Core Social Sciences II: The Problem of Inequality

Main Lecture: Thursdays 2-3:30pm, CAS 522

Faculty
David Swartz, coordinator (Sociology)  dswartz@bu.edu  B1 MWF 2-3pm  CAS 320
Maureen Sullivan (Core)  maureens@bu.edu  B2 MWF 10-11am  STH 440
"  "  B4 MWF 11-12am  STH 317
"  "  B6 MWF 12-1pm  STH 317
Thornton Lockwood (Core)  tlock@bu.edu  B5 TR 3:30-5pm  CAS 221
Kimberly Arkin (Anthropology)  karkin@bu.edu  B3 TR 11-12:30pm  STH B22

Core Social Sciences II will study contemporary approaches to the problem of inequality primarily in American society though there will be some international comparisons. The goal of this course is to use exemplary research in the Social Sciences to grapple with a problem that has implications for almost every aspect of our social, political, and economic life today. Lectures and readings will bring insights, statistical data, and modes of analysis from sociology, psychology, history, anthropology, political science, economics, and international relations.

Grades will be determined by your discussion section professor. They will be based on a combination of written work and class participation, and will likely follow these proportions:

Seminar papers - 45%  Research paper - 40%  Seminar participation - 15%

Research Paper. The principal assignment of the semester will be a research paper of approximately 15 pages in length on a topic related to one or more of the themes of the course. Students will develop paper topics in consultation with the leaders of their discussion sections and will be expected to begin independent secondary research and writing already by mid-semester, though the final version is due at the end of the semester. Seminar leaders will outline specific steps, such as topic selection, rough outline, annotated bibliography, detailed outline and/or rough draft), and their specific due dates for preparation of the research paper.

Seminar Papers. Seminar leaders will assign a few shorter papers on various topics and you should consult your section leader and syllabus for specifics (topics and deadlines).

Class Participation. A significant portion of your final grade will be based on class participation. Regular attendance at both Thursday lectures and individual section meetings is of course key. Good participation goes beyond attendance, however; any form of positive, active and reflective involvement in the course, such as asking or responding to questions, participating in class discussions, sending emails with substantive queries, and attending office hours to discuss class material, could enhance your final grade. Your discussion section professor will indicate how participation will be evaluated in your particular section and the forms of participation that he particularly values.
The Thursday lectures are an integral part of the course - not an optional component - and they will be discussed in the sections. A portion of your participation grade will measure your attendance and understanding of the lectures. Take good lecture notes and bring them to the sections for discussion. Discuss them with fellow students and your professors. Avoid any commercial use of lecture and section materials, such as buying or selling notes, summaries, handouts, and other course materials. Buying such materials is a waste of your money. There is no substitute for being there yourself and engaging the assigned materials directly. To rely on a commercial substitute would be like pontificating on a text that you have never read! And selling your class notes would be tantamount to what one of our thinkers from the first semester called “estranged labor,” giving away your “species-being” for a price!

**The Core Writing Center** in CAS 129 is available for help throughout the semester. The Core faculty encourage you to make good use of it. Writing Tutors are graduate and undergraduate students who have been trained in grammar and compositional skills and are familiar with the works read in the Core. To make an appointment with a tutor, stop by the Core Office (CAS 119) or call 353-5404. Tutors’ offices are in the CAS 129.

**Academic Conduct.** We expect the work you perform in this course to be your own. Presenting the work of someone else as your own, in any way, shape, or form, is plagiarism, and it will be punished by an F for the assignment and possibly for the course as well; more severe sanctions by the University Academic Conduct Committee are possible. The Boston University *Academic Conduct Code* describes plagiarism as including each of the following: “copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaboration with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution” (p. 2). A more detailed discussion with examples appears on pp. 9-14 of the *Code*. It is your responsibility to read these pages carefully and know exactly what constitutes plagiarism.

**Required Texts**


In addition, all assigned readings not found in the above texts will be posted at http://bu.edu/core/cc204, and will be handed out in hard copy in lecture or sections unless otherwise indicated.
Schedule of Lectures and Readings

**Week 1**
Course Introduction & Classical Concerns about Inequality
Lecture: January 19. Readings:
- Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, chap. 1
- *Class Matters* See http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/class/

**Week 2**
Class Inequality, Part I: Class and Status
Lecture: January 26. Readings:
- Max Weber, “The Distribution of Power Within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party”
- Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, chap. 2

**Week 3**
Class Inequality, Part II
Lecture: February 2. Readings:
- Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”
- Erik Olin Wright, “Understanding Classes”
- *Class Matters* See http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/class/
- Davis and Moore, “Some Principles of Stratification”

**Week 4**
Racial Inequality, Part I: Historical & Policy Origins
Lecture: February 9. Readings:
- W.E. B. Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” from *The Souls of Black Folks*

**Week 5**
Racial Inequality, Part II: Assets & Markets
Lecture: February 16. Readings:

**Week 6**
Gender Inequality, Part I: Gender and Domestic Labor
Lecture: February 23. Readings:
- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Second Shift*

**Week 7**
Gender Inequality, Part II: Gender and Domestic Labor
Lecture: March 1. Readings:
- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Second Shift*
- Mary Romero, “An Exploratory Study” and “Bonds of Sisterhood-Bonds of Oppression” from *Maid in the USA*
Week 8  Family Dynamics and the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender Inequalities, Part I
Lecture: March 8. Readings:
- Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*: Chaps. 1,3-5, 8-9, and Appendix A

SPRING RECESS

Week 9  Family Dynamics and the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender Inequalities, Part II
Lecture: March 22. Readings:

Week 10 Individual or Group Inequalities?, Part I: Intelligence as Innate and Measurable
Lecture: March 29, by Eric Kolaczyk (Mathematics). Readings:

Week 11 Individual or Group Inequalities?, Part II: Intelligence as Innate and Measurable?
Lecture: April 4, by Eric Kolaczyk (Mathematics). Readings:
- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*

Week 12 Individual or Group Inequalities?, Part III: Academic Achievement as Socially Constructed Performance
Lecture: April 12. Readings:
- Claude Steele, “A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance.”

Week 13 Educational Inequality: The History of Merit in Elite College Admissions, Part I
Lecture: April 19. Readings:

Week 14 Educational Inequality: The History of Merit in Elite College Admissions, Part II
Lecture: April 26. Readings:
- Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen*