
USC, Soci 360: Spring 2009

Social Inequality, Class, Status, and Power

No doubt that if we are to name few of human societies' dilemmas, social inequality comes at the top—the land of opportunities is no exception. This course provides a survey of the dimensions and the extent of inequality; in addition, it discusses the ways in which inequality can be reduced. Although the course focuses on inequality in the United States, it pays a special attention on how inequality functions in an increasingly globalized world.

Course Information

All course information, announcements, documents, etc. are available at the course web site <http://blackboard.usc.edu/>

Instructor:

Mazen Hashem, Ph.D.
Office: KAP 364E

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Office Hours: M & W 7:30 -8:30 a.m. and by appointment

Please do not hesitate to see me for any question or concern. If you email me, the subject line must start with “Soci 360”; also, please include related replies.

Teaching Assistant: Melissa Fujiwara fujiwara@usc.edu

Lecture: M & W: 80:30 – 9:50 at KAP 156

Reading Material

Hurst, Charles E. 2007. *Social Inequality: Forms, Causes, and Consequences*, 6/Ed. Allyn & Bacon.

Hytrek, Gary and Kristine M. Zentgraf. 2008. *America Transformed: Globalization, Inequality, and Power*. Oxford University Press.

Perrucci, Robert and Earl Wysong. 2008. *The New Class Society*, 3rd. Rowman & Littlefield.

Online articles

Course Goals and Objectives

Despite that the concept of inequality is commonly comprehensible, the forms that it takes are subtle and subject to debate. This course gives due attention to the examination of the different aspects of inequality. Inequality could be related to race, ethnicity, or gender, and could take the form of economic, political, or symbolic discrimination. Sociology does not stop at shedding light on complex phenomena, but it also ventures into explaining them. The course examines different theories that account for the rise of inequality and its persistence, and focuses on the processes through which inequality is sustained. Furthermore, the course discusses several competing visions on reducing inequality.

Students should note that common views on inequality overly focus on the individual level. However, inequality is foremost a collective phenomenon that afflicts whole segments of populations. This course generally focuses on the macro determinants of inequality, although it also pays adequate attention to the individual and the group consequences of inequality. Obviously, it would be unrealistic to discuss inequality in the United States in isolation from the rest of the world. Not only the forces of globalism could intensify or mitigate inequality, but it could also change its nature and the forms it takes.

Specifically, this course has the following objectives:

1. To introduce students to the varied dimensions of inequality, at the micro and macro levels.
2. To equip students with conceptual schemes viable for the understanding and analysis of inequality.
3. To address how the different forms of inequalities can coalesce, reinforcing each other.
4. To give students the opportunity to think of effective ways that could reduce inequality in the United States and in the world in general.

Expectations

You are required to attend all lectures. It is suggested that students familiarize themselves with the material before coming to class. Dynamic participation in discussions helps in digesting the material, makes the class livelier, and stimulates student intelligences, all of which result in better papers and scores. Moreover, the presentations of students on case studies form an integral part of the course. During this course, try to make a connection between what you learn in class and what you observe in daily life—and try to suspend your judgment. It would be a missed opportunity if a student brushes away an explanation that does not resonate with he or she is used to. However, if you let the material sink in and give yourself the opportunity to reflect on the different explanations, you are likely to find that the sociological analyses of inequality are compelling.

Policies

- Students are responsible for the assigned reading materials as well as material presented and discussed in the class.
 - In doing the research and writing activities, you may cooperate with other students. However, you must turn in your own work. The conceptualization and the execution of the task are to be uniquely yours.
 - Dispute of a score can be raised within 24 hours of receiving it. Clerical score errors should be brought to the attention of the instructor immediately after receiving it. Scores will be deemed accurate after three days of their posting.
 - Honesty and self-responsibility in taking exams and writing papers are assumed and expected. Behaviors contrary to that will be dealt with according to the disciplinary procedures of the university.
 - If you have special needs such as a chronic medical condition or learning disability, you need to register with the DSP office.
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Assessment and Grading

Your grade for the course is determined by the following components: (1) three tests, (2) a term paper, (3) a presentation, and (4) class participation.

The term paper is meant to sharpen your analytical and research skills by studying in depth a specific problem. The presentation lets you become familiarized with a specific problem and the efforts toward mitigating it. The exams focus on the key concepts and factual information discussed in class and covered by the readings.

Weights

Tests @3	60%
Presentations	10
Paper	20
Attendance and Participation	10
100%	

Grading Scale

A	93 to 100			A-	90 to 92
B+	87 to 89	B	83 to 86	B-	80 to 82
C+	77 to 79	C	73 to 76	C-	70 to 72
		D	60 to 69		
		F	<=59		

Exams

The tests include the material covered in the previous weeks, and the final solicits your all-over understanding of the subject—it is conceptually cumulative.

Team Report and Presentation

You need to write a report on a specific aspect of inequality. Several themes, which are synchronized with the reading material, are available for students to choose from. The specific topic within a theme is left to student's choice. The point of the presentation is to study in details a case of inequality, shedding lights on the intestacies of such a problem. The presentation and the report are to: (1) present empirical evidence that clearly depicts the problem, (2) discuss the complexity of the problem, and (3) present different perspectives toward it. Visual aids greatly enhance the presentation (pictures, pamphlets, PowerPoint presentation etc.). Submit the report of your presentation, including references, by the presentation day. Two students are to cooperate on producing and presenting this report. **Sign-up** for your presentation date by the second week.

Paper

You are required to write a term paper (6-7 pages) on an inequality problem of your choice. You research this problem highlighting its importance and analyzing its multiple dimensions. You also discuss the factors that maintain it and discuss the suggested solutions to such a problem. The paper should draw on the material discussed in the books and taught in the class, in addition to the input from your library research. See separate sheet for detailed instructions. The topic of the paper can be the same as your presentation topic. However, the focus of the paper is careful analysis, supported by library research, while the focus of the presentation is sharing with the class facts about the case you are covering. Internet sources are fine for the report, but not the paper.

Extra Credit

You can sign-up for the Joint Educational Program (JEP) in which you work with neighborhood youth. Those who successfully complete this service-learning program can earn up to 1/3rd of a grade, provided that they have adequate attendance record. No other extra credit opportunity will be offered.

SOCI 360: SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Wk 1	Mon, Jan 12	Orientation
	Wed, Jan 14	Perrucci & Wysong, Ch 1: Class in America
Wk 2	Mon, Jan 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – no class meeting
	Wed, Jan 21	Perrucci & Wysong Ch 2: Separate Realities
Wk 3	Mon, Jan 26	Perrucci & Wysong, Ch 4: The Invisible Class Empire
	Wed, Jan 28	Perrucci & Wysong Ch 5: The Information Industry
Wk 4	Mon, Feb 2	Perrucci & Wysong Ch 6: Education for Privilege
	Wed, Feb 4	Test #1
Wk 5	Mon, Feb 9	Hytrek & Zentgraf: Chs 1 & 2: Overview; The Context
	Wed, Feb 11	Hytrek & Zentgraf: Ch 5: Globalization and Stratification
Wk 6	Mon, Feb 16	Presidents' Day – no class meeting
	Wed, Feb 18	Hytrek & Zentgraf: Ch 6: Globalization and Work
Wk 7	Mon, Feb 23	Hytrek & Zentgraf: Ch 7: Globalization and Immigration
	Wed, Feb 25	Hytrek & Zentgraf: Ch 8: Globalization and Gender
Wk 8	Mon, Mar 2	Test #2
	Wed, Mar 4	Paper Instructions Online: Inequality?
Wk 9	Mon, Mar 9	Online: The Elite
	Wed, Mar 11	Online: Race or Class?
	Mar 16-20	Spring Recess
Wk 10	Mon, Mar 23	Online: The Dilemma of Care
	Wed, Mar 25	Online: Inequality: US vs. Europe
Wk 11	Mon, Mar 30	Test #3
	Wed, Apr 1	Hurst, Ch 8: Classical Explanations of Inequality; Selections from Ch 9: Contemporary Explanations of Inequality
Wk 12	Mon, Apr 6	Hurst, Ch 2: Economic Inequality
	Wed, Apr 8	Hurst, Ch 4: Political Inequality
Wk 13	Mon, Apr 13	Hurst, Ch 5: Sex and Gender Inequality
	Wed, Apr 15	Hurst, Ch 7: Racial and Ethnic Inequality
Wk 14	Mon, Apr 20	Hurst, Ch 15: Addressing Inequality and Poverty: Programs and Reform
	Wed, Apr 22	Paper Due Perrucci & Wysong, The future of resistance pg. 371-
Wk 15	Mon, Apr 27	Hytrek & Zentgraf: Ch 9: Globalization: Counter Movements and Community
	Wed, Apr 29	Technology, Energy, and Sustainability
	Mon, May 11	Test #4 @ 11:00 am-1:00 p.m.