

**Sociology 214: Class/Status/Power  
Fall 2016**

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**Course Content**

This is a class about inequality.

In most societies, scarce resources – income, wealth, jobs, time, and others – are distributed unequally, so that some individuals have more and others have less. A major question for sociologists is how and why some individuals have more and others less.

In the United States, gender, race, and class are important divisions between those who have more and less. This class will focus on reasons why these are important divisions and on how unequal individuals are along these lines. We will also examine explanations for changes in inequality, asking what social policy has and has not been able to accomplish.

In addition, this course will ask about the implications of inequality for sustainability. Sustainability is one of Emory University's top priorities, and this class will highlight questions surrounding the sustainability of current social structures.

The course will be structured around 6 questions that motivate our inquiry:

- 1) Is inequality inevitable?
- 2) Is inequality sustainable?
- 3) Does the educational system create or reduce mobility?
- 4) Do we still live with "American Apartheid"?
- 5) Does prejudice underlie racial inequalities in environmental outcomes?
- 6) Is the gender gap in pay fair?

Each unit will have associated assignments and readings. We will often begin the segment with a short film. We will conclude each unit with an in-class discussion or debate about the topics.

**Course Structure**

This course will rely on student participation to work successfully. Students should come prepared to discuss the readings and engage with presentations. Essay assignments and short assignments will give students opportunities to think about the material ahead of time in preparation for class. I am open to questions, relevant discussions, and other ideas about ways to advance the topic. However, I will also plan to spend time lecturing.

Much of our concern in this course will be figuring out ways to ask questions that give us answers that we are confident in. Often, there will be no established answer in the existing literature, but it can be useful to discuss how one might come to an answer.

### Course Grading

The final grade in the course will consist of the following:

	Number	x	Points	= Total
Class discussion prep memos	4	x	14	=56
Class discussion participation	6	x	1	=6
Short additional assignments	4	x	3	=12
Final essay draft 1	1	x	6	=6
Final essay draft 2	1	x	20	=20
Total points:				=100

The largest portion of the course grade will be memos that you write in preparation for class discussion. We will have in-class discussions at the end of each unit, and these memos will help you prepare for the discussions. There are a total of 6 discussions, and you must write memos for 4 of these 6 discussions. You may write up to 5 memos and drop the lowest-scoring memo. You may choose which memos you wish to write. Memos will be two pages long: you will devote one page to supporting each side of the argument. Additional details are available on the memo handout. Even if you do not write a memo for the unit, you should come to class prepared to discuss the material, as the discussion is also graded.

Turn-in and late policies for the quizzes and paper. Papers should be turned in, printed out, the day of class when they are due. The late policy is that each day late will lower your grade by 10%. This will be waived in the case of an emergency or a medical absence.

There will be a final essay for the course. In addition, there will be four short credit/no-credit assignments.

For the final grade, I will assign letter grades based on the grade conversion chart, which will be posted online.

### Additional Course Perspectives

This course relies primarily on writing to evaluate students, for two reasons. First, writing begins to require students to some of the skills that sociologists use and engage in the activities that sociologists engage in, such as the evaluation of evidence. Second, the course is designed to at least in part mimic the types of responsibilities that you might face in a full-time paid position. Thus, there are no tests, and the majority of your evaluation is based on your ability to generate good arguments and your writing ability.

### Emory Writing Center

The Emory Writing Center offers 45-minute individual conferences to Emory College and Laney Graduate School students. It is a great place to bring any project—from traditional papers to websites—at any stage in your composing process. Writing Center tutors take a discussion- and workshop-based approach that enables writers of all levels to see their writing with fresh eyes. Tutors can talk with you about your purpose, organization, audience, design choices, or use of sources. They can also work with you on sentence-level concerns (including grammar and word choice), but they will not proofread for you. Instead, they will discuss strategies and resources you can use to become a better editor of your own work. The Writing Center is located in Callaway N-212. Visit <http://writingcenter.emory.edu> for more information and to make appointments.

### **Disability Statement**

Emory University is committed under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to providing appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the instructor(s) with an accommodation notification letter from Access, Disabilities Services and Resources office. Students are expected to give two weeks' notice of the need for accommodations. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with instructor(s) as soon as your accommodations have been finalized.

**Emory Honor Code:** The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult: [http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor\\_code.html](http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor_code.html)

### **Required Texts**

In addition to the books noted below, I will place links to journal articles and several chapters on the course Blackboard website. You will also likely be able to access the journal articles simply by searching and accessing them through the publisher's website.

- 1) Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 2) Iceland, John. 2009. *Where We Live Now: Immigration and Race in the United States*.
- 3) Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. 2006. *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. New York: Routledge.
- 4) Stiglitz, Joseph. 2013. *The Price of Inequality*.

## Course Schedule

### Week One (Aug 22-26)

**Tuesday**      **No class**

**Thursday**    **Introduction**

- Short assignment 1 handed out (do before doing reading)

### Week Two (Aug 29-Sep 2)

**Tuesday**      **Sustainability and inevitability**

- Short assignment 1 due
- Read Chapter 2 (41-57) of the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (<http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>)
- Read Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality* Chapter 2

**Thursday**    **Is inequality inevitable?**

- Films: PBS Now: Income Inequality; Many Americans Stuck in a Rut
- Read Piketty and Saez 2003.

### Week Three (Sep 5-9)

**Tuesday**      **Is inequality inevitable?**

- Read Volscho and Kelly 2012
- Read Stiglitz chapter 3

**Thursday**    **Discussion: Is inequality inevitable?**

- Read chapter (Bell Curve rebuttal).
- Memo1 due

### Week Four (Sep 12-16)

**Tuesday**      **Is inequality sustainable??**

- Watch Wilkinson Ted talk.
- Read Christopher Jencks. 2002. "Does Inequality Matter?"
- Read news article: <https://hbr.org/2014/01/income-inequality-is-a-sustainability-issue-2>

**Thursday**    **Is inequality sustainable?**

- Read: <http://lanekenworthy.net/is-income-inequality-harmful/>
- Read: Inequality and Environmental Sustainability ([http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp145\\_2015.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp145_2015.pdf))

Week Five (Sep 19-23)

**Tuesday Is inequality sustainable?**

- Read before class: Becker and Murphy. “The Upside of Income Inequality.” (online)
- Kurt Vonnegut: Harrison Bergeron (online)

**Thursday Discussion: Is inequality sustainable?**

- Read before class: Beyond Economic Growth: An Introduction to Sustainable Development ([http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/beyond/beyondco/beg\\_all.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/beyond/beyondco/beg_all.pdf))
- Stiglitz, Chapter 5
- Memo 2 Due

Week Six (Sep 26-30)

**Tuesday Does the educational system create or reduce mobility?**

- Film: People Like Us
- Read before class: Bourdieu 1986 (online)
- Short assignment 2 handed out

**Thursday Does the educational system create or reduce mobility?**

- Read before class: Lareau, pages 1-70

Week Seven (Oct 3-7)

**Tuesday Does the educational system create or reduce mobility?**

- Read before class: Kornrich and Furstenberg 2013 (online)
- Read before class: 2012 New York Times article (online)
- Short assignment 2 due

**Thursday Discussion: Does the educational system create or reduce mobility?**

- Read Lareau, pages 71-133 and 161-181
- Memo 3 due

Week Eight (Oct 10-14)

**Tuesday No class**

**Thursday Do we live with “American Apartheid”?**

- Film: Race: The power of an Illusion
- Read Massey and Denton, chap. 1 (online)

Week Nine (Oct 17-21)

**Tuesday Do we live with “American Apartheid”?**

- Read Massey and Denton, chap. 2 (online)
- Short assignment 3 handed out

**Thursday Do we live with “American Apartheid”?**

- Read Oliver and Shapiro, selection

Week Ten (Oct 24-28)

**Tuesday Do we live with “American Apartheid”?**

- Read Iceland chapters 1-3
- Short assignment 3 due

**Thursday Discussion: Do we live with “American Apartheid”?**

- Read: Oliver and Shapiro, selection
- Memo 4 due

Week Eleven (Oct 21-Nov 4)

**Tuesday Does prejudice underlie racial environmental inequalities?**

- Read: Downey and Hawkins 2008. “RACE, INCOME, AND ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES.”
- Read: Eskandari et al. 2015. [http://www.pc-progress.com/Documents/RVGenugten/Eskandari et al ESPR 2015.pdf](http://www.pc-progress.com/Documents/RVGenugten/Eskandari_et_al_ESPR_2015.pdf)
- Short assignment 4 handed out

**Thursday Does prejudice underlie racial environmental inequalities?**

- EPA My Environment map
- Read: Mullainathan and Bertrand

Week Twelve (Nov 7-11)

**Tuesday Does prejudice underlie racial environmental inequalities?**

- Read: Sears on Symbolic Prejudice
- Short assignment 4 due

**Thursday Discussion: Does prejudice underlie racial environmental inequalities?**

- Memo 5 Due

Week Thirteen (Nov 14-18)

**Tuesday Is the Gender Pay Gap Fair?**

- Read Farrell
- Read 2 news articles
- Read

**Thursday Is the Gender Pay Gap Fair?**

- Read: Blau and Kahn chapter

Week Fourteen (Nov 21-25)

**Tuesday** (No class meeting)

**Thursday** No class (Thanksgiving)

Week Fifteen (Nov 28-Dec 2)

**Tuesday** **Is the Gender pay gap Fair?**

- Read: Corell, Benard, and Paik 2007
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**Thursday** **Discussion: Is the gender pay gap fair?**

- Read: Padavic & Reskin excerpt
- Memo 6 due

Week Sixteen (Dec 5-Dec 9)

**Tuesday** **Lecture: The US in comparison (Last day of class)**

- Read Various readings (on Blackboard)