

SYO 4530: Social Inequality

Fall 2024

Tuesdays	Period 7	1:55 pm - 2:45 pm
Thursdays	Period 7 – 8	1:55 pm - 3:50 pm

Class Location:
McCarty Hall B (MCCB) 2102

Professor Edo Navot
Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law
Office: Turlington Hall, Room 3356
enavot@ufl.edu

Office hours:
Tuesdays, 12 pm – 1 pm
Thursdays, 12 pm – 1 pm
or by appointment

INCLUDE “SYO 4530” IN SUBJECT OF ALL EMAILS

Required Readings:

Grusky, David, and Jasmine Hill, eds. *Inequality in the 21st century: A reader*.
Routledge, 2018.

Access instructions:

The textbook is available for free as an eBook through UF Libraries’ subscription to “Taylor & Frances eBooks Complete.” To access the eBook, search for the title in [Primo](#) while on campus or after connecting to UF VPN if off campus. You may read the book online, download select chapters as pdf files, or download the whole book as a pdf file. You are welcome to purchase a hard copy of the textbook but are not required to do so.

All other readings available on Canvas.

Overview of the class:

Week	Day	Date	Class #	Topic	Unit	
1	Thursday	22-Aug	1	Intro to class		
2	Tuesday	27-Aug	2	Income and wealth inequality	Income and wealth	
	Thursday	29-Aug	3	Economics of inequality		
3	Tuesday	3-Sep	4	Institutions and Inequality		
	Thursday	5-Sep	5	Inequality and democracy		
4	Tuesday	10-Sep	6	Experience of poverty	Poverty	
	Thursday	12-Sep	7	Extent of poverty and segregation		
5	Tuesday	17-Sep	8	Class analysis of poverty		
	Thursday	19-Sep	9	Politics of poverty		
6	Tuesday	24-Sep	10	Educational inequalities	Education	
	Thursday	26-Sep	11	Meritocracy and social mobility		
7	Tuesday	1-Oct	12	Racial formation	Race	
	Thursday	3-Oct	13	Immigration		
8	Tuesday	8-Oct	14	Racial discrimination		
	Thursday	10-Oct	15	Race and health disparities		
9	Tuesday	15-Oct	16	Incarceration I	Incarceration	
	Thursday	17-Oct	17	Incarceration II		
10	Tuesday	22-Oct	18	Affirmative action	Affirmative Action	
	Thursday	24-Oct	19	Affirmative action debate		
11	Tuesday	29-Oct	20	Social construction of gender	Gender	
	Thursday	31-Oct	21	Gender discrimination		
12	Tuesday	5-Nov	22	Gender and sexual orientation		
	Thursday	7-Nov	23	Intersectionalities and the "stalled gender revolution"		
13	Tuesday	12-Nov	24	Work and labor	Class, work, and labor	
	Thursday	14-Nov	25	Power and inequality		
14	Tuesday	19-Nov	26	Elites		
	Thursday	21-Nov	27	Capitalism and inequality		
15	Tuesday	26-Nov	No class - Thanksgiving break			
	Thursday	28-Nov				
16	Tuesday	3-Dec	28	Semester wrap-up		

A full reading list for each class can be found at the end of the syllabus. The reading list will also be provided separately from the syllabus on Canvas. Readings will either be in Grusky and Hill's "Inequality in the 21st Century" (Shown as "I21c" in reading list) or in pdf format delivered through the class Canvas site.

Course Description:

There are many dimensions along which we can account for social inequality: by income, wealth, and other economic assets; between racial groups; by gender and sex; or by power, class, status, or other concepts. By most measures and few exceptions, social inequalities in the United States have been increasing along these dimensions for decades. This course will survey a wide variety of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies of inequality along multiple dimensions, including those listed above as well as others. While our focus will be on perspectives within the discipline of sociology, we will also survey and debate writings from other social sciences. We will address how race, class, gender, and the social institutions and policies of the United States contribute to, exacerbate, or ameliorate social inequalities in measurable outcomes such as income, wealth, health, employment, and incarceration. Each unit of a class will focus on one phenomenon and readings will show different views, which we will debate. Throughout this class we will emphasize critical engagement with the readings, asking questions and engaging in dialogue with a wide array of authors describing social inequality from many perspectives.

Class format

This class will be conducted as a combination of lecture, discussion, and other in-class activities. We will mix these formats to keep classes lively and students engaged. Students are expected to fully complete all readings *BEFORE CLASS* and demonstrate understanding and engagement with the class topics. Class participation is essential for successfully completing this course (and for the learning process in general). This class covers a broad array of social issues revolving around inequality and critical assessment of scholarly perspectives. Interrogation of the materials and synthesis of various approaches will be highly encouraged.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of this semester, students in this course will be able to:

- Understand the empirical trends of social inequalities in the United States in the last four decades; which types/measures of inequality are increasing, and which are decreasing,
- Be familiar with multiple theories and perspectives explaining *why* certain types of inequalities are increasing/decreasing,
- Understand which institutions, policies, and social arrangements contribute to growing inequality and which ones reduce social inequalities,
- Identify and comprehend different sociological perspectives on education, race, gender, class, and their intersections.
- *Most importantly:* critically think about and evaluate different perspectives, synthesize and compare these perspectives, and begin to judge their veracity.

Attendance in class is mandatory and expected.

You are allowed two unexcused absences. Additional absences will count against your class participation grade.

You can contact me regarding a class absence and receive an “excused” absence for the following reasons: you were sick and have a medical note, religious obligation, a family matter of urgent need, other emergencies, and when your attendance at other university events is required. To receive an excused absence, email me with “SYO 4530 absence” to explain the situation. *Emailing me about an absence is not a guarantee that you will be excused for that absence. I will not grant more than four excused absences for illness!*

If you are chronically ill during the semester (defined as more than four classes missed due to illness) please discuss the matter with me.

Course assignments, requirements, and grading

Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, five short multiple-choice exams, and a final research paper.

Class participation & attendance (25% of overall grade)

Class participation grades are based on two components, graded jointly.

1. Actual attendance of class. Showing up is important; physical presence in the classroom is necessary for success in this class and important to me. If there are specific challenges for you in this regard, please see me immediately after the first class.
2. In-class participation. In addition to attending class, you are expected to actively participate in class discussions. If this will pose a significant challenge or hardship for you, please discuss it with me immediately after the first class.

In addition to the above, we will hold at least 2 debates, several discussions, and several online discussions (within Canvas) which will also be part of your class participation grade.

I will also cold-call students during discussions to make sure that participation widespread and evenly distributed.

If I have reason to suspect many students are not doing the readings and not prepared or informed for class discussions, I reserve the right to give you pop quizzes on the readings. If quizzes are given, they will count towards your class participation grade.

Short Exams (10% each, 50% of overall grade)

You will take five short exams over the course of the semester. These exams will be multiple-choice only and will cover material from 1-2 units in the class. Exam questions will NOT be cumulative (e.g. exam 2 will only cover materials covered after exam 1, etc.).

I know that many students experience test anxiety and that you may be worried about the exams.

With that in mind, I will describe the motivation and design of these tests. The exams are designed to do two things: First, they test your reading comprehension and understanding of the

material. Second, they are designed to give you a strong incentive to do the readings. When students do the readings, class discussion is constructive and stimulating; you will get much more out of the class if you keep up with the readings and *so do your classmates*. Because one of the primary objectives of the exams is to incentivize reading the material, exam questions will be designed in a way that the exam should not be overly challenging if you have done the readings!

Final research paper (25% of final grade)

Students must complete a research paper that demonstrates comprehension and critical engagement with the class materials. The general guideline for the research paper is that it must engage with topics from more than one unit from the semester. One feature of social inequalities is that they are all deeply intertwined. Your research paper should demonstrate comprehension of multiple types of social inequality and discuss how they are related. For instance, you may discuss intersectionalities of race and gender, race and class, incarceration, or poverty, as each relates to race and class, etc. That is, the final research paper must engage with at least some of the materials or topics we touch upon in class but also build upon them, digging deeper and using new reference materials not covered in class.

Other than those general guidelines, your final research essay will be on a topic of your choosing and will have multiple components. First, you will hand in a topic proposal, which I will give you feedback on. You will then hand in a proposed reference list. Next, you'll hand in a rough / early draft that will consist of about 3 pages. Finally, your research essay will be due at the end of the semester. All of these components will add up to 25% of your final grade.

The research paper will take the style of an academic article, with citations and references at the end. The research paper will have some flexibility in length to allow you room to explore the topic of your choice but should not exceed 10 pages. A longer paper is not necessarily a better paper.

We will discuss the final research paper extensively in class. Additional details and deadlines will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Grading Rubrics: How you will be evaluated

Successful assignments will do two main things: First, you should demonstrate comprehension of the relevant materials, their main arguments, and perspectives. Being able to summarize the arguments of others clearly and concisely is an important skill and you will be evaluated on your ability to demonstrate this skill.

Second, critical engagement with the literature. This is an opportunity to voice your perspective on a topic. What are the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments and perspectives we reviewed? Which author or perspective on the relevant topic is incorrect, how and why are they incorrect? Which authors/perspectives do you appreciate or agree with and *why*? When evaluating this portion of your essays, I will be looking for demonstration of critical engagement, thoughtful discussion, and ability to synthesize complex issues clearly.

The research paper assignment description will also include a detailed rubric but, in general, I am looking for 1. Demonstration of understanding the material by clearly and concisely being able to summarize it in your own words, 2. Demonstration of thoughtful engagement and evaluation of the material as shown by informed, critical views of the material, 3. Ability to synthesize disparate perspectives and topics, to bring them into discussion with each other, and 4. offer your own perspective as informed by facts and backed up with explanations of WHY you argue what you argue and on what basis you take your position.

Due dates

These due dates are preliminary and subject to change, given potential class cancelations, our progress, and other considerations.

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of final grade (%)
Exam 1	Sept 5	10
Research Paper Proposal	Sept 15	2.5
Exam 2	Sept 26	10
Initial Research reference list	Oct 13	2.5
Exam 3	Oct 17	10
Exam 4	Oct 31	10
Research Paper Initial (3 pg)	Nov 10	5
Exam 5	Nov 21	10
Final Research Paper	Dec 8	15

Office Hours

Office hours are your chance to speak to me individually and I strongly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours. If your schedule does not permit you to visit my office during the scheduled hours for this class, we can set another time for individual discussion. To ask for an appointment outside office hours, please email me!

Accommodation for students with disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas

course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Grading

The University of Florida has a set system of grading and which grades corresponding to the number of points you have (i.e. percentages of 100). Please familiarize yourself with the [University grading policy](#).

UF Grading Scale

Points	Letter Grade
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B+
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	E

Attendance

Class attendance is required. Please be aware of the [university attendance policy](#) (link).

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.uf](#) for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

Academic Ethics

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the

University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

Recording Class

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or

via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

GENERAL EDUCATION POLICIES

This class may be taken to meet a part of your “general education” requirements. As such, it is subject to some additional policies, which are listed below.

First, a minimum grade of C is required for general education credit when taking this course.

GenEd Objectives

The General Education Objectives can be found in [this link](#).

In addition to the course objectives specific to sociology, outlined above, this course addresses several areas of the General Education subject area objectives. The relevant subject areas for this course are:

Diversity: Students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Students engage with

diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the US population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understandings of themselves and an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

Social and behavioral sciences: Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

GenEd Learning Outcomes

General education classes also require specific student learning outcomes, or SLO, which can be found at [this link](#).

For this class, learning outcomes related to each subject area above are as follows:

Diversity: Students will identify, describe, and explain the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability. Furthermore, students will analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints of different groups in the United States. Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

Social and behavioral sciences: Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, and terminology in the sociology of social inequalities; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes relevant to the generation of social inequalities. Furthermore, student will learn to apply formal and informal qualitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions. Finally, student will Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

Assessment of learning outcomes

The *diversity* SLO will be assessed throughout the course, as students engage with readings and demonstrate their comprehension in class discussions and debates. The primary focus of the two short essay assignments will be issues related to diversity as described in the above SLO. A secondary focus on the final research paper assignment will be on diversity SLOs. These

assignments are assessed in part on the basis of students' demonstration of comprehension and engagement with *diversity* SLOs.

The *social and behavioral science* SLO will be assessed throughout the course, as students engage with and demonstrate understanding of issues related to social science methods, statistics, analysis, critical thinking, etc. in class discussion and debate. The primary focus of the final research essay assignment will be an engagement with, and demonstration of capabilities related to, the social science SLO described above. A secondary focus on the short essay assignments will be with social science SLOs. These assignments are assessed in part on the basis of students' demonstration of comprehension and engagement with social and behavioral science SLOs.

FULL READING LIST AND CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Day	Date	Class	Topic	Reading	Unit
1	Thursday	22-Aug	1	Intro to class	I21c: Ch 1 and Wright, Erik Olin "Two approaches to inequality"	
2	Tuesday	27-Aug	2	Income and wealth inequality	I21c: Ch 6 and 7	Income and wealth
	Thursday	29-Aug	3	Economics of inequality	I21c: Ch 8, 9, and 12	
3	Tuesday	3-Sep	4	Institutions and Inequality	I21c: Ch 10 and 11	
	Thursday	5-Sep	5	Inequality and democracy	Gilens & Page. 2014. "Testing theories of American politics."	
4	Tuesday	10-Sep	6	Experience of poverty	I21c: Ch 17 and 22	Poverty
	Thursday	12-Sep	7	Extent of poverty and segregation	I21c: Ch 19, 20, 23	
5	Tuesday	17-Sep	8	Class analysis of poverty	Wright, Erik Olin, 1995. "The class analysis of poverty"	
	Thursday	19-Sep	9	Politics of poverty	Brady, 2023. "Poverty, Not the Poor"	
6	Tuesday	24-Sep	10	Educational inequalities	I21c: Ch 28 and 34	Education
	Thursday	26-Sep	11	Meritocracy and social mobility	* Sandel, 2021. "How meritocracy fuels inequality." * Chetty et al 2017 "Mobility report cards" [select pgs)	
7	Tuesday	1-Oct	12	Racial formation	I21c: Ch 43 and 44	Race
	Thursday	3-Oct	13	Immigration	I21c: 45 and 51	
8	Tuesday	8-Oct	14	Racial discrimination	I21c: Ch 47, 48, and 49	
	Thursday	10-Oct	15	Race and health disparities	*Jamila Taylor, 2019. "Racism, Inequality, and Health Care for African Americans." TCF report. * "Disparities and distrust: The implications of psychological processes for understanding racial disparities in health and health care" by Dovidio et al.	

9	Tuesday	15-Oct	16	Incarceration I	I21c: Ch 27 and NAS report on incarceration	Incarceration	
	Thursday	17-Oct	17	Incarceration II	* Alexander <i>New Jim Crow</i> Ch 2, "The lockdown" * Clegg and Usmani 2019 "Economic origins of mass incarceration"		
10	Tuesday	22-Oct	18	Affirmative action	Gaston 2001 "Reflections on affirmative action" in Diversity Challenged book	Affirmative Action	
	Thursday	24-Oct	19	Affirmative action debate			
11	Tuesday	29-Oct	20	Social construction of gender	I21c: Ch 54 and 56	Gender	
	Thursday	31-Oct	21	Gender discrimination	I21c: Ch 57, 59, and 60		
12	Tuesday	5-Nov	22	Gender and sexual orientation	I21c: Ch 55 and 62		
	Thursday	7-Nov	23	Intersectionalities and the "stalled gender revolution"	I21c: Ch 61, 63, and 64		
13	Tuesday	12-Nov	24	Work and labor	I21c: Ch 40 and 41	Class, work, and labor	
	Thursday	14-Nov	25	Power and inequality	Wright, Ch. 5 "Class and Politics" in <i>Interrogating Inequality</i> , 1994.		
14	Tuesday	19-Nov	26	Elites	I21c: Ch 13, Domhoff "Who Rules America" exerpt.		
	Thursday	21-Nov	27	Capitalism and inequality	Block, Fred, "The ruling class doesn't rule"		
15	Tuesday	26-Nov	No class - Thanksgiving break				
	Thursday	28-Nov					
16	Tuesday	3-Dec	28	Semester wrap-up			