

# **Social Inequality (Inequalities)**

SOCI 361 (01)  
Tuesday and Thursday 2pm-320pm  
ANSO 207  
Office hours: Thursday 430-6pm Room 125

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## **Course Description**

This is an upper level undergraduate sociology course meeting twice a week for 90-minutes. The goal of the course is for students to acquire a more robust understanding of power, power imbalances and reshaping power within different institutional and social settings on local, national and global scales. Particular focus is placed on recognizing how there are overlapping modes of oppression and power and how this is framed and/or ignored. The course problematizes what “inequality” can mean and takes a critical look at the historical, economic and structural entrenchment of inequalities (note plural). A large focus of the class is how people can, and do, create alternatives within and across different social groups. Considerable attention is paid to understanding notions of norms, norm creation and the institutionalization of norms; the course also problematizes the notion of “helping” other countries/societies to “progress” which can often entrench inequality even further. This is a multi-medium course which not only engages in critical sociological texts but also novels, memoirs, films, journalism and guest presentations. Through engaging in more personal case studies it will become evident that categories such as, ethnicity, class, race, sexual identity, ability, gender, immigration status, language and criminality are often interwoven and malleable – and can be changed and challenged.

## **Required Texts (texts are available at the bookstore or you can find other means of acquiring them)**

- Armstrong, Jeanette (1990) *Slash*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Publishers
- Polman, Linda (2011). *Crisis Caravan*. New York, NY: Picador
- Yunus, Mohammad (2003) *Banker to the poor: Micro-lending and the battle against world poverty*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs.
- Fanon, Frantz (1952/2008). *Black skins white masks*. New York: NY: Grove press.

Articles/excerpts will be available on Blackboard under “Course Content”

- An-na'im, Abdullah Ahmed (1990). Human rights in the Muslim world. In Henry Steiner, Philip Alston & Ryan Goodman (Eds.) *International human rights in context: Law politics morals* (pp. 531-539). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baer, Madeline & Brysk, Alison (2009). New rights for private wrongs: Female genital mutilation and global framing dialogues. In Clifford Bob (Ed.), *The international struggle for new human rights* (pp. 14-29). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bob, Clifford (2009). *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (Introduction pp. 1-13)
- Hill Collins, P. (1986/2008). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. In A. Jaggar (Ed.), *Just methods: An interdisciplinary feminist reader* (pp. 308–320). Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Bogert, Caroll (2011) Whose News: The changing media landscape and NGOs <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2011/whose-news>
- Califia, Pat (2000/1994) *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*, San Francisco: Cleis Press, ("Antidote to Shame" pp. 139-150 and "Gender Bending: Playing with Roles and Reversals," pp.181-190)
- Hall, Stuart, "Ethnicity, Identity and Difference," in *Becoming National: A Reader* edited by Eley and Suny, pp. 339-351
- Harding, Sandra (1993). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity?" In Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 49-82). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mackey, Eva (2005) "Universal Rights in Conflict," 'Backlash' and 'benevolent resistance' to indigenous land claims." *Anthropology Today* Vol 21 No 2, April 2005
- Mamdani, Mahmood (2004). *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*. New York, NY: Three Leaves Press. (Introduction and Chapter 1, (pp. 3-62)
- MOSAIC and Pivot Legal Society (2008) A Cultural Divide: A Neighbourhood Study of Immigrant Rental Housing in Vancouver <http://www.mosaicbc.com/sites/all/files/publications-public/CULTURAL%20DIVIDE.pdf>
- Quinney, Richard, (2001/1970) *The Social Reality of Crime*. New Brunswick, NJ. Transaction Publications (pp. ix-xxiv and 3-25)
- Razack, Sherene H. (1999/2008) *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (Introduction, Chapter 1)
- Sylvester, Christine (2000) "Development Poetics," *Alternatives: Global Local, Political*, Vol 25, No 3, pp. 335-351

**We will be watching the following films:**

*A Red Girl's Reasoning*

*Schooling the World: White Man's Last Burden*

*Cedar and Bamboo*

*Pigeon Park Savings*

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance at all classes, including all films and guest lectures, is *mandatory*. Students are expected to attend all classes and read the assignments so as to be prepared for class discussion. Experience shows that there is a direct relation between attendance and performance in the course. I will deduct 2 points from participation for any unexcused absence **An excused absence means you contact the instructor, me, prior to your absence (barring an emergency and then you contact me as soon as possible). You can reach me via email or phone. I do not have internet on my phone so if you need to reach me quickly, call. You are responsible for any class work or homework we go over or due during your absence.**

**Policies for Written Assignments:**

**All written work (response papers, proposal and final “white paper”) will be turned in hard copy at the beginning of the class it is due.**

Before submitting your written assignments, please make sure they are:

- written in 11 or 12 point, Times New Roman or Arial Font. Please use 1.5 spacing or double spacing;
- contains the title of your paper; your name and student ID; the date you are submitting the paper;
- have page numbers marked at the bottom right hand of your paper.

Please follow the citation guidelines for the **American Psychology Association (APA)** for all written assignments. A guideline for how to cite different types of texts using the APA format can be found online.

**Late assignments will be deducted 5% for each working day it is submitted after the deadline.** Exceptions will be made for medical or family crises. If you experience a medical, emotional or personal problems that detracts from your academic performance, please contact the Faculty of Arts Academic Advising Office, located in Buchanan A201, phone 604-822-4028. **I only make exceptions for missed deadlines with a letter from the Arts Advising Office.** For more information:

<http://www.arts.ubc.ca/students/degree-planning-advising/advising.html>

**Participation:**

Active involvement in this course is imperative. We will be discussing many volatile issues, and it is vital that students do the assigned readings before the class, as well as be prepared to talk intelligently about them with others. We will also be watching films; films are considered texts as well and should be used as part of your analysis.

**Groups:** This is a large class so you will be assigned to smaller groups in order to better facilitate discussions/in class work. Group assignments will take place by the end of the second week

**Syllabus is subject to change on based on the needs of the class and the assessment of the instructor.**

**Grading:**

- You are required to post a minimum of five discussion questions on Connect throughout the semester and to provide three responses to questions posted by your peers; these are due by noon the day before class. Posts are due by 6pm the night before; reflection questions are due by 7am the morning of class. = **each question/response is worth up to 5 points for a total of 40 points**
- Each student will work with a small group (6-7 people) to lead a class discussion on one of the sections focusing on the inequalities and the responses to inequalities – emphasis should be on the framing of issues based on socio-cultural and political ideologies, structures that maintain such ideologies and the challenges to those ideologies. Attention should be paid on the institutions but also the thinking/logic *behind* such institutions and how the authority of those institutions and logics are created and maintained (for example – like Quinney explains, in order to have “law breaking” you need to have “law making” and this perpetuates the power of the courts, the police, policy makers etc.) All discussion leaders are required to have completed the entire book/reading prior to leading the discussion – even if the class has not yet finished the book. In leading the discussion you will also need to create hand outs and/or “attention getting” materials to engage us in your analysis. = **25 points**
- Three short (3 pages) written papers are required. The first is a media analysis; the second is applying theoretical analysis of social inequalities to *Slash* (a personal story) and the third is a reflection paper on the panel discussion taking place on March 10th. Each paper must have at least three references from material read for class. **Up to 20 points each paper: 60 points total possible**
- The final project is a strategy/research paper with particular, targeted suggestions for how to address a current example (“case study”) of social inequalities. The case study can be local, national and/or global. The final paper will be modeled after a “white paper” <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-White-Papers>. **You must meet with me individually by January 27<sup>th</sup>** to discuss possible topics and possible working groups. Working with your group, you will create a written proposal with your group which will be due on February 12<sup>th</sup> - **25 points**.

You will receive thorough feedback on your proposal and will be mandated to meet with either Shayna or Edward to go over such feedback. For the “white paper” (final project), you will be graded on identifying a current issue of social inequality and then analyzing the phenomenon in terms of: identity/identities, power, framing, institutions, agency and means of resistance. You will need to bring in some of the theories/discussions (texts/films/speakers) we have discussed in class. You each be responsible for conducting an interview so that you can incorporate the perspective of at least one person directly affected and/or affecting such inequalities. You will also be required to create an executive summary which you will post three days before you are presenting for all of your classmates to read. **75 points**.

- Each person (working individually or in pairs) is required to do an interview with a person affected and/or affecting social inequality. These opinions will help inform your strategy paper. You will need to submit field notes of the interview, including how you located that person, and any quotes/impressions that you felt were particularly relevant. Please be sure to ask the person how they want to be referenced. You must provide the person with a copy of your final paper. **Total of 25 points.**
- There will be an oral presentation of the final project/"white paper". This will be modeled after a seminar "working paper." **Total 50 points**

**Total: 300 points**

***Up to 20 points extra credit is available up to the discretion of the instructor. Extra credit can include going to events/talks/art shows etc. that address social inequalities. Exciting events are happening on campus and throughout the city while this class is taking place such as the PuSH festival, Women's Film Festival, public forums discussing socio-economic issues before the election, as well as forums about social inequality affecting students/staff/faculty ON campus...In addition to attending events you can also include posting additional questions or responses in the discussion board.***

***All extra credit is due march 26th***

**How to read the homework:** All readings and assignments are due the class period *after* they are posted. For example, the homework posted under the January 8<sup>th</sup> class is due January 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Early Alert:** During the term, I will do my best to reach out and offer support if I am concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing. I also encourage you to come and speak with me if you need assistance.

In addition, I may identify my concerns using Early Alert. The program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. This provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counselling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track.

The information is treated confidentially and is sent because I care about your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit [www.earlyalert.ubc.ca](http://www.earlyalert.ubc.ca).

## **SYLLABUS**

### **WEEK 1 - OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE AND EXPECTATIONS/POSITIONALITY**

#### **January 6**

- Go over syllabus, course expectations
- Drawing identity exercise – ideas of representation and self representation  
Marked/Unmarked

*Homework: Hall, Stuart, "Ethnicity, Identity and Difference," in Becoming National: A Reader edited by Eley and Suny, pp. 339-351*

*Draft posting on the identity/identities and how this relates to inequality/inequalities.*

#### **January 8**

- Explaining themes and assigning group-led discussions
- Screening "To Kill a Sparrow"
- Discussion on the power of labels/norms – and its effects on framing "problems" and "solutions" in the world

*Homework: Quinney; Califia 'Antidote to Shame'*

### **WEEK 2 – UNPACKING POWER – "THE VICTIM," "THE CRIMINAL" AND "THE JUSTICE SYSTEM"**

#### **January 13**

- Discussing how labels/norms can build and create laws and entrench uneven power
- Introduction to "objectivity" and lecture on strong objectivity

*Homework: Read Harding; Hill Collins*

#### **January 15**

- Screening "A Red Girl's Reasoning"
- Review the coverage of the BC Missing women's inquiry in class – examples of coverage and framing: <http://womensenews.org/story/crime-policylegislation/120417/advocates-blast-canadian-probe-missing-women> and <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2011/12/13/pol-un-aboriginal-women.html> and [http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/News\\_Releases/UBCICNews04101201.html#ixzz1rsZd5cxY](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/News_Releases/UBCICNews04101201.html#ixzz1rsZd5cxY) and <http://www.nwac.ca/nwac-petition-national-inquiry-needed> and <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/inquiry-on-missing-vancouver-women-slams-police-failures-public-blindness/article6477651/> (for more information please go to: <http://www.missingwomeninquiry.ca/>) and <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/mulcair-pledges-inquiry-into-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-if-ndp-elected/article20220610/>
- Discussing audience

*Homework: Read Hermann and Chomsky's "Worthy vs. Unworthy Victims"*

## WEEK 3 – THE ROLE OF POWER IN FRAMING “PROBLEMS” AND “SOLUTIONS”

### January 20

- Group 1 debrief -- Hermann and Chomsky's “Worthy vs. unworthy victims”
- Framing
- The political economy of news – and the (assumed) importance of audiences
- Screening of Ted Talk by Alisa Miller  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa\\_miller\\_shares\\_the\\_news\\_about\\_the\\_news.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news.html)
- <http://youtu.be/9U4Ha9HQvMo>

*Homework: First reflection paper -- Select an ongoing, current events – and locate (at least) three different media coverages of each event (include links and/or scans to the coverage). The issue can be in Vancouver or occurring outside of the lower mainland. Using Harding's understanding of “strong objectivity” as well as Hermann and Chomsky's exploration of the creation (or marginalization) of “victims” – conduct a media analysis: What is the problem? Who are the actors (individuals and institutions)? What are the solutions (laws, inquiries, institutions, funding)? Who is presumed to be the audiences of these different articles? How do you know that? What assumptions of knowledge/norms are evident in the pieces?*

*Mandatory posting: one paragraph summary (abstract) posted about your paper. What was the story and what three media sources did you go to? You are required to read the summary postings from your group for discussion in the subsequent class.*

*Read Baer & Brysk in Bob*

### January 22

Debrief writing assignment – bring in your media analysis piece to discuss in groups

- Where did you get your information?
- What were the assumptions of audience?
- What were the topics that were covered?
- What topics were NOT covered?
- What institutions were discussed in the stories?
- How was their legitimacy upheld, questioned or diminished?
- What were the differences in different media outlets and/or languages of the media?

*Homework: Mamdani Intro and Chapter 1; MUST MEET WITH ME TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE TOPICS AND PROGRESS IN CLASS*

## WEEK 4 – CULTURE TALK AND FRAMING: LAW/JUSTICE/MEDIA

### January 27

- Group 2 debrief -- Mamdani's culture talk
- Focus on domestic and International examples of how “culture talk” is at play in policy, institutions and analysis.

*Homework: Read Razack, (Introduction, Chapter 1); Read Mackey*

### January 29

- Group 3 – Debrief of Razack

- What are the institutions at play here?
- How is equality/inequality understood and operationalized on personal, bureaucratic and legal levels
- Mackey
- Reviewing Marked/Unmarked on an institutional and global perspective

*Homework: Read Sylvester "Development Poetics," An – Naim's excerpt from "Human Rights in the Muslim World"; read bio of guest speaker,*

## **WEEK 5 – RECOGNIZING THE POWER, AND POWER IMBALANCE, OF INSTITUTIONS**

### **February 3**

- Group 4 – applying Razack to the two readings
- Screen *We are the Saami* –self-determination and how that is similar but distinct from anti-racism literature
- Introduction to *Slash*
- Bio of Jeanette Armstrong

*Homework: Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2;*

### **February 5**

- Guest Speaker: David Kirk (TBC)

*Homework: Chapter 3 and 4 and epilogue*

## **WEEK 6 – IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT AND THE DANGERS OF ESSENTIALIZING**

### **February 10**

- Group 5 – debrief of *Slash*
- Walking through power/institutions in "Slash's" life – micro and macro level
- Applying such an analysis to looking at policies on different levels affects individuals and vice versa
- Screening of *Cedar and Bamboo*

*Homework: Second reflection paper: Using the theories put forward by Razack, Mamdani as well as incorporating the guest speaker's truths, discuss how to engage with a personal, and political, memoir within a sociological lens – recognize the power and inequalities of power in histories, economics, colonialism, race, immigration status, class, gender, sexuality and ability and how these are confronted;*

*Review CCPA website; read Chapter 1 of Banker to the Poor, read MOSAIC report*

### **February 12**

Guest lecture by Iglia Ivanova (TBC) bringing discussions of the interconnectedness of socio-economic inequality (and alternatives) local including how she goes about conducting research to make policy reports

*Homework: Chapters 2-7 Banker to the Poor  
Proposal due hardcopy the 24<sup>th</sup> ...*

## Reading Break

### WEEK 7 – REFRAMING THE PROBLEM(S) AND THE SOLUTION(S)

#### February 24

- Turn proposals in hardcopy! No late proposals!
- Does “equal” = “same”? Bringing Razack into the social realities of economics
- Screening of *Pigeon Bank* film

*Homework: Identify three possible interviews; Finish Banker to the Poor; read Califia’s “Genderbending” and <http://globalnews.ca/news/1398131/motion-passes-for-genderless-bathrooms-in-vancouver-schools/>*

#### February 26

- Group 6 debrief on *Banker to the Poor*
- Discussion on “private” borders (of gender/sexuality) – and the policing that happens via policy
- Discussing of desire for rigid borders – private and public and the POLITICS of such borders
- Refresh and preview on Fanon

*Homework: Fanon forward – p. 63*

### WEEK 8 – PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND POLITICAL BORDERS

#### March 3

- Debriefing proposals
- Catch up/reflection
- Interviewing exercise

*Homework: Fanon 64 - 119;*

#### March 5

- Group 7 debrief of Fanon
- Bringing Fanon home...

*Homework: One question to each panelist due by noon October 29<sup>th</sup>; INCITE!’s *The Revolution will not be Funded* (Intro and chapter 1); Read Bogart’s *Whose news?**

### WEEK 9 – THE REALITIES OF INTERSECTIONALITIES – APPLYING THEORIES TO THE REAL WORKD

#### March 10

Panel discussion – take good notes!!!

*Homework: prepare questions for your classmates regarding your final project*

### **March 12**

- Bringing theories into practical discussion: panel discussion
- Macro/micro

*Homework: Reflection paper on the panel discussion applying at least three readings; bring three questions for your classmates about your final project*

## **WEEK 10 – THE PERILS OF “HELPING”**

### **March 17**

- Screening of *Schooling the World*
- Guiding questions:
  - What are the institutions at play here?
  - How are cultural stereotypes used to explain socio-economic and political problems and solutions?
  - How are equality/inequality envisioned?
  - What is the role of colonialism/neo-colonialism/capitalism
  - What role does power play here?
  - How can we apply Fanon and Yunus here? What role does self determination play or not play?

*Homework: Chapters 1-3 of Crisis Caravan*

### **March 19**

Small group discussion/group work and reflection on *Schooling the World*

*Homework: Chapters 4 – 8 of Crisis Caravan*

## **WEEK 11 -- “VICTIMS” HAVE AGENCY TOO...**

### **March 24**

- Group 8 debrief -- *Crisis Caravan*
- Understanding international institutions
- Screening of “I am a Roma Woman” and/or clips from some of the conversations during Idle No More

### **March 26**

- Last minute questions/reflections with class on final projects

*Homework: Finish Crisis Caravan.*

*All extra credit is due next class period.*

## **Week 12 – (March 31, April 2) CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

## **Week 13 – ( April 7, April 9) CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

**THOSE PRESENTING ON WEEK 12 WILL SUBMIT WHITE PAPERS AND TRANSCRIPTS HARDCOPY ON APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup>. THOSE PRESENTING DURING WEEK 13 WILL SUBMIT TRANSCRIPTS AND WHITE PAPERS HARDCOPY ON APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup>.**