

**Department of Sociology
Dartmouth College
Spring 2014**

Inequality and Social Justice (Sociology 45)

Professor: Marc Dixon

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Course Information:

MWF, 8:45-9:50, Wilson 219

x-period: Thursday, 9:00-9:50

Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 12-1, or by appointment

Course Description:

How are valued resources such as wealth, prestige, and power, distributed across different groups in society? What are the consequences of rising inequality? What would a just society look like? This course examines these and other questions with a survey of two central research areas in the social sciences: social inequality and social activism. In the first part of the course we take up sociological research on the extent of economic and social inequalities in the United States, how they are generated, and the consequences they bear. Part two considers a variety of activism arising in response to stark inequalities, the strategies activist groups adopt and the extent to which they affect change.

Readings:

All required articles, book excerpts and other media are posted on the Canvas course site.

There are two optional books available at the Dartmouth Bookstore and on reserve at the library:

Lane Kenworthy. 2014. *Social Democratic America*. Oxford University Press.

Saru Jayaraman. 2013. *Behind the Kitchen Door*. ILR Press.

Course Requirements and Evaluation: Seminar grades are based on daily participation, response papers, and group work on inequality briefs and a final project and presentation.

Course Requirements

Participation/in-class assignments – 10%

Response Papers – 35%

Research Briefs (Group) – 20%

Final Projects (Group) – 35%

Grading Scale

A 93-100

A- 90-92.99

B+ 87-89.99

B 83-86.99

B- 80-82.99

C+ 77-79.99

C 73-76.99

Etc.

1-Participation: While I will lecture on certain materials, this course is organized as a seminar. Your attendance and active participation are therefore crucial. Active class participation can take a variety of forms, including enthusiastic and intellectually rigorous discussion, work on in-class assignments, and regular class attendance.

2-Response Papers: Students will write two five page essays during the term that delve into a particular course subject area in greater depth. There are three options: 1) causes and consequences of rising inequality since the 1970s, due on Friday, April 11; 2) racial and/or gender inequality in the post-civil rights era, due on Monday, April 28; 3) contemporary movements for social and economic justice, due on Friday, May 23. The response papers can take many forms, but should convey the major debates in the

particular research area, key questions or problems that remain unresolved, and what you found most compelling or wanting. Papers should draw on at least a few of the optional readings for the particular course segment. Papers turned in after the start of class on the day they are due will have 5 points deducted; papers will have an additional 10 points deducted for each day they are late.

3-Research Briefs: Students will form research groups early in the quarter and produce a research brief and lead a class discussion on a particular topic during weeks four and five. The brief should include a summary of the problem and its importance today, key academic perspectives and evidence on the problem, and a series of questions for the class going forward. Groups will post a few key questions or a short reading for the class to consider the night before the in-class presentation.

4-Final Projects and Presentation: Working in the same research groups, students will analyze a particular social justice movement or campaign in the U.S. today. The end result will be a twenty-five to thirty page report and shorter resource guide to be posted on the course website. Groups will present on their findings in week nine and the reports are due in class on Wednesday, May 28. Additional details on groups and projects will be provided in class.

Honor Principle: Examinations and assignments will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses. I also encourage students to read Dartmouth's statement on Sources and Citations:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Religious Holidays: If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Classroom Etiquette: I expect everyone to show up to class on time. It is crucial for our class sessions to be comfortable and conducive to learning for all participants. This means listening while other people are talking and taking their ideas seriously. Personal attacks, yelling, or other threatening behaviors are not acceptable.

Course Schedule & Assigned Readings:

The following is an outline. I will occasionally update and change readings and post other documents and announcements for your edification. It is your responsibility to check the canvas course calendar at the beginning of each week.

Date	Topic & Assigned Readings
<i>Introductory Statements</i>	
3-24	Course Introduction and Overview
3-26	What is Social Justice? Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" Michael Sandel, "The Case for Equality"

3-28	Foundational Debates on Inequality Kinsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification" Melvin Tuman, "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis" Alan Krueger, "Inequality, Too Much of a Good Thing"
<i>The Shape of Inequality in the United States</i>	
3-31	Inequality Trends, Causes & Consequences Timothy Noah, "The United States of Inequality" Congressional Budget Office, "Trends in the Distribution of Household Income" Film Clip: Robert Reich, <i>Inequality for All</i>
4-2	Inequality Trends, Causes & Consequences, Part II Kathryn Neckerman and Florencia Torche "Inequality: Causes and Consequences" Ken Hou-Lin and Don Tomaskovic-Devey, "Financialization and U.S. Income Inequality" Group Project Sign-Up
4-4	No Class Meeting
4-7	Problems in the Middle: Economic Insecurity Lane Kenworthy, "Three Failings" Bruce Western et al., "Economic Insecurity and Social Stratification" Kevin Leicht and Scott Fitzgerald, excerpts from <i>Post-Industrial Peasants</i>
4-9	Growth at the Top Emmanuel Saez, "Striking it Richer" Lisa Keister, "The One Percent"
4-10	<u>X-Hour</u> : Racial Inequality Kevin Stainback and Don Tomaskovic-Devey, excerpts from <i>Documenting Desegregation</i> Don Tomaskovic-Devey et al., "Race and the Accumulation of Human Capital Across the Career"
4-11	Guest Speaker: George Wilson George Wilson et al., "Public Sector Transformation, Racial Inequality and Downward Occupational Mobility"
4-14	Gender Inequality Paula England, "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled" Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Why Women Still Can't Have it All"
4-16	Research Briefs in Class: LGBT Workplace Issues Joseph Sabia, "Sexual Orientation and Earnings in Young Adulthood"
4-18	Research Briefs in Class: Incarceration and Inequality Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record"
4-21	American Views on Inequality Leslie McCall, excerpts from <i>The Undeserving Rich</i> Leslie McCall and Lane Kenworthy, "Americans' Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality"
4-23	Research Briefs in Class: Education and the Reproduction of Inequality Annette Lareau, excerpts from <i>Unequal Childhoods</i> Shamus Kahn, excerpts from <i>Privilege</i>
4-25	Research Briefs in Class: Higher Ed and Student Debt Rachel Dwyer et al., "Debt and Graduation from American Universities" Jason Houle, "Disparities in Debt"

<i>Social Justice Activism</i>	
4-28	A Primer on Social Movements Charles Tilly, excerpts from <i>Social Movements, 1768-2008</i>
4-30	Guest Speaker: Leah Torrey, United Valley Interfaith Project Reading TBA
5-2	Group Project Meetings Readings TBA
5-5	Movements for Economic Justice Lecture
5-7	Civil Rights and Contemporary Movements for Racial Justice
5-9	Social Justice Coalitions: Foodies and Food Workers Saru Jayaraman, excerpts from <i>Behind the Kitchen Table</i> Ben Hewitt, excerpts from <i>The Town that Food Saved</i>
5-12	Environmental Justice Movements Shannon Bell and Yvonne Braun, "Coal, Identity, and the Gendering of Environmental Justice Activism in Central Appalachia"
5-14	Consumers, Coalitions, and Social Justice Brayden King, "A Political Mediation Model of Corporate Response to Social Movement Activism"
5-16	Transnational Activism and Human Rights Gay Seidman, <i>Beyond the Boycott</i> , Chapters 1-2 Excerpts from Naomi Klein's <i>No Logo</i>
5-19	Student Activism, Then and Now Sarah Soule, excerpts from <i>Contention and Corporate Responsibility</i> Nella Van Dyke, "Hotbeds of Activism"
5-21	Group Projects I: Economic Justice Issues
5-23	Group Projects II: Coalitions for Social and Economic Justice
5-26	Reading Day
5-28	Taking Stock of Inequality and Social Justice Final Reports Due