

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
HONORS COLLEGE

HON 185 (Section I)
Social Inequalities: Separating Causes from Consequences

Fall 2018
Stephanie Seguino, Department of Economics

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will discuss the major areas where social inequalities have existed and have been persistent, including (but not limited to) gender, class, and race. For each of these categories, we will evaluate and discuss the existing causes and consequences, antiquated and modern. We will discuss the classical “nature-nurture” dichotomy, and discuss how it is inadequate (if not misleading) for a proper handle on social inequalities. We will take a rigorous look at the possible explanations for certain inequalities, using real-world cases. And finally, we will look at the future of inequality, biologically and socially. The course is designed to meet the social science (but not natural science) distribution requirement and also fulfills the D1 requirement.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are 3 major goals for this course:

- **Introduce the “Other” into social science.** At the end of the semester, students should be better able to 1) Locate data on the socioeconomic status of demographic subgroups (largely focused on race, class, and gender) of the US population; 2) Interpret measures of inequality; 3) Describe the role of discrimination vs. other factors in explaining differences in socioeconomic status.
- **Develop and sharpen logical and scientific reasoning skills.** Regardless of career choice, science literacy is important for responsible citizenship. Moreover, science can influence social policy and it is important for understanding the assumptions that underlie arguments made at the policy level. In light of this, the course aims to emphasize the importance of scientific reasoning and data science.
- **Model a rational discourse about inequality.** This course emphasizes a scientific evidence-based analysis of inequality. Students will learn to make distinctions between speculative hypotheses and conclusions based on a careful analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. At the end of the semester, students should be better able to 1) Avoid assessments based on stereotypes; 2) Support a position with references to empirical evidence; 3) Express disagreement by challenging the logical consistency or the evidentiary basis of an opponent’s statement.

INSTRUCTOR: Stephanie Seguino, Professor of Economics

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Room 340 Old Mill
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CLASS TIMES: Tuesday and Thursday, 1005 – 1120am

CLASS LOCATION: University Heights North 016

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 130-230pm, 340 Old Mill

Please note, I have a class directly following ours and so will not be able to stay after class for questions. You can see me before class or during office hours. Email is not a good way to communicate with me and I really welcome in person office visits.

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. While working together to build this community, I ask all members of our class to:

- share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are two required texts. Both will be available at the bookstore.

1. Coates, T.-N. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. Random House.
2. Edin, K. & L. Shaefer. 2016. *Two Dollars a Day*. Mariner Books.

We will collectively discuss the Edin & Shaefer book very early in the semester. Begin reading the entire book as soon as possible. Later in the semester, we will have an in-class discussion on Coates' book and Coates will be on campus for a lecture on Nov. 9. Read the entire book before then, and as soon as possible after Edin & Shaefer.

ABBREVIATED COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Aug. 28-30 Introduction to Inequality

Week 2. Sept. 4-6 An Up-Close Look at Poverty in the US & Discussion of Research Papers

Week 3: Sept. 11-13 A History of Biological Theories of Inequality

- Basic evolutionary theory: Darwinian evolution
- Evolutionary psychology and sociobiology
- Biology, gender, and the "battle of the sexes"

Week 4: Sept 18-20 History of Biological Theories, Part II

- Eugenics as social engineering
- Modern takes on difference in the age of genomics

Weeks 5-6: Sept. 25, Oct. 2-4 Social Science Theories of Inequality, Part I

- Human Capital Theory (Sept. 25)
- Political Economy Theories of Inequality: Marxist and Stratification Theories (Oct. 2)
- Gender-specific theories (Oct. 4)

NO CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 27.

Week 7: Oct. 9-11 Social Science Theories of Inequality, Part 2

- Social dominance theories
- Social psychology and implicit bias

Week 8: Oct. 16-18 Social Science Approaches to Measurement of Inequality

- The economist's approach
- The anthropologist's approach
- The psychologist's approach
- The sociologist's approach

Week 9: Oct. 23 In-class work on research proposals and projects

NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 25. Research session at library

Week 10: Oct. 30-Nov 1 *Gene-Environment Interactions in Biology: Epigenetics*

- How the environment shapes biology
- Health inequalities and race
- Educational inequalities and the Flynn Effect

Week 11: Nov. 6-8 *Criminal Justice System, Mass Incarceration, and Inequality*

- Race, gender, and class and the criminal justice system
- The socioeconomic effects of incarceration

Week 12: Nov. 15 Discussion of *Between the World and Me*.

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 13. Attend Ta-Nehisi Coates lecture Nov. 9

Week 13: Nov. 27 *Inequality in the Future: Biology and Social Sciences*

- Transhumanism and other theories of human improvement (Nov. 29)
- The future of work in a robotic age (Nov. 29)

Week 14: Dec. 4-6 *Presentation of Research Projects*

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

Reading materials on Blackboard are marked with BB. You should look up journal articles through the library website which gives you free access. In some cases, I provide URLs for material. When in doubt, Google the reading. **ALWAYS bring all of the required readings to class, as we will be consulting them during class discussions.**

Week 1: Aug. 28-30 *Introduction to Inequality*

- Intra- and inter-group inequality
- Types of inequality (race, class, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, nationality)
- Exploration of ways we are unequal
- Equality of opportunity vs. equality of outcome

Required Reading

- Bowles, S. 2012. "Spotlight on Institutions and Inequality." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIM4-2833jQ>
- Reich, R. and D. Satz. 2011. "Ethics and Inequality." *Boston Review*.
http://bostonreview.net/archives/BR36.6/rob_reich_debra_satz_occupy_movement_future.php

Recommended

- The Guardian Inequality Project <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/apr/25/inequality-project-guardian-in-depth-look-unequal-world-equality>
- Potizane, 2013. "Wealth Inequality in America." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM>

Week 2: Sept. 4-6 *A Bird's Eye View of Poverty & Discussion of Research Papers*

- The nature of poverty in the US

Required Reading

- Edin, K. 2012. *\$2 a day* (entire book).
 - See BB for reading and discussion questions to help guide your reflections on this book.
 - Federal Safety Net Programs. <http://federalsafetynet.com/safety-net-programs.html> (Be able to identify the programs & eligibility requirements).

Recommended

- PBS: *Waging a Living* (film, electronic resource through Bailey/Howe Library).
https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity|video_work|1785157

Week 3: Sept. 11-13 A History of Biological Theories of Inequality

- Basic evolutionary theory: Darwinian evolution
- Evolutionary psychology and sociobiology
- Biology, gender, and the “battle of the sexes”

Required Reading

- Lewontin, R.C. 1972. “The Apportionment of Human Diversity.” In T. Dobzhansky, M. Hecht W. Steere (eds) *Evolutionary Biology*, pp. 381-396 Springer, New York, NY. [BB]
- Nielsen, F. 1994. “Sociobiology and Sociology.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 20: 267-303. [Read the whole article if you can, and at least pp. 267-272 and 278-284].
- Fine, C. 2017. “One Hundred Babies?” In C. Fine, *Testosterone Rex: Myths of Sex, Science, and Society*, pp. 46 t 63. Norton and Co. [BB] OR “The Hormonal Essence of the T-Rex? From the same book, also on BB. (If your last name begins with A-J, read the first chapter, and if it begins with K-Z, read the second one).

Recommended

- Gould, Stephen Jay. 1997. “Darwinian Fundamentalism.” *New York Review of Books*, June 12. [BB]
- Living Anthropologically. 2017. “Race Reconciled Re-Debunks Race.”
<https://www.livinganthropologically.com/biological-anthropology/race-reconciled-debunks-race/>
- Goetz, A. and T. Shackelford. 2006. “Modern Application of Evolutionary Theory to Psychology: Key Concepts and Clarifications.” *American Journal of Psychology* 119(4): 567-584.
- Mukherjee, S. 2016. *The Gene*. Scribner.
- Dawkins, R. 1986. *The Blind Watchmaker*. W.W. Norton.
- Buss, D. 2003. *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating*. Basic Books.

Week 4: Sept 18-20 History of Biological Theories, Part II

- Eugenics as social engineering
- Modern takes on difference in the age of genomics

Required Reading

- Kluchin, R. “Review Essay: Social Engineering in the United States: Eugenics and Euthanasia.” *American Studies* 47(1): 155-162.
- Galton, F. “The Comparative Worth of Different Races.”
<https://www.bartleby.com/library/prose/2140.html> (Galton is the originator of the eugenics movement. You do not need to read the whole article in detail but skim to give you a sense of this work and the way he discusses race and difference).

Recommended

- *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (3-part series from PBS). *Part I: The Difference Between Us*. The film can be accessed through Bailey-Howe Library at the following link:
<http://uvm.kanopystreaming.com/node/66398?gathStatIcon=true>
- Chou, V. 2017. “How Science and Genetics Are Reshaping the Race Debate.”
<http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2017/science-genetics-reshaping-race-debate-21st-century/>
- Hammonds, E. and R. Herzig. 2008. *The Nature of Difference*. MIT Press.

- Nelson, A. 2016. *The Social Life of DNA*. Beacon Press.

Weeks 5-6: Sept. 25, Oct. 2-4 *Social Science Theories of Inequality, Part I*

- Human Capital Theory (Sept. 25)

Required Reading

- Whitehead, John. 2005. "Racial Economic Inequality and Discrimination: Conservative and Liberal Paradigms Revisited." In C. Conrad, J. Whitehead, P. Mason, and J. Stewart (eds), *African Americans in the U.S Economy*. Rowman & Littlefield. [BB].
- Political Economy Theories of Inequality: Marxist and Black Political Economy Theories (Oct. 2)

Required Reading

- Stewart, James and Major Coleman. 2005. "The Black Political Economy Paradigm and the Dynamics of Racial Economic Inequality." In C. Conrad, J. Whitehead, P. Mason, and J. Stewart (eds), *African Americans in the U.S Economy*. Rowman & Littlefield. [BB].
- Bohmer, Peter. 2005. "Marxist Theory of Racism and Racial Inequality." In C. Conrad, J. Whitehead, P. Mason, and J. Stewart (eds), *African Americans in the U.S Economy*. Rowman & Littlefield. [BB].
- Gender theories (Oct. 4)

Required reading

- Lorber, Judith. 2011. "The Social Construction of Gender." In D. Grutsky and S. Szelenyi (eds), *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*, pp. 318-325. Westview Press. [BB]
- Ferrant, G., L. Pesando, and K. Nowacka. 2014. "Unpaid Care Work: The Missing Link in the Analysis of Gender Gaps in Labour Outcomes." OECD Development Centre. [BB]

Recommended

- Murray, C. 2005. "The Inequality Taboo." American Enterprise Institute. <http://www.aei.org/publication/the-inequality-taboo/>
- Bowles, S. and H. Gintis. 1975. "The Problem with Human Capital Theory—A Marxian Critique." *American Economic Review* 65(2): 74-82.
- Steele, C. 1992. "Race and the Schooling of Black Americans." *The Atlantic Monthly*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1992/04/race-and-the-schooling-of-black-americans/306073/>
- Seguino, S. 2013. "Toward Gender Justice: Confronting Stratification and Power." *Géneros* 2(1): 1–36. [BB]

NOTE: NO CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 27. INSTEAD, CHOOSE FROM A SELECTION OF LECTURES ON CAMPUS LISTED AT THE END OF THE SYLLABUS TO ATTEND.

Week 7: Oct. 9-11 *Social Science Theories of Inequality, Part II*

- Social dominance theories
- Social psychology and implicit bias

Required Reading

- Darity, W., D. Hamilton, P. Mason, G. Price, A. Davila, M. Mora, and S. Stockly. 2017. "Stratification Economics: A General Theory of Intergroup Inequality." In A. Flynn, S. Holmberg, D. Warren, and F. Wong (eds), *The Hidden Rules of Race*, pp. 35-52. Cambridge University Press. [BB]
- Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. 2016. "Trends in the Field" In *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2016*, pp. 19-42. [BB]

Recommended

- Blumer, Herbert. 1958. "Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position." [BB]

- Collins, R. J. Chafetz, R.L. Blumberg, S. Coltrane, and J. Turner. 1993. "Toward an Integrated Theory of Gender Stratification." *Sociological Perspectives* 36(3): 185-216. [BB]

Week 8: Oct. 16-18 Social Science Approaches to Measurement of Inequality

- The economist's approach
- The anthropologist's approach
- The sociologist's approach
- The psychologist's approach

Required Reading

- Relethford, J. "Race and Global Patterns of Phenotypic Variation." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139: 16-22.
- Goldsmith, A., D. Hamilton, and W. Darity. 2006. "Skin Tone Discrimination and Economic Outcomes." *American Economic Review* 96(2): 242-245. [BB]
- Khan, S. 2012. "The Sociology of Elites." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 361-377.
- Implicit Association Test (IAT): <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>. [Take the test on race, skin tone, or gender before class and write a one-paragraph summary of your results to include in your weekly summary).

Recommended

- Keiester, L. 2014. "The One Percent." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40:347-367.

Week 9: Oct. 23 In-class work on research proposals

NOTE: NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 25. INSTEAD, THE CLASS WILL MEET WITH A RESEARCH LIBRARIAN FOR TRAINING

Week 10: Oct. 30-Nov 1 Gene-Environment Interactions in Biology

- How the environment shapes biology
- Health inequalities and race
- Educational inequalities and the Flynn Effect

Required Readings

- Williams, D. 2012. "Miles to Go before We Sleep: Racial Inequities in Health." <http://www.partnersforahealthiercommunity.org/sites/default/files/Miles%20to%20Go%20Before%20We%20Sleep%20JHSB%202012.pdf>
- Yehuda, R. 2017. "How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations." *On Being* podcast: <https://onbeing.org/programs/rachel-yehuda-how-trauma-and-resilience-cross-generations/>
- Flynn, J. 1999. "Searching for Justice: The Discovery of IQ Gains Over Time." *American Psychologist* 54(1): 5-20.

Recommended

- Ross, J. 2014. "Epigenetics: The Controversial Science Behind Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities." *The Atlantic Monthly*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/03/epigenetics-the-controversial-science-behind-racial-and-ethnic-health-disparities/430749/>
- *The Guardian*. 2012. "Interview with J. Flynn." <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/sep/23/james-flynn-iq-scores-environment>
- Hicken, M., M. Durkee, N. Kravitz-Wurtz, and J. Jackson. 2018. "The Role of Racism in Health Disparities: Integrating Approaches from Across the Disciplines." *Social Science and Medicine* 199: 11-240. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/social-science-and-medicine/vol/199/suppl/C>
- Mariani, M. 2017. "Does Poverty Show Up in Children's Brains?" *The Guardian* July 13. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/jul/13/neuroscience-inequality-does-poverty-show-up-in-childrens-brains>

Week 11. Nov. 6-8 Criminal Justice System, Mass Incarceration, and Inequality

- Race, gender, and class and the criminal justice system
- The socioeconomic effects of incarceration

Required Readings

- Wakefield, S. and C. Uggen. 2010. "Incarceration and Stratification." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 387-406.
- Alexander, M. 2012. "The Color of Justice," in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, pp. 97-139. The New Press. [BB]

Recommended

- Film: *13th*, directed by Ava Duvernay.
- Pager, D. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5): 937-975.
- Wacquant, L. 2002. "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration." *New Left Review* 13: 41-60.
- Wildeman, C. 2012. "Imprisonment and Infant Mortality." *Social Problems* 59(2): 228-257.

*Week 12: Nov. 15 Discussion of *Between the World and Me**

- See reading and discussion questions for this book on BB
- Bring book to class.

NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 13. Instead, attend Ta-Nehisi Coates' lecture on NOVEMBER 9.

*Week 13: Nov. 27 *Inequality in the Future: Biology and Social Sciences**

- Film and discussion: *Gattaca* (Nov. 27)
- Transhumanism and other theories of human improvement (Nov. 29)
- The future of work in a robotic age (Nov. 29)

Required Readings

- Film will be viewed in-class on Nov. 27. It does not need to be included in weekly summary. However, review discussion questions in advance. See BB for discussion questions.
- Suri, A. 2017. "Artificial Intelligence and the Rise of Economic Inequality." <https://towardsdatascience.com/artificial-intelligence-and-the-rise-of-economic-inequality-b9d81be58bec>
- Mishel, L., H. Shierholz, and J. Schmitt. 2013. "Don't Blame the Robots: Assessing the Job Polarization Explanation of Growing Wage Inequality." EPI Working Paper. <http://www.epi.org/files/2013/technology-inequality-dont-blame-the-robots.pdf>

Recommended

- Istvan, Z. 2013. *The Transhumanist Wager*. Futurity Imagine Media LLC.
- Bostrom, N. 2005. "A History of Transhumanist Thought." [BB]
- McChesney, R. and J. Nichols. 2016. *People Get Ready: The Fight Against a Jobless Economy and a Citizenless Democracy*.
- Tarnaff, B. 2017. "Robots Won't Just Take Our Jobs: They'll Make the Rich Even Richer." *The Guardian* March 2.
- National Academy of Sciences. 2017. *Information Technology and the US Workforce: Where are we and where do we go from here?* <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/DigitalEducation/National%20Academy%20of%20Sciences%20IT%20and%20future%20of%20work.pdf>

Week 14: Dec. 4-6 Presentation of Research Projects

COURSE DESIGN

There are no quizzes or examinations in this course. The course is designed as a communication-intensive seminar. A seminar is a small group of university students engaged in advanced study and original research under a member of the faculty who meet regularly to exchange information about their on-going research and hold discussions related to the

research of the participants and the relevant research of others. Therefore, the course will be participatory and writing-intensive. Part of each class may be devoted to lectures, particularly on technical material. The remainder will involve group work to analyze and discuss readings. We will also spend time in class discussing your research projects.

To support class participation, weekly essays will be required in which students summarize main arguments from readings, react to, and reflect on the readings, and engage with media as it applies to the topics of the course. **ALWAYS BRING ALL READINGS TO CLASS AS THESE FORM A KEY PART OF CLASS DISCUSSIONS. BRING THEM IN HARD COPY OR BRING YOU COMPUTER WITH THE ARTICLES/READINGS DOWNLOADED.**

Class discussion will be based on the **readings** listed in the Course Schedule (above) for that day, unless otherwise noted. Readings listed for September 7, for example, should be completed **BEFORE** class begins on that day.

Because there is a wide array of academic experience in this class and because there is so much literature on the topics covered, I will include recommended (optional) readings in the syllabus for those who wish to pursue topics in more depth.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COURSE ASSESSMENT

1. **Reading Essays.** Each student is expected to write a brief essay (2-3 pages total (or 500 to 750 words) to cover all required readings) for that week, responding analytically and critically to the reading/s. **Students must upload a copy of their respective essays to the appropriate Blackboard dropbox by 9:00 p.m. on Monday of each week.** In general, each response should include a) a brief summary of the main theme(s) of each reading and a statement about how the author supports claims made; b) an analysis of some aspects of the reading(s) that the student found compelling or that warrants further discussion, and c) at least one question the reading(s) has raised, and d) if desired, a personal/emotional response. These comments may reach back to consider themes or questions raised by prior readings. I will read your essays closely the first week or two to make sure you are on track—and will provide you comments for you to read and use in writing future essays. Thereafter, essays will be graded as a set at the end of the course. These weekly summaries are in lieu of in-class exams, and will prepare you to engage in class discussions in a meaningful way. **Late submissions will not be accepted. This work is worth 35 percent of the final grade. BRING YOUR ESSAYS TO CLASS.**
2. **Class participation.** All students should be prepared to discuss the readings each week. **BRING READINGS TO CLASS.** Participation is not measured by the amount of airtime you consume. Rather, it is measured by the extent to which you come to class prepared and contribute constructively to the discussion. The question is, within the context of your participation style, were you prepared and engaged? A few weeks into the course, I will give you a provisional class participation grade so that you can assess how well you are doing in this area. **This work is worth 20 percent of the final grade.**
3. **Research paper.** Each student is expected to submit a 10-page paper on a topic related to the course (not including bibliography). The paper should be typed and use standard margins and fonts only, a standard citation rubric [ASA, APA, and *University of Chicago Manual of Style*]. See below for a list of possible topics and more detailed guidelines on your papers. They may be based on extant research or it may be critically or analytically reflective of an issue raised in the course. Sources must include a balance of peer-reviewed hardcopy and credible Internet sources. Dictionary, encyclopedia, and Wikipedia research should only be used for students' own background research and are not appropriate sources for this paper. Students may also consider this requirement an opportunity to develop a research proposal that draws on theoretical perspectives and/or existing empirical work to identify an interesting and until now unsolved theoretical or empirical question if they intend to write a honors thesis. **Final papers are due on Tuesday, December 4. The research paper is worth 40 percent of the final grade.**
4. **Class presentations.** On December 4 and 6, students will present the results of their research papers. The presentation format for research papers will follow that of *Pecha Kucha*. The basic premise is 20 slides and 20 seconds per slide, for a total of 6.6 minutes per person. Here is an example of one on behavioral economics.

<http://www.pechakucha.org/presentations/behavioural-economics-2>. **This is worth 5 percent of your final grade.**

To summarize how your work will be assessed at the end of the semester:

Class participation	20%	
Weekly essays on readings and lectures	35%	
Research paper (10+ pages)	40%	
• Proposal (Oct. 4)		5%
• Detailed proposal (Oct. 23)		5%
• Revised proposal (Oct. 30)		10%
• Final paper		20%
Class presentation of research	5%	

Letter grades are assigned on a straight scale:

- A is 90-100 percent
- B is 80-89 percent
- C is 70-79 percent
- D is 60-69 percent
- F is 59 percent or less

+/- will be assigned at the discretion of the professor.

RESEARCH PAPERS

Plan to spend a significant amount of time this fall choosing a topic for your research paper, reviewing the relevant literature, identifying the evidence you plan to use, and determining key methodological strategies.

Deadlines:

Oct. 4 Upload to appropriate Blackboard dropbox a memo that describes of three possible paper topics with at least 3 possible sources (which must go beyond Internet sources). These memos will form the basis of individual face-to-face conversations with me to brainstorm a project. **Conversations with me must be completed by Oct. 12. (You may complete this work before Oct. 4 if you are prepared to do so, to facilitate a head start on your project).**

Oct. 23 Come to class with a written description of your preferred topic (approved by me). Your description will be discussed in class (and written descriptions will be handed in). Include a paragraph about each of the following.

- What is your research question?
- Why is your question important and policy-relevant?
- What work has already been done on the question you propose to address?
- What can you add to current knowledge about the question?
- What evidence (e.g., data) do you plan to use? If you plan to analyze existing evidence, you should have figured out whether you can get access to it, whether it really contains the information you need, and whether it includes the right characteristics to answer the question that interests you.

Oct. 30 Upload a description of your revised topic and responses to questions (above) to BB.

Dec. 4 Final papers due on BB.

Dec. 4-6 Class presentations of research projects.

Possible Research Paper Topics

All papers will be required to employ data as the primary source of evidence for hypotheses. The first task is to choose a topic area that interests you. The second task then is to narrow it down to a manageable scope, and to determine your approach. Will your paper be a literature review that explores competing arguments? Will you test a hypothesis, such as “Women’s lower income is a function their segregation into a limited number of occupations”? Will you explore a particular theory, such as stratification theory or human capital theory, as explanations for inequality? Whatever your topic, papers are to be evidence-based. By that I mean, that arguments need to be supported by evidence, not personal opinion.

1. Why is class inequality worsening in the US (world, state, any geographic region)?
2. Have we made progress in the US in reducing racial inequality?
3. Does gender inequality persist today and if so, what are its causes?
4. Wealth inequality – trends and causes
5. The social construction of race
6. The social construction of gender
7. Psychological theories of racial and gender inequality
8. Stratification theory
9. Human capital theory: Can this explain inequality?
10. Should we be concerned with equality of opportunity or equality of outcome (or both)?
11. Race and the criminal justice system
12. Systemic causes of inequality
13. Residential segregation and racial inequality
14. Is inequality harmful to society?
15. Racial health inequality

POLICIES

1. There are **no make-up or late submissions** accepted. If you miss (or are going to miss) something important due to illness or other severe circumstance, contact me immediately (contact your Dean’s office for validation of serious matters and medical documentation is required in the case of illness).
2. Your **presence and participation** are expected every class meeting and you are expected to have done the assigned reading and be ready to engage with the material. You are entitled to 2 absences for whatever reason. More than 2 absences will result in a loss of a letter grade on the class participation portion of your final grade for each additional absence.
3. You are expected to **do your own work**. Cheating, plagiarizing, fabrication, collusion, and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated at UVM. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University’s policy on academic honesty at <http://www.uvm.edu/cses>.
4. Students have the right to practice the **religion of their choice**. Students who foresee an absence for religious reasons should submit in writing their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester by September 13, 2018 I will make every effort to accommodate appropriately.
5. Please review UVM’s *Student Rights and Responsibilities* Policy document at <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf>.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

I have tried to give you a good idea of what the course involves and the timetable on which we will work through the material. I reserve the right to change readings, times, and other aspects of the syllabus as needed, however. You are responsible for reading your syllabus to keep abreast of the schedule, and staying current on any other changes to the syllabus, which will be announced in class and will also be communicated electronically to each of your UVM email addresses.

LECTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Below are lecture opportunities for you this semester. You may replace one weekly essay with an essay on one of these lectures (Ta-Nehisi Coates is required in place of class lecture. See syllabus). I will be adding to this list as the semester progresses and more information becomes available. See “Lecture Opportunities” under Course Materials on BB.

September 6: Moustafa Bayoumi, author of *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem? Being Young and Arab in America*, Davis Center Livak Ballroom, 7pm.

September 14: Jahi Chappell, "Beginning to end hunger," Friday, Sept. 14, 1-2pm, Stafford Hall, Room 101. The talk will present the story of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, a region of 2.5 million people with one of the most successful food security programs in the world.

September 19: Brandon Ogbunu, *A Cacophony of Errors: How Biology Ruined the Study of Human Difference (& Vice Versa)*, 5pm, location TBA.

October 25: Elizabeth Armstrong. Her talk will be on this book and title of talk is: *Paying for the Party: How social class influences the college experience.* Professor Armstrong is coauthor of *Paying for the Party*, a study of a party dorm at a major midwestern state university. It investigates gender and, more importantly perhaps, it examines the ways in which the institution has inadvertently developed mechanisms that privilege wealthy students while leave working class kids behind.

November 6: Ta-Nehisi Coates, author of *Between the World and Me*. More info to follow.

November 7: Viet Nguyen, author of *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and The Memory of War*

Guidelines on lecture essays

Essays should be 2 pages, 12pt font, and double-spaced. Include your name, name of speaker, date, place, title of presentation, and indicate the reading essay your lecture essay is replacing (e.g., in a footnote, “This essay replaces reading essay for Week 4.”). Essays on the lectures you attend should follow this format:

PART 1: A SUMMARY OF THE LECTURE. Write an informative summary of the lecturer’s presentation.

- Condense the content of the lecture by highlighting its main points and key supporting points.
- Summarize the material so that the reader gets a general sense of all key aspects of the lecture.
- Do not discuss in great detail any single aspect of the work, and do not neglect to mention other equally important points.
- Keep the summary objective and factual.

PART 2: YOUR REACTION TO THE LECTURE. To develop the second part of your essay, respond to the following:

- How was the lecture related to ideas and concerns discussed in the course?
- Did the lecture increase your understanding of a particular issue? Did it change your perspective in any way?
- How was the lecture related to your life, experiences, feelings and ideas?
- How is the lecture related to problems in our present-day world? (Optional)
- Evaluate the merit of the work: the importance of its points, its accuracy, completeness, organization, and so on.