

Patricia A. Roos (Draft: 1/15/09)

920: 573 Grad Seminar: Inequalities

Spring, 2009

Thursdays, 9:50 to 12:30

Lucy Stone Hall, A256

Contact information:

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Office hrs: Thursdays, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., LSH (or by appointment in LSH or LEC)

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I. Course Description:

Issues of inequality are central to the research that many sociologists do. Social scientists more broadly have long studied how inequality gets produced and reproduced, and how ascriptive inequalities shape our access to a wide range of opportunities. These core issues will be the focus of this course. Our readings will be interdisciplinary, and include a few popular authors as well.

This course is an overview course, focusing on a select number of important topics in inequality research.. We begin with an overview of why class still matters in contemporary American society. As part of that overview, we examine some theoretical voices, both classical and contemporary, who help to set later readings into context. We also view inequality historically, focusing in particular on the recent rise of inequality, and how durable that inequality is.

The middle part of the course will focus on categorical (i.e., group) inequalities, with two weeks each on race, class, gender. We'll then shift to discussion of *mechanisms of inequities*, those often subtle factors that continue to reproduce inequality in the labor market as more overt forms of discrimination have declined. We'll talk about how these more subtle mechanisms are often embedded in interactions among people and in the policies and procedures of our social institutions. As part of this discussion, we'll specifically discuss the role of education, and how it reproduces the status quo.

Finally, to finish out the semester, we'll spend some time thinking about how best to reduce inequality by rethinking what success, diversity, and capitalism mean.

II. Readings:

There are seven required books available at the Livingston bookstore, and additional readings are available through sakai. The required books (in alphabetical order) are:

Dalton Conley. 1999. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Malcolm Gladwell. 2008. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown.

Steven Greenhouse. 2009. *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. [note: the paperback version of this book will be available Feb. 10th]

Annette Lareau. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mary Ann Mason and Eve Mason Ekman. 2007. *Mothers on the Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mitchell Stevens. 2007. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruce Western. 2007. *Punishment and Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

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

If you would like a good edited volume of research on inequality, you might want to purchase:

David B. Grusky (ed.). 2008. *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [This volume has 111 chapters on everything you've always wanted to know about stratification and inequality. It can help to provide structure to the broader stratification field. I will recommend selections from this book throughout the course, and make them available on sakai.]

III. Expectations:

This is a seminar, not a lecture course. You are expected to complete all the required reading prior to class, prepare written comments, and participate actively in class discussions. Your grade will be based on:

1) Class participation, including written commentary (20 percent)

Everyone is required to do all the reading. For each class period, select one reading (or group of readings) and post a brief (1-2 paragraph) comment on sakai, no later than 5 p.m. Wed. evening.

Depending on the size of the class, one or more class members will facilitate each day's discussion. The facilitator(s) will bring in a set of written questions the class will discuss. These questions should extend, not reproduce, the readings.

2) Two reaction papers (3-4 pages maximum) (due Feb. 26th and April 2nd; 20 percent each)

In these short papers, I want you to *ask and answer a question* derived from your readings to date. The first reaction paper should address a question of interest from Weeks 2 through 5 (see course outline below). The second reaction paper should address a question of interest from weeks 6 through 10.

Follow your interests here, be creative. What struck you as most interesting about one or more of these readings? Did they raise a question to which you'd like an answer? Are there problems you see with the author's argument? Are there subthemes in one or more of the readings you'd like to explore in greater depth? Bring in other relevant literature, or not.

The question you ask should be brief and clear. Whatever question you ask, your answer should be an analytic essay. For advice on how to write an analytic essay, see Clarke, "On Writing and Criticism" (sakai). *Make an argument* that clearly and systematically answers the question you have raised. An example of a question might be: "Have the economic transitions of the post-World War II U.S. exacerbated, or narrowed, class inequality?" Alternatively, you might want to ask a more conceptual question, one you think through logically, something that might build on previous literature, or something you'd like to examine in a longer essay.

3) Final paper (18 to 20 pp. maximum), on a topic related to course content (due May 4th; 40 percent) [Note: this can be related to one of your reaction papers. A written description of your paper topic with 2-3 references is due Feb. 12th. A final paper outline is due April 16th. Clear your topic with me ahead of time, and if you change your mind, clear it with me again. Feel free to adapt this requirement to work on a relevant qualifying paper or dissertation chapter.] Note: as long as the paper is related to 'inequalities' it's appropriate, even if I have not assigned a week on that substantive topic (e.g., immigration).

Tentative due dates:

February 12: Paper topic, with 2-3 references

Feb. 26: Reaction paper #1

April 2: Reaction paper #2

April 16: Final paper outline due

April 30: Class presentations on final paper

May 4: Final paper due

We have only 14 meetings, 2 of which are given over to an introduction and class presentations. Attendance and participation are required. **The norm for graduate courses is: thou shalt not miss class!**

IV. Academic Integrity:

This course will be conducted in full accordance with the university's "Policy on Academic Integrity." Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) quoting or paraphrasing without attribution; submitting work for more than one course without the instructor's permission;

copying from, or assisting, other students on exams; plagiarizing major portions of assignments; using a purchased paper; presenting other's work as your own; altering a graded exam; theft of exams. [For the complete policy, click [here](#).]

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*.

V. Course Outline (many of these readings are available through sakai):

Part I: Overview and Theory

Week 1 (Jan. 22): Introduction and Course Overview

New York Times. 2005. Class Matters. New York: Times Books. Henry Holt and Company (available in original New York Times article format on sakai)

Ch. 1: Janny Scott and David Leonhardt, "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide"

Ch. 2: Janny Scott, "Life at the Top in America Isn't Just Better, It's Longer"

Ch. 6: David Leonhardt, "The College Dropout Boom"

Ch. 12: David Cay Johnston, "Richest Are Leaving Even the Rich Far Behind"

Ch. 14: Isabel Wilkerson, "Angela Whitiker's Climb"

Week 2 (Jan. 29): Theory: Categorical (and Durable) Inequalities (all in sakai)

David B. Grusky, and Manwai C. Ku. 2008. "Gloom, Doom and Inequality," Pp. 2-28 in David B. Grusky (ed.), *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [this is a good overview of the inequality/stratification field]

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore. 2008 (1945). "Some Principles of Stratification." Pp. 30-33 in David B. Grusky (ed.), *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Melvin M. Tumin. 2008 (1953). "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." Pp. 41-49 in David B. Grusky (ed.), *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Claude S. Fischer, Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss. 2008. "Inequality by Design." Pp. 49-53 in David B. Grusky (ed.), *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Charles Tilly. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp. 1-116 [Chs. 1-3])

Douglas S. Massey. 2007. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (pp. 1-27 [Ch. 1])
Week 3 (Feb. 5): Rising Inequality (all in sakai)

Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz. 2008. *The Race Between Education and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (pp. 1-125 [Chs. Intro-3]).

Robert H. Frank. 2007. *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp. 1-14 [Chs. 1-2]; pp. 52-86 [Chs. 6-8])

Arne Kalleberg. 2008. *Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition.* Presidential Address, American Sociological Association, August.

Recommended:

Leslie McCall, and Lane Kenworthy. 2008. "Do Americans Care About Rising Inequality?" Unpublished paper, Northwestern University.

Leslie McCall, and Lane Kenworthy. 2008. "Americans' Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality." Unpublished paper, Northwestern University.

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

Week 4 (Feb.12): Race I: Wealth Matters

Dalton Conley. 1999. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Recommended:

Douglas S. Massey. 2007. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (pp. 51-112; sakai)

Week 5 (Feb. 19): Race II: Race, Crime, and Inequality

Bruce Western. 2007. *Punishment and Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Devah Pager. 2007. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (pp. 58-99 [Chs. 4-5]; sakai)

Week 6 (Feb. 26): Class I: Reproducing Class

Annette Lareau. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Chs. 1-5; 8-12)

Week 7 (March 5): Class II: Lifting All Boats? How the Other Half Lives

Steven Greenhouse. 2009. *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Week 8 (March 12): Gender I: Fast Track Women: Interconnecting Work and Families

Mary Ann Mason and Eve Mason Ekman. 2007. *Mothers on the Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Anita Iltis Garey. 1999. *Weaving Work & Motherhood*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (pp. 1-19 [Ch. 1]; sakai)

Lonnae O'Neal Parker. 2005. *I'm Every Woman: Remixed Stories of Marriage, Motherhood, and Work*. New York: Amistad/HarperCollins. (pp. xv-16 [Intro-Ch. 1]; sakai)

Recommended:

Julie Bettie. 2003. *Women Without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. 32-56 [Ch. 2]; sakai)

Patricia A. Roos. 2008. "Interconnecting Work and Family: Race and Class Differences in Work Status and Attitudes." Unpublished paper, Rutgers University. (sakai)

Spring Break: March 19th

Part III: Mechanisms of Inequity: Producing Advantage and Disadvantage in the Workplace

Week 9 (March 26): Gender II: Reproducing Inequity and the Elasticity of Merit (all on sakai)

Barbara F. Reskin. 2003. "Including Mechanisms in Our Models of Ascriptive Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 68:1-21.

Malcolm Gladwell. 2005. *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. New York: Little Brown & Company. (pp. 245-54 [Conclusion])

Louise Roth. 2006. *Selling Women Short: Gender Inequality on Wall Street*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp. 1-10 [Introduction]; pp. 36-57 [Ch. 2])

Nancy DiTomaso, Corinne Post, D. Randall Smith, George F. Farris, and Rene Cordero. 2007. "Effects of Structural Position on Allocation and Evaluation Decisions for Scientists and Engineers in Industrial R&D." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 52:175-207.

Castilla, Emilio. 2008. "Gender, Race, and Meritocracy in Organizational Careers." *American Journal of Sociology* 113:1479-1526.

Patricia A. Roos and Mary L. Gatta. Forthcoming. "Gender (In)Equity in the Academy: Subtle Mechanisms and the Production of Inequality." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.

Recommended:

Alexandra Kalev, Frank Dobbin, and Erin Kelly. 2006. "Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies." *American Sociological Review* 71:589-617.

Week 10 (April 2): Education I: Reproducing Elites

Mitchell L. Stevens. 2007. *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Recommended:

Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz. 2008. *The Race Between Education and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (rest of book).

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

Week 11 (April 9): Education II: Reproducing Non-Elites (all in sakai)

James E. Rosenbaum. 2001. *Beyond College for All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (pp. xi-xii [Preface]; pp. 1-54 [Chs. 1-2]; pp. 265-82 [Ch. 12])

Brantlinger, Ellen A. 2003. *Dividing Classes: How the Middle Class Negotiates and Rationalizes School Advantage*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer. (selected chapters to be determined)

Recommended:

James J. Heckman and Paul A. Fontaine. 2007. *The American High School Graduation Rate: Trends and Levels*. Discussion Paper No. 3216.

<http://ftp.iza.org/dp3216.pdf>

Part IV: Reducing Inequality in the Workplace

Week 12 (April 16): What Constitutes Success? Changing Our Perceptions

Malcolm Gladwell. 2008. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown and Co.

Week 13 (April 23): The Power of Diversity & Rethinking Capitalism

Scott E. Page. 2007. *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp. 1-51 [Intro-Ch. 1]; pp. 339-75 [Ch. 14-Epilogue])

Douglas L. Kruse, Richard B. Freeman, and Joseph R. Blasi (eds.). Forthcoming. *Shared Capitalism at Work: Employee Ownership, Profit and Gain Sharing, and Broad-based Stock Options*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Read at least the Intro, Ch. 1, and Ch. 10; also recommended Ch. 2, Ch. 4, Ch. 8, and Ch. 11)

<http://www.nber.org/books/krus08-1/>

Week 14 (April 30): Student presentations (bring in power point slides)

VI. Help on Research, Thinking, and Writing: (all articles in sakai)

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"