I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the social, economic, cultural, and political forces behind the formation and reproduction of social inequalities in the United States. One of the unique characteristics of advanced industrialized societies is the presence of a class structure that distinguishes it from other forms of society. The course will analyze the evolution, formation, persistence, and development of class inequality in industrialized societies, especially in the United States. Sociologists assume inequalities are “designed” or appear as a result of government actions and regulations, for example the laws that provide the ground rules for wages, unionizations, working conditions, and taxes. The opportunity structure (referring as to how individuals “attain” a specific asset such as an educational credential) is also related to government policies such as how school resources are to be distributed. This course will also interrogate “ascribed” statuses, or those that are attached to individuals as a function of group memberships, such as gender and ethnicity. Although we recognize that social categories like race or gender are socially constructed and enforced by social institutions, the presence of real and somewhat permanent consequences attached to them forces us to examine their foundations and implementation in different societal arrangements.

We will examine how communities of color have dealt with inequalities in the United States using historical, anthropological, and sociological approaches and materials. Recent scholarship has emphasized the impact of persistent and concentrated poverty on communities. Frequently called the underclass or ghetto poor model, it has spawned a lively debate on whether persistent poverty is caused by behavioral pathology or the economic structure. So called “neighborhood effects” can operate under many different channels—for example, a ghetto culture that stresses short-term goals; a lack of role models and stabilizing institutions to buffer social dislocation; or underfunded schools and reduced access to new jobs in suburban areas.

To understand the major issues surrounding the underclass debate requires looking at theories and social science evidence regarding culture as it is practiced inside communities of color. It also requires looking at the institutions most closely linked to the people living in the barrios: schools, the criminal justice system, and the economic arrangements that provide a livelihood for these residents. One also needs to look deeper to understand the survival strategies of disadvantaged households and kinship systems, in other words, going beyond mere individualistic models of economic adaptation. Cultural values such as familism and the pooling of resources and social capital to access jobs are some examples of how families and communities deal with rapidly changing economic circumstances.
The study of minority communities requires a global perspective, as macro-economic forces producing migration waves and industrial restructuring also affect minority neighborhoods. Some of these communities are “transnational” in nature, often straddling two countries in physical (e.g., the border region) and socio-psychological ways (e.g., bilingual and bicultural identities). Communities are not passive receptors of social and economic conditions. They often organize politically to have an impact on the policy-making process as well as create organizations that secure resources and services for neighborhood residents.

II. TEXTBOOK AND REQUIRED READING SELECTIONS

The books that follow are required for this course and are available at the UWM Bookstore, which is located in the UWM Student Union.


III. Assignments and Grading

The grade that you earn in this course is based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, class attendance, application/synthesis of knowledge to papers and/or class discussions. The grading criteria are as follows:

**Response Papers:**
The class will be divided into small groups (depending on the total number of students in a course) for response papers. Each member of one group will be responsible for completing a response paper based on the weekly readings. For example, each student belonging to Group #1 would complete a response paper for the first week. Each member belonging to Group #2 would follow the second week, etc. Each response paper is to be at least 2 pages long. Each student will make a copy of their response papers for their classmates. These papers are then to be read and discussed in class. Response papers will be worth 15 points. Each group will complete approximately two response papers during the semester. A late response paper will be assessed a grade penalty.

**Weekly Discussion Points (DPs).** For seven different class periods, each student should prepare a reaction/question/comment on the readings for that day. These DPs will be due by 4pm the day before class and will be distributed electronically to everyone else in the course using the course D2L discussion forum, which will give the rest of the class roughly 20 hours to read these before class begins (a requirement for everyone). These discussion points should serve to help you organize your thoughts on a main theme from the readings and facilitate discussion in class. The topic of each weekly discussion point will be up to you and you should feel free to pick what is especially interesting/relevant/puzzling to you. Each discussion point should:
• Consist of a minimum of 600 words (roughly 1 single spaced page with a standard 12 pt. font and inch margins)
• Include an explanation of the issues at stake and why you think they are important, even if you cannot fully answer the question(s) you ask.
• Include at least 2 questions you have about the readings. Formulate these carefully and think of them as critical questions you would pose to the author(s) if you could or questions involving the interrogation of one author by another.
• Discuss connections between at least two of the readings for that day
• Involve a serious engagement with the material. You may reference the discussion points of your fellow students but you must lay out your own ideas and concerns.

I would encourage you to make references to readings from previous weeks of the course, as you find useful and appropriate. I will grade these discussion points on a regular basis; my feedback will be posted on D2L as comments on the discussion board itself and/or individual feedback via the D2L grading section. You are required to provide at least seven discussion points over the course of the semester. Again, regardless of whether you have completed a DP for a given week, you are required to have read all posts for the week before class and be prepared to discuss them. The first discussion point is due on Sept. 9.

**Exams:**
There will be a mid-term exam. The exam will be of a take-home nature and will cover material covered in class sessions leading up to the date of the exam. Each student will be given one week to complete the exam.

**Participation and Attendance:**
Each student is expected to regularly participate in class discussions and evidence knowledge of the readings by making pertinent contributions. All students are expected to have done all the assigned readings for each class. Regarding attendance, I know that we all have busy lives, as we have to balance family, work, and school. But unless you have an emergency, I expect you to be present for all class meetings. An attendance sheet will be passed out at ever class meeting. It is your responsibility to sign-up this sheet, even if you come-in late. A series of “write-in class” essays will be completed during class period and will form the basis for your attendance score.

**Final Paper (including proposal and presentation).** Each class member will be expected to complete a term paper on a subject within the social stratification themes discussed in class. I encourage you to pick a topic that is of particular interest to you and linked to current or future research project plans, including an MA proposal/paper or a Ph.D. proposal or chapter. This paper will define a research question in social stratification, connect it to ideas and readings discussed in the class, thoroughly discuss how the issue has been treated in the existing literature beyond what was read in class, outline a research strategy, and include a discussion of potential data sources and methods. The topic will involve some negotiation with me to talk to me early. I require a three page proposal (in addition to a well-developed bibliography) be turned in by November 3, which will give me an opportunity to provide you with feedback on your ideas. The paper should be roughly completed by our last class on December 8th, so that you can give a brief (5 minute) presentation to the class on that day. The paper itself is due Tuesday, December 15th, at 4:30pm.
CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNMENT OF LETTER GRADES (Total: 100 Points)

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Weekly Discussion Points</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Response Papers</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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The final grade will be calculated as follows:

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<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
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<td>90.00</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>83.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>77.00</td>
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<td>63.00</td>
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**A NOTE ON YOUR EXPECTED TIME COMMITMENT TO THIS CLASS: University Policy on Credit Hours**

As the UW System assumes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

As this is a traditional, face-to-face, course, you will spend a minimum of

- 37.5 hours in the classroom
- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams

UWM Credit Hour Policy, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Faculty Document No. 2838, can be found at [https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf](https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf).

UWS ACPS 4, the University Of Wisconsin System Policy On Academic Year Definition And Assorted Derivatives, can be found at [http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf](http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf).
Using UW-Milwaukee Desire2Learn (D2L) course web sites

Materials for this course are available on a Desire2Learn (D2L) course web site. You may see these materials there anytime you wish, using a standard web browser.

**Recommended browsers:** For a PC-compatible computer, use either Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox. For Apple (Mac) computers, it is best to use Safari or Firefox. Be sure your browser also has “Sun Java Runtime Environment” (Java-scripting) enabled for a recent version of Java. (If you have any questions about these requirements, contact the UWM Help Desk, as described at the bottom of this page.)

In order to find and browse the D2L course web site:

1. Open your web browser and go to the UWM home page: http://www.uwm.edu **(OR go directly to the D2L login page at http://D2L.uwm.edu and skip to #3 below).**
2. From the UWM home page, click on **D2L**.
3. On the Desire2Learn Welcome screen, you will see a location to enter your **Username** and **Password**.
4. Type in your ePanther **Username** (your ePanther campus email, but without the “@uwm.edu”). Hit the [Tab] key on your keyboard, or use the mouse to click in the box next to Password.
5. Type in your ePanther **Password**. Then hit [Login].
6. On the **MyHome** screen, find the area called **My UW-Milwaukee Courses**.
   - Click on [Search] with the textbox empty, to see all the “Active” courses you are enrolled in. (Students are not able to see course sites until the Instructor has designated them as “Active.”)
   - Alternatively, you can type a search string (for instance, “psych 101” but without the quotes) and click on [Search]. If you’re enrolled in an active D2L site with that search string, it will be displayed for you.
   - In the search results list, click twice on the word **Semester** at the top of the column to organize your courses by semester, displaying the current semester first.
7. If you have any difficulty getting into the course web site, please close down your web browser completely and open it up again. Then try logging on again, using the instructions above. If you do not know your ePanther username or password, please get help as indicated below.
8. When you are finished looking around your D2L course sites, always click on [Logout]. This is especially important if you are in a computer lab. Otherwise, the next person who uses the machine will be using your D2L account!

**What to do if you have problems with Desire2Learn (D2L)**

If you have problems with your login (e.g., you forgot your password, or if you just can’t get on) or if you run into any other difficulties with D2L, help is available from the UWM Help Desk. You may do one of the following:

- Send an email to **help@uwm.edu**
- Call the UWM Help Desk at 414.229.4040 if you are in Metro Milwaukee (or just dial 4040 on a UWM campus phone).
- Go to Bolton 225 (this lab is not open all day or on weekends – call 414.229.4040 for specific hours)
- If you are calling from outside the 414 or 262 area codes, but from within the USA, you may call the UWM Help Desk at 1.877.381.3459.
Major Course Units/Themes

Unit 1: Basic Concepts in the Study of Inequalities: Weeks of Sept. 8 and Sept. 15

Key Questions: What is the meaning of social class as a concept used in the social sciences? Of status? Is the unequal distribution of resources necessary for the efficient operation of labor markets in modern capitalist societies? How and why has the structure of inequality changed since the 19th century? Why do we have increasing levels of income inequality in the last 30 years? The rise of the “one percenters”: breaking down receiving income from wages and getting income from capital. Does the U.S. have a power elite? How do Weber, Marx, and Erik Olin Wright conceptualize class? How do we apply the concept of justice in assessing the presence of inequalities in advanced societies?

Readings:

Davis, Kingsley and Wilbert E. Moore. “Some Principles of Stratification” (in reader)
Fischer et al, “Inequality by design” (in reader)
Krueger, Alan B., “Inequality, Too Much of a Good Thing” (in reader)
Marx, Karl, “Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism” (in reader)
Wright, Erik Olin, “Class Counts” (in reader)
Weber, Max “Class, Status, Party” (in reader)
Grusky and Weden, “Is Market Failure Behind the Takeoff in Inequality” (in reader)
Thomas Piketty, “Two Worlds” (chapter 8 of Capital in the 21st Century-in class website)
C. Wright Mills, “The Power Elite” (in reader)
William Domhoff, “Who rules America?” (In reader)

Unit 2: Conceptualizing & Measuring socioeconomic mobility (September 22)

Key Questions: What is the role of technology, education (or skills) and marginal productivity in explaining wage inequalities? Can we justify (or objectively explain) the salaries of “super-managers” in the United States? How do we define and measure socioeconomic mobility? How is inequality transmitted over generations? How do we conceptualize different kinds of capital: human, cultural, social, and economic? Is “big” class reproduction a myth?

Readings:

Featherman and Hauser, “A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility” (in reader)

Thomas Piketty, “Inequality of Labor Income” (chapter 9 in Capital in the 21st Century) in class website
Jonsson, Grusky, Di Carlo, and Pollak, “It’s a Decent Bet That Our Children Will be Professors Too” (in reader)

Unit 3: Race as an analytical category for studying inequality-A first Look. (September 29)

Key Questions: How was race “socially constructed” in the United States? How do race, class, and gender sit within a matrix of domination? How is racial inequality crystallized by government policies and institutional practices?

Readings:

Omi and Winant, “Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s” (in reader)


Unit 4: The Gendered Society: From biological determinism to differential socialization (October 6)

Key Questions: What explains the prevalence of male dominance? What are the cultural meanings behind the so called “differences” between men and women? What are the main tenets of the differential socialization model of gender differences? Why do we say that gender remains “invisible” to most people? The devaluation thesis: how gender bias by employers explains why women earn less.

Readings:


Ridgeway, Cecilia, “Framed Before We Know It” (in class website)

England, “Devaluation and the Pay of Comparable Male and Female Occupations” (in reader)

Blau and Kahn, “The Gender Pay Gap: Have Women Gone as Far as they Can?” (in reader)
**Unit 5: Poverty and Communities of Color: Social Structure vs. Culture (October 13, 20)**

**Key Questions:** How do we define poverty? What are the main causes of poverty? What is the impact of structural factors on the creation and maintenance of poverty? What is concentrated poverty and how does it impact communities of color? The geographic and skills mismatch hypotheses: explaining employment declines amongst Black youths. What is collective efficacy and how does it impact a neighborhood?

**Readings:**


Kasinitz et al, “Race, Prejudice, and Discrimination” (chapter 10 in *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*, Russell Sage Foundation, 2009). In class website

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**Unit 6: Defying Power: How the Oppressed Fight Back, Social Movements and Collective Action (October 27)**

**Key Questions:** What is power and how is rule-breaking an essential part of challenging power? How does class consciousness affect collective action? How does political consciousness affect social protest and guide the collective resistance to domination? Linking Mobilization theory and identity-based movements. What was the impact of the 1960s social movements on the organizational fortunes of organized labor?

**Readings:**

Morris, Aldon D., “Political Consciousness and Collective Action” (in class website)

Piven and Cloward, “Rule Making, Rule Breaking, and Power” (in class website)

Meyer, David S. and Daisy Verduzco Reyes, “Social Movements and Contentious Politics” (in class website)


**MID-TERM EXAM DUE—OCTOBER 27!!!**
**Unit 7: Social Capital, Networks, and Attainment (November 3 and November 10)**

**PAPER PROPOSALS DUE** (November 3)

**Key Questions:** What is social capital and how is it related to other kinds of capital? How do we convert personal ties into valuable resources? How does the information gained from social networks is processed by managers? How do we apply the social flow framework to the lives of immigrant women? Examining the ways in which immigrant women display agency, that is, are self-propelling agents who interact with each other and develop support and leverage networks to facilitate socioeconomic mobility.

**Readings:**

Granovetter, Mark S., “The Strength of Weak Ties” (in reader)
Burt, Ronald S., “Structural Holes” (in reader)
Domínguez, Silvia, *Getting Ahead: Social Mobility, Public Housing, and Immigrant Networks*

**Unit 8: Schools and Educational Processes: Reproducing Inequality? (November 17)**

**Key Questions:** How do parents from different social classes manage and approach their children’s education? What aspects of family life have an impact on educational processes? What is the role of the genetic inheritance of IQ on Cognitive performance? How important is cognitive performance as a direct and indirect determinant of earnings?

**Readings:**

Lareau, Annette, “Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life” (in reader)


Unit 9: Housing Issues Concerning Communities of Color (November 24)

Key Questions: What are the different measures of residential segregation? What are the historical trends of residential segregation according to racial/ethnic group? What are the major causes of residential segregation? What are the unique arguments of perpetuation theory? What is the ethnic enclave versus racialization model? Do institutional actors play a role in promoting segregation (e.g. mortgage and insurance redlining)? What are some of the consequences of residential segregation? Does it increase poverty, reduce educational attainment, and other factors? Is Latina/o segregation (from Whites) different from African-American segregation? Do we need to look at specific Latino subgroups in order to better understand the causes of their residential segregation? What is “place attachment” and why do efforts to relocate the poor have limited success?

Readings:


Krysan, Maria, “Race and residence from the telescope to the microscope” (Contexts, September 8, 2011, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 38-42). In class website

Lichter, Parisi, & Taquino, “Toward a new segregation? Decomposing segregation within and between metropolitan areas and suburbs” (American Sociological Review 2015, Vol. 80(4) 843 –873) in class website


Unit 10: Globalization and Inequality (December 1st)

Key Questions: Models and theories of globalization: imperialism or a new social space for social relations and transactions? Are we seeing the development of a new global socioeconomic system? Is globalization eroding democracy and the autonomy of the nation-states?

Readings:

Stiglitz, “Globalism’s Discontents” (in reader)

Firebaugh, “The New Geography of Global Income Inequality” (in reader)

Unit 11: What is to Be Done? Policies to Alleviate Poverty (December 8)

**Key Questions:** Can we help workers by helping unions? Is early intervention the best strategy to close the achievement/income gap between rich and poor? Can we fix our schools by increasing competition, closing bad schools and giving parents and children more choices? What is the role of government in the production and distribution of wealth? “Progressive” taxation: can it slow down or even reverse the rise in economic inequalities?

**Readings:**

Rosenfeld, “Little Labor: “How Union Decline is Changing the American Landscape” (in reader)

Heckman, James J. “Skill Formation and Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children” (in reader)


Thomas Piketty, “A Social State for the Twenty-First Century” and “Rethinking the Progressive Income Tax” (chapters 13, 14 in Capital in the 21st Century). In class website
UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

**Students with Disabilities.** Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

**Incompletes.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/osl/dean/conduct.cfm

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/upload/grievance_procedure.pdf

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/policies/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

Update 08/2015