

Social Inequality (Inequalities) – SOC 361

Tuesday and Thursday 1230pm-150pm - Westbrook 201

Instructor: Dr. Shayna Plaut

University of British Columbia

Department of Sociology

604-817-0311

Shayna.plaut@ubc.ca

Office hours: Monday 4-6pm, ANSO 3126

Teaching Assistant: Kelsea Perry

khperry@alumni.ubc.ca

Office Hours Tuesday 1030-1130am, ANSO 108

Course Description

This is an upper level undergraduate sociology course meeting twice a week for 80-minutes. Please keep in mind that there is a significant amount of work that must be done outside of class, including group work. 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 further entrench inequality. 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.

Articles/excerpts will be available on Connect 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.
- 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)
- Duggan, Sarah (June 15, 2015) "Invisible People: The Rights of "Temporary Foreign Workers" Praxis Center – find online at: <http://www.kzoo.edu/praxis/invisible-people/>
- Gilmore, Scott (January 22, 2015) "Canada's Race Problem? It's Even Worse than America's", *Maclean's Magazine*.
- Hall, Stuart, "Ethnicity, Identity and Difference," in *Becoming National: A Reader* edited by Eley and Suny, pp. 339-351
- Herman & Chomsky (1988) "Worthy and Unworthy Victims" in *Manufacturing Consent*
- 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.
- Macdonald, Nancy (February 18, 2016) "Canada's Prisons are New Residential Schools," *Maclean's Magazine*.
- 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>
- Plaut, Shayna (February 5, 2015) "Art as Storytelling and Resistance: "I Love Cats", Praxis Center <http://www.kzoo.edu/praxis/storytelling-and-resistance/>
- Plaut, Shayna (July 22, 2016) "Learning Resistance and Building Solidarity North of the 49th" <http://www.straight.com/news/740886/shayna-plaut-learning-resistance-and-building-solidarity-black-lives-matter-north-49th#comment>

- 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
- Tannock, Stuart (2011) "Points of Prejudice: Education-Based Discrimination in Canada's Immigration System," *Antipode*, Vol 43 No 4

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

1700% Muslim

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 review or that is 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 with 1.5 or double spacing;
- contain the title of your paper; your name; the date you are submitting the paper;
- have page numbers marked at the bottom right hand of your paper;
- and are stapled!

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 day it is submitted after the deadline; including if it is turned in later in the day. Exceptions will be made for medical or family crises. If you experience a medical, emotional or personal problem 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. You will be responsible, as a group, for presenting one text to the class. You will be able to email within your group through Connect. Assignments to your group will take place during second week.

GRADING:

Discussion Board

- You are required to post a minimum of ten (10) reflections and discussion questions on Connect throughout the semester and to provide five (5) responses to questions posted by your peers. Posts are due by 12pm the day before class. Responses are due by 10am Sunday. = **each reflection/question and response is worth up to 5 points for a total of 75 points**

Discussion Leaders

- Each student will work with their small group (6-7 people) to lead a class discussion on an assigned text/group of texts— 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 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.** 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**

Reflection Papers

- 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 novel) and the third is a reflection paper on the panel discussion taking place on November 3rd. Each paper must have at least three references from material read for class. **Up to 25 points each paper; 75 points total possible**

Interview

- Each person is required to do an interview with a person affected and/or affecting social inequality. These opinions will help inform your strategy in your “white paper” as a group, but again **each person is conducting an individual interview.** 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. **25 points.**

“White paper” (Strategy/research paper)

- 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.

There are multiple steps to this project. A brief discussion with me, a proposal with your group, a presentation and a “white paper” <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-White-Papers>. **You must meet with me individually by September 27th** to discuss possible topics and possible working groups.

Proposal: Working with your group, **you will create a written proposal with your group.** This will be **no more than five pages** and will include at least external sources. The proposal is **due on October 25th**. You will receive thorough feedback on your proposal and will be mandated to meet with either Shayna or Kelsea to go over such feedback. = **25 points.**

- White paper: 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. The paper will be 20 pages and will need to include some of the information from your interviews and least ten sources’ **at least three** of the theories/discussions (texts/films/speakers) must be from our class. Papers will be due either December 1st or December 9th based on when you present. = **75 points.**
- Oral presentation and executive summary: There will be an oral presentation of the final project/“white paper”. You will briefly explain the problem that you have been researching, bring in the different research (including interviews) as well as your proposed solution. Your goal is to “sell” your solution. Based on the size of the class presentations will be 10-12 minutes. You must have a visual component. This will be modeled after a seminar “working paper.” You will also be required to create an executive summary **which you will post noon the day before you are presenting** for all of your classmates to read. = **50 points**

Total: 350 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 Vancouver International Film Festival, Liu Institute’s refugee Opera and Symposium, events at SFU Woodward’s and the Institute for the Humanities, 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 but if you do so, please email me to alert me. All people are responsible for keeping track of their own extra credit.

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All extra credit is due November 18th.

SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE ON BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE CLASS AND THE ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

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 September 8th class is due September 13th.

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 facilitates a more coordinated response. This program provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counseling, 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.

SYLLABUS

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE AND EXPECTATIONS/POSITIONALITY

September 8

- 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; Rushdie's "leavened bread"
Draft posting on your identity/identities (300-500 words) and how this relates to inequality/inequalities.*

UNPACKING POWER – "THE VICTIM," "THE CRIMINAL" AND "THE JUSTICE SYSTEM"

September 13

- 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: Califia 'Antidote to Shame', Quinney

September 15

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

Homework: Read Hill Collins; Sarah Duggan "Invisible People" <http://www.kzoo.edu/praxis/invisible-people/#more-9345>, MacDonald, "Canada's Prisons are the new Residential Schools" <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/canadas-prisons-are-the-new-residential-schools/>

THE ROLE OF POWER IN FRAMING "PROBLEMS" AND "SOLUTIONS"

September 20

- Screening "A Red Girl's Reasoning"
- Review the different coverage of the BC Missing women's inquiry in class – examples of coverage and framing depending on outlet (for more information please go to: <http://www.missingwomeninquiry.ca/>)
- Concept of audience

Homework: Read Hermann and Chomsky's "Worthy vs. Unworthy Victims;" Gilmore "Canada's Race Problem; It's Worse than America's" <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/out-of-sight-out-of-mind-2/>

September 22

- 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://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 local or global. Using Hill Collins' understanding of "strong objectivity" as well as Hermann and Chomsky's exploration of the creation (or marginalization) of "victims" – write 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? (750-1000 words, no more!)

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

LAW/JUSTICE/MEDIA = THE POWER OF FRAMING

September 27

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

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

September 29

- 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 "Universal Rights in Conflict" and Schwartz <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/how-black-lives-matter-co-founder-janaya-khan-sees-canada/> -- we will be discussing in group work in class.

RECOGNIZING THE POWER, AND POWER IMBALANCE, OF INSTITUTIONS

OCTOBER 4

- 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 and/or Black Lives Matter
- Intro to Sylvester and An-Naim in terms of “helping” and “self-determination”

Homework: Read Sylvester “Development Poetics,” An – Naim’s excerpt from “Human Rights in the Muslim World”;

October 6

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

Homework: Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2; read bio of guest speaker,

IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT AND THE DANGERS OF ESSENTIALIZING

October 11

Guest speaker David Kirk (TBC)

Homework: Chapter 3 and 4 and epilogue

October 13

- Group 5 – debrief of *Slash* and reflection on guest speaker
- 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 and analyze some key examples in Armstrong’s novel *Slash*. Focus on: power and inequalities of power in histories, economics, colonialism, race, immigration status, class, gender, sexuality and ability as well as the means of resistance. Feel free to bring in the other examples (i.e. in Maclean’s pieces) but be sure to tie it back to the theories we have discussed in class.*

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

REFRAMING THE PROBLEM(S) AND THE SOLUTION(S)

October 18

- Concept of cooptation
- Interviewing exercise
- Last minute proposal questions
- Catch up/reflection

*Homework: Chapters 2-7, *Banker to the Poor*; Proposal due October 25th – no late proposals!*

****NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 20TH!!! – WORK ON INTERVIEWS/PROPOSALS****

PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND POLITICAL BORDERS

October 25

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

Homework: Finish Banker to the Poor; read Califia’s “Genderbending” and <http://globalnews.ca/news/1398131/motion-passes-for-genderless-bathrooms-in-vancouver-schools/> and <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2016/05/timeline-bathroom-wars>

October 27

- 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

Homework: “I love cats” <http://www.kzoo.edu/praxis/storytelling-and-resistance/>; Tannock, 2011 “Points of Prejudice,” CCPA website

THE REALITIES OF INTERSECTIONALITIES – APPLYING THEORIES TO THE REAL WORLD

November 1

- Guest lecture by Senior Economist Iglia Ivanova of the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives – BC Office bringing discussions of the interconnectedness of socio-economic inequality (and alternatives) local including how she goes about conducting research to make policy reports

Homework: The Revolution will not be Funded (Intro and chapter 1); “Whose news?” (Bogart) Visit International Human Rights Funders Group’s website especially: <https://www.ihrfg.org/policy-research>

One question to each panelist due by noon November 2nd.

November 3

Panel discussion – take good notes!!!

Homework: reflection paper due on November 10th. Crisis Caravan Chapters 1-2; Write three questions regarding final project/white paper to bring to class.

THE PERILS OF “HELPING”

November 8

- Debriefing panel discussion

- Macro/micro
- Overview of international institutions/structures/systems
- Group work for final project

Homework: crisis Caravan Chapters 3-5. Reflection paper due next class.

November 10

- 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 Hall and Yunus here? What role does self-determination play or not play?

Homework: Finish Crisis Caravan

“VICTIMS” HAVE AGENCY TOO...

November 15

- Group 8 debrief -- *Crisis Caravan*
- Small group discussion/group work and reflection on *Schooling the World*
- Discussion of agency/solidarity screening of “I am a Roma Woman” and 1700% Muslim

Homework: Plaut, “learning Resistance and Building Solidarity North of the 49th” <http://www.straight.com/news/740886/shayna-plaut-learning-resistance-and-building-solidarity-black-lives-matter-north-49th>

Write three questions regarding final project/white paper to bring to class.

November 17th

- Last minute questions/reflections with class on final projects

All extra credit is due next class period.

Week 12 – (November 22, November 24) CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Week 13 – (November 29, December 1) CLASS PRESENTATIONS

THOSE PRESENTING ON WEEK 12 WILL SUBMIT WHITE PAPERS AND TRANSCRIPTS HARDCOPY ON DECEMBER 1ST. THOSE PRESENTING DURING WEEK 13 WILL SUBMIT TRANSCRIPTS AND WHITE PAPERS VIA EMAIL ON DECEMBER 9TH.