

COURSE: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

This syllabus is subject to revision as necessary at any time during the semester.

Professor Sarah Swider

Class location: ONLINE

Hours/Days: All weekly materials will be posted by Thursday midnight; most deadlines (unless otherwise specified) will be Wednesday evening by midnight.

Office hours:

- 1) via Skype, Wimba, or Facebook by appointment
- 2) In person –Tuesday 2-4pm in my office or by appointment

Office location: 2247 Faculty and Administration Building

Course Number: SOC-3300-002

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Course Description

The question of social inequality has plagued humankind for centuries. People have advocated for the necessity of inequality in society while others have argued that increased inequality will (and has) led to the downfall of civilizations. Even today, right now, questions about inequality are central to debates and decisions that are being made here and elsewhere. This course is designed to help you to think about social inequality by framing those debates and assisting you in finding how you and your ideas about social inequality fit into this larger framework. There are four **learning objectives/outcomes** for this course:

- Provide you with a useful sociological framework (based on theory) to help you understand the concept of social inequality. This means that you will be able to identify, recall, and compare 1) social theories used to understand social inequality and 2) the different dimensions of social inequality.
- You will be able to identify your own social position within the global and national context and then examine how your social position shapes your ideas about social inequality.
- You will participate in current debates about social inequality and be able to link sociological concepts and theory with these current issues of inequality.
- Finally, you will improve your reading and critical thinking skills.

Course Organization

Although this course is an online course it is not an independent study. This means that there will be weekly assignments, quizzes, readings, and activities. It is imperative that you logon EVERY week to complete these tasks. Each week at the beginning of the week (Thursday) the materials will be posted in blackboard and the old materials will be taken off on Wednesday at midnight.

Each week we will cover a different topic. Missing a week means that you miss the complete topic and associated assignments and grades.

Each week there will be 1) an overview and short lecture 2) reading assignments 3) an activity 4) discussion 5) a quiz and 6) some weeks will have assignments due. The overview gives you a heads up about what is coming up that week and what to pay attention to for the quiz. The lecture helps you pick out what is important in the readings and understand why the readings were chosen. 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, ideas. Finally, there are some assignments that will be due throughout the class related to your final project.

Course Text

The main text for the class is available in the bookstore. It is your responsibility to make sure you get a copy of this text immediately.

Sermau, Scott. (2011) *Social Inequality in a Global Age*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

I am using the third edition of this work by Sermau and prefer that you try to find a copy of that version. In addition to the main text listed above, we will also be reading selected chapters, chapter excerpts, and/or articles. I will have these materials available on the Blackboard or you may go to the library and make copies from the original texts. Please pay attention to assigned page numbers and note that in many cases a full chapter may be posted but you are only required to read designated pages (the remaining sections are recommended but not required reading). Every week on Blackboard I will post the reading assignment (source and pages) and make sure that readings are clearly marked as either REQUIRED or optional/recommended.

Important Dates

****Students must complete late registration and adds by the end of the first week of classes
Late Registration, Late Adds Aug 27 – Sept. 3

****Course withdrawal Deadline is November 9th, 2014

Technology and Course Platform(s)

1. **Internet:** This course is delivered in a web-based format
1. **Blackboard:** This course will use Blackboard as the main course platform but it will be supplemented by other technologies and software.
2. **E-mail:** Students must use the WSU e-mail system for all correspondence with the instructor and other students.
3. **Software:** Any written assignments will be expected to be in Word or a Word compatible format. 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, and Safari Internet browser to use with Blackboard.

4. **Hardware:** 486/66-MHz processor or higher and 56kbs minimum Internet connection. Please use the following checklist to determine your computer readiness. You should own or have access to the following:

- a. a computer with personal access to the Internet (modem or cable modem connection)
- b. a WSU e-mail account
- c. Web-browser software – preferably Mozilla Firefox 3.15.13
- d. Windows 98 operating system or higher (or MAC OS 9 or higher)
- e. virus-checking software
- f. plug-ins including Acrobat reader and Flash Player
- g. Additional hardware including speakers and microphone

Course Policies

Learning is ultimately the responsibility of the student. University courses require rigorous self-discipline, thoughtful organization, and effort to receive a successful grade. It is expected that students will complete the required readings prior to the deadlines indicated in the course schedule, participate in online discussion, and complete examinations, projects and quizzes in a timely manner.

Behavior and Code of Conduct. All students are expected to follow the University's Code of Conduct (<http://www.doso.wayne.edu/judicial/index.htm>). Violations of the Code of Conduct (including any disruptive behavior) will be reported to the Dean of students and dealt with according to policy. Furthermore, inappropriate behavior will impact your participation grade (worth 20% of overall grade).

Email and Blackboard: All important information can be found on Blackboard. It will be used for making important announcements, transmitting assignments, grades, communicating any changes and posting class materials. I will send emails using your campus email. When you send an email please put SOC 3300 in the subject line. You are responsible for setting up your campus email, checking it and Blackboard regularly. Campus email is also a convenient way for you to communicate with me. However, please don't expect an immediate response and give me at 3 working days to respond. This means that there is a good chance that you will not get a response to emails (or any other form of communication) on the weekends or in the evenings.

Troubleshooting Technology: Technology can be liberating and it expands our educational classroom but not without occasional "hiccups." In fact, part of becoming technologically proficient requires that your use of technology is prepared to cope with these contingencies. There are two important rules here. First, you should not expect to eliminate all "problems" that might come up but rather you should just make sure that you know who you can contact to help you work through the problems that come up. I have contact information on our Blackboard Page. Second, you need to build in a buffer in order to create the space and time to deal with potential technological issues. This means that you shouldn't wait last minute to do assignments,

especially if they might require you to use technology that you haven't used before. Also, if there is a deadline that requires an online filing you should not wait for the last minute. If you do, you might miss the deadline because of technical issues.

Link to WSU C&IT Help and Support	http://computing.wayne.edu/support/index.php
Blackboard Documentation	http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard/student-documentation.php
More Blackboard Help	http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard/students.php
Other computing support at WSU	http://computing.wayne.edu/support/tech-resources.php

Technical Problems with testing: I will not reset tests and quizzes for students. The only exception is when the technology staff listed above can confirm that there was a technical problem on their end that caused a problem such as automatically closing windows and kicking students off of 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 on the University end and they (IT staff/Blackboard staff) can confirm it.

Communications: This is a class that will require communication between you and your peers and between you and me (your professor). It is expected that you will communicate in a professional manner when writing emails and posting on the discussion board. Shorthand and incorrect grammar is not acceptable. Also, you are expected to show respect to both your peers and your professor. I have posted a document called “**Soc 3300 NETIQUETTE**” in order to help facilitate our discussions and communication. Please read it over closely before sending any emails or posting on the discussion boards.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is considered egregious behavior with severe consequences. You are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism (ignorance is not innocence). Please take a moment to review Wayne State University's academic honor code. Also, listed below are two websites which explain how to properly cite and use material without plagiarizing. You should review this information PRIOR to doing any written assignments.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>

If there are any violations of the academic honor code (including plagiarism) there are severe penalties ranging from: a zero on the assignment, an “F” in the class, and potential additional repercussions in terms of your standing with the University. Please review the academic integrity policies at Wayne State University: <http://www.doso.wayne.edu/judicial/academic-integrity.htm>. If you are SUSPECTED of plagiarism, you will be penalized and the penalty is up to the discretion of the professor.

Assignments and late work: Late assignments are not accepted. Only in the case of a documented emergency (death, accident, hospitalization, etc) will an exception to this policy be made. The same policies apply to all assignments and tests. All written assignments, unless otherwise specified, must be typed (using 12 point Times Roman font, double spaced, with one inch margins) and handed in as specified (either emailed or posted on blackboard).

Grading Policy: If you believe that you have been graded unfairly on an assignment you must either come to my office hours or set up an alternative meeting time to discuss the issue. When you come to discuss grading issues, you should have a prepared written statement clarifying what you think was graded unfairly, why, and what you think the grade should have been. In this statement you should clearly identify the section of the assignment which you feel was graded unfairly, you should provide evidence and material (from the course) supporting your argument and reasoning for wanting a grade review. I will review your written statement along with the graded assignment and make a determination on the grade. The possible outcomes include increasing the grade, decreasing the grade, or keeping the original grade. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have a right to contact the Chair of Sociology (Room 2233 in the Faculty Administration Building, 313-577-8131). The final level of appeal is the Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, 2nd floor of "Old Main" Room 2155.

Syllabus: This syllabus is an outline of the course for this semester. However, readings and deadlines may change. Any changes will be announced in the class and posted on Blackboard, so please check Blackboard often! If you have any questions on the assignments, due dates, or class activities, please check Blackboard and the syllabus to find the answers. If you cannot find the answer then email me, Skype, or stop by my office.

Reasonable Accommodation: If you have a disability that makes it difficult/impossible for you to complete this course in the manner specified in the syllabus, please feel free to contact me privately to discuss your specific needs and/or contact the Office of Educational Accessibility Services (EAS) which is responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The Office is located in 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library, phone: 313-577-1851 (Voice) / 577-3365 (TTD).

Advising and Assistance: I am always willing to talk to students about any difficulties they are having in my class or in general. I have office hours in person, online, and via email. I am also willing to meet with students by appointment. If I cancel my office hours, I will announce alternative hours for that week in class and post it on Blackboard. In addition, WSU also provides a number of services to help students succeed. Some potential resources include: *The Academic Success Center* (David Adamany Undergraduate Library Suite 1600, (313) 577-3165) the *Writing Center* (2nd Floor Undergraduate Library, (313) 577-2544) or Counseling and Psychological Services (Student Center, Room 552).

Assessments/Assignments:

Point system: This class is based on a point system. Everything you do for the class earns you points which are cumulative and increase your grade over the course of the semester. The more

points you earn the better grade you get. There is an opportunity to earn 1100 points doing regular assignments and there are extra credit opportunities which will allow you to earn up to an additional 300-400 points. Below is a chart that translates points into grades:

970-1000	97-100	A+
930-969	93-96	A
900-929	90-92	A-
870-899	87-89	B+
830-869	83-86	B
800-829	80-82	B-
770-799	77-79	C+
730-769	73-76	C
700-729	70-72	C-
670-699	67-69	D+
630-669	63-66	D
600-629	60-62	D-
	below 60	F

Readings: One of the major goals in this class is to help students improve their reading skills, making the reading assignments central to the course. Students should expect to spend around four (4) hours outside of class reading, preparing for class and doing assignments. Many of the discussions, assignments and test questions are centered on the readings. You will be expected to reference your reading materials in your discussions and assignments (using page numbers in discussions and proper citations in written assignments).

Weekly Quizzes: This is an assignment designed to help students develop their reading and comprehension skills. The quizzes will deal with broad concepts and ideas that are discussed in the weekly readings. The quizzes will be given each week. The quizzes will either

- 1) Some have 10 questions each and each question is worth 2 pts
- 2) Some have 5 questions with each question worth 4 points

In both cases, the total quiz value is 20 points. Quizzes are worth up to 240 points over the semester. You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz once you start it. Also, once you start it you cannot stop it or restart it. In other words, you only have one opportunity to do it. The quizzes will be posted weekly on Thursdays by midnight and you will have until Wednesday on midnight to take it. If you don't, it will be removed and you will receive a "0" on the quiz. There will be a quiz almost every week.

Participation: Despite this being an online course your participation matters. Most of your participation will be via our weekly activities and discussion boards. Each week there will be an activity. It will vary from watching a movie or news clip, playing a game, or some other online activity. You have to complete the activity. You get 10 points a week for completing the activity. Then, each week there is a discussion board that is started by the instructor posting a set of questions. Often the discussion board is related to the activity. You have to 1) answer one or

more of the questions posted and 2) react to one of your classmate's posts. Your answer to the weekly question is worth 10 points and your weekly reaction to a fellow classmate is worth 10 points. This means each week you can earn 20 points for discussion per week, totaling 240 points over the semester. Also, you can earn 10 points per week for doing the discussion related activity, totaling 140 points over the semester

Tests: There will be a mid-term which will be worth 200 points.

Final Project: Instead of doing a final exam you will complete a final project. The project will have different associated assignments that will, in total, be worth up to 300 points. Please see the instruction sheet for this assignment and see the breakdown of points.

Extra Credit: Most of our extra credit assignments will require you to have a Facebook account and to join the class Facebook page. You can create a fictitious Facebook account if you want to keep your personal and academic worlds separate but you have to let me know your online name and real name so I can match them up and give you points.

Grading:

Assignment	Points
Participation Discussion Board Posts -one post and one reaction per week. This is a total of 12 weeks	240
Weekly Activity: 12 activities	120
Quizzes (12 quizzes)	240
Mid-term	200
Final Project	300
Total	1100

Determining Final Grade

Points	Percentage	Final Grade
970-1000	97-100	A+
930-969	93-96	A
900-929	90-92	A-
870-899	87-89	B+
830-869	83-86	B
800-829	80-82	B-
770-799	77-79	C+
730-769	73-76	C
700-729	70-72	C-
670-699	67-69	D+
630-669	63-66	D
600-629	60-62	D-
	below 60	F

Class Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

Date	Topics/Reading Assignment BB=Blackboard
Week 1 8/28/2014	<u>Week 1 :Introduction</u> Lecture- Introduction and Lecture Combined/Posted
Week 2 09/04/2014	<u>Week 2: Theory</u> Lectures: Overview and Reading lecture posted Readings: (1) Class Textbook (Sernua) (2) Marx-
Week 3 09/11/2014	<u>WEEK 3: Theory continued</u> 1) Lecture – Overview and Reading lecture posted 2) Readings: (3) Class, Status, Party by Max Weber (4) Sociology of Stratification C. Wright Mills
Week 4 09/18/2014	<u>Week 4: Global Inequality-</u> Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted Reading: 1) Text -Sernua Chapter 2 (27-49)
Week 5 9/25/2014	<u>Week 5: Gender and social inequality</u> Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted Reading: 1) Lorber: The Construction of Gender 2) Gender Play 1.
Week 6 10/02/2014	<u>Week 6: Social Class and inequality</u> Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted Reading: 1) Semua
Week 7 10/09/2014	<u>Week 7: Class/Status and social mobility</u> Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted Reading: Semua
Week 8 10/16/2014	Week 8: Mid TERM EXAM
Week 9 10/23/2013	<u>Week 9: Social Inequality and Race</u> Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted READINGS: 1. Semua 2. Racial Formations

Week 10 10/30/2014	Week 10: Social Inequality and Race Continued Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted READINGS: 1) online
Week 11 11/06/2014	Week 11: Experiencing Inequality Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted READINGS: 1) Making the Systems of Privilege Visible 2) A dozen Deamons 3) Yes, I follow Islam 4) The Story of my Body 5) I am your welfare reform
Week 12 11/13/2014	Week 12: Social Institutions: Education and Social Mobility/ Reproduction Lecture: Overview and Reading lecture posted READINGS 1) Semua 2) Elite Boarding Schools 3) Civilize them with a Stick
Week 13 11/20/2014	Week 13: Social Institutions The Family and Social Mobility/ Reproduction Lecture Readings- Feminist theory: from margin to center By Bell Hooks -The Second Shift -Families on the faultline -Our mother's Grief
WEEK 14 11/27/2014	HOLIDAY/Thanksgiving
Week 15 12/4/2014	Week 14: Challenges to Inequality: Counter Movements Lecture READINGS: 1) Semua
WEEK 16 12/11/2013	Final Project Due