

Social Inequality

Fall 2008, Grinnell College
Soc 250-01
Meets T 10-11:50am & Th 10-10:50am, ARH 131
Course website on PioneerWeb

Professor Betsy Erbaugh
Office: Carnegie 106
Ext. 9304
erbaugh@grinnell.edu

In this course we will analyze social inequality in groups and society. We will investigate why inequality occurs, its consequences for individuals, groups and societies, how systems of social stratification operate, and how individuals attain status within these systems. We will examine the workings of power, privilege and oppression with a focus on the social constructs of race, ethnicity, class and gender. We will evaluate a range of theories of stratification, with the 2008 U.S. presidential election, the Postville immigration raid, the “gender regime” of Grinnell College, and other socio-historical developments as case studies for purposes of this evaluation.

The course involves small- and large-group discussions, short lectures, films, field activities, student presentations and individual written work. Our readings include two anthologies, a racial history text and supplemental readings. As social actors located at specific intersections of privilege and oppression, we all bring relevant experience to the study of inequality, so we will draw upon our lived experiences and sociologically informed observations to enrich our studies.

Some of the ideas presented may challenge your thinking about race, gender, sexuality, class, migration and other dimensions of identity and social life. If you are not comfortable with explicit discussions of racism, white privilege and white supremacy, class hierarchy, feminism, queer politics and other movements for social change, this may not be the class for you. We will operate under the assumption that active learning entails openness to new ideas and willingness to struggle with intellectual and social contradictions.

A reader edited by David Grusky and Szonja Szelenyi will usher us through many central arenas of inequality scholarship, from classic works to contemporary research. We will also read Omi and Winant’s classic text on racial formation and Paula Rothenberg’s edited collection of essential readings on whiteness. We will supplement these texts with selected readings posted on e-reserves.

Required Books & Supplies:

1. Grusky, David and Szonja Szelenyi, eds. 2007. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
2. Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960’s to the 1990’s*, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.
3. Rothenberg, Paula S., ed. 2008. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, 3rd edition. New York: Worth Publishers.
4. A reading and field journal (a notebook of your choice dedicated to this purpose).

Coursework & Grading

Discussion groups (10%). I will assign you to a discussion group that will meet outside of class weekly for an hour. This group will offer opportunities to review readings and to discuss sociological ideas and concerns that arise from them. Group members will take turns writing weekly informal reports of the group's discussions. Your group will also act as discussion leaders periodically during the semester.

Two short papers (2 x 15% each = 30%). You will write two brief essays (3-4 pages) that integrate assigned reading with your observations and other sources.

Participant observation & response paper (10%). You will attend a public event related to inequality and write a 2-3 page essay in response to event proceedings.

Exam (15%). An exam will be given during the semester that draws upon readings, discussion, lecture, films and other activities.

Project (25%). You will complete a final project of your own design related to material covered in the course. You will have a range of options for carrying out this project (research paper, ethnography, multi-media, etc.). There will be deadlines periodically throughout the semester for proposing your project, gathering sources, establishing your methodology and medium/a of expression, and creating a "scaffold" for the project, as well as the final product. Your grade will depend partly upon satisfactory and timely completion of these steps. You will present your project in class during the final weeks of the course.

Participation and other assignments (10%). Given that this course revolves around discussion of the readings, small group work, lectures, class presentations and other activities, ***your attendance, preparedness and active participation are essential.*** There are multiple ways of participating actively in class -- overall I expect you to be physically and psychically present and to interact critically with the material and your colleagues. I will periodically assign in-class or take-home writing and fieldwork assignments that will contribute toward this part of your grade.

Reading and field journal: This course requires a significant amount of reading, writing and discussion. Your reading journal will be your greatest tool for cataloging thoughts about readings, films, other course material and current events related to inequality, and coming to class prepared to actively participate. Please have a notebook dedicated to this course that you will use to take notes on readings, discussion and lecture, to keep track of in-class freewrites, to record field notes and ideas. The journal is not graded; however your efforts will be reflected in your ability to participate in discussion, in your formal written assignments, your independent project and in your preparation for the exam.

Notes on reading. Use these questions to guide your reading and notetaking:

1. What is the author's main point or argument? If a research study, what is the author's research question?
2. What theories and research methods does the author use to demonstrate his/her points?
3. What key pieces of evidence are presented to support the author's argument?
4. What is important about the argument? Why does it matter?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the specific argument(s) made?
6. How does the article or chapter relate to previous readings, discussions, experiences or observations?

The college's Reading Lab (1321 Park St.) offers further specific strategies on effective, efficient reading in the liberal arts environment.

I encourage you to use RefWorks, Endnote or other bibliographic software to keep track of, and make notes on, what you read. It will serve you well throughout your academic career -- it's never too soon to start organizing your research library, and the technology saves time and headaches in generating bibliographies for papers.

A note on writing: While what you write is essential, *how* you present your ideas in writing is also extremely important. The short essays will provide opportunities to exercise and strengthen your writing skills. I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the college Writing Lab for assistance with your assignments for this and other classes. As per Sociology Department protocol, you should include a line at the end of each paper acknowledging assistance of any kind that you received in producing the paper, including advice from Writing Lab staff or feedback from a fellow student, roommate, family member, etc.

Expectations & Policies

I will do everything I reasonably can to help you meet your goals in this course and to maintain a respectful classroom atmosphere. I expect you to do the same. Please see me or contact me by email to talk about any questions or problems you have with the material, my presentation of it, or classroom dynamics.

Accessibility: If you need any kind of accommodation in order to participate fully in the course, contact me and Joyce Stern in Academic Advising (ext. 3702) as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements. "Grinnell is committed to making accommodations for students with physical, learning or psychological disabilities" (*Student Handbook*), and so am I.

Academic honesty & citing sources: As in every course, you are expected to abide by the college's standards of honesty in academic work as outlined in the *Student Handbook*. I am required to bring suspicious coursework to the attention of the Committee on Academic Standing. It has become quite easy to find out whether a student has copied sections of a text from written sources or from the internet – do not be tempted.

For citations of sources in papers, I will accept any disciplinary reference style (endnotes or footnotes) provided it is consistent throughout the paper, but I strongly recommend that you use the American Sociological Association reference style.

Written work: Bring completed assignments to class or deliver them to my box in Carnegie 115 by 4pm on the due date. Please print double-sided whenever possible. NOTE: **All written work must be printed out and handed in; I do not accept emailed work.**

Deadlines: Your written work must be handed in **on time. I do not accept late work** unless you have spoken with me in office hours and obtained my permission for an extension *before* the day the assignment is due. *If you get an extension, send me an email summarizing our agreement, print it out and attach it to your late work.* Even if you have been granted an extension, a late assignment may receive a grade penalty.

Classroom presence: I take attendance at the beginning of class. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade, as will cross-talk, sleeping in class, repeatedly arriving late, or leaving early without notifying me beforehand. An absence is counted as excused **only** when I receive an email or note from Academic Advising, the Health Center or the Athletics Office.

Please note that whether excused or not, **you are responsible** for any and all material missed due to absences. Get the emails and phone numbers of your discussion group members or other classmates and if you miss a class, ask them to review what was covered and/or lend you their notes. (Do not ask me to review what was covered, or if we did anything important. Please do not tell me you are skipping my class to study for another class.)

Contacting me: I expect to be in contact with students throughout the semester. Please come by during office hours to discuss course content, thoughts or concerns about assignments, or for extra explanation or assistance. My office hours are posted weekly outside my office (Carnegie 106). If you are not available during office hours, we can schedule another time to meet. I am online daily during the week, so email is the best way to reach me.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to Kent McClelland and to contributors to the ASA Resource Manuals on Social Stratification and Race, Class & Gender for assistance in developing this syllabus.

Course schedule: Given that current events and issues raised in class may affect the pace of the course, the following is a tentative outline, subject to change. You should complete assigned readings by class time on the dates specified.

IR = *Inequality Reader* (Grusky & Szelenyi)
 OW = Omi & Winant, *Racial Formation in the U.S.*
 WP = *White Privilege* (Rothenberg)

Week	Date	Topic & Readings
1	Th 8/28	Introduction to the Course *Fri. 8/29: Shimomura exhibit opening reception, "Return of the Yellow Peril," 4:15pm, Faulconer Gallery
2	T 9/2	Inequality: Why? Who Benefits? IR Preface, Ch's 1 & 2 (1-17) Gates , Preface (vii-x) DuBois , Forethought, Ch.'s 1 & 2 (5-33) Bruce , DuBois & Double Consciousness (236-244)
	Th 9/4	IR 3 Fischer et al, Inequality by Design IR 4 Krueger, Inequality, Too Much of a Good Thing IR Part III-1st half: Class Approaches (18-63)
3	T 9/9	Race, Whiteness & Privilege OW Prefaces (both), Introduction, Ch.'s 1 & 2 (1-35) WP Introduction & Part I (1-23) WP Part IV: Ch 1 Tatum, Breaking the Silence (147-151)
	Th 9/11	OW 3: Nation & "Toward a Racial Formation Perspective" (36-50) WP Part III: Ch's 1,2, 3 (109-127, note: reading out of order)
4	T 9/16	Racial Formation & Racism OW 4 Racial Formation (53-76) WP II: 1, 2, 3 (29-51)
	Th 9/18	OW 5 The Racial State (77-91) WP II: 4 Foley, Becoming Hispanic (55-63) IR 23 Waters, Immigration, Intermarriage, &... Racial/Ethnic Identities (203-206) 11am: Juan Cole gives Scholars' Convocation in Herrick Chapel: The Iraq Crisis and the Presidential Campaign
5	T 9/23	Race & Social Structure OW 6 & 7 The Great Transformation, Race & Reaction (95-136) WP II: 5 Lipsitz, The Possessive Investment in Whiteness (67-85)

- Th 9/25 **OW Conclusion & Epilogue** (137-159)
WP II: 6 Williams, The Constraint of Race (91-94)
Rich, Credo of a Passionate Skeptic, Why I Refused the National Medal for the Arts, & letter to NEH/Pres. Clinton

*11am: Adrienne Rich gives Scholars' Convocation in Herrick Chapel
- 6 T 9/30 Class & Poverty
IR 8 Pakulski & Waters, The Death of Class
IR 10 Morris & Western, Inequality in Earnings
IR 16 Smeeding et al, U.S. Poverty in a Cross-National Context
IR 18 Massey & Denton, American Apartheid*
IR 46 Bradbury & Katz, Are Lifetime incomes Growing More Unequal?
IR 57 Chan & Goldthorpe, The Social Stratification of Theatre, Dance, & Cinema Attendance* (525-536)
- Th 10/2 Class: Structures & Outcomes
IR 19 Pebley & Sastry, Neighborhoods, Poverty, & Children's Well-Being
IR 20 Hays, Flat Broke with Children*
IR 21 Western, Incarceration, Unemployment & Inequality (165-196)
IR 55 Scott, Life at the Top...
IR 56 Mullahy et al, Health, income & Inequality* (503-520)

Paper 1 Due Friday 10/3 at 4pm
- 7 T 10/7 Industry, Immigration & Incarceration in Iowa
Camayd-Freixas, Interpreting after the Largest ICE Raid in US History
Luthra, US factory raid splits small town (BBC)
NYT articles
IR 24 Portes & Zhou, The New Second Generation
IR 25 Waters, Black Identities
- Th 10/9 New Frameworks of Race & Ethnicity
IR 31 Gans, The Possibility of a New Racial Hierarchy... (266-274)
Bonilla-Silva, Rethinking Racism (ASR 62:465-477)
Kim, "Seoul-America" on America's "Soul" (Crit. Soc. 32: 381-402)

*11am: Scholars' Convocation by Roger Shimomura, presenting his work in the context of life experience and how Americans treat one another.
- 8 T 10/14 Inequality Goes Global
WP II: 7 Mills, Global White Supremacy (97-104)
IR 61 Stiglitz, Globalism's Discontents
IR 62 Firebaugh, The New Geography of Global Income Inequality
IR 63 Krueger & Maleckova, Does Poverty Cause Terrorism? (576-606)
IR 41 Hochschild, The Nanny Chain (357-360)

- Th 10/16 Race on Campus
IR 29: Steele, Stereotype Threat & African-American Student Achievement (252-257)
McClelland & Hunter, The Perceived Seriousness of Racial Harassment (Soc. Prob. 39:92-107)
WP III: 4 Jensen, White Privilege Shapes the U.S. (129-132)
Simmons & Thomas, CBS History
CBS, Black Manifesto
Bullard, Grinnell Students Allege Racism
- Oct. 18-26 FALL BREAK
- 9 T 10/28 Gender & Labor
IR 35 Jacobs & Gerson, The Time Divide (295-300)
IR 36 Goldin & Rouse, Orchestrating Impartiality* (301-313)
IR 37 Reskin, Labor Markets as Queues (315-323)
IR 38 Charles & Grusky, Egalitarianism & Gender Inequality (327-340)
- Th 10/30 **IR 39** Petersen & Morgan, The Within-Job Gender Wage Gap
IR 40 England, Devaluation & the Pay of Comparable Male & Female Occupations
NCPE Website: <http://www.pay-equity.org/info.html>
IR 60: Hout & Moodie, The Realignment of U.S. Presidential Voting, 1948-2004 (567-574)
- *11am: Scholars' Convocation by Thomas O. Melia: The State of Democracy in '08
- 10 T 11/4 Sex & Gender Systems & Regimes
Rubin, The Traffic in Women
Add'l reading TBA
- *VOTE***
- Th 11/6 **Kessler & McKenna**, Toward a Theory of Gender
Butler, Doing Justice to Someone
- 11 T 11/11 Social Change & the Role of Allies
WP III: 5, 6 (133-141)
WP IV: 2, 3 (153-167)
Add'l reading TBA
- Th 11/13 TBA
- Paper 2 Due Friday 11/14 at 4pm**
- 12 T 11/18 TBA/Review
- Th 11/20 Exam

13 T 11/25 Project presentations

Nov. 27-30 THANKSGIVING RECESS

14 T 12/2 Project presentations

Th 12/4 Project presentations

15 T 12/9 Project presentations

Th 12/11 Project presentations

Final Project due Wed. Dec. 17 at 5pm in Carnegie 106 or 115