



HTS 3008-A Class, Power & Inequality Spring 2015

Instructor Information:

Dr. Kristy Gordon

Email: kristin.gordon@hts.gatech.edu

Office: Old CE G17

Office Hours: M/W 11:00-12:15 & by appointment

Meeting Information:

Room: Architecture East 309

M/W/F 1:05-1:55 pm

Course Description and Learning Objectives

While many in the United States embrace the rhetoric of equal rights and the American Dream, inequality persists in living standards, power over resources and life chances. This course explores the causes and consequences of social inequality in the United States. Throughout the course we will seek to achieve the Area E Approved Learning Outcome which states, "Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior." We will accomplish this goal through a thorough exploration of the social, political and economic forces that cause, and are produced by, social inequality in the United States. In the first section of the course, we will examine the various theoretical perspectives taken by social scientists on social inequality. Next, we will explore how social inequality is experienced and maintained by studying various dimensions of inequality and their interaction. Throughout the course, we will explore a variety of topics, including: wealth and income inequality; racial and gender inequality; educational inequality; ideology; the intersection of class, race/ethnicity, and gender; privilege and oppression. Students will demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcome through the completion of a learning portfolio, three written essays, in-class quizzes, and class engagement. The course material will encourage you to think critically as you continuously try to make sense of – and reduce, should you want to – various inequalities in the world around you.

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Learn to think about inequality from a sociological perspective, applying concepts to personal experiences as well as understanding how life chances differ for various groups in the US.
- Use concepts discussed in class to create cohesive arguments in classroom discussion and written assignments.
- Understand how race, class, gender, and sexuality impact interactions, institutional placements, choices, identities, and social policy in the contemporary US.
- Apply course content to build a comprehensive learning portfolio on a topic of your choosing related to social inequality.

Course Readings

Grusky, David and Szonja Szelenyi, eds. 2011. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Johnson, Heather Beth. 2006. *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth: Choosing Schools and Inheriting Inequality in the Land of Opportunity*. NY, NY: Routledge.

There are two required texts for this course. Readings marked GS can be found in *The Inequality Reader*. Readings marked with an asterisk will be posted on T-Square. It is your responsibility to complete all the required readings before class and be prepared to contribute to class discussion. Please note that some weeks the reading assignment is heavier than others so read ahead in the syllabus and plan adequate time to complete the readings before class.

Course Requirements

Class Engagement - Student attendance and participation is crucial to the success of this class. Good student participation includes completing all of the readings and assignments before class as well as coming to class prepared to engage in informed discussions based on the readings. Please note that I will evaluate your in-class participation-- both how much you participate and the thoughtfulness of your contributions. Come to class on time and prepared to ask questions, generate ideas, and discuss the assigned readings.

Attendance is also crucial. I will frequently present material not covered in the readings during class. You are responsible for all of the readings listed on the syllabus, regardless of whether we discuss them, and the new material I introduce. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get the lecture notes from a classmate. I will not review the lecture material with you privately. Coming to class on time is also required. Tardy arrivals are disruptive and disrespectful to both the professor and your classmates. Class engagement is 15% of your course grade.

Quizzes – Throughout the semester, I will administer short, unannounced quizzes. Quiz questions can cover readings, lectures, discussions, films, etc. In short, all course content is a possible source of a quiz question. In order to do well on the quizzes you must read, come to class, take notes, and engage in class discussion. Students with excused absences may make-up a missed quiz within two weeks of the absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor and arrange the make-up quiz. If you do not contact the professor and make up the work within two weeks of your absence, you will no longer be able to make up the missed quiz and will earn a zero on that quiz. All students will be allowed to drop their lowest quiz grade. Quizzes will count for 15% of your course grade.

Analysis Papers – You will complete three analysis papers during the semester. These papers challenge you to use ideas from the course, and some thought and investigation of your own, to analyze aspects of social inequality in society. These exercises will require you to write up your

thoughts, findings, and experiences in a short essay. Detailed instructions for each paper will be distributed in class. Each paper is worth 10 points for a total of 30% of your course grade.

Learning Portfolio – One of the primary objectives of this course is to continue the development of your sociological perspective. I want you to finish the course with the ability to examine society through a sociological lens. In addition, education research suggests that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the course content. I seek to assist you developing your sociological perspective using an active learning approach by requiring each student to complete a semester-long learning portfolio. You will select a topic related to the course content from a prepared list, gather source material, and conduct analysis and synthesis of these materials. At the conclusion of the project all students will share their learning with the class through a poster presentation. The completed portfolio, including introductory and concluding reflection papers, source materials, analysis, and poster presentation, is worth a total of 40% of your course grade. Detailed instructions and specific grade guidelines will be distributed in class.

<u>Grading Summary</u> - Class Engagement	15 points
Quizzes	15 points
Analysis Papers (3)	30 points
Learning Portfolio	<u>40 points</u>
Total Points Available	100 points

The final course grade will follow the A to F scale as follows: The grading system will follow the A to F scale as follows: A: 100-90; B: 89-80; C: 79-70; D: 69-60; F: 59-0.

Policy on Late Assignments - It is crucial that you turn in all assignments on time. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments MUST be submitted to T-Square before the start of class on the date they are due. Specific deadlines will be distributed in advance with the instructions for every assignment. Thus, all late assignments will be penalized 1/2 point per day including weekends. If you have questions, concerns, or technical issues with T-Square it is your responsibility to inform me and attempt to resolve the problem prior to the deadline.

Academic Honesty – Every Georgia Institute of Technology student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Students are expected to have a thorough understanding of the Georgia Institute of Technology academic honor code. All work submitted by the student—unless specifically noted by the professor—must represent the individual effort of the student. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, it is your responsibility to ask your professors. If you choose to be dishonest, be aware that I will submit your case for further review. Remember: Your personal integrity is more valuable than your grade on any assignment.

Class Conduct - In order to create an atmosphere of learning, please turn off your cell phone and anything else that may disrupt class. You should not use any electronic equipment during class unless it is necessary to facilitate your learning and approved by the professor. I reserve the right to lower your participation grade should you disrupt class.

Disability Statement – Georgia Tech offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with the ADAPTS office (www.adapts.gatech.edu).

Disclaimer – The syllabus detailed below is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Introduction to Social Inequality and Theoretical Perspectives		
January 5	Course Introduction - Dusting off the cobwebs	
7	Stratification Concepts What is inequality?	Charon, “Should We Generalize about People?”* G&S, Ch 1 (Grusky) “The Stories About Inequality That We Love To Tell”
9 & 12	What is the structure of inequality?	G&S, Ch. 5 (Marx) “Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism G&S, Ch. 7 (Weber) “Class, Status, Party” DUE (Jan. 12): Portfolio Topics
14 & 16	What is the structure of inequality?	G&S, Ch 6 (Wright) “Class Counts” G&S, Ch 11 (Mills) “The Power Elite”
21 & 23	Are we stuck? An examination of social mobility January 19 – Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, We will not meet as a class. Please use this time to honor the day in a way that is meaningful to you.	G&S, Ch 56 (Blau and Duncan) “The Process of Stratification” G&S, Ch 59 (MacLeod) “Ain’t No Makin’ It” DUE (Jan. 21): Portfolio Initial Reflection Paper
26	Does inequality serve a purpose?	Tumin, “Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis.”*
28	Why do we have inequality?	Massey, selections from “Remaking the Political Economy”*
Dimensions of Inequality		
Class		
Jan 30 & Feb 2	How Unequal Are We?	Domhoff, “Wealth, Income, and Power”* Smeeding, “Public Policy and Economic Inequality”*
February 4 & 6	Wealth Inequality	G&S, Ch 12 (Domhoff) “Who Rules America?” Stiglitz, “Of the 1%, By the 1%, For the 1%”* Kendall, “Class in the United States: Not Only Alive but Reproducing”*

9, 11 & 13	Poverty and Labor Market	G&S, Ch 15 (Ehrenreich) “Nickel and Dimed” G&S, Ch 21 (Hays) “Flat Broke with Children” G&S Ch 16 (Newman and Chen) “The Missing Class”
16 & 18	Stratification and Education	Johnson, Ch. 1-2
20 & 23	Stratification and Wealth	Johnson, Ch. 3-5
25 & 27	Stratification and Ideology	Johnson, Ch. 6-7
Dimensions of Inequality		
Race		
March 2 & 4	Social Construction of Race	G&S, Ch 24 (Omi and Winant) “Racial Formation in the United States” G&S, Ch 25 (Farley) “Racial Identities in 2000” DUE (March 2): Analysis Paper #1
6	Race and Wealth	G&S, Ch 33 (Oliver and Shapiro) “Black Wealth / White Wealth” Conley, “Wealth Matters”*
9 & 11	Racism and Racial Discrimination	Tatum, “Defining Racism”* G&S, Ch 32 (Wilson) “The Declining Significance of Race” G&S, Ch 30 (Feagin) “The Continuing Significance of Race”
13	Racial Discrimination	Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich, “The Sweet Enchantment...”* G&S, Ch 28 (Bertrand and Mullainathan) “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?”
16 - 20	Spring Break	No New Assigned Readings
23	Race, Environment and Health	Bullard and Johnson, “Environmental Justice: Grassroots Activism and Its Impact on Public Policy Decision Making”* Scott. “Life at the Top.”*
25	Race and Privilege	Wise, “Born to Belong”* and “On White Pride...”* McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege”* White, “White Privilege, Joe Biden Style”* DUE (March 25): Analysis Paper #2
Dimensions of Inequality		
Gender and Sexuality		
27 & 30	Social Construction of Gender	G&S, Ch 36 (Lorber) “The Social Construction of Gender” Johnson, “Patriarchy, The System”*
April 1 & 3	Gender and Work: Paid and Unpaid	Williams, “The Glass Escalator”* G&S, Ch. 40 (Jacobs and Gerson) “The Time Divide” G&S, CH. 43 (Reskin) “Rethinking Employment Discrimination and Its Remedies”

6 & 8	Globalization and Gender	Readings TBA
10 & 13	Sexuality	Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality"* Stacey, "Gay and Lesbian Families are Here"* Bérubé, "How Gay Stays White"* DUE (April 13): Analysis Paper #3
Dimensions of Inequality Intersectionality		
15	Intersectionality	Hancock, "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition"* Schwan, "Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement"*
17 & 20	Black Feminist Thought and The Matrix of Domination	Collins, "Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought."* Woods, "The Black Male Privilege Checklist"* DUE (April 17): Learning Portfolio
22	Where do we go from here? Strategies for Reducing Inequality	G&S, Ch 78 (Frank) "The Pragmatic Case for Reducing Income Inequality" G&S, Ch 79 (Bebchuk and Fried) "Tackling the Managerial Power Problem"
24	Review and Discussion Day	No New Assigned Readings DUE (April 24): Portfolio Final Reflection Paper

Portfolio Presentations:

April 27, 2:50-5:40 pm