

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-1:30p, Perks (and by appointment)
Email: e1bender@ucsd.edu

*Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past.
The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.*

Karl Marx

COURSE DESCRIPTION

These days, it seems inequality is all around us, we see it whenever we turn on the television or log in to social media. From riots against police brutality, to political speeches about who “belongs” in the United States, to Supreme Court decisions about reproductive rights, to the fight to increase wages and implement universal healthcare. Everything in our society exists against a backdrop of inequality that we have inherited from the generations that came before us.

This course will introduce you to some of the most significant backdrops of inequality as well as challenge you to think and write about them critically. Inequalities in class, race, and gender are foundational in our society and in the academic discipline of sociology. We will explore how inequalities that occur at the societal/macro level are experienced at the individual/micro level, and vice versa. We will also explore how these inequalities are historically situated as well as their relationships to personal and political struggles. This course is not designed to be a “survey” class, where we focus on breadth over depth. Rather, we will contend with particular kinds of inequality deeply, with an understanding that they do not represent the sum total of inequalities in society, and that all inequalities intersect in complex ways.

Overall, my objective in this class is to awaken in you a critical awareness that you will take with you well beyond the confines of this classroom. Through lecture and discussion, I would like you to become confident in asking questions about inequality and how it is reinforced in the interactions and institutions that you encounter every day. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a strong awareness of how inequalities are historically rooted, with contemporary effects
- Confidently engage with critical authors and your peers about social problems and issues
- Articulate the link between macro and micro dimensions of inequality
- Write concisely but comprehensively about inequality topics
- Find academic research material on topics that interest you
- Connect and expand themes and concepts in this class to the social world you live in

REQUIRED READING

We will focus deeply on three core texts and occasional PDFs posted online. The three texts are available at the UCSD Bookstore and on reserve at the library:

Edin, Kathryn J. and H. Luke Shaefer. 2015. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. Melbourn, Australia: The Text Publishing Company.

hooks, bell. 2015. *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. New York: Routledge.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

40% Reading Memos/Small Papers (4 memos, 10% each)

20% Research Paper Build-Up

Topic (2%), Bibliography (5%), Outline (10%), Peer-Instruction Participation (3%)

20% Research Paper

20% Participation

Participation (20%) and Attendance Policy

This class will be a hybrid between the traditional lecture and seminar formats, meaning you will be called to participate in the lecture quite often. I will incorporate a number of partner, small group, and whole class discussion activities and mix them in with traditional lecturing. You need to come to class prepared to meaningfully participate in our discussions.

Lecture attendance is mandatory. Because we will incorporate a range of “active learning” activities, your attendance and participation are *crucial* for the class to function. You are allowed one absence without any penalty to your grade (please note you will miss participation points for that day). After the first absence, your overall course grade will be reduced by 2 points for each additional absence.

Reading Memos (4 memos, 10% each)

Each week I will pose a short question for you to answer/discuss in the form of a memo, which is a short but concise piece of writing on a very particular topic. You will use the material from reading and lecture that week to write a memo that answers the question posed on the syllabus for that week. Your memo should be approximately one full single-spaced page, or two double-spaced pages. Memos are due by 5pm on Fridays via turnitin.com, in weeks one through four.

Research Paper/Literature Review (20%)

Because this is an upper division course, I would like you to get accustomed to taking charge of your own education to make sure you are learning about things that are important to YOU. To that end, I will ask you to write a short, but academically grounded research paper on some topic related to social inequality that is particularly interesting to you. Your paper topic must be grounded in some form of class, race, or gender inequality, meaning it must fall under *at least* one of those “umbrellas.” For example, you could write a paper about racial “riots” (race), or Beyonce feminism (gender/race), or the jobless economic recovery (class). The goal of the research paper is to put **you** in charge of learning about something that interests you and enhance your ability to see course themes and concepts in the “real world” around you.

Your research paper must introduce as well as make some kind of argument about the topic you are researching. In addition, you must cite at least 5 outside academic sources (books or peer-reviewed articles) and at least 1 of our course texts. You are welcome to cite popular sources, but in addition to (not in place of) your academic sources. Your paper should be approximately 7-10 pages. The paper will be due via upload to turnitin.com before the end of the scheduled final exam period (Friday, September 3, 6pm).

Research Paper Build-Up (15%)

We will use peer-instruction and project-based learning to help you build your research paper throughout the class. You will tackle one part of the paper-planning process at a time, and get feedback from your peers along the way. Submitting each of these pieces and participating in the peer-instruction process is part of your course grade. Detailed instructions for each piece will be distributed and posted on TritonED.

- Monday, August 8 – Submit a Topic (2%) + Participate in Peer Instruction (1%)
- Monday, August 15 – Submit a Bibliography (5%) + Participate in Peer Instruction (1%)
- Monday, August 29 – Submit an Outline (10%) + Participate in Peer Instruction (1%)

COURSE POLICIES

Classroom Demeanor

As members of the UCSD Community, I expect each of us to respect each other and create a class environment that is conducive to civil engagement and discourse. This includes being attentive during lecture, not engaging in side conversations (especially when your fellow students are trying to participate), demonstrating a commitment to hearing alternative viewpoints and experiences, and discussing topics in a courteous manner. It is crucial that you engage with each other **respectfully** and **empathetically**.

Office Hours

I have office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30-1:30pm at Perks (UCSD Bookstore). If you cannot make these times, let me know and we will schedule an appointment. You should come to office hours if you have a question about the reading, lectures, memos or research paper, or to discuss how you are doing in the class. However, you should come to office hours even if you do not have a problem! I would love to chat with you about this material, so please feel encouraged to stop by. I look forward to getting to know you!

Email Policies

Your UCSD email will be the primary way that I contact you. I will try to respond to your emails within 24 hours (Monday-Friday). In addition, I much prefer answering questions verbally, where we can discuss precisely what is confusing you and resolve the confusion together. Thus, if you email me with a question that will take more than a few sentences to answer, I will ask that you speak with me in office hours or make an appointment.

Accessibility

I want the course to be as accessible to as many different people as possible. If you have an OSD accommodation, please consult with me any time after class or contact me via email. I am happy to work with you. In addition, if you have had trouble with the standard approach to college courses, please come talk to me about it or send me an email, so we can brainstorm ideas to help you be successful in this class and, maybe, other classes as well.

Campus Resources for Students

Shannon Goodison (Sociology Department Undergraduate Advisor): (858) 534-4628
The Writing Center (for help with all kinds of writing): (858) 534-4911
CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services): (858) 534-3755
OASIS (tutoring and study skills): (858) 534-3760

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

I expect you to uphold UCSD's standards when it comes to academic integrity. I understand that sometimes it is hard to know what academic integrity means. As such, I have put a "Plagiarism Primer" and other resources on Academic Integrity on TritonED. You are expected to familiarize yourselves with these policies if you are otherwise unfamiliar. Any violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Academic Integrity Review Board.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Monday, August 1: Course Introduction, Grounding Concepts

Required Reading: None

Wednesday, August 3: Dimensions of Inequality: From Macro to Micro

Required Reading: Collins "Towards a Politics of Empowerment;" Anderson and Collins "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter;" and Frye "Oppression" (TritonED)

Memo Question: How should we think about social inequality?

Week 2

Monday, August 8: Class: From Policy to Families

****Submit Research Paper Topic for Peer Instruction/Instructor Review**

Required Reading: \$2.00 a Day, pages 1-63 (Chapters 1 and 2)

Wednesday, August 10: Class, continued

Required Reading: \$2.00 a Day, pages 94-155 (Chapters 4 and 5)

Memo Question: How are a family's life chances determined by policy decisions? How are they not?

Week 3

Monday: August 15: Race: From History to Bodies

**Submit Research Paper Bibliography for Peer Instruction/Instructor Review

Required Reading: Coates, pages 1-71 (Starting with “Son, Last Sunday the host of a popular news show...” and ending with “they transfigured our bodies into sugar, tobacco, cotton, and gold”)

Wednesday, August 17: Race, continued

Required Reading: Coates, pages 72-152 (Starting with poem by Amiri Baraka through the end of the book)

Memo Question: What does Coates mean when he talks about “losing his body,” or the possibility of his son losing his body?

Week 4

Monday: August 22: Race, continued

Required Reading: Excerpt from Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (TritonED)

Wednesday, August 24: Gender, from Belief to Behavior

Required Reading: hooks, pages xi-6, 13-18, 25-66 (Introduction; Feminist Politics; Sisterhood is Still Powerful; Our Bodies, Ourselves through Ending Violence)

Memo Question: Using the language from this class, explain the statement “the personal is political.”

Week 5

Monday: August 29: Gender, continued

**Submit Research Paper Outline for Peer Instruction/Instructor Review

Required Reading: hooks, 67-99, 110-118 (Feminist Masculinity through Total Bliss; Visionary Feminism), PLUS Watch “We Should All Be Feminists” (TritonED)

Wednesday, August 31: Social Change

Required Reading: Excerpt from King, *Why We Can't Wait* and Kivel “What Should an Ally Do?” (Optional: Baumgardner and Richards, “Manifesta”) (TritonED)

**Research Paper due by 6:00pm on Friday, July 31, toTurnitin.com