CONTROVERSIES ABOUT INEQUALITY
SOC 2220, GOVT 2225, PHIL 1950, ILROB 2220, DSOC 2220, PAM 2220
Fall 2015, 4 credits

Professor: Anna R. Haskins, Department of Sociology
ahaskins@cornell.edu
http://www.soc.cornell.edu/faculty/haskins.html

Lectures: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:25-2:40pm, G01 Uris Hall
Office Hours: Professor Haskins: Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am, 354 Uris Hall
Teaching Assistants:
  Alex Currit (last names A-Di): Mon. 3:00-5:00p, 356 Uris Hall, bac256@cornell.edu
  Lucas Drouhot (last names Dj-J): Fri. 10:00a-12:00p, 349 Uris Hall, lgd35@cornell.edu
  Jing-Mao Ho (last names K-P): Tues. 3:00-5:00pm, 353 Uris Hall, jh2268@cornell.edu
  Yuqi (Carl) Lu (last names Q-Z): Fri. 9:30-11:30a 366 Uris Hall, yl2323@cornell.edu

Course Website: search for “Soc 2220” in Blackboard (www.blackboard.cornell.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In recent years, poverty and inequality have become increasingly common topics of public
debate, as academics, journalists, and politicians attempt to come to terms with growing
income inequality, with the increasing visibility of inter-country differences in wealth and
income, and with the persistence of racial, ethnic, and gender stratification. This course
introduces students to ongoing social scientific debates about the sources and consequences
of inequality, as well as the types of public policy that might appropriately be pursued to
reduce (or increase) inequality. These topics will be addressed in related units, some of
which include guest lectures by faculty from other universities (funded by the Center for the
Study of Inequality). Most units will culminate with a highly spirited class debate.

UNIVERSITY COURSE DISTINCTION
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 three required books are not on the course
website but are available for purchase at The Cornell Store, Kraftees, Amazon.com or are on
reserve at Uris Library:

    Maintains Inequality. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
  Silva, Jennifer. 2013. Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of

EXAMS, DEBATE SESSIONS, AND GRADING
The majority of your course grade will be based on two in-class exams (25% each) on
October 6th and November 5th, and one comprehensive take-home final exam (35%) due
before midnight on Saturday, December 12th (available on the course website at 2:40pm on
Thursday, December 3rd). 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.

Attendance and participation in all three debate sessions will count for the remaining 15% of your course grade. As noted on the course schedule, most controversy modules conclude with a class debate, during which the course is subdivided. We will decide on the procedure to divide the class into debating groups in the second or third week of the course (it all depends on room availability, as well as the final enrollment tally). These debate sessions occur during the regularly scheduled class time but are often held in alternative locations. The purpose of these debate sessions is to critically engage with course readings and lecture content in order to develop your own reasoned viewpoints and to present and defend your thoughts in a coherent, engaging, respectful, and convincing manner.

Final course grades will be assigned on the basis of the following distribution:

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<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<td>99-100%</td>
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<td>93-98%</td>
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<td>90-92%</td>
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**ATTENDANCE AT LECTURES AND DEBATES**

I know this is a large lecture class, but attendance at all sessions is mandatory. 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 the four official assignments; i.e., the final exam would then count for .9*.35=.315). Attendance will be taken at all debate sessions.

**GENERAL CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME**

Outside of the formal course requirements described above, there are a few expectations I have for you this semester. I expect you to do all the required readings on-time, attend lecture, and be actively involved in the debate sessions and the guest lectures. 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). 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 better 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 in a work in progress and I put great effort into making lecture as interesting and engaging 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](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 and debates, 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 in any sense (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 classroom dishonesty.”

Additionally, your take-home final exam 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. 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. 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.

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.”

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**

This course serves as a required course within the cross-college Inequality Minor that introduces students to the various tracks and areas of specialization that concentrators might pursue. 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; phone: 607-254-8674).

**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 any questions.

This syllabus can be understood as a contract between us. I do, however, reserve the right to make minor changes in the course as I see necessary 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 2015

INEQUALITY BASICS
Week 1—Aug 25 & 27

8/25: Introduction and Course Overview

8/27: What is Inequality? Does it Serve a Purpose?
Assigned readings: Davis & Moore 1945; Tumin 1953; Krueger 2003; Grusky & Wimer 2010; Norton & Ariely 2011

CONTROVERSY 1— WEALTH, POVERTY AND THE AMERICAN CLASS SYSTEM
Week 2—Sept 1 & 3

9/1: Measurement, Sources, Structure and Growth of Inequality
Assigned readings: Fisher 1997; Iceland 2013; Gilbert 2015

9/3: Mobility and the American Dream
Assigned readings: Hochschild 2005; Sawhill & Morton 2008; Swift 2004; Silva (pp. xi-25)

Week 3—Sept 8 & 10

9/8: The American Social Welfare System – Past and Present
Assigned readings: Spar 2011 (pp. 1-7, 12-32); Waldfogel 2013; Soss & Schram 2008; Silva (pp. 26-52)

9/10: The Underclass, the Working Poor, and Fragile Families
Assigned readings: Jencks 1992; Blank 2009; Cancian & Reed 2009; Bullock 2008; Silva (pp. 53-80)

Week 4—Sept 15 & 17

9/15: Debate and Discussion 1
Assigned readings: Silva (pp. 81-111)

9/17: Guest Lecturer—Professor Jennifer Silva, Bucknell University
Assigned readings: finish Silva (pp. 112-163)

CONTROVERSY 2—EDUCATION, SCHOOLS AND ACHIEVEMENT
Week 5—Sept 22 & 24

9/22: School Funding and Resources

9/24: Within-School Structures of Inequality
Assigned readings: Lareau 1987; Hallinan & Oakes 1994; Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. xi-25)
Week 6—Sept 29 & Oct 1

9/29: Public, Private and Charter Schools
   Assigned readings: Conley 2013; Finn et al. 2000; Thernstrom & Thernstrom 2002; Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 26-93)

10/1: Race and Achievement Gaps
   Assigned readings: Farkas 2008; Fordham & Ogbu 2011; Tyson et al. 2011; Carter 2011; Jencks & Phillips 2011; Ferguson 2008

Week 7—Oct 6 & 8

10/6: In Class Exam 1
   Assigned readings: Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 94-117)

10/8: Guest Lecturer – Karim Abouelnaga, Founder/CEO of Practice Makes Perfect
   Assigned readings: Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 118-147)

Week 8—Oct 13 & 15

10/13: No Class (Fall Break)
   Assigned readings: Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 148-208)

10/15: College Entry and Persistence
   Assigned readings: Bailey & Dynarski 2011; Klugman 2011; Jack 2014; Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 209-233)

Week 9—Oct 20 & 22

10/20: Debate and Discussion 2
   Assigned readings: Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 234-252)

10/22: Guest Lecturer — Professor Laura Hamilton, University of California-Merced
   Assigned readings: finish Armstrong & Hamilton (pp. 255-278)

CONTROVERSY 3— RACE, DISCRIMINATION, AND PUNISHMENT
Week 10—Oct 27 & 29

10/27: Discrimination and Individual Responsibility
   Assigned readings: Pager 2008; Anderson 2001; Wilson 2010

10/29: Racial Disparities across Outcomes, the Life Course, and Time **
   Assigned readings: Farkas 2003; Pettit & Western 2004; Williams et al. 2003

Week 11—Nov 3 & 5

11/3: Policing and Punishment in America
   Assigned readings: Goffman 2009; Brayne 2014; Wheelock & Uggen 2008
11/5: In Class Exam 2

CONTROVERSY 4—SPATIAL INEQUALITY, POVERTY AND SEGREGATION

Week 12—Nov 10 & 12

11/10: Segregation and Urban Inequality
Assigned readings: Stoll 2008; Logan & Stults 2011; Charles 2003; Sharkey 2009 (skim)

11/12: Spatial Inequality and Rural Poverty
Assigned readings: Lichter & Schafft 2014; Lichter & Brown 2011; Allard 2008

Week 13—Nov 17 & 19

11/17: Neighborhood and School Contexts
Assigned readings: Fischer 2013; Jargowsky & El Komi 2011; Smrekar & Goldring 2009

11/19: Debate and Discussion 3

CONTROVERSY 5—MORAL OBLIGATIONS, GLOBAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Week 14—Nov 24 & 26

11/24: Globalization and Economic Development
Assigned readings: Stiglitz 2000; Sach 2005

11/26: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15—Dec 1 & 3

12/1: Moral Obligations in an Era of Global Poverty
Assigned readings: Singer 1972; Singer 2004; Miller 2004

12/3: Justice, Equality, Politics and Change
Assigned readings: Cohen 2009; Desmond & Emirbayer 2011; Cannon 2009

Final Exam Due: December 12th, 2015 before midnight!

**Note, this syllabus is subject to change, if changes occur you will be notified in lecture.