Core Social Sciences II: The Problem of Inequality

Main Lecture: Thursdays 12:30-2pm, CAS B36

Faculty
David Swartz, coordinator (Sociology)  dswartz@bu.edu  B1 MWF 1-2pm  CAS 425
Jura Avizienis (Writing)  jura@bu.edu  B3 TTH 2-3:30pm  CAS 114A

Discussion Sections
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Core Social Sciences II will study contemporary approaches to the problem of inequality primarily in contemporary American society though there will be some historical, anthropological, and cross-national 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 primarily from sociology, history, and anthropology, political science, and economics.

Grades will be determined by your discussion section professor. They will be based on a combination of written work and class participation, and will 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 15-20 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/she 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.

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
- Katznelson, Ira. *When Affirmative Action was White* (Norton, 2005)
- Mead, Margaret. *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (Harper Perennial, 2001)
- Lareau, Annette. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (Univ. of California, 2011)

In addition, assigned readings not found in the above texts will be posted at the course webpage, http://bu.edu/core/cc204. They will be handed out in hard copy in lecture or sections unless otherwise indicated.

Course communication, aside from announcements in lecture and seminar, will take place via email from core@bu.edu or the instruction staff, as well as via Twitter. Follow along @BUCore204.
Schedule of Lectures and Readings

**Week 1.** Course Introduction & Classical Concerns about Inequality.
Lecture: 1/16, Stephanie Nelson (Classics; Director, Core Curriculum) & David Swartz (Sociology)
Readings:  - Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, chapter 1

**Week 2.** Class Inequality Part I: Class and Status.
Lecture: 1/23, David Swartz
Readings:  - Davis and Moore, “Some Principles of Stratification” (packet)
    - Marx, “Classes” pp. 441-442 (packet) & “The Communist Manifesto” pp. 473-83 in *The Marx-Engels Reader* (from CC203; online at bu.edu/core/cc204/)
    - Weber, “Class, Status, Party” (packet)
    - Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, chapter 2

**Week 3.** Class Inequality Part II: Class and Status.
Lecture: 1/31, David Swartz
Readings:  - Wright, “Understanding Class” (packet)
    - Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital” & “Social Space & Symbolic Space” (packet)

**Week 4.** Thinking Critically and Historically about Racial Inequality.
Lecture: 2/6, Ruha Benjamin (Sociology & African American Studies)
Readings:  - Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, chapters 1,2,7
    - Boas, “Race and Progress” (packet)
    - Omi and Winant “Racial formation in the US” (packet)
    - Smedly, “The History of the Idea of Race...And why it Matters” (packet)

**Week 5.** Thinking Critically and Historically about Racial Inequality & Public Policy
Lecture: 2/13, David Swartz
Readings:  - Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*: Preface, chapters 1-2, 5-6
    - Massey, Chapter 3 “Reworking the Color Line”

**Week 6.** Racial Inequality: Assets & Intergenerational Transfers of Wealth
Lecture: 2/20, Thomas Shapiro (Brandeis University)

**Week 7.** Racial Inequality & Incarceration
Lecture: 2/27, Ruha Benjamin
Readings:  - Alexander, “The New Jim Crow” (packet)
    - Wacquant, “Deadly Symbiosis” (packet)

**Week 8.** Race and Immigration
Lecture: 3/6, Nazli Kibria (Sociology)
  - Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, chapter 4 “Building a Better Underclass”
  - Mollenkopf and Hochschild, “Immigrant Political Incorporation” (packet)

**SPRING RECESS**

**Week 9.**  Gender Differences in Historical & Anthropological Perspective  
Lecture:  3/20, Kimberly Arkin (Anthropology)  
Readings:  - Mead, *Sex and Temperament*, Intro, chapters 1-2,4,8-9,11,13-16,18, Conclusion

**Week 10.**  Gender, Race & Class: Intersectionality  
Lecture:  3/27, Ashley Mears (Sociology)  
Readings:  - West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender” (packet)  
  - Collins, “Black Sexual Politics” (packet)  
  - Glenn, “Race and Gender” (packet)

**Week 11.**  Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on Gender Inequality  
Lecture:  4/3, Kimberly Arkin (Anthropology)  
Readings:  - Mead, *Sex and Temperament* (continued)  
  - Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” (packet)  
  - Mahmood, “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent” (packet)

**Week 12.**  Contemporary Gender Inequality in the Domestic Sphere  
Lecture:  4/10, by David Swartz (Sociology)  
Readings:  - Brown, “A Note on the Division of Labor by Sex” (packet)  
  - Hochschild, *The Second Shift*, chapters 1,2,4,5,9  
  - Hochschild, “The Nanny Chain” (packet)  
  - Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, chapter 6, “engendering Inequality”

**Week 13.**  Intergenerational Transmission of Inequalities in Families & Institutions  
Lecture:  4/17, Annette Lareau via internet (University of Pennsylvania)  
Readings:  - Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*: chapters 1,3-5, 8-9, 13-15 and Appendix A, C & D

**Week 14.**  NO THURSDAY LECTURE the week of April 24  
Monday classes substituted for Thursday  
Reading:  continue the Lareau reading

**Week 15.**  May 1 - Summing Up