

---

# CONTROVERSIES ABOUT INEQUALITY

---

SOC 2220, AMST 2225, DSOC 2220, GOVT 2225, ILROB 2220, PAM 2220, PHIL 1950  
Fall 2017, 4 credits

**Lectures:** Tuesdays & Thursdays | 1:25-2:40pm | KG70 Klarman Hall

**Section:** Fridays (see below)

**Professor:** Anna R. Haskins, Department of Sociology

[arh96@cornell.edu](mailto:arh96@cornell.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2:50-4:30pm | 354 Uris Hall

## Teaching Assistants:

Loredana Loy

mll283@cornell.edu

**S201** 1:25-2:15 (204 Uris)

**S204** 2:30-3:20 (204 Uris)

Yunsub Lee

yl2568@cornell.edu

**S203** 1:25-2:15 (G24 Goldwin Smith)

**S210** 2:30-3:20 (254 Uris)

Meaghan Mingo

mm2845@cornell.edu

**S207** 2:30-3:20 (262 Uris)

**S209** 1:25-2:15 (260 Uris)

Xinwei Xu

xx239@cornell.edu

**S202** 12:20-1:15 (204 Uris)

**S205** 11:15-12:05 (142 Goldwin Smith)

Junius Brown

jfb299@cornell.edu

**S206** 12:20-1:10 (207 Malott)

**S208** 11:15-12:05 (207 Malott)

**Course Website:** search for "Soc 2220" in Blackboard ([www.blackboard.cornell.edu](http://www.blackboard.cornell.edu))

---

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND UNIVERSITY COURSE DISTINCTION

---

Evidence of inequality is everywhere. The amount, its causes and the proposed solutions to inequality are often the subject of fierce political, academic, and public debate as Americans attempt to come to terms with growing domestic and global poverty, the persistence of racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination and the increasing visibility of inter- and intra-country differences in wealth and income. This course introduces students to ongoing social scientific debates about the sources and consequences of inequality, while also exploring how social inequality is enacted and reinforced in everyday life. The course also hosts guest lectures by renowned faculty from around the country, further exposing students to recent social scientific scholarship in the area of inequality.

University Courses at Cornell are designed to teach students to think from the perspectives of multiple disciplines, across departments, and among diverse fields of study. Through this course students will foster intellectual discovery, promote debate, and address complex issues as they engage with students from across the university to examine social issues through new and different lenses.

---

## COURSE WEBSITE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

---

Most of the **assigned readings** are available on the course website, in which you should be automatically enrolled after registering for the course. Please come to lecture having read the listed assigned readings for that day. The **four required books** are not on the course website but are available for purchase at The Cornell Store, Kraftees, Amazon.com or are on 3-hour reserve at Uris Library:

Cohen, G. A. 2009. *Why Not Socialism?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Harris, Alexis. 2016. *A Pound of Flesh*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Shedd, Carla. 2015. *Unequal City*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Wade, Lisa. 2017. *American Hookup*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

## **EXAMS, DISCUSSION SECTION, EXTRA CREDIT AND GRADING**

---

The majority of your course grade [80%] will be based on **two in-class prelims** (25% each) on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup>, and **one comprehensive take-home final exam** (30%) due before midnight on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> (available on BB at 3:30pm on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>). I do not give make-up exams except in the case of a dire emergency (e.g., long-term hospitalization, death in the family). If you need a make-up exam, you must notify me *and* get my approval at least 12 hours in advance of the scheduled exam time.

**Re-grading policy:** I generally don't like to re-grade exams and if I do, 99% of the time the grade doesn't change. Great care is taken when grading exams and effort is made to give your work the grade it deserved. If you are unsatisfied, first set up an appointment with your TA to discuss your concerns, if they remain, you can schedule an appointment with me. You have within one month after exams are returned to contest a grade and only I (Professor Haskins) will change grades. Keep in mind that re-grading does not always guarantee a grade change in the positive direction.

Attendance at and active participation in **discussion sections** will count for the remaining 20% of your course grade. Sections meet on Fridays and provide a more intimate classroom context in which you can discuss the week's lecture content and reading materials with your TA (a PhD student in the Sociology Department). Section will be used for further exploration of the course content, not lecture review or grasping of basic concepts. Attendance is mandatory and you must attend the section in which you are officially enrolled. Your TA will keep track of your attendance and participation. You are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty to your grade. An absence will only be excused for emergencies (e.g., hospitalization, family death) or authorized university events (with appropriate documentation) and it is your responsibility to let your TA know of any absences before section.

A few thoughts on discussion sections. Participation extends beyond mere talking. You are expected to contribute to discussions, participate in any group activities, and complete in-class exercises. Participation is evidence of critical engagement with the subject material and quality participation constitutes being prepared, being an attentive listener, involvement in class activities, asking insightful questions, paying attention, and not hindering anyone's learning. By nature, much of the material covered in this class will be controversial. Thus, the goal of discussions sections is to create an environment where open, respectful, and informed discussions can occur. In order for this to happen there must be respect on all levels and from all participants. If discussions get intense (and they may), I ask that the following guidelines be kept in mind: **a)** Be open-minded and remember that you are in a class with people from a variety of backgrounds so be cognizant of that; **b)** Think about what you want to say first and have a reasonable justification for any stance you take; **c)** Wait to speak until the person currently speaking has finished. We can agree to disagree about ideas and theories, but personal attacks will not be tolerated.

**Exam and final course grades** will be assigned on the basis of the following distribution:

100%+ = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+	67-69% = D+
93-99% = A	83-86% = B	73-76% = C	63-66% = D
90-92% = A-	80-82% = B-	70-72% = C-	60-62% = D-
			Below 60% = F

**Extra credit:** There will be some opportunities to earn extra credit throughout the semester. These will likely be in the form of attending (in person or virtually) some university event or talk and writing up a brief reflection. More details regarding extra credit requirements will be outlined in lecture.

## **ATTENDANCE AT LECTURES**

---

I know this is a large lecture class, but attendance at all sessions is important. If attendance begins to fall to unacceptable levels in lecture, unannounced but trivially easy quizzes will be introduced as a mechanism to verify attendance. These quizzes will count for up to 10% of your final grade (and will therefore reduce the weighting given to other course requirements; i.e., the final exam would then count for  $.9 \times .30 = .27$ ). *Also, please note, no video, audio, or unauthorized photographing of lecture content or materials is permitted.*

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES AND PRACTICE**

---

I expect you to do all of the required readings on-time, attend lecture, and be actively involved in your discussions sections. I expect you to learn from and teach each other (including me). **I expect you to be respectful of your peers, TAs and myself by not engaging in activities or conversations not pertaining to class activities (e.g. texting or inappropriate laptop/tablet use) during lecture or section.** I expect you to let me or your TA know when you need help or do not understand something, and I expect you to communicate with us about how we can help you best learn the material.

You can expect me to work to help you understand the material covered in lecture and the texts. I will take your questions seriously, learn from the things you all may teach me and learn from the mistakes I may make. *This course is a work in progress*, and I put great effort into making lecture as interesting, engaging, and informative as I can. Lastly, you can expect me to be respectful of you, honoring the fact that we are all diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, age, political orientation, dis/ability, place of origin, religion and so on. Many of these expectations are also courtesies I hope you extend to each other as well as myself and the course teaching assistants.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, PLAGIARISM AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

---

All students are expected to adhere to the university's Code of Academic Integrity (found here: <http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/AcadInteg/code.html>) and be aware of the related consequences. Your work is expected to be your own, and cheating, in any form, is truly not worth it. You are welcome to study in groups for the exams, but you are not permitted to buy or sell notes to or from on-line sources, such as NoteHall.com, Chegg, their current incarnations, or any other such service. This is not strictly illegal (as long as copyright law is obeyed), but *it is my strong belief that such pay-for-notes services undermine the culture of learning at Cornell. I therefore have a class rule that such activity is prohibited. Violators will be subject to an academic penalty in their final grade.* As of Fall 2013, the Dean of the Faculty has recommended that all instructors include the following language in their syllabi: "Unless you have the express permission of the instructor, you should not buy or sell course materials. Such unauthorized behavior constitutes academic misconduct."

Additionally, some of your assignments will be submitted through the *Turnitin* tool on the Blackboard course website. *Turnitin* is a form of anti-plagiarism software that allows student work to be compared to a database of previously submitted work, on-line sources, and published academic materials. As of Fall 2013, the Dean of the Faculty has required that all instructors who use *Turnitin* include the following language in their syllabi: "Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site."

If you find yourself in a bind, come talk to me. It is better to be honest and accept some minor consequences than permanently tarnish your academic record. A clear definition of plagiarism as well

as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at:

<http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>.

I am happy to make academic accommodations to students in need. As stated on the Student Disability Services (SDS) website (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>), "Students requesting academic accommodations are required to provide an accommodation letter from SDS to the professor within the first two weeks of classes, or at least 2 weeks before accommodations are expected to begin if accommodations are granted or modified further into the semester. This letter verifies that the student is registered with SDS and specifies accommodations. Accommodations will not be provided retroactively. Early notification and active communication with instructors is the best way to ensure that your accommodations are handled smoothly."

### **INEQUALITY MINOR**

---

Controversies about Inequality serves as the required capstone course within the cross-college Inequality Minor. For further information on the Inequality Minor, please consult the website for the [Center for the Study of Inequality](#) (CSI), or contact Clara Elpi the CSI administrator (office: 363 Uris Hall; email: [inequality@cornell.edu](mailto:inequality@cornell.edu); phone: 607-254-8674).

### **OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACTING ME**

---

The best way to reach me is to come talk to me during office hours. However, since this is a large lecture class and my office hours are limited, **I encourage you to first consult the syllabus, Blackboard, a classmate, or contact your TA with questions.** I am also available over e-mail but expect a less speedy response after 5pm and over the weekend.

This syllabus can be understood as a contract between us. However, this class is also a work in progress so I may make minor changes as I see fit for the good of the class. If I do, I will make sure everyone is made aware of these changes in a timely and appropriate matter.

**COURSE SCHEDULE  
FALL 2017**

**INEQUALITY BASICS**

**Week 1**

**8/22: Introduction and Course Overview**

*Assigned readings:* Schwalbe 1998; Gay 2014

**8/24: What is Inequality? Does it Serve a Purpose?**

*Assigned readings:* Davis & Moore 1945; Tumin 1953; Krueger 2003

**8/25: Discussion sections** (cancelled)

**Week 2**

**8/29: Measurement, Sources and Structure of Inequality**

*Assigned readings:* Acs 2014; Iceland 2013; Gilbert 2015

**8/31: Mobility and the American Dream**

*Assigned readings:* Hochschild 2005; Davidai & Gilovich 2015; Harris (pp. 1-17)

**9/1: Discussion sections**

**CONTROVERSY 1— RACE, CLASS AND PUNISHMENT**

**Week 3**

**9/5: Inequalities by Race and Class: Nature? Nurture? Or Both?**

*Assigned readings:* Sernau 2016; Boyce 2012; Shanahan, Bauldry & Freeman 2010; Harris (pp. 18-51)

**9/7: The American Social Welfare System – Past and Present**

*Assigned readings:* Waldfogel 2013; Edin & Shaefer 2015; Harris (pp. 52-98)

**9/8: Discussion sections**

**Week 4**

**9/12: The Underclass, the Working Poor, and the “Culture of Poverty”**

*Assigned readings:* Jencks 1992; Wilson 2010; Small, Harding & Lamont 2010; Harris (pp. 99-123)

**9/14: Policing and Punishment in America**

*Assigned readings:* Goffman 2009; Brayne 2014; Wakefield & Uggen 2010; Krieger et al. 2015; Harris (pp. 124-150)

**9/15: Discussion sections**

**Week 5**

**9/19: Guest Lecture – Professor Alexis Harris (Washington) – *A Pound of Flesh***

*Assigned readings:* finish Harris (pp. 151-162)

**9/21: Discrimination, Inequality and Marginalization**

*Assigned readings:* Pager 2008; Soss & Schram 2008; Gans 1994

**9/22: Discussion sections**

## CONTROVERSY 2—EDUCATION, SCHOOLS AND ACHIEVEMENT

**Week 6**9/26: **School Funding and Resources**

*Assigned readings:* Raudenbush 2017; Coleman 1990; Hanushek 2016; Kozol 2005; Shedd (pp. 1-18)

9/28: **Public, Private and Charter Schools**

*Assigned readings:* Conley 2013; Finn et al. 2000; Thernstrom & Thernstrom 2002; Gamoran 2016; Shedd (pp. 19-44)

9/29: **Discussion sections****Week 7**10/3: **Prelim Exam 1 (in class)**10/5: **Within-School Structures of Inequality**

*Assigned readings:* Lareau 1987; Dufur et al. 2016; Hallinan & Oakes 1994; Shedd (pp. 45-79)

10/6: **Discussion sections** (cancelled)**Week 8**10/10: **No Class (Fall Break)**

*Assigned readings:* Shedd (pp. 80-119)

10/12: **College Entry and Persistence**

*Assigned readings:* Bailey & Dynarski 2011; Klugman 2011; Jack 2014; Houle & Warner 2017

10/13: **Discussion sections**

## CONTROVERSY 3— SPATIAL INEQUALITY, NEIGHBORHOODS AND SEGREGATION

**Week 9**10/17: **Residential Segregation and Urban Inequality**

*Assigned readings:* Stoll 2008; Charles 2003; Sharkey 2009 (skim); Logan & Stults 2011 (skim); Shedd (pp. 120-156)

10/19: **Guest Lecture – Professor Carla Shedd (CUNY) – *Unequal City***

*Assigned readings:* finish Shedd (pp. 157-162)

10/20: **Discussion sections****Week 10**10/24: **The Suburbs, Spatial Isolation and Rural Poverty**

*Assigned readings:* Murphy & Allard 2015; Lichter & Schafft 2014; Allard 2008 (pp. 247-255)

10/26: **Neighborhoods, Housing and Health**

*Assigned readings:* Hernandez 2016; Quillian 2017; Sengupta 2008; Desmond 2016; Wade (pp. 13-49)

10/27: **Discussion sections**

## CONTROVERSY 4—GENDER, SEX AND SEXUALITY

**Week 11**10/31: **Gender***Assigned readings:* Gender Spectrum 2013; Lorber 1994; Risman 1998; Wade (pp. 50-91)11/2: **Education, Work and Pay***Assigned readings:* DiPrete & Buchmann 2013; England 2010; Blau & Kahn 2006; Miller 2016; Wade (pp. 92-133)11/3: **Discussion sections****Week 12**11/7: **Sex and Sexuality***Assigned readings:* Pascoe 2005; Ward 2008; Denizet-Lewis 2003; Wade (pp. 134-179)11/9: **Sex as Commodity***Assigned readings:* Bales 2012; Bernstein 2007; Hoang 2013; Wade (pp. 180-223)11/10: **Discussion sections****Week 13**11/14: **Prelim Exam 2 (in class)**11/16: **Guest Lecture – Professor Lisa Wade (Occidental) – American Hookup***Assigned readings:* finish Wade (pp. 234-251)11/17: **Discussion sections** (field trip—Johnson Museum of Art)

## CONTROVERSY 5—MORAL OBLIGATIONS, GLOBAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Week 14**11/21: **Globalization and Economic Development***Assigned readings:* Stiglitz 2000; Mills 200911/23: **No Class (Thanksgiving Break)**11/24: **Discussion sections** (cancelled)**Week 15**11/28: **Moral Obligations in an Era of Global Poverty***Assigned readings:* Singer 1972; Singer 2004; Miller 200411/30: **Justice, Equality, Politics and Change***Assigned readings:* Cohen 2009; Cannon 2009; Eitzen 200412/1: **Discussion sections** (final exam available at 3:30pm on BB)**Final Exam Due: December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 before midnight!****\*\*Note,** this syllabus is subject to change, if changes occur you will be notified in lecture.