

Sociology 185G: Theories of Gender Inequality
University of California, Santa Barbara

Spring 2009

Instructor: Nicki Lisa Cole

Course Description

How do gender and inequality shape everyday life in our globalized social context? In this course we examine contemporary systems and theories of gender inequality in order to address this question and others. We consider how concepts of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality, intersect with other social categories such as race, class, and religion, in order to understand how these social forces support and reproduce power, domination, and inequality in our world.

Rooted in classical social theory, we explore the formation of gender as a social category, and the meaning that is compacted in this social sign. We rely on social theory and research to understand how gender inequality has developed, is maintained, and is reproduced at both macro and micro levels in society. We will examine struggles against gendered inequality, and will examine how relations of power and domination shift, yet persist, over time.

We begin with a review of classic social theories of inequality. From there, we explore how early critiques of gendered inequality were built on classical social theory. Then, throughout the remainder of the quarter we will consider the main theoretical strands that have grown from and evolved out of the early critiques. Incorporated into our consideration of theory is the *application* of theory: doing sociological research. We thus also review the methodological approaches that have developed from theorizing gender and inequality, and take a critical eye to the role scientific research has played in shaping concepts of gender and systems of inequality over time.

We will rely primarily on three research case studies which allow us to learn about distinct theoretical strands through examination of contemporary, real world cases of how gender and inequality shape everyday life, and have lasting social, political, economic, and cultural implications.

Genders in Production by Leslie Salzinger (2003) offers an in depth look at how femininity and masculinity are reproduced on the shop floors of maquiladoras across Mexico, which reveals the significant role global capitalism and labor play in shaping what gender is and means, and how inequality is reproduced in both local and global contexts.

Dude, You're a Fag by C. J. Pascoe (2007) is a study of how gender and sexuality form, function, and intersect in a high school in the Central Valley of California. Pascoe illustrates how ideas about heterosexuality and homosexuality intersect with understandings of gender, race, culture, and class.

Killing the Black Body by Dorothy Roberts (1997) offers a socio-historical indictment of the powerful intersection of race, gender, class, and sexuality, as they have shaped the experiences of black women in the United States, from the period of enslavement to the present. In doing so, Roberts reframes the mainstream debate about reproductive rights.

By studying social theory, and applying it to research and everyday life experiences, you should complete this course with comfortable use of a set of conceptual tools that help you see and think about gender and inequality in your life and the in the world around you.

Required books:

Pascoe, C. J. 2007. *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Roberts, D. 1997. *Killing the black body: Race, reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*. New York: Vintage Books.

Salzinger, L. 2003. *Genders in production: Making workers in Mexico's global factories*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Assignments

Reflection papers: You will submit five two-page, typed reflection papers. These are due in class on the days indicated in the syllabus below. These papers are designed for you to reflect on what you are learning in the course. You can write about the reading, lecture, and other things going on in the world, or your life outside of class, as long as you relate your discussion to the course concepts and material.

Research paper: Your primary assignment for this course is a research paper that will be written in three stages. You will receive credit for each portion of the assignment. The schedule for submitting each portion of the research paper is as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Research topic and questions | Thursday, April 16 |
| Paper draft (midterm) | Tuesday, May 5 |
| Paper final draft | Thursday, June 4 |

Final exam: The final exam will be a written essay exam given on the date scheduled by the registrar: Tuesday, June 9th, 4:00 - 7:00 PM, in our classroom.

Attendance and class participation: Though role will not be called, attendance is required. Lectures will focus on theory and will not be simply a review of readings. It is imperative that you attend class. You will be expected to employ theories addressed in lecture in your written work, including the final exam. Lecture slides will be posted on ERES for your review, but they will not be substantive enough to substitute for attending class. If you are regularly absent you will not do well in this class.

Additionally, this course will rely on group and full class discussion throughout the quarter, and occasionally in-class writing will be assigned. Your vocal and written participation in class will account for 10% of your grade.

Grade composition:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Reflections papers (5): | 15 points |
| Research topic & questions: | 05 points |
| Paper draft (midterm): | 20 points |
| Paper final: | 20 points |
| Final exam: | 30 points |
| Class participation: | 10 points |

Office visits: Meeting with the instructor and the teaching assistant throughout the quarter as you have questions or concerns about the class, and as you develop your research paper, is strongly encouraged. Without a doubt, students who speak with instructors and teaching assistants during office hours produce better written work and earn higher grades. We are here to help you!

Extra credit: Throughout the quarter opportunities for extra credit will be presented. You may earn up to five extra credit points during the quarter. Each extra credit submission will be awarded between zero and five points depending on the quality of work. Extra credit events are listed on the course website, and announcements will be made as events arise. You too can suggest events that should be eligible for extra credit. To earn extra credit write a two page response paper based on the event you attended (see the course website for additional guidelines).

Academic integrity: Cheating, plagiarism and collusion will not be tolerated to any degree. To put it simply, do not do it. Anyone who is caught engaging in academic dishonesty will be reprimanded accordingly, and will be reported to both the chair of the sociology department and to the Office of the Dean of Students. To ensure that you understand the university's policy on these matters, you are required to read it online at this website: <http://hep.ucsb.edu/people/hnn/conduct/disq.html>

After you read the policy, please sign and date the Oath of Academic Honesty that you are given in class. Turn this form in at the beginning of class on Tuesday, April 7. If you do not turn this form in you will be penalized 10 points on your final course grade.

Course schedule and readings are as follows. You are expected to read in advance the selections listed for each class session.

Week 1: Course Introduction: Gender Inequality and Social Theory

Tuesday, March 31: Course introduction and overview

Thursday, April 2: Classic social theories of inequality

Reading: Excerpts from Marx, Engels, Weber, and DuBois (available on ERES)

Week 2: Early Theories of Gender

Tuesday, April 7: Early critiques of gender in social life

Reading: Excerpts from Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Virginia Wolf, Anna Julia Cooper, Sojourner Truth (available on ERES)

Assignment due: Reflection paper 1

Thursday, April 9: Film and discussion: *Hillary's Class*. PBS Frontline documentary.

Reading: Judith Lorber (available on ERES)

Week 3: Theoretical Evolutions

Tuesday, April 14: Modern critiques of gender inequality and social science
Reading: Audre Lorde, Simone de Beauvoir; Betty Friedan, Dorothy Smith, Ann Fausto-Sterling (available on ERES)

Thursday, April 16: Contemporary theories
Reading: Patricia Hill Collins, Gloria Anzaldúa, West & Zimmerman, (available on ERES)
Assignment due: Research topic and research questions

Week 4: Gender in the context of global capitalism: *Genders in Production*

Tuesday, April 21: Understanding gender and labor in a global context
Salzinger: pages ix-34

Thursday, April 23: Salzinger continued
Salzinger: pages 35-74
Assignment due: Reflection paper 2

Week 5: Salzinger continued

Tuesday, April 28: Salzinger continued
Salzinger: pages 75-127

Thursday, April 30: Finish Salzinger
Salzinger: pages 128-end
Assignment due: Reflection paper 3

Week 6: Masculinity, femininity, and sexuality: *Dude, You're a Fag*

Tuesday, May 5: Pascoe
Pascoe: pages ix-51
Assignment due: Paper draft (midterm)

Thursday, May 7: Pascoe
Pascoe: pages 51-114

Week 7: Pascoe continued

Tuesday, May 12: Pascoe
Pascoe: pages 115-155

Thursday, May 14: Pascoe
Pascoe: pages 155-end

Week 8: Race, Class, and Reproduction: *Killing the Black Body*

Tuesday, May 19: Roberts
Roberts: pages ix-55

Thursday, May 21: Roberts
Roberts: pages 56-149
Assignment due: Reflection paper 4

Week 9: Roberts continued

Tuesday, May 26: Roberts
Roberts: pages 150-245

Thursday, May 28: Roberts
Roberts: pages 246-end
Assignment due: Reflection paper 5

Week 10: Review and discussion

Tuesday, June 2: Review and discussion

Thursday, June 4: Review and discussion
Assignment due: Final paper

Week 11: Final Exam

Tuesday, June 9: 4:00 - 7:00 PM, in our classroom.