

Sociology 2300: Social Inequality

Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. Krista M. Brumley

Office: 2265 Faculty Administration Building

Office Hours: Canvas Conference, Thursdays, 2:30-3:00; in person by appointment

Communication: Canvas email

Department of Sociology: 313-577-2930 (main office number) (*Canvas email is best and fastest*)

Course Description:

This course explores key categories of difference and inequality in society such as, race/ethnicity, social class, sex, gender, sexuality, and dis/ability. It also explores how these categories are constructed and transformed into systems of inequality. Using sociological theories and intersectional analysis, we will examine how these categories (1) are constructed and transformed into systems of inequality social structures, and (2) maintain and perpetuate systems of inequality that create differential access to resources for the members of diverse groups. We will look at individual experiences of inequality in the United States and across the globe, and use a social justice framework to explore strategies for resisting oppression and transforming society.

Course Learning Objectives:

After completing this course students will be able to:

1. Define culture, social structure, and institutions.
2. Describe the relevance of culture, social structure, and institutions.
3. Give examples of how social institutions perpetuate inequality.
4. Describe the intersectional approach to social inequality.
5. Give examples of axes of social inequality.
6. Describe the current state of inequality across multiple axes (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality).
7. Give examples of resistance movements to social inequality.

Required Readings:

Ferguson, Susan. 2015. *Race, Gender, Sexuality and Social Class*. 2nd edition. Sage Publications (ISBN: 9781483374956).

The [required book](#) is available at the Wayne State University bookstore, or through online sources. **Make sure you get the 2015 edition!** I may require other articles or book chapters, which will be posted on Canvas or available for download through the WSU library. In addition to course readings, I will incorporate various documentaries and other videos to illustrate social inequalities.

Communication:

This is an ONLINE course. All course information (announcements, syllabus, assignments, quizzes, videos, etc.) is managed through Canvas. You must have regular access to a computer and you are required to check Canvas EVERYDAY. Not checking Canvas is no excuse for missing assignments and information for the course. Students must use email in Canvas to communicate with me; do not email me directly.

A note on interactions: The classroom, online or in-person, is a learning community – both professor and students have active responsibilities. I make every effort to ensure students learn and gain insightful knowledge; however, students must fulfill course requirements and adhere to course policies to contribute to a successful learning environment. We will read some texts and watch films that explore sensitive topics. These materials and our discussions may make you uncomfortable. It is important to be willing to grapple with this material, and its implications, while also treating one another with respect. We will work to create a space in this online course to think about serious and difficult questions together in a respectful manner.

Course Organization:

This is an online course which means there will be weekly readings, assignments, quizzes, and activities. It is imperative that you logon every week to complete these tasks. Every Monday, the new materials will be posted in Canvas and the old materials will be taken off. Each week covers a different topic. Missing a week means that you miss the complete topic and associated assignments and grades. Canvas is set up so that you cannot progress to the next module without having completed the previous one. Each week's materials are only available for one week. Please plan accordingly.

Each week includes (1) an overview or short lecture (e.g., a power point presentation), (2) reading assignment, (3) discussion board, and (4) quiz. Some weeks will have videos or documentaries, or another type of activity. There will be one final exam. The overview summarizes the week's plan, and highlights key concepts/themes. The overview/lecture helps you identify what is important in the readings. The lectures are based on the readings but not meant to substitute them. The quiz is directly related to the readings. The activities and discussions are interactive and reinforce the main topics, concepts, and ideas. Students are divided into small groups to help facilitate conversation on the discussion board.

Technology and Course Platform(s):

Students will need the following for this course:

1. **Internet:** This course is delivered in a web-based format.
2. **Canvas:** This course will use Canvas as the main course platform.
3. **E-mail:** Students must use their WSU e-mail for all correspondence with me and other students. *I will ONLY respond to emails sent through Canvas; do not send me messages directly to my email.*
4. **Software:** There are a number of free software programs that students will need. For example, students will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to read PDF documents, a media player that will play MP3 and/or MP4 files, plug-ins including Acrobat reader and Flash Player, and an Internet browser like Mozilla Firefox, Chrome, or Safari to use with Canvas.
5. **Hardware:** a computer with regular personal access to the Internet. Make sure you have speakers or a microphone so you can hear the videos and lectures.

Technology can be an amazing tool and it expands our educational classroom but not without occasional issues. Since this is the first time the University is using Canvas, I would ask everyone to be patient with how it works. It is user friendly, but it will take us some time to get used to it. Part of becoming technologically proficient requires preparation to cope with these moments. Please also keep in mind that building in a buffer will create the time to deal with potential technological issues. This means that you shouldn't wait last minute to do assignments or take quizzes. If you do, you might miss the deadline because of technical issues.

Technical Problems with testing:

I will not reset tests and quizzes for students. The only exception is when the WSU C&IT can confirm that there was a technical problem on their end that caused a problem such as automatically closing windows and kicking students off quizzes and tests. If they cannot confirm a problem on their end, I do not reset the quiz or test. This means that it is essential that you follow instructions and (1) use a computer that meets requirements (no mobile devices), (2) use compatible browsers and software, (3) only open one window and tab that you are using to take a test or quiz (no multitasking). If you follow these instructions you will not have problems with the quiz or test shutting down. If you do not follow these instructions and "technical problems" result, you will not be able to retake the quiz or test. Again, the only technical problems that warrant a resetting of the test is if there is a technical problem at on the WSU end and C&IT can confirm it.

Course Requirements:

Discussion Boards and Class Participation:

Students will be randomly assigned to small groups of about 9 to 11 students. Each week there will be one student from each group who will serve as discussion leader. In each group, students will be assigned a letter for the order of discussion leader (i.e., A, B, C, etc.). On weeks where there is no student discussion leader assigned, I will post the questions (for example, weeks one-three). All discussion board posts are graded. Student discussion leaders start the week of September 23rd (week 4). Discussion questions should be based on the week's readings. For those weeks where there are documentaries, the discussion leader may also post a question on the video, but the two required questions must be from that week's reading. Discussion questions are just that – questions should be written to elicit more than a one word or short phrase response.

Discussion leaders must post their two questions by Monday at midnight. Questions cannot be about the same reading. I encourage questions that link the readings – think about what the readings as a group say about a topic. The other group members must **post their first response** by Wednesday at midnight. All students, including the discussion leader, must **post their second comment** by Sunday at midnight. This means if a discussion leader does not post their two questions, the other classmates in the group will not have something to respond to – this is a team effort, so please be cognizant of how it may impact others.

Students are expected to reply to discussion questions, with a minimum of 250 words. The second post must also be a minimum of 250 words. You may, of course, go over the 250 words. Each post is worth 8 points for a total of 16 discussion board points weekly. **The discussion board posts are worth 40% of the overall course grade.** I reserve the right to make changes to the groups, if deemed necessary.

A few reminders on posting: I expect students to communicate in a professional manner when posting on the discussion board. Shorthand and incorrect grammar is not acceptable – students are graded on this aspect. Posts should exhibit critical thinking skills; it is important to question the often taken-for-granted assumptions made on a daily basis. However, I ask that posts are respectful and are not personal attacks. Any postings to the contrary will negatively impact grades. We come from different backgrounds, and thus likely come to this class with different ideas based on our distinct experiences. [See course policies for more details.](#)

Quizzes: There will be weekly quizzes under each week's module on Canvas. The purpose of the quizzes is to solidify your understanding of the material from each week. You can find the weekly quizzes in a separate folder within each module. Quizzes will be based on information from the textbook. Students have only one attempt for each quiz. Quizzes begin week 3, September 10th. **Quizzes are available each Monday at 12:00 a.m. (Midnight) and will be open until 11:59 p.m. each Sunday. Quizzes are worth 40% of the overall course grade.**

Final Examination: There will be one examination this semester, administered at the end of the term. **The final examination is worth 20% of the overall course grade.**

Final Grade:

1. Discussion board	40%
2. Quizzes	40%
3. Final examination	20%
TOTAL	100%

Grade Chart:

100% = A+	88-89% = B+	78-79% = C+	68-69% = D+	0-59% = F
95-99% = A	84-87% = B	74-77% = C	64-67% = D	
90-94% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-	60-63% = D-	

Course Policies:

Course policies are designed and implemented to ensure a quality learning environment. As your professor, my responsibility is to create an environment so students can learn; students are responsible for respecting policies and completing all assignments.

1. **Professor contact information:** All communication is managed through Canvas. I will not respond to emails sent directly to me. If you have not heard from me in 2-3 days, assume I did not get the email and send it again. It's the students' responsibility to come to me with questions, concerns, or comments related to coursework. I am always willing to discuss lectures, readings, and assignments. Do not wait until the last weeks of the semester to inquire about grade concerns. Always ask whenever you have questions about your course progress instead of ignoring the situation.
2. **Judgement Free Classroom:** Participation is essential to success in this course. I expect students to engage in discussions and demonstrate their understanding of readings and concepts. Active participation means voicing ideas, asking questions, and carefully "listening" to what other students express online. Due to the nature of the topics discussed in this course, some points may be controversial, uncomfortable, and/or lead to "heated" debates. Learning something new isn't always comfortable and, often, our personal judgments cloud our ability to learn to the fullest. Please try to keep those judgments outside of the "classroom" and focus on gaining new knowledge while engaging in discussion or reading the assigned texts. Students should try to create an environment that encourages everyone's participation, regardless of ideology or personality seemingly conveyed in posts.

Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action through the university. If you have strong feelings about anything brought up in discussion by either your fellow classmates or me, please feel free to make an appointment to come speak with me. I am more than willing to listen to your concerns.

3. **Email etiquette:** All students have a WSU email, so if you decide to use a different one you must forward the WSU email to that alternate email. **Canvas only uses WSU email for communicating.** Emails must follow a professional format, including punctuation, full sentences, correct spelling and grammar, and capital letters at the beginning of sentences or proper nouns. **DO NOT EMAIL AS IF YOU ARE SENDING A TEXT MESSAGE.**
4. **Student Support Services:**
 - Academic Success Center; <http://success.wayne.edu/>
 - Academic Advisor for Sociology; Stacie Moser, #2245 FAB, (313) 577-2355; stacie.moser@wayne.edu
 - Wayne State Writing Center, located in the UGL, #2310; <http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/writing>
 - Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Center Building, #552; <http://caps.wayne.edu>
5. **Grades:** If you have grade questions, I recommend setting up an appointment. If you believe you have been graded unfairly, check with me to see if it was a simple oversight. If not and you still believe you have been graded unfairly, you must submit a written explanation of why you believe the grade should be re-evaluated. Be very specific by providing evidence from course readings, along with your original graded assignment. However, a re-evaluation does not automatically mean a grade change. If you are able to show you were graded unfairly then I will gladly change your grade, but keep in mind the grade can stay the same or go down as a result of the second review. If you are still not satisfied you must go through proper channels in the Department of Sociology. A third party reviews the assignment. Again, based on the third party review, the grade(s) may go up, remain, or decrease.
6. **Plagiarism:** I expect students to abide by the academic honor code. If you use your own words, but the ideas are from someone else, you must give credit to the author(s). If you use someone's exact words,

you must use quotation marks and provide the page number/citation. Do not use a “cut-and-paste” method for written assignments. I take plagiarism seriously and will follow WSU procedures if a student violates the integrity of academics. At a minimum, the student will receive a zero for the assignment (most likely failing the course); at a maximum I will enforce WSU policies on academic dishonest.

7. **Student Disability Services:** If you have a documented disability requiring accommodations, you must register with Student Disability Services (SDS), located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department; telephone is [313-577-1851](tel:313-577-1851) or [313-577-3365](tel:313-577-3365) (TTY phone is for hearing impaired students only). Once accommodations are in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at WSU.
8. **Changes to the syllabus:** I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus throughout the course. Please pay close attention to all announcements in class and on the Canvas.
9. **WSU Registration/Withdrawal policies:** Students must complete registration by August 28th, without paying an additional fee. After September 12th, students cannot add the course. The last day to drop the course is September 12th (with tuition cancellation). If dropped by this date, the course does not appear on the academic record. Students can request to drop the course up until November 11th, but this requires professor approval (WP or WF will appear on the academic record, and students must go through SmartCheck on Pipeline). **ALL registration and withdrawals are initiated by students on Academica.** After **November 11th** students cannot withdrawal from the course and will receive a grade. See: <https://reg.wayne.edu/students/calendar18-19>.
10. **Course Schedule:** The course schedule is listed below. **For each week, there will always be readings, a discussion board, and quiz.** Some weeks will also have videos, documentaries, or other activities. For a complete list of weekly assignments, students should refer to the Modules in Canvas – this is where the most up to date assignment information is located. As mentioned previously, each Module becomes available as the previous week’s Module comes to a close. ***I reserve the right to make adjustments to the schedule as needed.***

Course Schedule

Date	Topics, Readings and Assignments	
Week 1 Aug. 29-31	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Course overview Introductions Buy textbook Discussion Board: introduce yourself to classmates in your group
Week 2 Sept. 3-7	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Introduction to Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class Concepts Read Chapters 1-4; watch documentary: Class Dismissed Complete discussion board
Week 3 Sept. 10-14	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Introduction to Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class History Read Chapters 5-8; watch two videos Complete discussion board; quiz (this is the first quiz)
Week 4 Sept. 17-21	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Introduction to Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class Theories of Difference Read Chapters 9-14; watch documentary: Tough Guise Complete discussion board (student discussion leaders start); quiz

Week 5 Sept. 24-28	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Identities Matter Identity Formation Read Chapters 15-19 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 6 Oct. 1-5	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Identities Matter Identities and Social Interaction Read Chapters 20-24 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 7 Oct. 8-12	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Identities Matter Identity Construction and Stigma Management Read Chapters 25-29 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 8 Oct. 15-19	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality The Family Read Chapters 30-32 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 9 Oct. 22-26	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality Education Read Chapters 33-35 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 10 Oct. 29– Nov. 2	TOPICS: ASSIGNMENTS: PREPARATION:	Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality Employment and the Economy Read Chapters 36-38 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 11 Nov. 5-9	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality Health Care and Medicine Read Chapters 39-41 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 12 Nov. 12-16	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality Media Read Chapters 42-44 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 13 Nov. 19-25	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Social Institutions and the Perpetuation of Inequality Politics and Government Read Chapters 45-47 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 14 Nov. 26-30	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Power and Privilege Unmasked Read Chapters 48-55 Complete discussion board; quiz
Week 15 Dec. 3-7	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Empowerment and Social Change Read Chapters 56-60 Complete discussion board; quiz
Available TBD	TOPICS: PREPARATION: ASSIGNMENTS:	Categories of Difference and Social Institutions Study!! Final Exam