

SYO 4530 – Social Inequality

Summer C 2024 Syllabus

1. Course General Information

Items	Information
Course	
Class sections	15404 and 14444
Class format	Online - Asynchronous
Primary General Education Designation	Social Science (S) (Area objectives available here)
Secondary General Education Designation	Diversity (D) (Area objectives available here)
Instructor	
Name	Luis Rondan-Vasquez (he/him/his), M.A.
Preferred way of contact	Message via e-learning platform (Canvas).
Email	lrondanvasquez@ufl.edu
Phone	352-294-7164
Online office hours	Thursdays 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM. https://ufl.zoom.us/j/8566072117

2. Course Description

Welcome to the course "**Social Inequality**"! I am Luis Rondan-Vasquez, the instructor of this course. The course is a general approach to the definition, dimensions, causes, dynamics, and consequences of social inequality (D). This course also addresses the responses of governments and civil society toward social inequality. The approach of this course is based on the concepts, theories, and methods of social sciences, particularly Sociology (S). From this perspective, the course aims to help students understand how the culture, structures, and processes of society produce multiple categories that establish similarities and differences between people (e.g., gender, race, social class, etc.). These categories may serve to justify an unequal allocation of resources (e.g., power, wealth, prestige, etc.) within the society, which in turn creates social inequalities. The social inequalities are associated with multiple effects that have a meaningful impact on people's daily life. Due to that, citizens and governments develop different responses to social inequalities. The analysis of social inequalities is focused on the experience of the United States (D).

I organized the course following this syllabus. It summarizes key course aspects that students should know. Due to that, please read this document carefully and ask me any questions.

3. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

- Understand social inequality's definition, causes, dynamics, consequences, and social responses from a social sciences standpoint, particularly sociology. Students

will understand how the culture, structure, and processes of a society can shape multiple social categories (e.g., race, gender, social class, etc.) that establish similarities and differences between individuals and may serve to justify an unequal allocation of resources between them. To achieve the above, students will learn and apply key terms, concepts, theories, and methods of social inequality research, particularly in sociology (Content SLOs for Gen Ed S and D [[area SLOs available here](#)]). ***This outcome will be assessed through Quizzes, Reflections, and a Research Project.***

- Analyze and discuss critically the existence and implications of key types of social inequalities in the U.S.: race, gender, social class, and their relationships. Students will evaluate the relationship between social inequalities with merit and discrimination, the consequences of social inequalities on the daily life of people, and the responses from civil society and governments to deal with these consequences. To do so, students will analyze quantitative and qualitative information provided in the lectures, readings, and videos of the course. This assessment enables students to propose individual and collective actions to address the consequences of social inequalities from an ethical perspective (Critical thinking SLOs for Gen Ed S and D [[area SLOs available here](#)]). ***This outcome will be assessed through Discussion Boards, Reflections, and a Research Project.***
- Explain clearly and effectively key concepts, theories, and methods of social inequality research, how to use them in analysis, and the analysis results. Students will demonstrate in written form their understanding of key analytical tools provided in the course. Likewise, they will explain the utility of these analytical tools to understanding aspects of social inequality in daily life. Moreover, students will explain in a clear, detailed, and careful way the results of the analysis done using the analytical tools provided in the course (Communication SLOs for Gen Ed S and D [[area SLOs available here](#)]). ***This outcome will be assessed through Discussion Boards, Reflections, and a Research Project.***

4. Course Format

This is an asynchronous online course. Therefore, there are no scheduled Zoom lectures. Instead, the course is based on the online submission of class material (via the e-learning course platform) and the development of online assignments.

5. Course Activities

5.1. Weekly Submission of Class Materials

Since the first week of the course, the instructor will upload to e-learning a set of class materials that students should review. This set will be available each Monday at 9:00 AM. The weekly class materials are:

- a) **Modules:** Document that summarizes key concepts, theories, methods, and empirical evidence about a social inequality topic the course will cover in a week.

Modules are designed to be self-learning materials that do not require a live lecture to be fully understood. Nevertheless, you can always ask questions about the module content on the question board, which is explained below. In some cases, the module will be submitted with a video of myself explaining aspects of the module. The modules are organized into three topics, and there are 10 in total:

Topic I: Defining Social Inequality

- Module 1: Concept, relevance, and characteristics.
- Module 2: Origins, dynamics, types, and consequences.

Topic II: Dimensions of Social Inequality

- Module 3: Class.
- Module 4: Race.
- Module 5: Gender.
- Module 6: Intersectionality.

Topic III: Social Inequality in Daily Life

- Module 7: Poverty 1.
- Module 8: Poverty 2.
- Module 9: Global Inequality.
- Module 10: Responses to social inequality.

- b) **Question Boards:** boards on e-learning where students can post questions about class materials and any course-related issues. I prefer that questions about the class material content be posted on the question boards because it helps me answer faster questions that other students might also have. Nevertheless, you can email me questions about the material if you feel more comfortable.
- c) **Required Readings:** a set of book chapters required to be read each week. They will be available for **FREE** via e-learning (Canvas) or [ARES Course reserve service](#) from the UF library. The required readings are described below:

***Required book chapters from:**

Szelenyi, David B., and Grusky Szonja. 2011. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. 2nd Edition. New York, London: Routledge (ISBN: 9780813344843).

- d) **Required Videos:** a set of documentaries and videos that address illustrative cases about the topics we will analyze in the modules. These videos are available for free on the Internet, and I will include links to access them in the module.
- e) **Assignment Instructions:** a set of prompts or questions that guides students in developing course assignments. These assignments will be described in detail in the next section (participation in course assignments). If you have any questions about assignment instructions, you also can post them on the question board.

5.2. Participation in Graded Work

Once weekly class materials are uploaded, students should review them (modules, readings, videos, and assignment instructions). Then, students may ask questions about the materials if they have them. Once class material has been understood, students are ready to do these assignments:

- a) **Quizzes:** Online short evaluations based on questions about the weekly class modules. These evaluations comprise multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions. Students have to take one quiz for each module (10 in total). This quiz will be taken during the business week where the module was published (Monday at 9:00 AM to Friday at 11:59 PM). Students have two attempts to do the quizzes, and only the highest score will be considered for grading. Also, the single lowest score (of the 10 quizzes) will be dropped from the grading calculation. In this way, the average quiz score is calculated with the 9 highest quiz scores. This average represents 20% of the student's final grade.
- b) **Discussion Boards:** an online place where students discuss questions of the instructor about weekly required readings. To participate in discussions, each student has to provide: i) an answer to instructor question(s) and ii) comments about at least one classmate's answer (e.g., pointing out agreements or disagreements or providing examples). Students have to participate in 8 of 10 discussion boards. If they participate in 9 or more, the lowest score(s) will be dropped from grading. The average participation score in discussion boards represents 20% of the student's final grades. Please review your post on discussion boards to ensure it was saved successfully.
- c) **Reflections:** Written answers to prompts related to one or more modules and readings. There will be 3 reflections during the course. Reflection instructions will be given at least one week before their submission deadline. The average reflections score represents 15% of the student's final grades. Please double-check the proper and timely reflection submission. If your reflection is unavailable or incomplete on the e-learning platform, you receive a zero score or a deduction, respectively.
- d) **Research Project:** individual research proposal based on a collective literature review. This project is based on two components that will be developed through the course:
 - **Collective literature review:** summary of recent papers on a social inequality topic done by groups of 4-5 students. This summary will be made in three steps:
 - **Proposal:** topic definition and rationale (5% of final grade).
 - **Detailed outline:** scheme of main topics, sub-topics, and key ideas (5% of final grade).
 - **Final version:** summary of readings and potential research questions (10% of final grade).

- **Individual research proposal:** a research question proposed to fill a gap in recent research on a subtopic of the collective literature review. This proposal will provide a critical review of recent research in a subtopic of the literature review chosen by each student. This review will show the scope and limitations of previous research and propose a research question that contributes to overcoming one limitation mentioned. This proposal will be made in three steps:
 - **Proposal:** sub-topic chosen and rationale (5% of final grade).
 - **Detailed outline:** scheme of main themes, sub-themes, and key ideas (5% of final grade).
 - **Final version:** proposal of a research question based on a critical review of recent research on the chosen topic (15% of final grade).

6. Grading

6.1. Grading Breakdown

Assessment	Student Competence Assessed	Final grade percentage
Quizzes	Understand module contents about social inequality's definition, dimensions, causes, dynamics, consequences, and social responses.	20%
Discussion boards	*Understand, analyze, discuss, and apply reading and video content about social inequality. *Communicate effectively ideas and reasoning.	20%
Reflections	*Analyze, discuss, and apply module content, readings, and videos to understand daily social events. *Communicate effectively ideas and reasoning.	15%
Research project	<i>Collective literature review:</i> *Work collectively on a product using course content. *Communicate effectively ideas and reasoning.	20%
	<i>Individual research project:</i> *Effective application of course content as a whole to create an individual product. *Analyze, discuss, and apply module content, readings, and videos to understand daily social events.	25%
Total Grade		100%

6.2. Grading Policies

- a) **Due Dates:** Students should submit assignments by the due date to be able to get full credit (avoiding late-submission deductions). Keep in mind that assignment due dates are different than the assignment availability dates. Some assignments are available an extra day (24 hours from the due date) to allow late submissions.

b) Late Assignments: Students who miss the due date for any assignment due to a valid reason (e.g., university duties, religious holidays, medical procedures, etc.) can request a late submission without deductions. To make this request, the students should present proof documentation of the reason that justifies the late submission. To request this documentation, students contact the University Care Team (umatter@ufl.edu or by phone at 352-294-2273). They will collect documentation and let me know the number of excused days if they apply.

Students who do not present the above documentation can still submit the late assignment with a score deduction of 15% from the total points possible. For instance, a student received a score of 90/100 from a late reflection submission. This score will be reduced to 15% of the total score possible (15/100 points). Therefore, the final grade is 75/100. The late assignment submission with a deduction is available only for a 24-hour window after the assignment's due date.

c) Review Grades Request: Students have three days to request a grade review. I establish this time window to encourage students to review their grades and request any changes quickly. In this way, I can begin grading the next assignment faster. To request the grade review, students should send an email asking about this procedure and provide reasons to justify their request. Then, I will review the assignment and ask the student to join Zoom office hours to discuss their grade with me.

d) Final Grades: Students' final grades will be calculated by the e-learning system based on their grades in all the course assignments. I will double-check this calculation and assign final grades. The final grades given to students will not be rounded up. If you are concerned about your final grade calculation, please track your assessment grades and double-check e-learning calculations. Also, if you are concerned about your expected final grade based on your course assignment grades, please contact me as soon as possible to schedule a Zoom meeting and discuss it.

6.3. Rubric for Assignments

The written assignments (Discussion Boards, Reflections, and Research Project) will be graded following these criteria:

Criterion	Description	Score
Application of course content	Use information provided in course materials (concepts, examples, statistics). Make a clear reference to this content and quote if necessary.	40
Use of empirical evidence	Provide empirical evidence to justify key ideas in your writing. For instance, provide clear examples of your ideas. These examples can be related to news or statistics about the theme. Each example presented should be backed up with a parenthetical citation to a reference, preferably bibliographic. For instance: (Author, 2024).	30

Criterion	Description	Score
Use of logical sequence of ideas	Develop each paragraph of your work following a clear logical sequence of ideas. Use of logical connectors between your ideas.	20
Observance of grammar rules	Review the grammar of writing products before submission. Avoid grammar mistakes.	10
Total		100

6.4. Grading Scale

Letter	Meaning	Description	Sign	Score
A	Exemplary Work	Thorough understanding of the course material that exceeds the average.	A	93.0-100
			A-	90.0-92.9
B	Good Work	A clear understanding of the material with minor gaps.	B+	87.0-89.9
			B	84.0-86.9
			B-	80.0-83.9
C	Average Work	Understanding of the material with substantial gaps.	C+	77.0-79.9
			C	74.0-76.9
			C-	70.0-73.9
D	Marginal Work	A superficial understanding of the material.	D+	67.0-69.9
			D	64.0-66.9
			D-	61.0-63.9
E	Unacceptable Work	Lack of demonstrating substantial understanding of the material.	E	≤ 60.9

Note: A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

7. Class Policies

7.1. Office Hours

Weekly time slot where the instructor guides students in understanding and developing course activities. The office hours are offered online via Zoom at the time mentioned above (see page 1). Nevertheless, students can request Zoom meetings by appointment. Although having meetings during office hours is optional, I strongly recommend them to help you improve your efficiency in course activities. During office hours, students will be attended to on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please come up with specific topics or questions to use meeting time more effectively.

7.2. Communication

The course has three ways of communication: the question board, email, and office hours. One way of communication is preferable over the others depending on the issue students want to address with me.

- a) **Question Boards:** These boards are preferable over other means to ask questions about the content of course materials. For instance, request to elaborate the explanation of a concept, provide an example, or clarify the instructions of an assignment. Question boards are more useful for the mentioned purposes because I can reply faster to shared questions. Also, students can have the answer faster and sometimes immediately by reviewing previously answered questions.

- b) **Email:** This communication means is preferred over others mentioned for asking specific questions regarding your assignments or your participation in the course. For example, "yes" or "no" questions, questions about how you are doing an assignment that requires a one-sentence answer, asking for an extension in a deadline for health issues, or requesting a Zoom office hour by appointment, etc. Emails are better for answering previous questions because they can be solved with a short answer (it does not require dialog) and are a private means for communicating sensitive topics. Please email me via e-learning because it allows me to identify and reply faster to students' emails.

Please keep in mind that I review my email inbox only during business hours and days (Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Also, I usually reply to emails during the morning (8:00 AM - 8:30 AM) and noon (12:00 - 12:30 PM). I can quickly answer specific questions in the periods mentioned. I usually reply in a 24-hours-time window. If this time window passes and you do not receive an answer to an urgent email, please follow up on your inquiry.

- c) **Zoom Office Hours:** This means of communication is preferred over the others when answering the question will require dialog. For example, explaining a theory or providing more detailed feedback on a graded assignment.

7.3. Class Participation

Students are expected to maintain active class participation. It means reading the modules and required readings, posting comments on the discussion boards, doing quizzes and other assignments, and asking questions if required.

Students should maintain a respectful attitude toward their classmates' opinions when participating in class activities. Students should state their points of view and provide arguments to justify them without demeaning others' opinions. To do that, please: a) keep an open attitude to others' opinions, b) look to understand others' viewpoints before criticizing them, c) criticize ideas, not individuals, and d) avoid insulting and inflammatory language.

7.4. Accommodations

Students could request accommodations if they have special conditions (e.g., disabilities) that make it difficult to course participation. To receive accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible and give me the official documentation required to grant accommodations from the [Disability Resource Center](#).

7.5. Academic Honesty

UF students should observe The Honor Pledge: “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 [UF Honor Code](#) establishes several actions that violate this Code and its sanctions. For instance, "unauthorized assistance" violates the Honor Code, and students aware of this action should report it (avoiding complicity). Students can report code violations to the instructor or the Dean of Students Office. If you have questions about allowed and prohibited behaviors, please ask me.

7.6. Course Evaluation by Students

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the course instruction quality by completing online course evaluations via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give professional and respectful feedback is available [here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. They can complete evaluations via the email received from GatorEvals or via this [website](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

8. Course Calendar

The modules will be addressed following the tentative calendar below (see pages 10 to 13). Please keep in mind that this calendar is a plan that could be updated according to the pace and circumstances of the semester.

9. Miscellaneous

9.1. Study Suggestions

- Read each module and review the required readings and videos carefully. Do not wait until the last minute to read the materials.
- Ask all the questions you have. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the course. In this way, you can get a clear understanding of course contents and assignment instructions.
- Make sure you have enough time to review the papers needed for the research project. If you do not know how to move forward with your research project at any time, please let me know to see how I can help you.

Course Calendar:

Week	Date	Activity	Description	Due date
1	May 13 - 19	Lecture	<p>Topic I: Defining Social Inequality Module 1: concept, relevance, and characteristics of Social Inequality</p> <p>This module includes the course presentation and an initial sociological approach to social inequality. I review the key terms associated with social inequality and the sociological approach to it (main schools of thought and methods used). Then, I explain the relevance of social inequality for its effects. Finally, I describe key characteristics of social inequality as a social phenomenon.</p>	
		Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quiz 1 - Discussion board 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May 17 - May 19
2	May 20 - 26	Lecture	<p>Module 2: Origins, dynamics, types, and consequences of Social Inequality</p> <p>This module explains theoretical approaches to the processes (origins and dynamics) and outcomes (consequences) associated with social inequalities. I explain classical and contemporary sociological theories about the causes and dynamics of social inequalities and describe their consequences (their sign, types, and extent).</p>	
		Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ch.2 (Davis and Moore) "Some Principles of Stratification*." - Ch.3 (Fischer et al.) "Inequality by Design." 	
		Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quiz 2 - Discussion board 2 - Collective Literature Review: Step 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May 24 - May 26 - May 26
3	May 27 - Jun 2	Lecture	<p>Topic II: Dimensions of Social Inequality Module 3: Class</p> <p>This module provides an overview of the dimensions of social inequality. I explain how social categories influence the allocation of people within social structure, which in turn creates an unequal allocation of resources. Then, I explain the relevance of this situation for society (the basis for social inequalities). Finally, I address class inequality</p>	

			in the U.S.: I explain its definition, relevance, components (income and wealth inequality and social mobility), dynamics (neoliberalism and middle-class contraction), and effects (examples in education and work).	
		Reading/ Video	- Ch. 10 (Grusky and Weeden). "Is market failure behind the takeoff in inequality?" - Video " Inequality for All ," narrated by Robert Reich (required view only the first 40 minutes).	
		Assignment	- Quiz 3 - Discussion board 3 - Reflection 1	- May 31 - Jun 2 - Jun 2
4	Jun 3 - 9	Lecture	Module 4: Race This module addresses racial inequality in the U.S. I explain its definition, relevance, components (racial categories and structures), dynamics (mistreatment, marginalization, segregation, and exploitation), and effects (examples in education and work).	
		Reading	- Ch.30 (Feagin) "The Continuing Significance of Race." - Ch.32 (Wilson) "The Declining Significance of Race."	
		Assignment	- Quiz 4 - Discussion board 4	- Jun 7 - Jun 9
5	Jun 10 - 16	Lecture	Module 5: Gender This module addresses gender inequality in the U.S. I explain its definition, relevance, components (gender categories and patriarchy), dynamics (segregation, marginalization, harassment, violence, and exploitation), and effects (examples in education and work).	
		Reading/ Video	- Ch. 48 (Blau and Kahn). "The gender pay gap. Have women gone as far as they can?" - Short video (7 minutes): " The most popular explanation for the gender pay gap is wrong " by Richard Reeves.	
		Assignment	- Collective Literature Review: Step 2 - Quiz 5	- Jun 11 - Jun 14

			- Discussion board 5	- Jun 16
6	Jun 17 - 23	Lecture	Module 6: Intersectionality This module addresses the intersectional inequalities in the U.S. I explain its definition (intersectional approach), relevance, components (domination matrix, social stratification, and resource allocation), dynamics (elements and types), and effects (examples in work and health).	
		Video	Documentary: Black feminist	
		Assignment	- Quiz 6 - Discussion board 6 - Collective Literature Review: Step 3	- Jun 21 - Jun 23 - Jun 23
7	Jun 24 -30		No module - Summer break	
8	Jul 1 - 7	Lecture	Topic III: Social Inequality in Daily Life Module 7: Poverty 1 This module addresses poverty in the U.S. as a main outcome of social inequality. I explain poverty's definition (absolute and relative), relevance, characteristics of people experiencing it (in terms of race, gender, and place of residence), causes (cultural, economic, political, and social), and effects (examples in health).	
		Reading	- Ch. 15 (Ehrenreich) "Nickel-and-Dimed. On (not) Getting by in America." - Ch. 17 (Smeeding) "Poorer by Comparison."	
		Assignment	- Quiz 7 - Discussion board 7 - Individual Research Proposal: Step 1	- Jul 5 - Jul 7 - Jul 7
9	Jul 8 - 14	Lecture	Module 8: Poverty 2 This module provides an overview of welfare programs as a mainstream political action against poverty in the U.S. I explain welfare social programs' definition, relevance, dynamics (approaches, types, and current situation), and main results (assessment of last reform).	

		Video	Documentary: " How poor people survive in the USA ," made by Deutsche Welle (German television network).	
		Assignment	- Quiz 8 - Discussion board 8 - Reflection 2	- Jul 12 - Jul 14 - Jul 14
10	Jul 15 - 21	Lecture	Module 9: Global Inequality This module offers an approach to global inequalities. I explain global inequality's concept, relevance, types (class, gender, and racial differences), causes (different theoretical explanations), and effects (implications for globalization).	
		Video	Documentary: " Obesity and corporate greed ," made by Deutsche Welle (German television network).	
		Assignment	- Quiz 9 - Discussion board 9	- Jul 19 - Jul 21
11	Jul 22 - 28	Lecture	Module 10: Responses to Social Inequality This module analyzes the responses toward social inequalities. I begin by defining what is a response to social inequality and its relevance. Then, I analyze the main types of responses, such as social movements (types and examples), public policies (redistributive and focused on abilities and housing), and individual actions.	
		Reading	- Ch. 75 (Brooks) "The Harlem Miracle." - Ch. 80 (Murray) "Poverty and Marriage, Income Inequality and Brains."	
		Assignment	- Quiz 10 - Discussion board 10 - Individual Research Proposal: Step 2	- Jul 26 - Jul 28 - Jul 28
12	Jul 29 - Aug 4	Assignment	Reflection 3	Jul 31
13	Aug 5 - 9	Assignment	Individual Research Proposal: Step 3	Aug 9

*The weekly readings are chapters of the required textbook "The Inequality Reader."

- Please let me know if you have any circumstances that affect your course performance. In this way, I can help you figure out how to avoid the circumstances mentioned affecting your wellness and course performance.
- Explore and use (if needed) the student's resources listed below.

9.2. Students' Resources

- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#): Call (352) 392-1575 for information on crisis and non-crisis services.
- [Student Health Care Center](#): Call (352) 392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need.
- [UF Police Department](#): Call (352) 392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).
- [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center](#): call (352) 733-0111 for immediate medical care or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road.
- [UF Computing Help Desk](#): Contact this office at (352) 392-4357 or via email at helpdesk@ufl.edu for E-learning technical support.
- [Career Connections Center](#): visit this center for career assistance and counseling services (Reitz Union Suite 1300) or call (352) 392-1601.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](#): Visit this center for inquiries about general study skills and tutoring at Broward Hall. Call (352) 392-2010 or (352) 392-6420 to make an appointment.
- [Writing Studio](#): Visit the studio for help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers (2215 Turlington Hall). Call 352-846-1138 to make an appointment.
- [Online Students Complaints](#): Service to report problems in UF online services.

9.3. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: How can I refer to you?

A: Please call me Mr. Rondan.

Q: Can I schedule a meeting during your online office hours to discuss a grade posted four days ago?

A: No. I can discuss grades three days after they are posted in e-learning.

Q: Can you round up my final grade?

A: No. As I said earlier, I will not round up final grades.