



**Class Location: Founder's Hall 208**

**Day/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 AM**

Instructor: Roslyn Schoen, PhD

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Office hours will be posted to our Canvas course page and announced in class.

**Mode of Instruction and Course Access:** This is a face-to-face course that has online components. In order to access your grades and certain learning materials, you will need to log on to our course Canvas site at <https://tamuct.instructure.com>.

*\*Students should set notification preferences in Canvas so that you receive course announcements in your email inbox or via text.*

**Course Description:** This course examines social inequality and categories of difference from a sociological perspective. Students will interrogate social difference and stratification on the basis of race/ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and sexuality by examining how these categories are constructed, institutionalized, and experienced. This course will also focus on economic and labor-based inequality through the lens of contemporary global processes.

**Course outcomes:** The direct aim of this course, as it focuses on categories of difference in the contemporary globalized world, is to help students develop social, cultural, and global competence. Students will develop critical thinking skills through the application of social theory and by making connections between domestic and international social inequalities. By the conclusion of the course, students will be able to place contemporary patterns of social inequality in a historical context. Students will also be able to identify mechanisms and processes in contemporary life that contribute to patterns of inequality both across the U.S. and between the U.S. and other countries.

**Required Books and Materials:**

- Froyum, Bloch, and Taylor. 2017. *Creating and Contesting Social Inequalities*. Oxford University Press.
- Edin, Kathryn and Luke Shaefer. 2016. *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Mariner Books.
- Timmerman, Kelsey 2012. *Where Am I Wearing? A Global Tour to the Countries, Factories, and People That Make Our Clothes*, Revised & Updated. Wiley & Sons.
- Other materials listed on the syllabus will be available through Blackboard and our course eReserves page. (eRes password = inequality)

**ASSESSMENT**

**Attendance and participation**– Points in this category will be based on attending class and participating in in-class discussions. Starting the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of classes, your professor will take attendance using a sign-in sheet. Attendance scores will be based on 25 days @ 4 points each. I consider all absences legitimate so I do not differentiate by labeling some excused and others unexcused; all absences are counted the same way. Please note: If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes or other materials from other students in the class. Attendance total = 100 points.

**Student-led discussions (SLDs)** – Four of our course meetings will consist of student-led discussion (SLD) days where groups of ~4 students will prepare to present and lead our discussion on a particular topic. All students be placed in a group, and all group members will be responsible for presenting during the full class time on your assigned day. Discussion group members should prepare for their SLD together. SLDs can include any slides, notes, or in-class activity you’d like but *must always include at least 3 thoughtful discussion questions to engage the class*. You will submit questions and discussion ideas to your professor for review by 2 PM exactly two days before you lead discussion. After your group presents, you will turn in a brief personal reflection on how well your group worked together and whether you felt everyone contributed equally. SLD total = 100 points.

**Exams** – Students will take three unit exams, each worth 100 points. Exams will include a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Each exam will cover material from the assigned readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. Exams are not cumulative. Exam total = 300 points.

**Grades will be based on 500 points:**

Discussion leading	100 points	(20%)
Attendance: 4 points per day x 25 days	100 points	(20%)
Exams 3 @ 100 points each	300 points	(60%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500 points</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

**Grading scale:**

Points	Percent	Grade
450 - 500	90 – 100%	A
400 - 449	80 – 89%	B
350 - 399	70 – 79%	C
300 - 349	60 – 69%	D
0 – 299	0 – 59%	F

**Posting of Grades:**

- All student grades will be posted using the Canvas grade book and students should monitor their grade status through this tool.
- Students should always refer to the syllabus for total points and points possible. The Canvas gradebook tool has been known to misinform students from time to time by auto-populating deadlines and points possible. Note that the syllabus, not the grade book, is the final word on deadlines and points possible.
- Grades will usually be posted within 7-10 days of due dates. Some assignments may require more personalized instructor feedback. These assignments could take longer to grade and so you may need to be patient.

**COURSE TOPICS**

**Thinking sociologically.** An introduction to theories of society, especially the sociological imagination and the social construction of categories like gender and race. Also includes an exploration of the historical roots of social inequalities. Weeks 1 and 2.

**Poverty.** Sub-topics and concepts include wages, work, and welfare as well as how exploitation and exclusion shape life chances for children and adults in the United States. Weeks 3-6.

**Discrimination and social control.** Connecting what we know about the social construction of difference to social inequalities, including how inequalities are maintained through boundary work and in the labor market. Weeks 7-8.

**Challenging inequalities.** Explores how people work to mitigate or eliminate inequalities using case studies of diverse issues to include racial profiling, homophobia and safe spaces, and social movement building. Week 9.

**Globalization and development.** Sub-topics include colonization, industrialization, urbanization, global commodity chains, and gendered labor regimes. Students are introduced to the “race to the bottom” and precarious work arrangements in the Global South as well as how this connects to wealth and inequality in the Global North, including in the United States. Weeks 10-13.

**Resistance and social change.** This final unit returns to the ways we can challenge social inequalities but with a focus on global inequalities and how our personal choices affect the future for everyone. Weeks 14 and 15.