

SOCI 215

Spring 2021
W 3.30 – 6.20
Classroom: N/A

Class and Social Inequality

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Course Description: Sociologists have long shown that people who are racialized as white live longer than those who are not; that cis-men earn more money than people who identify as women, trans or genderqueer; that settlers experience less violence than people who are indigenous; or that capitalists control land and labour at the expense of countless other beings. Investigations of social inequalities also reveal that they endure and have a consistency of character. In other words, the phenomenon of social inequality points to underlying systems of domination that organize the distribution of all manner of social qualities, from the capacity to self-determine to the absence or presence of skills, relationships and resources through which to do that.

This course will try to lay some intellectual foundations to make sense of how systems of domination operate in interlocking ways to create the world we share. As the title to the course suggests, we will be foregrounding the role of capitalism in understanding inequality even as we attempt to pay attention to how it connects with patriarchy, white supremacy and other systems of oppression. We will ask, and attempt to answer, questions like: How is it that a world has been constructed in the first place that can be apprehended this way? What are the ways domination happens? Through what sites and modes is it organized? How are we, and sociology, implicated in and organized by the interlocking systems of domination we will be describing? Finally, and perhaps most importantly, what is to be done about inequality and the systems that produce it?

Course Delivery Format: If public health conditions require courses to remain online, then this course will deliver the core theoretical framework through pre-recorded lectures for students to watch on their own time. Scheduled class times will be used for live discussion of readings, to respond to videos, to schedule guest speakers, and to prepare students for assignments. This course will not make use of discussion forum postings as a teaching technique or evaluation method.

Course Evaluation: Evaluation will consist of three written assignments connected to course readings. For each assignment, students will be given questions and choose one to respond to. The first two responses will be 1000 words in length, while the final assignment, due a week after the end of scheduled classes, will be 2000 words in length.

Course Texts: *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* by David Harvey (2014) will be the primary text for the course. Further readings are yet to be determined, but will invite us to enrich our understanding of social inequality to include other systems of domination and will be posted as links or PDFs to CourseSpaces.

