

090:261 Honors Seminar: Inequality and Opportunity in America
(Draft, 1/30/13)

Patricia A. Roos
Spring, 2013
Thursdays 9:50 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.
Brett Hall Seminar Room, CAC

Contact information:
Department of Sociology
Office: Rm. 115, Davison Hall (Douglass)
Email: roos@rutgers.edu (best way to contact me)

Office hrs: Thursdays 1-2 @ Brett Hall (or by appointment—especially Wednesdays—in Davison Hall)

I. Course Description:

Social scientists—and especially sociologists—have long studied how inequality gets produced and reproduced, and how ascriptive inequalities shape our access to a wide range of opportunities. We focus on these core issues.

We begin with an overview of why class still matters in contemporary American society. We'll assess how important class remains in defining our life chances, and our opportunity to pursue the American Dream.

We will also examine how inequality has been rising in recent years, and how durable that inequality remains. We'll focus on categorical (i.e., group) inequalities, especially the "big three" (race, class, and gender), but we'll address other forms of inequality as well.

As more overt forms of discrimination have declined, researchers have begun to examine the more subtle ways in which inequality is reproduced. We'll talk about these more subtle *mechanisms of inequity*, and discuss the ways they are often embedded in interactions among people and in the policies and procedures of our social institutions.

There are no prerequisites for this course. Although the readings come from a variety of disciplines, an important goal of this course is to introduce you to the sociological imagination.

Brett Hall is wireless. We will take advantage of this, so please bring your laptops to class when we're scheduled to use them.

II. Readings:

There are five required books available at the Rutgers College bookstore. Additional readings are available on Sakai. The required books (in alphabetical order) are:

Dalton Conley. 2010. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*. 10th Anniversary Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Annette Lareau. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. 2nd edition. Berkeley: University of California Press. **[make sure you buy the 2nd edition]**

Devah Pager. 2009. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cecilia L. Ridgeway. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mitchell Stevens. 2009. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Purchase each of these books early in the semester to make sure you have them when you need them.

III. Expectations:

This is an honors seminar, so I have high expectations of each of you. We meet only once per week, so ***it is important that you attend each class***. Indeed missing even one class without an approved excuse could reduce your grade. If something horrible happens, let me know asap.

Because this is a "seminar," the format will be discussion, not lecture. The success of the course depends on your active participation, and the small class size facilitates this goal. Assigned readings should be completed ***prior to class***, and you should come prepared to ask and answer questions.

In addition to books, I've assigned both academic and media (newspaper, magazine) articles, the latter of which tend to be quite short. To keep the number of readings down to a reasonable number, I've moved some of the readings to "recommended." While these articles or books are not required, I nonetheless do recommend them to you if you'd like to do extended reading on the topic, or use them for your writing assignments.

Your final grade will be based on:

1) *Class participation/attendance, including written class memos* (20 percent total)

Beginning week 2 (January 31st), for each class period, write one to two paragraphs (no more than a page) about one or more of the readings. ***Post it to Sakai by 12 noon on Wednesday, the day before class***. Is there something in the readings that you find particularly intriguing, or with which you disagree? Or something that puzzles you that you think merits class discussion? Which issue would you like to talk about with your parents or friends?

You can miss one memo over the course of the semester without harm to your grade ("life happens" to all of us at one time or another). More than one, however, will negatively affect your grade.

Read everyone's memo before class. We'll use them to structure the day's discussion. Each of you should be prepared to "lead off" the class discussion. I'll randomly choose one (or more) of you to lead the discussion. Please be considerate of your fellow students and me: make sure you post to Sakai no later than 12 noon on Wednesday.

2) To get you writing and thinking early in the semester, there will be **one short paper, or "real world reflection."** (double-spaced, 3-4 pp. max; due February 28th; post to Sakai no later than 12 noon Wednesday; 20 percent)

Our readings are about topics that are very much applicable to the "real world." I've chosen two recent articles about family and class that have gotten a lot of attention in the popular press:

Jason DeParle. 2012. "Two Classes, Divided by 'I Do.'" New York Times, July 14.
Article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/us/two-classes-in-america-divided-by-i-do.html>
Related video: http://video.nytimes.com/video/2012/07/14/us/100000001661964/single-and-unequal.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120715)

Elizabeth Kolbert. 2012. "Spoiled Rotten: Why Do Kids Rule the Roost." The New Yorker, July 2.
http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2012/07/02/120702crbo_books_kolbert?printable=true¤tPage=all&mobify=0

Responses to Kolbert's article, if you're interested:
<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/07/14/when-parents-hover-and-kids-dont-grow-up>

Read through these two articles. Note the authors' reliance on academic concepts. **Develop an argument** using course concepts. Do not just summarize the articles. Instead, **take a stand, make an argument, and justify it**, using points from the articles as evidence for the argument you make. Describe how course concepts illuminate the issues the articles address. You don't need to use "data" from each article; what you use will depend on the argument you make.

3) **Analytic review and debate** (double-spaced, 4-5 pp. max; due March 28th; 20 percent)

On Thursday March 28th, we will have an in-class debate on the political approaches of the two modern-day political parties. In this era of hyper partisanship, it's important to know how Democrats and Republicans (or subsets therein) address issues of inequality. We will divide the class in half, with half being "Team Democrat" and half being "Team Republican." You will work collectively in your respective groups to research issues you jointly choose. There are a number of issues relevant to the topics we discuss this semester (e.g., race, gender, class, education, the economy). These are quite broad topics, so you'll want to narrow down your topics into something you can more easily research and write about. Check this web page for some ideas of specific topics: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/slides.html>

Each of you will write an *analytic critique* of the research material you personally collect. On the day of the debate, you will use the political party's viewpoint you research as the basis for

your arguments, serving as the advocate for that point of view. ***This means that you will critique the research in your analytic review, and argue for its viewpoint in the debate.*** For advice on how to write an analytic review, see Clarke's "On Writing and Criticism" (Sakai).

4) ***Final research paper*** (double-spaced, approx. 10-12 pages, with a minimum of 7 *academic* references) on a topic of your choice (40 percent).

Note: this can be an outgrowth of your short paper, the debate topic, or any other topic related to inequality that interests you (for ideas, see the Stanford University web link noted above). A written description of your paper topic (1-2 pages) with at least 3 annotated references is due February 14th. I encourage you to talk with me early and often. Your paper outline is due April 18th, the first draft of the paper on April 25th, and the final draft on May 9th. Use primarily academic references for this paper. It's okay to supplement with excellent articles from reputable media sources (e.g., Fortune, the New York Times, The Atlantic), but these should be few in number in comparison with academic references.

Each student will also present a brief power point presentation of her or his paper during the last class session (May 2nd). We will talk more about this as the semester progresses.

Feel free to work in groups, researching different aspects of the same issue. You'll each still need to do your own oral presentation, and to write individual final papers. But collaborative efforts can often be greater than the sum of their parts.

Summary of due dates:

February 14th: Description of final paper topic (1-2 pp.), with at least 3 annotated references; brief in-class presentations (post to Sakai 12 noon Wednesday)
February 28th: Real word reflection (3-4 pp.; post to Sakai by 12 noon Wednesday)
March 28th: Analytic review and debate preparation due (4-5 pp.; bring hard copy to class)
April 18th: Final paper outline due (post to Sakai by 12 noon Wednesday)
April 25th: First draft of final paper due (bring hard copy to class, and send email attachment)
May 2nd: Class presentations with power point slides (post slides to Sakai by 12 noon Wednesday)
May 9th: Final draft of paper due (send email attachment)

IV. Academic Integrity:

This course will be conducted in full accordance with the university's Academic Integrity Policy:

“The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration.

- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.” (Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, 2011, p. 1)

Note: it is very easy to cut and paste from the internet, and/or copy verbatim selections from articles or books. **This is called plagiarism.** It's also pretty easy to find plagiarism nowadays. You can use internet sources (preferably academic sources you find online through IRIS), as well as print sources, but paraphrase the work you use and properly cite it. Avoid over-quoting, but if you do use an author's exact words *you must put them in quotes and cite, including page numbers.* A reader needs to be able to check all sources.

I will not accept any assignments or papers from students involved in dishonest behavior, and I am required to report such students. Students engaging in dishonest behavior hurt all students.

V. Classroom Atmosphere:

I encourage the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other disrespectful behaviors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted (and indeed encouraged).

VI. Course Outline (with the exception of the books you buy, **all articles are available either online or through Sakai**):

Part I: Overview, Theory, and Historical Context

Week 1 (January 24th): Introduction and Course Overview

Paul Krugman. 2002. “For Richer.” New York Times, October 20.

Janny Scott. 2005. “Life at the Top in America Isn’t Just Better, It’s Longer.” New York Times, May 16.

Isabel Wilkerson. 2005. “Angela Whitiker’s Climb.” New York Times, June 12.

In class: Organize debate groups, and spend some time doing initial web research; bring your laptops.

Recommended:

Chrystia Freeland. 2011. "The Rise of the Global Elite." *The Atlantic*. January/February.

Week 2 (January 31st): Categorical (and Durable) Inequalities: Theory and Historical Context

Theory: Categorical Inequalities and their Reproduction

Charles Tilly. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 1: "Of Essences and Bonds" (pp. 1-40)

Douglass S. Massey. 2007. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1: How Stratification Works (pp. 1-27)

Historical Context: Trends in Household Income

Congressional Budget Office. 2011. "Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007." Washington D.C.: Congressional Budget Office. (pp. 1-19)

Recommended:

Arne Kalleberg. 2011. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1: "Job Quality in the United States" (pp. 1-18) and Ch. 2: "Economic Transformations and the Decline of Institutional Protections" (pp. 21-39)

U.S. Department of Census. 2011. "Poverty: 2009 and 2010."

Part II: Categorical Inequalities: Race, Class, and Gender

Week 3 (February 7th): Race I: Wealth Matters

Dalton Conley. 2010. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*. 10th Anniversary Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Recommended:

Paul Taylor, Rakesh Kochlar, Richard Fry, Gabriel Velasco, and Seth Motel. 2011. "Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics." Pew Research Center, July 26.

Dalton Conley and Rebecca Glauber. 2008. "Wealth Mobility and Volatility in Black and White." Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress. (www.americanprogress.org)

In class: Debate groups convene; bring laptops

Week 4 (February 14th): Race II: Race and Crime

Due Today: Description of final paper project

Devah Pager. 2009. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nicholas K. Peart. 2011. "Why is the NYPD After Me?" *New York Times*, December 17. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/18/opinion/sunday/young-black-and-frisked-by-the-nypd.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

In class: Presentations on final paper topics

Week 5 (February 21st): Class I: Reproducing Class

Annette Lareau. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. 2nd edition. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Chs. 1-5, 12, Part IV (Chs. 13-14)]

In-class: Introduction to Real World Reflection paper

Week 6 (February 28th): Class II:

Due Today: Real World Reflection

Guest lecturer: Angelique Haugerud, Department of Anthropology

Angelique Haugerud. 2013. "Leave No Billionaire Behind: Political Dissent as Performance Parody," *Princeton Report on Knowledge (p-rok, volume 1, number 1)*: <http://www.princeton.edu/prok/issues/1-1/inventions.xml>

Jacob S. Hacker. 2006. *The Great Risk Shift: The Assault on American Jobs, Families, Health Care, and Retirement and How You Can Fight Back*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Introduction-Ch. 2, pp. 1-60)

Joseph E. Stiglitz. 2013. "Inequality is Holding Back the Recovery." *New York Times*, January 19.

In class: reflections on "Reflections" write-up

Recommended:

Angelique Haugerud. 2010. "Neoliberalism, Satirical Protest, and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign." Pp. 112-127 in Carol J. Greenhouse (ed.). *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism*. Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania Press.

Week 7 (March 7th): Gender I: The Persistence of Gender

Cecilia L. Ridgeway. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Recommended:

Jeff Hayes and Heidi Hartmann. 2011. *Women and Men Living on the Edge: Economic Insecurity after the Great Recession*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women's Policy Research.

In class: Debate groups convene; bring laptops

Week 8 (March 14th): Gender II: It's Structural

Guest lecturer: Dana Britton, Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations

Joan Acker. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." *Gender & Society* 4:139-158.

Dana M. Britton and Laura Logan. 2008. "Gendered Organizations: Progress and Prospects." *Sociology Compass* 2/1:107-121.

In class: Final prep for debate

Recommended:

Christianne Corbett & Catherine Hill. 2012. "Graduating to a Pay Gap: The Earnings of Women and Men One Year after College Graduation." AAUW. Washington, D.C.

Rachel Maddow, "Fact or Friction (women get paid less than men for the same work)": <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26315908/#47240047>

Dana M. Britton. 1999. "Cat Fights and Gang Fights: Preference for Work in a Male-Dominated Organization." *Sociological Quarterly* 40:455-474.

Dana M. Britton. 2000. "The Epistemology of the Gendered Organization." *Gender & Society* 14:418-434.

Week 9 (March 28th): Debate! Partisanship and Inequality

Due Today: Analytic Review and Debate Presentations

Part III: Producing Advantage and Disadvantage: Selected Topics

Week 10 (April 4th): Education I: Reproducing Elites

Mitchell L. Stevens. 2009. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Recommended:

David Brooks. 2001. "The Organization Kid." *Atlantic Monthly*, April.

Week 11 (April 11th): Education II: Reproducing Inequality

Audrey Devine Eller. 2012. *Post-Secondary Planning Paradoxes: How Regular Kids Prepare for the Future in the College-For-All Era*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Rutgers University. (Ch. 1: "Introduction," pp. 1-45).

Stacey Patton. 2012. "From Cellblock to Campus, One Black Man Defies the Data." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 29.

DeParle, Jason. 2012. "For Poor, Leap to College Often Ends in a Hard Fall." *New York Times*, December 22.

Laura Hamilton & Elizabeth A. Armstrong. 2012. "The (Mis)Education of Monica and Karen." *Contexts Magazine*, American Sociological Association.

Recommended:

James E. Rosenbaum. 2001. *Beyond College for All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Preface (pp. xi-xii) and Ch. 1: "Pathways to Adulthood: Reversing the Downward Spiral of the Youth Labor Market (pp. 1-23)

Elizabeth Murphy. 2011. "The 'Boy Problem' Examined." *Inside Higher Education*, December 6.

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/12/06/women-high-income-families-outpace-their-brothers-college>

Anthony P. Carnevale and Jeff Strohl. 2011. "Our Economically Polarized College System: Separate and Unequal." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 25.

Scott Carlson and Goldie Blumenstyk. 2012. "For Whom Is College Being Reinvented?" Chronicle of Higher Education, December 17.

In class: Little Rock Central: 50 Years Later documentary and discussion

Week 12 (April 18th): Race Redux: Mixed-Race Legacies

Due Today: Final paper outline

Guest lecturer: Crystal Bedley, Ph.D. student, Department of Sociology

Ruth La Ferla. 2003. "Generation E.A.: Ethnically Ambiguous." New York Times, December 28.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/28/style/generation-ea-ethnically-ambiguous.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

In class: Roundtable discussion of final paper topics

Week 13 (April 25th): Class and Gender Redux: Individualism vs. Structure

Due Today: First draft, final paper

Jessica Bennett. 2012. "How to Attack the Gender Wage Gap? Speak Up." New York Times, December 15.

Anne-Marie Slaughter. 2012. "Why Women Still Can't Have It All." The Atlantic, July/August.

In class: Born Rich documentary, and discussion

In class: Discussion of final paper progress

Week 14 (May 2nd): Student presentations (post power point slides to Sakai by 12 noon)

Due Today: Class presentations

May 9th: Final papers due

VII. Help on Research, Thinking, and Writing:

Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Becker, Howard S. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clarke, Lee. "Notes on Proposing" and "On Writing and Criticism"

Germano, William. 2005. "Passive Is Spoken Here." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 22, 2005.

Jasper, James. "Why So Many Academics are Lousy Writers"

Rosenfield, Sarah. "Some Things To Think About While Reading Papers"

Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. 2000. *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition. New York: Allyn & Bacon.

American Sociological Association, "Writing an Informative Abstract"

And, for some humor: "How to Write Good"

VIII. Other Sources (in progress):

- 1) Inequality in the United States slide show, Stanford University, October 2012:

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/slides.html>

- 2) Gapminder World:

[http://www.gapminder.org/world/#\\$majorMode=chart\\$;shi=t;ly=2003;lb=f;il=t;fs=11;al=30;stl=t;st=t;nsl=t;se=t\\$wst;tts=C\\$;sp=5.59290322580644;ti=2011\\$zpv;v=0\\$inc_x;mmid=XCOORDS;iid=phAwcNAVuyj1jiMAkmq1iMg;by=ind\\$inc_y;mmid=YCOORDS;iid=phAwcNAVuyj2tPLxKvvnNPA;by=ind\\$inc_s;uniValue=8.21;iid=phAwcNAVuyj0XOoBL_n5tAQ;by=ind\\$inc_c;uniValue=255;gid=CATID0;by=grp\\$map_x;scale=log;dataMin=283;dataMax=110808\\$map_y;scale=lin;dataMin=18;dataMax=87\\$map_s;sma=49;smi=2.65\\$cd;bd=0\\$inds=;example=75](http://www.gapminder.org/world/#$majorMode=chart$;shi=t;ly=2003;lb=f;il=t;fs=11;al=30;stl=t;st=t;nsl=t;se=t$wst;tts=C$;sp=5.59290322580644;ti=2011$zpv;v=0$inc_x;mmid=XCOORDS;iid=phAwcNAVuyj1jiMAkmq1iMg;by=ind$inc_y;mmid=YCOORDS;iid=phAwcNAVuyj2tPLxKvvnNPA;by=ind$inc_s;uniValue=8.21;iid=phAwcNAVuyj0XOoBL_n5tAQ;by=ind$inc_c;uniValue=255;gid=CATID0;by=grp$map_x;scale=log;dataMin=283;dataMax=110808$map_y;scale=lin;dataMin=18;dataMax=87$map_s;sma=49;smi=2.65$cd;bd=0$inds=;example=75)

- 3) Occupy Wall Street links:

Academic Voices:

G. William Domhoff. 2011. "Wealth, Income, and Power."

<http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html>

And, a link within Domhoff:

http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/investment_manager.html

http://www.bostonreview.net/BR36.6/occupy_movement_forum.php

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/cgi-bin/facts.php>

http://blog.nj.com/njv_guest_blog/2011/12/occupy_wall_street_political_t.html

Other Voices (in brief):

<http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/02/income-inequality-in-america-chart-graph>

<http://www.thenation.com/article/164207/why-occupy-wall-street-has-left-washington-behind##>

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-november-1-2011/men-of-a-certain-wage>

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-november-1-2011/men-of-a-certain-wage---money-talks>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/15/business/the-1-percent-paint-a-more-nuanced-portrait-of-the-rich.html?pagewanted=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha23>

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/how-the-gop-became-the-party-of-the-rich-20111109>