

Princeton University
FRS 135

How Inequality Shapes Communities in the United States and in a Global World

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A Freshman Seminar cosponsored by the Center for Human Values
and the Community-Based Learning Initiative

Office Hours: by appointment

Tuesday, 1:30-4:20

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Rockefeller College, 1917 Room

Objectives:

This seminar will explore how inequality shapes our selves and how various groups make sense of social differences. The prime focus will be the class divide between the college-educated and workers, but we will also consider the differences between whites and blacks, men and women, and natives and immigrants. Topics to be addressed include: Is the middle class living in growing isolation from other classes and races? Are we willing to take responsibility toward an increasingly small circle of "people like us"? How do conceptions of social membership vary across groups? How do the media shape our understanding of differences between groups? These questions will also be discussed in a comparative context, by examining how American lines of division contrast with those of other societies. We will also ask ourselves how globalization transforms our conceptions of social membership and community. Ethnography, interview-based studies, and surveys will help us to understand these issues.

Readings:

A reading packet can be purchased at Pequod (6 Nassau, tel: 921-7888). The following book can be purchased at the U-Store:

- Charles C. Ragin, 1994. *Constructing Social Research*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Saskia Sassen, 1999. *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: New Press.
- Virginia Valian. 1998. *Why So Slow. The Advancement of Women*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

In addition, a few books on qualitative research methods are available for your perusal at the reserve at the Firestone Library:

- Raymond Gorden, 1980. *Interviewing*. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press
- Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, 1983. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock
- Steven Taylor and Robert Bogdan, 1984. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*. New York: Wiley.

Requirements:

- 1) The main requirement for the course is a term paper (15 pages) based interviews conducted in the Princeton community or elsewhere -- a list of topics chosen by last year's participants is attached. The class will operate as a research workshop where to discuss your research in progress. This paper is due on January 11 and represents 30 percent of the grade. The outline of project is to be turned in on week 5 (October 19) and should be discussed with me prior to this date. This outline represents 10 percent of the grade. A brief report on your paper should also be presented in class on December 15. This presentation represents 10 percent of the grade.
- 2) You are expected to make a few additional presentations in class for an additional 25 percent of the final grade. Presenters are responsible for emailing to the group questions to guide our discussion by Monday morning.
- 3) For mid-term, I am asking that you conduct an interview with a member of the African-American community in Princeton (25 percent of the grade). This interview will provide information on the history of the community and on how blacks establish social membership in a white upper middle class town. Sample questions will be developed in class on week 3 and 4.

Week 1 (September 21): Introduction: Collective Life

Robert Reich, 1991. "The Secession of the Successful." *New York Times Magazine*. January 20th.

Georg Simmel, 1950. "The Stranger." Pp. 402-408 in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff. New York: Free Press.

Benjamin Anderson, 1983. *Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso. Pp. 1-8.

Jeffrey Alexander, 1992. "Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification: On the Polarizing Discourse of Civil Society." Pp. 289-308 in *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, edited by Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 2 (September 28): Studying Culture

Charles C. Ragin, 1994. *Constructing Social Research*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, chapters 1-5.

Daniel Bertaux, 1981. *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in The Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richard Jenkins, 1994. "Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization, and Power." *Racial and Ethnic Studies* 17 (2): 3-223.

Guest: Mary Miller, Community-Based Learning Initiative, Princeton University

Week 3 (October 5): The Structure of Inequality in the United States and Globally

Douglas Massey, 1996. "The Age of Extremes: Concentrated Affluence and Poverty in the Twenty-first Century." *Demography* 33(4): 395-412.

Claude S. Fischer, Michael Hout, Martin Sanchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss, 1996. *Inequality by Design*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 102-157.

York W. Bradshaw and Michael Wallace. 1996. *Global Inequalities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Pp. 15-58.

Week 4 (October 12): How do Race and Class Shape our Selves (1)

Guest: Professor Elijah Anderson, University of Pennsylvania

Elijah Anderson, 1999. *The Code of the Street*. New York: W.W. Norton, pp. 15-34 and 66-106.

Katherine S. Newman and Catherine Ellis, 1999. "There's No Shame in My Game: Status and Stigma among Harlem's Working Poor." Pp. 151-181 in *The Cultural Territories of Race: Black and White Boundaries*, edited by Michèle Lamont. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mary Patillo-McCoy, 1999. *Black Picket Fences. Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 68-90.

Week 5 (October 19): How do Race and Class Shape our Selves (2)

Turn in outline of project

Speaker: Monday, October 18: Maria Kefalas, Department of Sociology and Populations Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania “*Lawns and Order: Home and Place in a White Working-Class Chicago Neighborhood.*”

Michèle Lamont. Forthcoming. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class and Immigration.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapter 1.

Michèle Lamont. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class.* Chicago: University Of Chicago Press. Chapter 2.

7pm: Videos: “True Color” and “The Princeton Plan” (on the black community in Princeton) (jointly with the seminar on “Finding Voices: Perspectives on Race and Class” (Prof. Kitsi Watterson)

Week 6 (October 26): How Does Gender Shape our Selves

Virginia Valian, 1998. *Why So Slow. The Advancement of Women.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8.

Harriet Evans. 1995. “Defining Difference: The “Scientific” Construction of Sexuality and Gender in the People’s Republic of China.” *Signs.* 10 (2): 357-394.

November 2: Fall break

Week 7 (November 9): How Americans View Various Groups and their Place in American Society

Turn in mid-term paper (interview)

Thomas D. Cook and Thomas R. Curtin. 1987. “The Mainstream and the Underclass: Why are the Differences so Salient and the Similarities so Unobtrusive.” Pp. 217-264 in *Social Comparison, Social Justice, and Relative Deprivation: Theoretical, Empirical, and Policy Perspective*, edited by John C. Masters and William P. Smith. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Link, Bruce G., Sharon Schwartz, Robert Moore, Jo Phelan, Elmer Struening, Ann Stueve, and Mary Ellen Colten. 1995. “Public Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs about Homeless People: Evidence for Compassion Fatigue.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 23 (4): 533-556.

Aihwa Ong, 1996. “Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making. Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States.” *Current Anthropology* 37 (5): 737-762.

Week 8 (November 16): Image Making: How do the News Media Shape our Perceptions of Groups?

Guest: Robert Jackall, Williams College, co- author of *Experts with Symbols: Advertising, Public Relations, and the Ethos of Advocacy*.

Robert M. Entman, 1992. "Blacks in the News: Television, Modern Racism, and Cultural Change." *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (2): 341-361.

Martin Gilens, 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 5 and 6.

Week 9 (November 23): How does Entertainment Television Shape our Perception of Groups?

Speaker: Michelle Fowles, Department of Sociology, Princeton University

Butsch, Richard, and Lynda M. Glennon. 1983. "Social Class: Frequency Trends in Domestic Situation Comedy, 1946-1978." *Journal of Broadcasting* 17 (1): 77-81.

Joshua Gamson, 1998. "Publicity Traps: Television Talk Shows and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Visibility." *Sexuality* 1 (1): 11-41.

Herman Gray. 1995. *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness."* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapters 4-5.

Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis. 1992. *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, Audiences and the Myth of the American Dream*. Boulder: Westview Press. Chapters 4 and 6.

Week 10 (November 30) Comparative Perspectives

Michèle Lamont, forthcoming. *The Dignity of Working Men*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6.

Week 11 (November 30): Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

Saskia Sassen, 1999. *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: New Press.

Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, ed. 1998. *Cosmopolitics. Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 1-44.

Week 12 (December 14): Conclusion and Presentations of Term Papers

"How Inequality Shapes our Communities in the United States and in a Global World."

Papers written for FRS 157, fall 1998

Projects based in the students' community of origin:

The Downsizing of IBM and the Transformation of a Community: Dutchess County, New York, 1988-1998.

Virginia's Chickahominy and Mattaponi: Does Living on a Reservation Affect a Tribe's Assimilation?

The Success of Male and Females in School: a Comparison of All-Males and All-Female High School

The Rise of Materialism in Elite Prep School Students: America's Youth and Inglehart's Theory of Value Change.

The Changing Face of Canarsie, Brooklyn.

The Confederate Battle Flag in Dallas and on the Web: Symbol of Pride or Racism?

Projects based in the Princeton area:

The Controversy at Community Park: A Sociological Survey of Race and Class in Community Relations.

Projects based on the Princeton campus:

Assimilation into the American Community: Comparing and Contrasting the Experiences of Asian international Students and Asian American Students.

Christianity, Secularism, What's the Difference? A Qualitative Look into the Lives of Six Christian and Six Secular Students at Princeton University.

What Part of Jamaica is That? A Study of Students of Caribbean Background and how this Background Affects their Princeton University Experience.

Struggling with Flawlessness: Female College Students and the Perfect Body.

Exclusive Eating: A Study of Black Student Grouping at Princeton University.

