Sociology 3803: Inequality in a Global Perspective (Section 001)

Semester: Spring 2014 Office: Kaufman Hall 317

Instructor: Rob Clark Office Hours: MWF (1:30pm – 2:30pm)

Class time: MWF (12:30pm – 1:20pm) Phone: 405-325-2566

Classroom: Kaufman Hall 138 Email: robclark@ou.edu

# Course Description

We are accustomed to thinking of inequality in terms of disparities that exist between the rich and the poor within the United States. What does it mean, then, to think about “inequality in a global perspective”? This can refer to a number of different concepts. First, just as inequality exists within the United States, we can think of inequality that exists within other countries all over the world. Second, we can consider inequalities that exist *between* countries, comparing the average level of wealth in the U.S. to the average level of wealth in, say, Somalia. Alternatively, we can become “sociologists without borders” and focus on how much inequality exists if we treat all seven billion people on this planet as part of one big group.

In this course, we will examine global inequality in its many dimensions and forms, addressing a number of important questions along the way. What types of inequality do we care about, and how much inequality actually exists? What’s the difference between inequality and mobility, and which is more important? Should we care about poverty more than inequality, or are they both equally deserving of our attention? Finally, what explains inequality, and how has it changed over time? Why have some poor nations developed quickly, while others have remained stagnant? How does globalization affect inequality? And what can we, as individuals, do about any of this?

##### Course Books

The following books are available on Amazon (http://www.amazon.com):

Boo, Katherine. 2012. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai*

*Undercity*. Random House.

Deaton, Angus. 2013. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*.

Princeton University Press.

Shelley, Louise. 2010. *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

##### Course Requirements

You can earn a maximum of 1,000 points in this class based on the following course items:

##### **Course Item Maximum Points Percent of Total**

Exam #1 200 20%

Exam #2 200 20%

Exam #3 200 20%

Quizzes 200 20%

Paper 200 20%

#### Total 1,000 100%

All grades will be posted on D2L (<https://learn.ou.edu>).

*Exams (60% of final grade)*: There are three scheduled exams, each worth 20% of your final grade. Scheduled exams will consist of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The final exam will not be cumulative. Students who miss a scheduled exam may request a make-up. However, students must request make-up exams within 24 hours of the scheduled exam, and students must take the make-up within a week of the scheduled exam. Make-up exams will consist entirely of essay questions.

*Quizzes (20% of final grade)*: Throughout the semester, I will administer 20 quizzes that test your comprehension of the assigned readings. Each quiz will be worth 10 points (or 1% of your final grade). At the end of the semester, I will add 30 points to every student’s total (I will cap scores at 200), meaning that each student gets THREE freebies. In other words, you can miss three quizzes without it hurting your grade. I structure my quiz policy this way so that it becomes unnecessary for you to inform me of any absences due to prior commitments, emergencies, illnesses, etc.

*Paper (20% of final grade)*: Each student will write a paper about a specific type of inequality as it exists across the world (e.g., infant mortality, literacy, HIV prevalence). Part of your paper will involve data analysis using real cross-national data, so you will want to select a topic with this in mind. I recommend using data from the World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/>). On February 19th (Wednesday), we will meet in a computer lab (room TBA), where I will describe the paper requirements in greater detail (see also “Guide to Paper,” posted on D2L). I will approve your paper topic and data on a first-come, first-serve basis (during office hours). Select your paper topic and data no later than March 14th (Friday). Meeting this deadline is worth 10 points (5% of your final score). Papers should be at least 1,500 words long, not including references (each paper should include at least five references). Overall, your paper is worth 200 points (or 20% of your final grade). Papers are due on April 28th (Monday) at 12:00pm.

*Extra Credit*: You also have the opportunity to earn a maximum of 10 extra credit points by writing a 1,000-word paper, due on May 2nd (Friday) at 12:00pm. There are several options for the extra credit assignment. You may (a) apply the video *Guns, Germs, and Steel* to the assigned readings, (b) develop your own theory of global inequality, or (c) propose your own topic (subject to my approval). See me in advance for details.

Papers (as well as the extra credit) will be submitted to me via the Dropbox on D2L. Papers MUST be in Microsoft Word and conform to standard formatting (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins). Papers that deviate from the above in any way will not be accepted, and you will receive zero points. Late papers will be accepted, but points will be deducted for tardiness.

Course Grades

The total points you earn will be assigned a final letter grade based on the following scale:

#### Total Points Earned Percent out of 1000 Final Letter Grade

900 – 1000 Points 90.0% – 100.0% A

800 – 899 Points 80.0% – 89.9% B

700 – 799 Points 70.0% – 79.9% C

600 – 699 Points 60.0% – 69.9% D

0 – 599 Points 0.0% – 59.9% F

Attendance Policy

Although I do not formally take attendance, I highly encourage all students to attend all classes and to arrive on time. In the unfortunate and rare event that you must arrive late to class, I ask that you please be “mousy.” This means entering the classroom and finding your seat quickly, quietly, and covertly. The less you are seen or heard by me or the other students, the less of a distraction you will be to the class. Note: this is not an invitation to be tardy. Mousiness will only get you so far.

# Email Contact

I appreciate that my scheduled office hours may not be convenient for all of you. Therefore, I am happy to meet with students by appointment. In addition, I encourage you to contact me via email. However, I ask that you please refrain from sending me emails involving substantive questions. A substantive question might be something like, “What can you tell me about global inequality?” Please reserve such discussion for office visits, as any attempt to respond to these sorts of questions via email can become unwieldy and time consuming.

Course Syllabus

Also, I ask that you read the syllabus carefully before you ask me any questions (whether by email or in person). You may be surprised by the amount of handy information this document contains. For example, students frequently ask me questions that involve simple forecasting, such as “Can I still pass this class?” Because you have a copy of this syllabus, and because I post grades on D2L, you know as much as I do regarding the grades you’ve earned thus far, how much each requirement is worth, and how many points are left to be earned. In sum, know your syllabus well, as it may contain the answer to many of your questions.

# Academic Misconduct

I strongly urge students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding academic misconduct. In particular, students are encouraged to read the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity,” the “Academic Integrity Code,” the “Interactive Tutorial: Avoiding Plagiarism,” and “Nine Things You Should Know About Plagiarism,” all of which are available online under the “Students” tab at the Academic Integrity website (<http://integrity.ou.edu/index.html>).

##### Disability Accommodations

Students in need of disability accommodations should contact Chelle’ Guttery, Director of the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (phone: 405-325-3852; email: drc@ou.edu). The DRC in Norman is located at 620 Elm Avenue, Suite 166, at the Goddard Health Center. For more information, visit the DRC online (<http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html>).

##### Writing Center

Students interested in receiving additional support may wish to contact OU’s Writing Center. For more information, visit the Writing Center online (<http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter>).

# Course Schedule

**Week 1 (1.13, 1.15, 1.17): Introduction**

Boo: Prologue (Between Roses)

#### Week 2 (1.20, 1.22, 1.24): Living Poor

Boo: Part I (Undercitizens)

\***No Class on 1.20 (Monday)**\*

**Week 3 (1.27, 1.29, 1.31): The Shape of Inequality**

Boo: Part II (The Business of Burning)

#### Week 4 (2.3, 2.5, 2.7): Convergence vs. Mobility

Boo: Part III (A Little Wildness)

#### Week 5 (2.10, 2.12, 2.14): Inequality vs. Poverty

Boo: Part IV (Up and Out)

#### Week 6 (2.17, 2.19, 2.21): Guns, Germs, and Steel

Deaton: Introduction and Chapter 1

**\*Exam #1 on 2.17 (Monday)\***

**\*Meet in Computer Lab on 2.19 (Wednesday)\***

#### Week 7 (2.24, 2.26, 2.28): Guns, Germs, and Steel

Deaton: Part I (Life and Death)

#### Week 8 (3.3, 3.5, 3.7): The Modern World-System

Deaton: Part II (Money)

**Week 9 (3.10, 3.12, 3.14): Colonialism**

Deaton: Part III (Help)

**\*Paper Topics Due on 3.14 (Friday)\***

#### Week 10 (3.17, 3.19, 3.21): Spring Break

\***No Class on 3.17 (Monday), 3.19 (Wednesday), and 3.21 (Friday)**\*

#### Week 11 (3.24, 3.26, 3.28): Inequality Within Countries

Shelley: Introduction

**\*Exam #2 on 3.28 (Friday)\***

#### Week 12 (3.31, 4.2, 4.4): Africa

Shelley: Part I (The Rise and Costs of Human Trafficking)

#### Week 13 (4.7, 4.9, 4.11): East Asia

Shelley: Part II (The Financial Side of Human Trafficking)

-Chapter 3 (Human Trafficking as Transnational Organized Crime)

**Week 14 (4.14, 4.16, 4.18): Democracy and Human Rights**

Shelley: Part III (Regional Perspectives)

-Chapter 5 (Asian Trafficking)

-Chapter 6 (Human Trafficking in Eurasia and Eastern Europe)

#### Week 15 (4.21, 4.23, 4.25): Gender Inequality

Shelley: Part III (Regional Perspectives)

-Chapter 7 (Trafficking in Europe)

-Chapter 8 (Trafficking in the United States)

#### Week 16 (4.28, 4.30, 5.2): Case Studies

Shelley: Part III (Regional Perspectives)

-Chapter 9 (Human Trafficking in Latin America and Africa)

**\*Paper Due on 4.28 (Monday) at 12:00pm\***

**\*Exam #3 on 5.5 (Monday) (1:30pm – 3:30pm)\***

*Note*: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester.