

Sociology 201
T/ R 3:30 PM – 4:50 PM
Location: Harris 107

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Office Hours: R 2:00-3:15, or by appointment
Office Location: 1808 Chicago Room 105

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Social Inequality

This course examines inequality in American society with an emphasis on race, class, and gender. Lectures emphasize the mechanisms through which inequality develops and comes to be seen as legitimate, natural, and desirable. We will also examine the economic, social, and political consequences of rising inequality. We will place special focus on poverty and inequality in Native North America.

Required Readings: Readings may be found on the course website. In the course schedule they are listed the day they are due. Readings and schedule may change throughout the quarter.

My Co-Worker

Mitaka Ki (Mita for short), is a licensed medical alert dog. She is trained to detect and alert to subtle changes in blood chemistry. She accompanies me everywhere, but when we are out she is frequently working, so please do not be offended if she doesn't visit you. If you would like to have Mita kept away from you, please let me know. Also, we all get distracted once in a while. Mita is just a dog, so forgive her if she periodically gets distracted or forgets what she is doing.

Requirements

Opinion Editorial Writing Assignments

1st Op-Ed Assignment (500-1,000 words)

Draft 1	4/11	5 pts
Comments	4/12	2.5pts
Draft 2	4/18	5 pts
Draft 3	5/2	10 pts

2nd Op-Ed Assignment (500-1,000 words)

Draft 1	5/9	5 pts
Comments	5/10	2.5pts
Draft 2	5/16	5 pts
Draft 3	6/7	10 pts

Presentation	5/18	5pts
Take Home Final	6/7	20 pts
Participation	-----	30 pts

Participation

Show up, be on time, and participate. *Fully 30% of your grade is based on being part of the conversation.*

Make-Up Points: Life happens and sometimes students need to miss class. In this class, there is no attendance requirement. However, there is no textbook, and almost everything you learn comes from being in class. Therefore, you are required to sign in, so that I know you were in class, and you will be expected to participate in the conversation. If you miss class, you will have an opportunity to make up lost participation opportunities by reviewing the in-class material and responding to it.

Students may miss or fail to participate in any two lectures with no participation point penalty. However, additional missed lectures will result in point deduction, NO MATTER THE REASON, unless you do the make-up work. Fortunately, lectures will be recorded. If you miss a day, all you have to do to make up the lost points is watch the missed lecture and write a short essay that answers a specific question. The question may be obtained from your TA. Make-ups are due Thursday of finals week (by midnight) or they will not be considered in the final participation grade.

Opinion Editorial Writing Assignments

Each student will write two Opinion-Editorial pieces of no more than 1,000 words. Each should state an opinion and support that opinion using well-reasoned logic and material presented in the class. Use what you learned in the logic and argument lecture. Specifically:

- State a current issue;
- Provide your opinion on the issue;
- Support your argument using well-reasoned class material and outside facts;
- Use concrete examples; and,
- Demonstrate your grasp of materials presented in class.

In addition, your piece should be well-written, concise, interesting, and grammatically-sound.

Some notes on writing a good op-ed: The issue you discuss should be timely and thought-provoking. I also look for ingenuity, strength of argument, freshness of opinion, clear writing, and newsworthiness. Personal experiences and first-person narrative can be great, particularly when offered in service of a larger idea. So is humor, when it is funny and topical. Eschew . . . um, I mean . . . stay away from Olympian language and bureaucratic jargon (infrastructure, inputs, outlays). Write the article in a way you would like to read it. Make one argument (and only one) thoroughly, point-by-point; the more detail, the better. If you try to do too much, you can wind up with an article that, in striving to say everything, ends up saying nothing. Do not be afraid to stick your neck out. Remember it is difficult but possible to express complex ideas in clear, concise prose (I will never provide page minimums). Above all, put yourself in your readers' shoes. Learn from comments and feedback, but you do not have to accept all of them.

The goal of the op-eds is to form a well-reasoned opinion, express it effectively, and understand the limitations of your argument by responding to feedback.

Take Home Final

Each student will pick three questions and write no more than 500 words in response to each. Learn from your research project. Be well-reasoned, concrete, and concise.

Policies

Late Policy

You may be late on any one individual assignment (or combination of assignments), up to four days total (in 24-hour increments), with no penalty and no questions asked. Students will lose ten (10) percent of possible points for each 24-hour period the assignment is late beyond that. Keep in mind you receive feedback on your op-eds, so being late on one may inhibit your ability to gain constructive feedback. Commenting on your partner's paper is not subject to late forgiveness. All assignments must be submitted no later than Thursday of finals week (by midnight) or no credit will be given.

Academic Freedom

This class will deal with subjects that are difficult, complex, and controversial. My goal as the instructor will be to introduce you to a diverse variety of theories and opinions about these topics. None of the topics we discuss have easy answers; if they did then they would not be controversial, nor a matter for public debate. You may have an opinion that differs from that of the material discussed, your fellow classmates, and even me. This is completely fine. Students are free to express their opinion, or not, depending entirely on their comfort level. Similarly, I expect students to respect the opinion and voice of others. At no time will your grade be based on your personal views. All views are welcome in my classroom, though we will be applying critical thinking to a diverse group of opinions and beliefs. Critical thinking means you will be challenged to explore new ways of looking at the world. Sometimes this is uncomfortable, but intellectual growth and exposure should be uncomfortable. Readings will be diverse. By no means should you believe, or even agree with, everything you read for class. Students are encouraged to think critically about the content, style and structure of materials.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities or other concerns should contact the Accessible NU office (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu) for a student accommodation letter.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Northwestern's code of academic conduct applies. I am required to report incidents of academic misconduct. University policies may be found at <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>.

Topics & Schedule

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Week 1	3/28	Review Syllabus & Academic Freedom Debate	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicago's Safe Space Controversy (11pgs; Canvas); "I'm Northwestern's president. Here's why safe spaces for students are important." – Washington Post (2pgs; Canvas). 	
Week 2	3/30	Functions and Dysfunctions of Inequality	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "30 days (S1E1) - The Minimum Wage" (45min; Amazon); "Raising Minimum Wage" (13pgs; Canvas). 	
Week 3	4/4	Why Don't We See Inequality	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Oliver Last Week Tonight – School Segregation (18min; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8yiYCHMAIM); Queen of Versailles (100min; Amazon); Class Segregation in California (4min; http://www.bethredbird.com/?p=327); Class Segregation in Architecture (5min; http://www.bethredbird.com/?p=259); Interview with Dan Price (5min; http://www.bethredbird.com/?p=430). 	
Week 4	4/6	Logic and Argument	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read sample op-eds. 	
Week 5	4/11	Many Varieties of Inequality	Op-Ed 1: Draft 1 (bring your paper draft to class)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due in Class: Parable of Shmoo (3pgs; Canvas); "High Cost of Cheap Goods" (21pgs; Canvas); "BBC's Panorama – Dying for a Bargain" (30min; http://northwestern.kanopystreaming.com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/video/panorama-dying-bargain); John Oliver Last Week Tonight – Fashion (17min; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdLf4fihP78). 	
	4/13	A (Very) Brief History of Social Class	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Communism: Promise and Reality, pt.1" (60 min; https://youtu.be/4eJmgQISEyk). 	

Inequality in the U.S.

Week 4	4/18	3 - A (Slightly) Brief History of Class in American	Op-Ed 1: Draft 2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Franklin D. Roosevelt - Annual Message to Congress (1934) (3pg); "Deconstruction Of The Administrative State" Is Shorthand For Dismantling The New Deal – Real Clear Politics (February 27, 2017) (2min/1pg; http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2017/02/27/glaude_deconstruction_administrative_state_is_shorthand_for_dismantling_the_new_deal.html); "Stephen Bannon: Core Of Trump's Platform Is "Deconstruction Of The Administrative State" Real Clear Politics (February 23, 2017) (2min/1pg; http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2017/02/23/stephen_bannon_pillar_of_trumps_platform_is_deconstruction_of_the_administrative_state.html) 	

4/20 4 - A (Slightly) Brief History of Class in America

- “Fiscal Crisis Symptom of Detroit’s Woes” - NY Times (2013) (3pgs; Canvas);
- “The Culture of Debt” - NY Times (2008) (3pgs; Canvas);
- “The Three Marketeers” - Time (1999) (9pgs; Canvas);
- “Two American Families” by PBS (85min; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3rhUTzIV34>)
– AND / OR –
- “Inequality for All”(90 min; Amazon).

4/25 5 - The Great Recession

- “How Did Economists Get it So Wrong” - Krugman NY Times (2009) (13pgs; Canvas);
- “The Jobless Trap” - Krugman NY Times (2013) (3pgs; Canvas);
- “The Story of Our Time ” - Krugman NY Times (2013) (2pgs; Canvas);
- “Alan Greenspan explains the Fed” (Sept 18 2007) (<http://www.cc.com/video-clips/cenrt5/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-alan-greenspan>) (9min);
- “Alan Greenspan Testifies” (6min; Canvas);
- “Inside Job” (108min; Amazon)
– AND/OR –
- “Too Big to Fail” (98min; Amazon).

4/27 Consequences of the Great Recession

- “Rise of Right-Wing Populism” (37pgs; Canvas);
- John Oliver Last Week Tonight: Brexit (15 min; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAgKHSNqxa8>);
- Brexit Update (5 min; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nh0ac5HUpDU>)
- Scottish Independence (15 min; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YkLPxQp_y0);
- Boarder Wall (18 min; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU8dCYocyuI>).

*Draft 2:
Comments
Returned*

5/2 Generating and Maintaining Inequality

Op-Ed 1: Draft 3

- “The Cheating Economy” (35pgs; Canvas);
- For-Profit Colleges (40pgs; Canvas);
- “John Oliver Last Week Tonight: Trump University” (S3E14) (22min);
- “Lives on Hold” – Consumer Reports (21pgs; Canvas);
- “Unconventional Wisdom on the Loan Crisis – CHE” (6pgs; Canvas).

The Future of Inequality

5/4 Guest Speaker: TBA

- TBA

5/9 Guest Speaker: TBA

- TBA

Op-Ed 2: Draft 1

*(bring your paper
draft to class)*

Week 5

Week 6

Week 7

	5/11	Guest Speaker: TBA	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA 	
Week 8	5/16	Guest Speaker: TBA	Op-Ed 2: Draft 2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA 	
	5/18	Can We Solve Inequality?	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No readings due. 	
	5/23	Final Presentations	
	5/25	Final Presentations	<i>Draft 2: Comments Returned</i>
	5/30	No Class - Reading Week	
	6/5	Finals Week	Op-Ed 2: Draft 3 (6/7)
		<i>Final Presentations (6/8 @ 3-5pm) if needed</i>	Take Home Final Due (6/7)