held in class on 10/08. The final exam will be held during finals week 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 (10%):** Poverty and inequality are social issues that permeate our daily lives. As a result, most Thursdays (7 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) type up 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!).

**Note:** This class will include both lecture and discussion. 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 3 classes), his/her *overall* grade for the course will drop by one letter grade (from A to B, B to C, etc.) for each absence beyond 3. Please note, anyone that arrives to class more than 5 minutes late is considered absent for that particular class period.

**Final Essay (20%):** 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. (Additional information available on course website.) This assignment is due, in class, on the 28th of November.

**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). This includes write-ups and reflections.

**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 |
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| **08/20** | -Introduction to course | -Syllabus (benjaminjameswaddell.com)<br>-Two worlds scenario (World A; World B)<br>-In-class tutorial on stock markets and currencies |
| **08/22** | -Intro to Stock Market Project<br>-Intro to Stratification | -Pollo a la Carta<br>-Manza, Jeff. "Inequality and Society: An Introduction, pg. 1-35 (in *Inequality*)<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **08/27** | -Sustainable Development<br>-Inequality through a global lens | -Kates, Robert W., *et al.* "What is sustainable development", pg. 367-387 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").<br>-Korzeniewicz, Roberto Patricio and Timothy Patrick Moran. (2009). *Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective*. Introduction and Chapter 1. (Website). |

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| **08/29** | -Classic Approaches to Inequality and Poverty | -Gapminder.<br>-Smith, Adam. "The Division of Labour", pg. 43-54 (in *Inequality)*<br>-Handlin, Oscar. "The Uprooted", pg. (Website.) |
| **09/03** | -Emergence of Labour Rights | -Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party", pg. 67-75 (in *Inequality*)<br>--Bruce G. Carruthers, "A Sociology of Bubbles." (Website.) |
| **09/05** | -Evolution of Citizenship in Europe/U.S. | Marshall, T.H. "Citizenship and Social Class", pg. 148-154 (in *Inequality*)<br>*Country report due today!!! (See Stock Market Assignment.) |
| **09/10** | -The History of Gender Inequalities | De Beauvoir, Simone. "The Second Sex", pg. 126-136 (in *Inequality*)<br>-Breen, Richard and David Rottman. "Social Mobility", pg. 313-332 (in *Inequality)* |
| **09/12** | -Social Mobility in the 20th Century U.S.<br>-The Function of Stratification | -Davis, Kinsley and Wilbert E. Moore. "Some Principles of Stratification", pg. 137-147 (in *Inequality)*<br>-Tumin, Melvin M. "Critical Review of Some Principles_of_Stratification" (Website).<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **09/17** | -Inequality Growth in the U.S. | -Noah, Timothy "The Great Divergence" (Read Part 1-5, available on website) |
| **09/19** | -Inequality Growth in the U.S. | -Noah, Timothy "The Great Divergence" (Read Part 6-10, available on website)<br>-Finish up with "The Great Divergence"<br>-Lachmann, Richard. "The Roots of American Decline", 44-49 (Website).<br>-Buffet, Warren. "Stop Coddling the Super-Rich", (Website). |
| **09/24** | -Being Poor in the U.S.<br>-Gender Inequalities | -Federman, Maya and *et al.* "What Does it Mean to Be Poor in America?" (in *Inequality)*<br>-Blau, Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. "The Gender Pay Gap", pg. 239-245 (in *Inequality)* |
| **09/26** | -Racial Inequalities | -Massey, Douglas. "The Psychology of Social Stratification", pg. 387-396 (in *Inequality)*<br>-Wilson, W. J. "Jobless Poverty", pg. 503-513 (in *Inequality)*<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/01** | -The Social Psychology of Stratification<br>-Structural Explanations for Growing Inequality | -Mid-term exam review (10-15 min)<br>-View documentary *The Men Who Crashed the World.* |
| **10/03** | Fall Break | No Class |
| **10/08** | **Exam** | -Mid-term exam |

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| **10/10** | -Democracy and development | -Barro, Robert J. "Democracy and Growth", pg. 92-98 (Website).<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/15** | -Inequality in the developing world | -Banerjee, Abhijit V. and Esther Duflo. "The Economic Lives of the Poor", pg. 146-167. (Website, Economic Development Reader)<br>-Birdsall, Nancy. "Inequality Matters", pg. 135-145. (Website, Economic Development Reader) |
| **10/17** | -Effects of Inequality<br>-Root Causes of Inequality | -Acemolgu, Daron "Root Causes" (Website, look in "Economic Development Reader")<br>-Overview of Geography in Latin America (Remember, map quiz on final!)<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/22** | -Latin American in the Colonial Period<br>-20th Century Economic Development in L.A. | -Bakewell, Peter. "Colonial Latin America", pg. 77-85 (Website, look in Latin American History Reader)<br>-Glade, William P. "Latin American Economies Restructure, Again" pg. 101-116 (Website, look in Latin American History Reader) |
| **10/24** | -Tapping into Capital | -De Soto, Hernando. "The Mystery of Capital", pg. 99-105 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/29** | -Squatters' Communities in L.A.<br>-Case Study: La Carpio | -Waddell, Benjamin J. "Urban Fractures." (Website.)<br>-La Caprio (In-class presentation)<br>-View documentary *NICA/raguense* in class |
| **11/31** | -Case Study: La Carpio | -View documentary *NICA/raguense* in class |
| **11/05** | -Modern Class Structure in L.A. | Portes, Alejandro. "Latin American Class Structure", (Website)<br>-Sen, Amartya. "Women's Agency and Social Change", pg. 184-193 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader"). |
| **11/07** | -Women and Development<br>-Microfinancing | -Yunus, Muhammand. "Banker of the Poor", pg. 401-411 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").<br>-Checkout www.kiva.org and www.grameen.com<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **11/12** | -The Role of the Consumer in Sustainable Development<br>-Case Study: CECOCAFE | -Fair trade clip (short in-class video)<br>-Sustainable Development in Nicaragua: The CECOCAFE Story (In class presentation)<br>-Firebaugh, Glenn. "Massive Global Income Inequality", pg. 916-936 (in *Inequality*) |
| **11/14** | -Inequality and Democracy | -Frank, Robert H. "How the Middle Class is Injured by Gains at the Top", 971-977 (in *Inequality*)<br>-Jacobs, Lawrence and Theda Skocpol. "American Democracy in an Era of Rising Inequality", pg. 960-970 (in *Inequality*)<br>-Discuss two-worlds scenario results |

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| **11/19** | -Aid and poor countries<br>-Stock Market Challenge<br>-Future challenges | -Feldstein, Martin. "Argentina's Fall", pg. 474-479 (Website).<br>-Birdsall et al "How to help poor countries," pg. 530-541 (Website).<br>-Discuss Stock Market Investments<br>-Bring print out of final portfolio to class<br>-Final reflection for stock market assignment due today!!! |
| **11/21** | -Final Presentations | -Final essay due in class!<br>-10-15 min per presenter |
| **11/26** | -Final Presentations | -10-15 min per presenter |
| **11/28** | -No Class! | -Thanksgiving! |
| **12/03** | -Final Presentations | -10-15 min per presenter |
| **12/05** | -Final Presentations | -10-15 min per presenter |
| **12/11** | **Final Exam (+ map quiz)** | **-Tuesday, December 10th from 3:00-4:50pm.** |