

**SOCIAL INEQUALITY (SOC 3300:001)**  
Winter 2015

**Instructor:** Dr. Michelle Jacobs  
**Office:** 2263 Faculty / Administration Building (FAB)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 10 am – 12:00 pm, or by appointment  
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<i>Course</i>	<i>CRN</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
3300	26041	[001]	M W	11:45 am – 01:35 pm	0329 STATE

*\*\*You are responsible for the information in this syllabus. Read it carefully & ask questions if necessary.*

### **Course Description**

This semester we will look at several key categories of difference – race & ethnicity, social class, sex & gender, and sexuality – and explore how these categories are constructed and transformed into systems of inequality. Using sociological theories and intersectional analysis, we will examine how social structures 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 and transforming stratifying social structures.

### **Learning Outcomes**

*This course is designed to introduce you to the basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations. At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to define, give examples, and demonstrate the relevance of culture; social change; socialization; stratification; social structure; institutions; and differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class.*

### **Required Course Materials**

Textbook: *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality* (6<sup>th</sup> edition), by Tracy Ore. ISBN 9780078007802 ISBN 00780078026904

\*Additional readings and assignments will be posted on *Blackboard*. You are expected to log in to Blackboard regularly to access course materials (e.g., readings and homework assignments), check email, and review announcements.

## Course Requirements & Expectations

Assessment	%
Attendance, Preparation, & Participation (APP)	15
Assignment I: Visual Sociology	15
Assignment II: Media Analysis	20
Assignment III: Group Presentation	25
Assignment IV: Final Analysis & Reflection	25
	100

### *Attendance, Preparation, & Participation (APP)*

High APP scores will be earned by students who 1) attend class regularly, 2) prepare for class rigorously, and 3) participate in class respectfully.

1) *Attend class regularly:* Information that is critical to your understanding of course materials will be provided during class time, so it is necessary that you attend. I (frequently) will take attendance at the beginning of class. It is *your* responsibility to ensure that I have recorded you as “present.” Chronically arriving late for class and/or leaving class early is disrespectful and disruptive and will have a negative impact on your attendance grade. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late will be counted as absent. More than two absences will result in a reduced grade, and each subsequent absence will reduce your grade further. Please note that I do not expect to be informed of singular absences and I do not make arbitrary judgments regarding “excused” or “unexcused” absences. In the case of an emergency that will result in excessive absences, please contact me immediately. If you miss class for any reason, *you are responsible* for the following: submitting homework assignments on time; obtaining class notes from a classmate; continuing with the reading; and scheduling a meeting with me if you have specific questions about the materials you missed.

2) *Prepare for class rigorously:* You are expected to complete all assignments (readings, homework) prior to class so you are able to contribute *knowledgeably* to class discussions. Your performance on in-class assignments, homework assignments, and unannounced quizzes will be used to assess your preparation for class. Other indicators of adequate preparation include asking thoughtful questions and responding thoughtfully to verbal and written questions, as well as participating actively in group work. Your opinion is valuable, but you must be able to critically assess the readings and relate them to your personal experiences and broader social phenomena to demonstrate that you understand and can apply the sociological perspective. The more actively you engage in class, the more everyone will gain from this experience.

3) *Participate respectfully:* You are expected to treat all members of the class and the broader community with *respect*. This means *listening attentively* when others are speaking and using *inclusive language* when it is your turn to speak. We will discuss sensitive topics in this course. Everyone is encouraged to participate in these discussions, but personal opinions should be presented in a way that does not marginalize any person or group. Respectful participation also means refraining from participating in private conversations (in person, on the phone, etc.) during class time.

- Cell phone use is not permitted when class is in session (barring extraordinary circumstances, of which I must be informed before class begins). I will reduce your course grade by 2% for each unauthorized use of your cell phone. The same rule applies to tablets.

- You may *NOT* use a laptop computer in class unless you can articulate a specific need and you have received my express permission to do so. For students granted permission: If I discover that you are not using your computer for class purposes, I will reduce your course grade by 2% and revoke your computer use privileges. *Exception:* Anyone is permitted to bring a computer to class on days reserved for group work.

*Assignment I: Visual Sociology*

This assignment requires you to explore your unique social location within the matrix of domination. You will identify visual images that signify your experiences of privilege and oppression, and submit these images along with a two page (maximum) written reflection of your experiences. More detailed instructions will be provided in class and posted to Blackboard. Due: Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

*Assignment II: Media Analysis*

You will identify, summarize, and analyze a news article about social inequality. You will use readings and concepts discussed in class to center your analysis (3 page maximum). You also will briefly present your summary and analysis in class. More detailed instructions will be provided in class and posted to Blackboard. Due: Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>.

*Assignment III: Group Presentation*

Students will be assigned to cooperative learning groups that will remain constant throughout the semester. In addition to working on in-class group assignments, each group will be responsible for teaching one course topic for one course period. In short, each group will be assigned a social institution (family, education, work & economy, state & public policy, media, language & culture, violence & social control) and will be responsible for delivering an interactive and informative presentation that illustrates how inequalities are perpetuated and maintained in the institutional realm. Two class periods have been set aside for groups to work on their presentations, but group members will need to work individually and/or collectively outside of class, too. More detailed instructions and presentation guidelines will be provided in class and posted to Blackboard. See the course schedule for presentation dates.

*Assignment IV: Final Analysis & Reflection*

You will submit a final, five page (maximum) research paper that identifies some aspect of inequality that is maintained and perpetuated within the institutional realm. It is expected that you will write about the same institution you investigated for the group presentation, but that your analysis will focus on a specific aspect of inequality perpetuated within that institutional sphere. Your paper will include a review of scholarly sources on the topic and a reflection of how your social location has affected your access to power and resources. You also will briefly present your paper to the class. More detailed instructions will be provided in class and posted to Blackboard. Due: Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

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*Please note:* Clear and concise writing is an essential aspect of college-level work. All written work should be properly punctuated, grammatically correct, and clearly written. If you need writing assistance, please contact the WSU Writing Center (2310 Undergraduate Library, 313-577-2544). For more information about the Writing Center, visit <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing>.

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**Grades** | The grading scale for this course is as follows:

Grade	Percentage
A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D+	67 – 69
D	60 – 66
F	59 and below

**Final grades are FINAL!** Opportunities for “extra credit” will *not* be made available. No points will be added to any student’s grade at the end of the semester. *Do not ask me to make an exception on your behalf.*

### **Additional Student & Instructor Responsibilities**

#### **Student Responsibilities:**

- I (the instructor) reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus. As such, you (the student) are responsible for keeping up with any changes that are announced in class, on Blackboard, or in email communications. Not attending class, not checking Blackboard, and/or not checking your WSU email account are not legitimate excuses for missing assignments and other information pertinent to this course.
- You are *strongly encouraged* to communicate with me (the instructor) through email and/or in person if you have any comments, questions, or concerns. I cannot assist you if you do not let me know that you need assistance. *Please schedule an appointment to meet with me*, whether you would like to meet during office hours or at another designated time.
- *Emails* must have a clear and informative subject line that includes your full name and the name of the course in which you are enrolled. Emails without this information in the subject line will be promptly returned to sender. I also ask that you send emails that are appropriate for the university setting, meaning that they should have a salutation and should be written in complete sentences with real words – i.e., “you” instead of “u.”
- *Religious holidays*: “It is University policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students with classes or examinations that conflict with their religious observances are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that mutually agreeable alternatives may be worked out.”
- *Accommodative services*: "If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your

accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my 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 Wayne State University." *Please refer to the SDS website for further information: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>*

- *Academic dishonesty*, which includes cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of unethical academic behavior, *will not be tolerated*. Cheating and plagiarism are forms of academic theft that destroy the integrity of academic communities. It is expected that all students enrolled in this class support the letter and the spirit of the Student Code of Conduct. It is your responsibility to review the Code of Conduct, which is available for download at the Dean of Students Office website: <http://www.doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html>. Ignorance is not a viable defense against allegations of student conduct violations.

***My policy on academic dishonesty:*** Suspected academic dishonesty will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Students suspected of academic dishonesty may receive a score of 0 on the assignment or a score of 0 in the course, depending on the magnitude of the offense. Moreover, *I am obligated to report all instances of suspected academic dishonesty to university administrators.*

#### **Instructor Responsibilities:**

- I will provide you with the necessary tools for learning and doing sociology.
- I will come to class prepared to discuss the materials and to facilitate the educational process.
- I will be available to answer questions you have about course materials during class times, office hours, independently scheduled meetings, or by email. I will do my best to answer emails received Monday through Thursday within 48 hours. I will also make every effort to respond to emails received Friday through Sunday by the following Monday. If you do not receive a response from me within these time frames, you should assume that I did not receive your email and resend it.
- I will explain class assignments and outline my expectations for graded work.
- I will grade your work as consistently and fairly as possible.
- I will grade and return your written assignments in a timely fashion.
- I will treat all students with respect.
- I will acknowledge and correct my mistakes.

#### **Important Dates:**

Mon, January 12: Classes begin

Mon, January 19: *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (university closed, no class)*

Mon, January 26: Last day to add a course or drop a course with full tuition reimbursement

Sun, February 8: Last day to drop a course with no grade reported (no tuition reimbursement)

Fri, February 13: Degree applications due

Mon, March 2: Early assessment period ends (midterm)

Mon, March 16 through Sat, March 21: *Spring break*  
 Wed, March 25: *No class*  
 Sun, March 29: Last day to withdraw from a class with instructor permission  
 Mon, April 27: Last day of class  
 Tues, April 28: Study day  
 Wed, April 29 through Tues, May 5: Final Exams

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*The course schedule is tentative and inevitably will be adjusted throughout the semester.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment *Due on day noted</b>
01/12	Introductions & Syllabus	
01/14	Privilege & Oppression	Rodney King’s Question & Privilege, Oppression, & Difference, pp. 1-40 <i>*online</i>
01/19	<i>MLK Day (no class)</i>	
01/21	The Matrix	Constructing Differences, pp. 1-18; Capitalism, Class, & the Matrix of Domination, pp. 41-53 <i>*online</i> ; and Black Men’s Privileges Checklist, pp. 28-38 <i>*online</i>
01/26	Race	Racial Formations, pp. 19-29; Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only? pp. 29-41; Becoming Suspects, pp. 42-55
01/28	Race	Movie: <i>The Color of Fear</i>
02/02	Library instruction: Meet at UGL, Lab B, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor	<b><i>Assignment I: Visual Sociology DUE</i></b>
02/04	Class	Media Magic: Making Class Invisible, pp. 91-100; Doubly Divided: The Racial Wealth Gap, pp. 100-107
02/09	Class	Capitalism Hits the Fan, pp. 108-112; Not Poor Enough, pp. 669-678
02/11	<b><i>GROUP WORK SESSION I</i></b>	<i>*See group presentation handout for assignment details</i>
02/16	Sex & Gender	The Social Construction of Gender, pp. 112-120; The Five Sexes, Revisited, pp. 120-127; Square Pegs: Affronting Reason, pp. 685-698
02/18	Sex & Gender	Movie: <i>Ma Vie en Rose (My Life in Pink)</i>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b> * <i>Due on day noted</i>
02/23	Sexuality	Naming All the Parts, pp. 157-169; Getting Off and Getting Intimate, pp. 188-210; Trading on Heterosexuality, pp. 145-172
02/25		<b>Assignment II: Media Analysis DUE</b>
03/02	Global Perspectives	Maid in LA, pp. 269-286 * <i>online</i> The International Sexual Trafficking of Women and Children, p. 449-454 * <i>online</i>
03/04	<b>GROUP WORK SESSION II</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
03/09	Global Perspectives	India's Reproductive Assembly Line, pp. 23-27 * <i>online</i> Poisoning the Planet, pp. 37-41 * <i>online</i>
03/11	<b>Group #1</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
03/16 & 03/18	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
03/23	<b>Group #2</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
03/25	<i>No class</i>	
03/30	<b>Group #3</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
04/01	<b>Group #4</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
04/06	<b>Group #5</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
04/08	<b>Group #6</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
04/13	<b>Group #7</b>	*Assignment details to be announced
04/15	Resistance & Social Change	Part IV: Resistance and Social Change, pp. 699-710; Making Systems of Privilege Visible, pp. 589-595; Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection, pp. 711-725
04/20	Resistance & Social Change	Gee, You Don't Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation, pp. 639-645; Challenges of Multiracial Antiracist Activism: Racial Consciousness and Chief Wahoo, pp. 687-706 * <i>online</i>
04/22	Resistance & Social Change	Young Women, Late Modern Politics, and the Participatory Possibilities of Online Cultures, pp. 726-744; Good for the 'Hood?, pp. 745-751; Seeing More than Black and White: Latinos, Racism, and the Cultural Divides, pp. 752-758
<b>04/27</b>	Final class meeting :)	<b>Assignment IV: Final Analysis and Reflection DUE</b>

## Engaged Reading\*

Reading provides opportunities to create new knowledge. An author writes to communicate ideas or share experiences, but cannot possibly say all there is to say about any given topic. Readers must bridge the gaps of meaning; as they do, they contribute their own assumptions, experiences, and ways of perceiving “reality.” In this way, every act of engaged reading is a process of meaning creation.

Moreover, engaged reading is *active* reading. You should take notes as you read and reread an author’s work, paying careful attention to the author’s arguments. Doing so will help you judge the strength of the author’s claims.

Think about the following questions as you read:

- What is the author’s primary focus &/or primary research question?
- What key terms contribute to your understanding of this work? How are these terms defined by the author?
- What are the author’s key claims &/or findings?
- What evidence is used to support the author’s claims/findings?
  - Which theory/theories does the author use?
  - Are data used to support the author’s claims?
  - If so, what are the data and how are they analyzed?
- Does the author acknowledge arguments that contradict her claims? What are they?
- What are the strengths of this piece?
- What are the weaknesses of this piece?
- What is the most interesting part of the author’s work?
- What assumptions / life experiences do you bring to this process that lead to your unique interpretations?

Tips for highlighting and annotating during the active reading process:

- A pencil works as well as a pen or marker; try both and see which you like best.
- Underline each claim an author makes.
- Circle or box definitions or essential terms.
- Use arrows or lines to show connections.
- Use vertical lines in the margins to mark entire passages.
- Star the most important items.
- Use question marks for confusing places.
- Use the margins to:
  - Summarize key terms, sections, or ideas in your own words.
  - Articulate disagreements with the author’s arguments.

\* Material adapted from: <http://www.slideshare.net/UCEW/engaged-reading-and-writing>