# 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 in the United States (U.S.) as well as several case studies from around the world. Through readings and lectures students will be introduced to issues associated with poverty and inequality, including: the legacy of colonialism, unemployment, crime, pollution, discrimination, migration, etc.

**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.

Instructor: Benjamin James Waddell, Ph.D.
Office: 386
Office hours: M 11:00-2:00; T 11:00-1:00
Phone: 587-7394
E-mail: bwaddell@adams.edu;
benjaminjameswaddell@gmail.com

Adams State University
Department of Sociology
Fall 2014
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.

*Students are required to subscribe to *The New York Times*. Subscriptions are available with a college discount at:
http://www.nytimes.com/subscriptions/edu/lp1474.html?campaignId=3KLU3

## 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 10/07. The midterm exam will include multiple-choice questions, short essay questions, and a map quiz on the Americas and Asia. The final exam will include multiple-choice questions, short essay questions, and a map quiz on Africa, Europe and Australia. I recommend students start studying now for geography section of the exam. Student may study however they best see fit but I recommend using freerice.com, which will contribute to the World Food Programme (http://freerice.com/category). As you study, remember what Mark Twain once wrote, "God created war so that Americans would learn geography." So, let's make a pledge to end war together by learning geography!

**Participation (10%):** Poverty and inequality are social issues that permeate our daily lives. As a result, most Thursdays (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 *The New York Times* as well as other professional news source such as *The Economist*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The BBC*, 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 an 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 is available on course website.)

**Final Presentation (10%):** At the end of the semester students will present the main findings from their essay to the rest of the class. Students may present their work in the way that they are most comfortable 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 that 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 |
|---|---|---|
| **08/26** | -Introduction to course | -Syllabus (benjaminjameswaddell.com)<br>-Two worlds scenario (World A; World B)<br>-In-class tutorial on stock markets and currencies.<br>-Discussion of geography: freerice.com<br>-Subscribe to *The New York Times*! |
| **08/28** | -Intro to Stock Market Project<br>-Sustainable Development | -Pollo a la Carta<br>-Kates, Robert W., *et al.* "What is sustainable development", pg. 367-387 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").<br>-"Why do some Somalians turn to Piracy?" (Website.) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | -"The Rise of Mexico's Self-Defense Forces." (Website.)<br>-Watch, The Deadly Genius of Drug Cartels."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/rodrigo_canales_the_deadly_genius_of_drug_cartels<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **09/02** | -Inequality through a global lens | -Solimano, Andrés. (2001). "The Evolution of World Income Inequality." (Website.)<br>-Korzeniewicz, Roberto Patricio. (2011). "Inequality." (Website, Read Chapter 2, 3, and Conclusions.)<br>-Watch, "The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/chrystia_freeland_the_rise_of_the_new_global_super_rich |
| **09/04** | -Classic Approaches to Inequality and Poverty | -Gapminder.<br>-Smith, Adam. "The Division of Labour", pg. 43-54 (in *Inequality).*<br>-Marx, Karl. "Wage, Labour, and Capital.", pg. 67-75 (in *Inequality*).<br>-Watch, "The Voice of China's Workers."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/leslie_t_chang_the_voices_of_china_s_workers<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **09/09** | -Emergence of Labour Rights<br>-Evolution of Citizenship in Europe/U.S. | -Marshall, T.H. "Citizenship and Social Class", pg. 148-154 (in *Inequality*). |
| **09/11** | -The History of Gender Inequalities<br>-Social Mobility in the 20th Century U.S. | -De Beauvoir, Simone. "The Second Sex", pg. 126-136 (in *Inequality*)<br>-Breen, Richard and David Rottman. "Social Mobility", pg. 313-332 (in *Inequality).*<br>-Watch, "The Generation that's Remaking China."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/yang_lan<br>*Country report due today!!! (See Stock Market Assignment.) |
| **09/16** | | -Blau, Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. "The Gender Pay Gap", pg. 239-245 (in *Inequality).*<br>-Federman, Maya and *et al.* "What Does it Mean to Be Poor in America?" (in *Inequality).*<br>-Watch, "Is Anatomy Destiny?"<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/alice_dreger_is_anatomy_destiny |
| **09/18** | -Mass Consumerism and its consequences | -Veblen, Thorstein. "The Theory of the Leisure Class."<br>-Watch, "Less Stuff, More Happiness."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/graham_hill_less_stuff_more_happiness<br>-Listen, "Behind the Ever_Exanding American Dream House."<br>http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5525283<br>-Watch, The Greatest TED talk ever sold."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/morgan_spurlock_the_greatest_ted_talk_ever_sold<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **09/23** | -Inequality Growth in the | -Noah, Timothy "The Great Divergence" (Read Part 1-5, available on website) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | U.S. | |
| **09/25** | -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). |
| **09/30** | -Inequality in the U.S. | -Jacobs, Lawrence and Theda Skocpol. "American Democracy in an Era of Rising Inequality", pg. 960-970 (in *Inequality*)<br>-Discuss two-worlds scenario results<br>-Watch, "Why We Shouldn't Trust Markets With Our Civic Life."<br>http://goo.gl/9MvFmk<br>-View documentary *Inequality for All.* |
| **10/02** | -The Social Psychology of Stratification<br>-Structural Explanations for Growing Inequality | -Massey, Douglas. "The Psychology of Social Stratification", pg. 387-396 (in *Inequality)*<br>-Wilson, W. J. "Jobless Poverty", pg. 503-513 (in *Inequality)*<br>-Watch, "Black Men Ski."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/stew_says_black_men_ski<br>-Watch, "We Need to Talk about an Injustice."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/07** | **Med-term Exam (+ map quiz)** | -Mid-term exam. (Remember, there is a geography component.) |
| **10/09** | -Democracy and development | -Barro, Robert J. "Democracy and Growth", pg. 92-98 (Website).<br>-Watch, "Does Democracy Stifle Economic Growth?"<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/yang_lan<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/14** | -Political Violence in Nepal | -Basnett, Yurendra. "From Politicalization of Grievances to Political Violence." (Website.)<br>-Watch, "Photos that Bear Witness to Modern Slavery."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/lisa_kristine_glimpses_of_modern_day_slavery |
| **10/16** | -Fall Break | -No Class |
| **10/21** | -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)<br>-Watch, "The Economic Injustice of Plastic."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/van_jones_the_economic_injustice_of_plastic |
| **10/23** | -Effects of Inequality<br>-Root Causes of Inequality | -Acemolgu, Daron "Root Causes" (Website, look in "Economic Development Reader")<br>-Jared Diamond activity. (In class.)<br>-Overview of Geography (Remember, map quiz on final!)<br>-Watch, "Why Do Societies Collapse?"<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/jared_diamond_on_why_societies_colla |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | pse<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **10/28** | -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) |
| **10/30** | -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 |
| **11/04** | -Argentina Debt Crisis | -Feldstein, Martin. "Argentina's Fall", pg. 474-479 (Website).<br>-Watch, *The Take.* (In class.)<br>-Watch, "What I learned from Latin America." http://blog.ted.com/2013/06/12/what-i-learned-from-latin-america-juan-pardinas-at-tedglobal-2013/ |
| **11/06** | -Poverty Reduction in Ghana | -Hatskevich, Jenicek, et al. "Shea Industry." (Website.)<br>-"The Shea Butter Economy: Big Money and Exploitation." (Website.)<br>-"Booming Demand for Shea." (Website.)<br>-Watch, "Filming Democracy in Ghana." http://www.ted.com/talks/jarreth_merz_filming_democracy_in_ghana<br>*Discuss students' analysis of newspaper articles. |
| **11/11** | -Conditional Cash Transfers | -Sen, Amartya. "Women's Agency and Social Change", pg. 184-193 (Website, in "Economic Development Reader").<br>-Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty", pg. 1-21. (Website.)<br>-"Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) in Asia Reduce Poverty." (Website.)<br>-Redesigning Conditional Cash Transfers." (Website.) |
| **11/13** | -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. |
| **11/18** | -The Role of the Consumer in Sustainable Development | -Fair trade clip (short in-class video)<br>-Sustainable Development in Nicaragua: The CECOCAFE Story (In class presentation)<br>-Watch, "Walk the earth…" |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | -Case Study: CECOCAFE | http://www.ted.com/talks/john_francis_walks_the_earth<br>-Watch, "Greening the Ghetto."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/john_francis_walks_the_earth<br>-Measure your Carbon Footprint; http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/<br>PRINT out your results and bring them to class! |
| **11/20** | -Aid and poor countries | -Birdsall et al "How to help poor countries," pg. 530-541 (Website).<br>-"How Mobile Phones can Fight Poverty."<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/iqbal_quadir_says_mobiles_fight_poverty<br>-Watch, "Want to Help Someone? Shut up and Listen!"<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen |
| **11/25** | -Stock Market Challenge<br>-Future challenges | -Reardon, Sean F. (2011). "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor." (Website.)<br>-"Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor, Studies Say." (Website.)<br>-Norton, Michael I. and Dan Ariely. "Building a Better America—One Wealth Quintile at a Time." (Website.)<br>-Watch, "Is China the New Idol for Emerging Economies?"<br>http://www.ted.com/talks/dambisa_moyo_is_china_the_new_idol_for_emerging_economies<br>-Discuss Stock Market Investments/Reports.<br>-Bring print out of final portfolio to class.<br>-Final reflection for stock market assignment due today!!! |
| **11/27** | -Thanksgiving | -No class. |
| **12/02** | -Final Presentations | -Final essay due in class!<br>-10-15 min per presenter |
| **12/04** | -Final Presentations | -10-15 min per presenter |
| **12/09** | -Final Presentations | -10-15 min per presenter |
| **12/11** | -Final Presentations | -10-15 min per presenter |
| **12/19** | **Final Exam (+ map quiz)** | **-Friday, December 19th from 3:00-4:50pm.** |