

# **SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

## **Soc/AmCult 221**

### **Winter 2017**

This Version: February 26

#### Lecture

Tuesday & Thursday, 1pm-2.30pm  
Angel Hall, Auditorium B

#### Instructor

**Prof. Fabian Pfeffer**  
Email: [fpfeffer@umich.edu](mailto:fpfeffer@umich.edu)  
Office: 4213 LSA Building  
Office Hours: Use [link](#) to book

#### Sections

(02) Thursday, 4pm-5pm, 1636 CHEM  
(03) Thursday, 5pm-6pm, 3411 MH  
(04) Friday, 10am-11am, G168 AH  
(05) Friday, 11am-12pm, 1046 DANA  
(06) Friday, 12pm-1pm, 2130 SEB  
(07) Friday, 1pm-2pm, 1401 MH

#### Graduate Student Instructors

**Jessica Gillooly** (sections 02, 04, 06)  
Email: [jgillool@umich.edu](mailto:jgillool@umich.edu)  
Office Hours: Thursday, 2.30-4pm, ISR Atrium  
**Matthew Alemu** (sections 03, 05, 07)  
Email: [mwalemu@umich.edu](mailto:mwalemu@umich.edu)  
Office Hours: Friday, 2.30-4pm, Weill Hall 3211

## Course Description & Aims

The topic of social inequality has recently garnered much public attention. As a topic of scientific study, social inequality has a long and rich history and, in one way or another, continues to underlie most sociological inquiry. In this course, you will gain a broad overview of social inequality by learning about the main theories and empirical findings provided by classical and current sociological research. By the end of the course, you will not only be able to distinguish and describe the many different forms that social inequality takes in today's society – inequality in social class, income, wealth, education, race, or gender – but also understand some of its most important causes and consequence. That is, where does inequality come from and what does it do? You will also develop an understanding of the dynamics of social inequality as you learn how inequality shapes the life-course of individuals and families and how inequality is transmitted across generations. Finally, this course will provide you with a broad and international perspective on how inequality is influenced by a variety of factors, from neighborhoods, to national policies and institutions, to global forces. The overriding aim is that you will gain a clear understanding of one of today's most urgent social challenges.

## Assignments & Grading

### How and why this course is different

While there are parts to your learning that will be the same for all students (required assignments) you also will be able to choose your own pathway through this course. You will pick from a variety of assignments according to your own interests, curiosities, and strengths (or weaknesses!).

- Sounds great? Proceed!
- Sounds scary? Watch this: <https://youtu.be/kxb3wVwmYyc>

I want you to be actively involved in deciding on the way in which you acquire some of your new knowledge. And in order to allow you to test out what the best way is for you, this course also affords you the freedom to fail. If an assignment does not work out for you, try another one. Your final grade will be determined by the total number of points that you accumulate based on whatever assessments you have chosen. So you do not lose track of your overall goals (and grade), you will use a quite powerful and intuitive software tool (GradeCraft) that allows you to see whether you are on the path to success at all times.

The way in which this course is the same as any other courses that you are taking at the University of Michigan is that the same rules of academic integrity and support apply. You can find statements about these at the end of this syllabus and I encourage you to read them as an important reminder. They describe important rules, which if disregarded can carry grave consequences.

## Required Assignments

Required assignments cover the content taught and discussed in lecture and in section. It is important to note that, in most weeks, the content covered in lecture and section is different from and complementary to each other (rather than sections merely clarifying what was covered in lecture). As a result, attending just lectures or just the section would provide you with only about half of the instruction that you should be getting out of this course; so attendance in both is required.

All aspects of the required assignments are managed through Canvas, which includes announcements, pdfs of additional literature, submission of assignments. The points you earn through these assignments are summarized further below.

**Lecture Participation** Each lecture provides an introduction to a subtopic of social inequality to help you understand and connect different theories, concepts, and empirical findings. The lecture will draw on a variety of interactive elements for which you will need your own iClicker. The iClicker will be to confirm not only your attendance but also your participation throughout the lecture, i.e. whether you engage with the interactive content. Therefore, you need to bring your own iClicker to all lectures. You may use your laptop for note taking, but I ask you to refrain from messaging and social media, which will not only distract you but also your fellow students. If you need a little help (rather than a reprimand) for that, I recommend the use of some simple but effective productivity tools (such as [www.heyfocus.com](http://www.heyfocus.com)). Lecture slides will be posted at the beginning of each lecture in case you want to take notes on them and to help you review what we covered after class (and in preparation for lecture quizzes).

**Lecture Quizzes** To encourage you to review and make sense of content covered in both the lecture and the readings (discussed in section, see below), we will offer brief lecture quizzes at the beginning of each lecture on Tuesday. The quiz will be short and multiple choice and administered via iClicker. The quizzes are a way for you to gain points (keep in mind the freedom to fail: there are many more quizzes than you need to get the full points) and for us to identify any topics that may have remained unclear or confusing for several

students. These quizzes are meant to be a low-intensity form of engagement and should soon become a relatively low-stress part of the course. In week two there will be a test quiz so you familiarize yourself with the system. That test quiz comes without points and covers the content of this syllabus. So, having read the syllabus will help. There is just no other way you will know that I once owned a parrot.

**Section Participation** Sections will help you analyze, clarify, critique, and connect the required readings for each week. While it will be helpful for you to do the readings before lecture (in some weeks, the lecture directly draws on some of these readings but in other weeks it does not), it is absolutely necessary to do the readings before section so you can actively participate in class. Each section's GSI provides separate and detailed instructions and feedback on what they expect active participation to look like.

**Reading Interrogations** To critically engage with the readings of each week, we ask you to submit a reading interrogation between 200-300 words that is due every Tuesday by 11.59pm via Canvas. These reading interrogations will take different forms in different weeks (you may be asked to synthesize different pieces of work, critique an argument, apply a concept to a contemporary issue, compare contrasting viewpoints, etc.), but they are always geared at making you a critical consumer of information and at allowing you to craft your own research questions and arguments. They will also provide a great way for you to come to section prepared for active participation. An announcement from your GSI will go out over Canvas every Friday night that explains how to approach each week's reading assignment. That announcement will also specify the final set of readings which may be slightly different from the list included here since we sometimes update the reading list as we learn more about your interests and challenges and as the course progresses. So, as a general recommendation, wait for the note from your GSI about the nature of the reading assignment & the final reading list.

## Choice Assignments

There is a menu of additional assignments that you will choose from. You can choose as many as you like, but at least two. These assignments will provide you with different types of learning opportunities that we cannot cover in lecture or section: learning through collaboration, learning through experience, or learning from media. You will find a brief introduction to each of these assignments below. In week three, you will be provided with a separate document that contains detailed

information on the specific aims, time line, and measures of success for each assignment. Most, but not all, of these assignments require a written product. The points you earn through these assignments are summarized further below.

Each choice assignment will be available in a specific time frame (unlike the required assignments, which are available every week), though they will be more or less equally distributed across the course. This will allow you to pick assignments that fit your schedule (e.g. by avoiding those that you know will fall into the crunch time on another course). All choice assignments are managed through GradeCraft (linked through Canvas), which includes the submission of assignments and the prediction of your grade (through GradePredictor). At the beginning of week 3, we begin the lecture with a demonstration of the system by GradeCraft staff.

**Collaborative Assignments** To apply your new knowledge and generate your own, new insights on social inequality you will engage in a group project. Groups are formed by 4-5 students within each section. One of the options is to create and edit a Wikipedia page. Another option is to engage in an interview or participant observation and document it using media, such as an audio or video interview or documentary.

**Experiential Assignments** To enhance your academic understanding of social inequality and compare it to an aspect of “everyday life” you will participate in an activity outside of the classroom and write a reflection (3-4 pages) on your experience. One of the options is to participate in a workshop that simulates the experience of poverty. Another option is a bus ride to Ypsilanti during which you observe the transition from one socio-economic local context to another.

**Media Assignments** Given the topicality of social inequality, a number of interesting contributions in the form of ambitious documentaries, podcasts, and recorded talks have appeared over the recent time. To learn about a different aspect of a subtopic you have the option to watch/listen to any number of them and provide a written reaction (1-2 pages) that connects the contribution to the course or critically assess the accuracy of these contributions.

## Overview of Assignments

Category	Assignment	Max.	Explanation
<b>(A) LEARNING FROM LECTURE</b>			
Required	Lecture Participation	100	100 = participation in at least 25 lectures    50 = participation in 20-24 lectures    0 = participation in less than 20 lectures
Required	Quizzes	200	40 for each quiz with a pass (i.e. count up to 5 quizzes)
<b>(B) LEARNING FROM THE LITERATURE</b>			
Required	Section Participation	100	100 = participation in at least 12 sections    50 = participation in 10-11 sections    0 = participation in less than 10 sections
Required	Reading Interrogation	200	20 for each interrogation with a pass (i.e. count up to 10)
<b>(C) LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION (CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE)</b>			
Choice	Wikipedia	200	200 = high pass    125 = pass (or lack of indiv. contribution)    0 = fail (or lack of indiv. contribution)
Choice	Interview / Documentary	200	200 = high pass    125 = pass (or lack of indiv. contribution)    0 = fail (or lack of indiv. contribution)
<b>(D) LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE (CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE)</b>			
Choice	Poverty Simulation	100	100 = high pass    80 = pass after invited resubmission    50 = pass    0 = fail
Choice	Bus between Ypsilanti and A2	100	100 = high pass    80 = high pass after invited resubmission    50 = pass    0 = fail
<b>(E) LEARNING THROUGH MEDIA</b>			
Optional	Documentaries, Podcasts, Talks	280	40 for each reaction with a pass

## Grades

A	1,050	+ at least 250 points each from lecture (A) & section (B)
A-	975	or more, but less than 250 points each from lecture & section
B+	900	
B	850	
B-	800	
C+	750	
C	700	
C-	650	
D+	600	
D	550	
D-	500	
F	<500	

## Some FAQs

### I am confused, where do I start?

- Week 1
  - ◇ Get the course reader (information below)
  - ◇ If you do not already have one, purchase your own iClicker for the next lecture from the Computer Showcase (\$32 new, \$28 used).
  - ◇ Register your iClicker remote on Canvas by clicking on the iClicker Registration tool in the course navigation menu. You will need to enter the 8-character code listed under the barcode on the back of your remote (if you are having technical issue try using Google Chrome browser). When registration is successful, you will see a verification notice.
- Week 2
  - ◇ Settle into the course like any other, i.e. attend lectures and section and follow your GSI's instructions. That is, do just the required assignments for the course for now
- Week 3
  - ◇ Once you are settled, we will provide you with the full details on all choice assignments so you can review them and plan your pathway through the course
  - ◇ Make use of the "GradePredictor" on GradeCraft by the end of the week

**But how do I get an A or, better yet, an A+?**

As you explore the “GradePredictor” feature, you will realize that there are many different pathways to your desired grade. Pick your interests, effort level, and expected points and see whether that is enough to earn an A. In theory, it is possible to earn up to 1,400 points (350 points more than you need for an A) meaning that it is not necessary (nor very feasible) to do every single assignment. Finally, note that the one feature that distinguishes an A from every other grade – besides the point level – is that you need a minimum number of points collected in both lecture and section. That is, only if you earn at least 250 points in lecture (through participation and quizzes) and at least 250 points in sections (through participation and reading interrogations), will you be able to “unlock” an A.

An A+ is a different story. It can be awarded based on our assessment of extraordinary achievement and should be considered special and rare. Simply receiving the highest overall points in class is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for earning an A+.

**Can I get some extra points?**

Opportunities to gain “extra points” already exist – you can choose to complete as many assignments as you like. In addition, however, a few new opportunities may present themselves during the semester (such as when some current on-campus or off-campus event or speaker lend themselves to a new assignment). We will let you know if such opportunity comes up and you should also feel free to bring proposals for such opportunities to our attention. But do not count on these potential new assignments as you plan for the semester.

**I am late on an assignment, can I still hand it in, even for less points?**

No. Try the next assignment. Also note that the online submission systems used in this course are set up to adhere to an inhumane enforcement of deadlines. If a due date is Tuesday night at 11.59pm, you will simply not be able to access the submission system starting midnight.



## Course Schedule

	Date	Topic
Week 1	01/05	Introduction
CONCEPTS OF INEQUALITY		
Week 2	01/10 & 01/12	Social Class and Occupations
Week 3	01/17 & 01/19	Income and Wealth
Week 4	01/24 & 01/26	The Top of the Distribution
Week 5	01/31 & 02/02	The Bottom of the Distribution
Week 6	02/07 & 02/09	Gender, Race, and Ethnicity
Week 7	02/14 & 02/16	Attitudes & Social Psychology
DYNAMICS OF INEQUALITY		
Week 8	02/21 & 02/23	Social Mobility: Intragenerational
		<i>Winter Break</i>
Week 9	03/07 & 03/09	Social Mobility: Intergenerational
Week 10	03/14 & 03/16	Family
Week 11	03/21 & 03/23	Education
CONTEXTS OF INEQUALITY		
Week 12	03/28 & 03/30	Neighborhoods & Schools
Week 13	04/04 & 04/06	National Contexts & International Inequality
Week 14	04/11 & 04/13	Policy
Week 15	04/18	Equality

## Lectures & Reading Assignments

The required textbook for this course is

- Grusky, David B. and Szonja Szelényi. 2011. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. Second Edition. Philadelphia: Westview Press [abbreviated as GR below]

The book is available for purchase at any campus bookstore (Ulrich's has stocked copies) and has also been placed on reserve at the Shapiro Undergraduate library. Additional readings are made available via Canvas.

### Concepts of Inequality

#### Week 1: Introduction

January 5 (Lecture 1): Overview of Class

##### *Readings*

- Davis, Kingsley and Wilbert Moore: Some Principles of Stratification (GR 16-19)
- Tumin, Melvin M.: Some Principles of Stratification. (pdf)
- Krueger, Alan.: Inequality. Too Much of a Good Thing (GR 25-33)

#### Week 2: Social Class and Occupations

January 10 (Lecture 2): Marxist and Weberian Traditions of Class Analysis

January 12 (Lecture 3): Occupations and Micro-Classes

##### *Readings*

- Marx, Karl.: Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism (GR 36-47)
- Wright, Erik O.: Class Counts (GR 48-55)
- Weber, Max: Class, Status, Party (GR 56-67)
- \* Breen, Richard: Foundations of a neo-Weberian class analysis (pdf)
- \* Weeden, Kim A. and David B. Grusky: Three Worlds of Inequality (pdf)

#### Week 3: Income and Wealth

January 17 (Lecture 4): Income Inequality (first half hour: introduction to Crade-Craft)

January 19 (Lecture 5): Wealth Inequality

##### *Readings*

- Atkinson, Anthony B. Inequality: What can be done? (pdf)
- Piketty, Thomas: Capital in the Twenty-First Century (pdf)
- Keister, Lisa A.: Wealth in America (pdf)

#### **Week 4: The Top of the Distribution**

January 24 (Lecture 6): The Super Rich

January 26 (Lecture 7): The Super Wealthy

##### *Readings*

- Mills, C. Wright: The Power Elite (GR 100-111)
- Domhoff, William G.: Who Rules America? (GR 112-118)
- Frank, Robert H. and Philip J. Cook: The Winner-Take-All Society (pdf)
- Saez, Emmanuel: Striking it Richer (GR 86-89)
- Page, Benjamin I. et al.: Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealth Americans. (pdf)

#### **Week 5: The Bottom of the Distribution**

January 31 (Lecture 8): Poverty

February 2 (Lecture 9): Shelter

##### *Readings*

- Smeeding, Timothy M.: Poorer by Comparison (GR 153-158)
- Edin, Kathryn J. and Luke H. Shaefer: \$2.00 a Day (pdf)
- Desmond, Matthew: Evicted (pdf)

#### **Week 6: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity**

February 07 (Lecture 10): Race, Ethnicity, and Intersectionality

February 09 (Lecture 11): Gender

##### *Readings*

- Lorber, Judith: The Social Construction of Gender (GR 318-325)
- Reskin, Barbara: Rethinking Employment Discrimination and Its Remedies (GR 378-388)
- Charles, Maria and David B. Grusky: Egalitarianism and Gender Inequality (GR 389-404)
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant: Racial Formation in the United States (GR 222-227)

- Farley, Reynolds: Racial Identities in 2000 (GR 228-236)
- Waters, Mary: Black Identities. (GR 250-253)

### **Week 7: Attitudes and Social-Psychology**

February 14 (Lecture 12): Attitudes towards Out-Groups

February 16 (Lecture 13): Attitudes towards Inequality

#### *Readings*

- Fiske, Susan T.: Envy Up, Scorn Down (pdf)
- Bobo, Lawrence.: What Do You Call a Black Man with a Ph.D.? (GR 314-316)
- Chen, Victor Tan.: The Spiritual Crisis of the Modern Economy (pdf)
- Hout, Michael: How Class Works (pdf)
- Konnikova, Maria: America's Surprising Views on Income Inequality (pdf)

## **Dynamics of Inequality**

### **Week 8: Social Mobility: Intragenerational**

February 21 (Lecture 14): Falling Down, Moving Up

February 23 (Lecture 15): Labor Markets

#### *Readings*

- Kalleberg, Arne L.: Precarious Work, Insecure Workers
- Gabler, Neal: The Secret Shame of Middle-Class Americans
- Hacker, James: Great Risk Shift.
- Egan, Timothy: No Degree, and No Way Back to the Middle (GR 452-454)
- Rosenfeld, Jake: Little Labor (GR 696-703)

—

### ***Winter Break***

—

### **Week 9: Social Mobility: Intergenerational**

March 07 (Lecture 16): Mobility in Class and Occupations

March 09 (Lecture 17): Mobility in Income and Wealth

#### *Readings*

- Featherman, David L. and Robert M. Hauser: A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility (GR 469-680)
- Breen, Richard: Social Mobility in Europe (GR 481-498)
- Jonsson, Jan O. et al.: It's a Decent Bet That Our Children Will be Professors Too (GR 499-516)
- Blau, Peter M. and Duncan, Otis D.: The Process of Stratification (GR 527-540)
- Harding, David J. et al.: Family Background and Income in Adulthood (GR 541-552)

### **Week 10: Family**

March 14 (Lecture 18): Fertility and Reproduction

March 16 (Lecture 19): Homophily and Assortative Mating

#### *Readings*

- Conley, Dalton: The Pecking Order (GR 584-588)
- Lawrence, Matthew and Richard Breen: And Their Children after Them? The Effect of College on Educational Reproduction (pdf) Schwartz, Christine R.: Trends and Variation in Assortative Mating: Causes and Consequences (pdf)
- Mare, Robert D. 2014. Multigenerational Aspects of Social Stratification (pdf)

### **Week 11: Education**

March 21 (Lecture 20): Educational Inequality

March 23 (Lecture 21): Schools

#### *Readings*

- Heckman, James J. Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. (GR 711-716)
- McLeod, Jay: Ain't No Makin' It (GR 567-583)
- Lareau, Anette: Unequal Childhoods (GR 648-659)
- Kozol, Jonathan: Savage Inequalities (pdf)
- Karabel, Jerome: The Chosen (pdf)

## **Contexts of Inequality**

### **Week 12: Neighborhoods**

March 28 (Lecture 22): Urban Inequality & Segregation

March 30: NO CLASS

April 4 (Lecture 23): Inequality in Suburbia

*Readings*

- Wilson, William Julius: Jobless Poverty. (GR 159-169)
- Massey, Douglas and Nancy A. Denton: American Apartheid (GR 170-181)
- Pebley, Anne R. and Narayan Sastry: Neighborhoods, Poverty, and Children's Well-Being (GR 182-195)
- DeLuca, Stephanie and James E. Rosenbaum: Escaping Poverty (GR 214-219)

**Week 13: National Contexts & International Inequality**

April 6 (Lecture 24): Welfare States & Global Inequality

*Readings*

- Esping-Andersen, Gøsta: The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (pdf)
- Stiglitz, Joseph E.: Globalism's Discontents (GR 672-681)
- Firebaugh, Glenn: The New Geography of Global Income Inequality (GR 681-694)

**Week 14: Policy**

April 11 (Lecture 25): Poverty Policy

April 13 (Lecture 26): Inequality Policy

*Readings*

- Bailey, Martha J. and Danziger: Legacies of the War on Poverty (pdf)
- Frank, Robert H: The Pragmatic Case for Reducing Income Inequality. (GR 730-734)
- Atkinson, Anthony B.: Inequality: What Can Be Done? (pdf)
- Kenworthy, Lane: Social Democratic America

**Week 15: Equality**

April 18 (Lecture 27): Perspectives on Equality

*Readings*

- Swift, Adam: Political Philosophy
- Mankiw, N. Gregory: Defending the One Percent
- Swift, Adam: Would Perfect Mobility Be Perfect?

## **General Considerations**

### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Michigan community functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The College promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity, and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education. Being found responsible for academic misconduct will usually result in a grade sanction, in addition to any sanction from the College. For more information please see [www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity). There, you will find examples of behaviors that are considered academic misconduct and reason for potential sanctions, such as cheating, unacceptable collaboration, falsification of data and documents, aiding and abetting dishonesty, and – importantly – plagiarism.

As a reminder, plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements, or other work as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. Examples include: Copying word for word or lifting phrases or a special term from a source or reference, whether oral, printed, or on the internet, without proper attribution. Paraphrasing, that is, using another person's written words or ideas, albeit in one's own words, as if they were one's own thought. Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, or other illustrative material without proper reference, unless the information is common knowledge, in common public use.

### **Support with Academic Writing**

Although this course does not include a major, paper-length writing assignment, many of the potential assignments involve different forms of scientific writing. The University of Michigan Sweetland Center for Writing provides assistance for a wide range of scientific writing activities and I encourage you to inform yourself of and, if desired, make use of their services. More information can be found here: <https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland>

### **Support for Students with Disabilities**

The University of Michigan is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Request for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office located at G664 Haven Hall. The SSD phone number is 734-763-3000. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been de-

terminated you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (VISA) form. Please present this form to me at the beginning of the term, or at least two weeks prior to the need for accommodation for the assignment.

### **Support of Student Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and caps.umich.edu during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>

### **Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting**

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as your teacher. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on U-M's campus with the University. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting SAPAC's Crisis Line at (734) 936-3333.