Department of Sociology

Spring 2022, UW-Milwaukee

**SOCIO 233-001**
Social Inequality in the United States

Online - Asynchronous Course Credit Hours: 3

Course Facilitator: Vijaya Tamla Rai
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Office: Bolton 732

Office Hours: 10:00 AM – Noon (Mondays) and by appointment (Virtual)

**Course Description**

Why do we have inequality? The COVID-19 pandemic is a common enemy of humanity, but why does it have disproportionate impacts on people of different social categories? When people say that they are lucky to have their jobs intact during the pandemic, is it really luck? Perhaps they deserved having their jobs because they were smarter, more hardworking, and highly skilled. But do these reasons really explain why inequalities persisted in the past and the present? No, sociology answers. Sociology investigates a range of social factors that lead to inequalities, some of them understandable, others indefensible.

This course is organized into three modules. The first module provides a foundational sociological framework for analyzing social inequality in the United States with a reference to the global context. Within this framework, in the second module, we will explore the multiple dimensions of inequality. We will examine intersection and influence of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, status, and power to develop an analysis that emphasizes the diverse ways inequalities are perpetuated, experienced, and resisted. In the final module, we will revisit whether theoretical accounts of inequalities need to be reexamined as result of social, economic, and environmental changes. We will seek answers to the overarching question that guides sociological inquiry into inequality: Who gets what, how and why? Lastly, as a part of this course's learning experience, we will have lectures (i.e., PowerPoints, notes, and video lectures), readings (i.e., textbook, research papers, and articles), tutorials (i.e., quizzes, discussions, media resources), and self-directed independent learning.

**Learning Outcomes**
The course has four principal learning outcomes (LO):

LO 1: to demonstrate a broad knowledge and understanding of the processes that (re)produce social inequalities.
LO 2: to compare and contrast different sociological concepts and perspectives on social inequalities.
LO 3: to critically analyze how social structures, contexts, and interactions reinforce persistent inequalities by class, race, ethnicity, gender, and social status.
LO 4: to assess the social implications of maintaining or dismantling different forms of inequality.
Skill Development
All four learning outcomes (LO 1 - LO 4) will help you progress your knowledge and understanding, intellectual, and transferable skills. In addition, LO 3 and LO 4 will enhance your practical skills.

General Education Requirements (GER) Credit
This course satisfies the UWM General Education Requirements because
a. The course will help learners recognize, analyze, and communicate how might specific social structures, environments, and interactions perpetuate, or alleviate inequality.
b. Learners will critically evaluate and offer alternative theoretical frameworks to explain why inequality is experienced and resisted, and to display a better understanding of how individuals relate to social structures and vice-versa.
c. The course assessments constructively align to the four learning outcomes and the course content. The assessments will give learners opportunities to produce creative works that document, evaluate and present different dimensions of inequality.

Course Prerequisite
Sophomore standing or a 100-level sociology course.

Readings
The main textbook for the course is:


Note:
- A copy of the textbook is available for loan at the UWM Golda Meir Library Reserve Collection.
- Additional required readings and tutorial materials will be posted on the course Canvas site. Learners are responsible for reading the materials. Please focus on understanding the main ideas of the reading materials rather than the technical details.
- Unlike the assigned readings that are time-bound, each week's "Relevant Resources" page will contain recommended materials for self-directed and self-paced independent learning.

Course Structure and Organization
This course is structured on three foundational modules:
- Roots of social inequality: class, race and gender, and sociological and global debates.
- Multiple dimensions of inequality: American class system, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and status and power.
- Solving social inequality: education and social mobility, poverty, health inequality, criminal justice and mass incarceration, and social movements.
Course Requirements
We will follow a regular weekly schedule, i.e., included as the course content and schedule at the end of this syllabus. Each week, we will engage in different learning experiences. We will review lecture materials (i.e., PowerPoints, notes, or video lectures), read textbook chapter(s) and research papers, participate in discussions and weekly quizzes, and engage in self-directed independent learning.

We will firmly follow the course plan. However, the course facilitator reserves the right to make any syllabus amendments if needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made life stressful and uncertain for many, therefore, let us be kind to one another and engage with our classmates respectfully.

Grades will be based on the four major assessments. You will submit all assessments and their components via Canvas. A brief description of each assessment is given below. Further details on these assessments will be provided on Canvas.

1. Discussions (Week 2, 4, 8, and 11) – 30%
   The course assessments begin with an introductory discussion. In addition, there are three more class discussions. You may skip one discussion exercise with no penalty, and no excuse required. There are two parts within each discussion exercise. Part A requires an original post of your own, and Part B requires at least one reply post to a classmate’s original post.

2. Weekly Quizzes (Week 2 - 10) – 30%
   This course will have eight weekly quizzes. You may skip up to two quizzes with no penalty, and no excuse required. If you take eight quizzes, your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped in calculating your final grade. Before taking a quiz, you should complete assigned readings and associated lecture materials.

3. Virtual Book Club (Week 12 - 13) – 20%
   Each learner will be assigned to a virtual book club that will read a designated book, participate in a book discussion, and draft an individual book review.

4. Unpaper (Week 6, 14, and 15) – 20%
   An unpaper project allows you to use your sociological imagination, select a topic of your interest related to social inequality, and produce a creative work which transcends the traditional academic paper format.

   The unpaper could take the form of a letter; a short story; a slam poetry; a musical composition, such as a song; a story map; a photo essay; a poster; a visual art; a twitter thread; a 3-minute thesis presentation; a podcast; a short video; a blog; or a vlog. The possibilities are limitless. Lastly, the unpaper will be graded on creativity, effort, and an assessment of whether the sociological approach shows engagement with course questions and materials.
Table 1. Course requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Required Assessments</th>
<th>Weightage (Points)</th>
<th>Evaluation LO 1</th>
<th>LO 2</th>
<th>LO 3</th>
<th>LO 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Virtual Book Club</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Un-paper</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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</table>

Note: Learning outcome (LO)

**Summary of course requirements**

**Learning Experiences**

In this course, you will require certain time commitment for engagement with course learning materials and self-directed independent learning experiences. The UW System notes that “study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours for class contact” (UWS ACPS 4). Therefore, this 3-credit course will require a minimum of 144 (3x48) hours for class contact via Canvas and associated independent learning settings.

The course’s learning experiences will require you to study course materials, prepare for and engage in discussions, complete assignments. The course’s guiding learning philosophy to engage in lectures, tutorials, directed and self-directed independent learning is 1:2:4:7 ratio, i.e., about 10 hours each week.
Table 2. Summary of the learning experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning experiences</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures:</td>
<td>Review the lecture materials (PowerPoints, notes, and lecture videos.)</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorials:</td>
<td>Attempt weekly quizzes, participate in discussions (i.e., class and book club discussions) with classmates, and watch media resources.</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directed learning:</td>
<td>Prepare for weekly quizzes and discussions. Read assigned textbook chapters and recommended articles posted in Canvas.</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed independent learning:</td>
<td>Engage in independent learning for the course such as reading a book for the virtual book club, and preparing, drafting, and submitting the unpaper assignment.</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
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</table>

Unlike other required readings, the weekly "Relevant Resources" will contain recommended materials for self-directed and self-paced independent learning.

Total: 140 hours

We are eager to offer as personalized and hands-on online learning experience to each learner as possible. In addition to the above learning experience, if you require special assistance for any reason, please feel free to contact the course facilitator immediately either via
- e-mail (tamlarai@uwm.edu),
- Canvas message,
- visit during virtual office hours (Mondays, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM), or
- request for an appointment
so that we can work together to support your success in this course.

If you have any concerns and comments about the course, you are welcome to send them via email, or communicate during the office hours. If you would like to pass them anonymously you can write them down and drop it in the course facilitator’s mailbox at the Bolton Hall 7th floor.

**The Grading Policy**
All course deadlines are firm. There will be extensions on assignments for an extenuating circumstance (e.g., illness) only. As a course facilitator, I will trust your word when you say you are ill, and in turn, I expect that you report your reason truthfully. Reach out to me if the extenuating circumstance will require late submission or modifications to deadlines. Excuses such as crashing of a personal computer, or internet outage are not considered as an extenuating circumstance so save your work in multiple storages including OneDrive. Please note, the course facilitator reserves the right to make any final discretion about course deadlines and grading.

Except for the weekly quizzes and the final unpaper project and reflection, other assignments can be submitted late for partial credit. Assignments submitted after the due date and time will be penalized as follow:
for each day that an assignment is late, the assignment grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade. 
- for example: an A- becomes a B+ if an assignment is one day late. 

Learners should expect for the marking and feedforward comments on their works via Canvas site within two weeks (i.e., 10 business days) of the assessment submission date.

The course facilitator has an open-door policy for learners to seek advice on strategies to enhance learning, improve grades, and be successful in the course.

Table 3. Translating the Final Points to a Letter Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 +</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>74 - 76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70 - 73</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67 - 69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 - 86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>64 - 66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60 - 63</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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Academic Integrity
UWM expects our learners to be honest in academic performance. Plagiarism, copying and pasting, or presenting someone else’s work as your own, is a serious academic offense. Any act of plagiarism is subject to disciplinary actions. Therefore, when using exact or paraphrased words, or even ideas of other people, we will need to provide credit to the source using proper citations: both in-text citations and full references.

Please maintain academic integrity. For guidelines on how to write without plagiarism, visit: [https://guides.library.uwm.edu/noplagiarism/definition](https://guides.library.uwm.edu/noplagiarism/definition)

Panther Community Health and Safety Standards
UWM has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols, taking into account recommendations by local, state, and national public health authorities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of our campus community, we are expected to abide by the Panther Interim COVID-Related Health & Safety Rules, which were developed in accordance with public health guidelines. These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus, UWM grounds, or participating in a UWM-sponsored activity:

- All individuals visiting UWM facilities must wear face coverings while indoors,
- Unvaccinated students coming to campus are required to test weekly for COVID-19; and,
- We should check daily for COVID-19 symptoms and not come to campus if we are feeling sick.

Additional details about student and staff expectations can be found on the UWM COVID-19 webpage.
## The Course Content and Schedule (as of January 7, 2022; subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Modules/ Learning Experiences (T = Textbook; Other readings and media links will be posted in the course Canvas site)</th>
<th>Learning Assessments (Due Date)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Module 1: Roots of Social Inequality</strong>&lt;br&gt;Course Overview: Introduction to Social Inequality&lt;br&gt;Virtual Information Session (Optional)&lt;br&gt;Tuesday, January 25, 10:00 AM – 10:45 AM</td>
<td>Discussion I (Part A, 02/01 Part B, 02/03) Quiz 1 (02/03)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>The Triad: Class, Race, and Gender</strong>&lt;br&gt;T: Chapter 1</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (02/10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Debates on Social Inequality</strong>&lt;br&gt;T: Chapter 2 (pp. 38-47) Chapter 3 (pp. 65-79)</td>
<td>Sign Up for Virtual Book Club (02/10) Quiz 2 (02/10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Modules/ Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Status and Power</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>T: Chapter 7, and Chapter 8</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Poverty and the Underclass</strong></td>
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<td>T: Chapter 10</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Module 3: Solving Social Inequality</strong></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Educational Opportunity and Social Mobility</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>T: Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Quiz 8 (03/31)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Health Inequality versus Health Equity</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Criminal Justice and Mass Incarceration</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Virtual Book Club - Part B</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Solving Multidimensional Poverty</strong></td>
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<td>T: Chapter 11</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Challenging the System: Social Movements</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>T: Chapter 12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Unpaper Project (04/28)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Conclusory Remarks and Reflection</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unpaper Reflection (05/05)</td>
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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 page is: https://uwm.edu/secu/syllabus-links/

Students in Need. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, or
technology, or is struggling with mental, physical, or emotional health, and believes this may
affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students (dos@uwm.edu)
for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will
enable them to provide any resources that they may have and can connect you to the Dean of
Students as well.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12) require that students
with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable
accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility.
Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations by the
end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred
or recognized. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the
Accessibility Resource Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations.
Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational
record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. More information is available from the
Accessibility Resource Center at http://uwm.edu/arc/

Religious Observances. Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious
observance are found at the following:
https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-2.%20Accommodation%20of%20Religious%20Beliefs.pdf

Students Called to Active Military Service. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of
reserves to active military duty are found at the following links
https://uwm.edu/onestop/students-called-to-active-duty/

Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who
has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or
other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or
complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. More
information can be found at https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-
13.%20Incomplete%20Grades.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: https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-
policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf

Title IX/Sexual Violence. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education
program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct,
above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault,
relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM’s Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/

**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: https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/academic-misconduct/

**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 https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf

**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 sociology department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science.

Policy for student grade appeal can be found at https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%2010.%20Grade%20Appeals%20by%20Students.pdf

**Drop /Withdrawal/Repeat Policies.** UWM Academic and Administrative Policy SAAP 1-8 details the Drop/Withdrawal/Repeat policies (https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%208.%20Drop,%20Withdrawal,%20and%20Repeat%20Policy%20for%20Courses.pdf). A student may drop a full-term course(s) through the end of the 10th week of classes. (Deadlines for shorter session courses are prorated.)

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-9.%20Final%20Examinations.pdf

**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.

**LGBTQ+ resources.** UWM is committed to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBTQ+ in the learning environment. Information on LGBTQ+ resources is available at http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/

**Smoke and Tobacco-Free Campus.** UWM is committed to maintaining a safe campus environment and to ensuring that it acts to the extent possible to shield its students and employees from harm. To mitigate the established health risks associated with the use of tobacco products and exposure to secondhand smoke, UWM prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco on all campus property. More information is available at https://uwm.edu/smokefree