COURSE DESCRIPTION
According to the course catalog, Sociology 165 is “[A]n examination of the causes and consequences of inequality along the dimensions of social class, race/ethnicity, gender, citizenship status, and/or sexualities. The approach will be local, national, and international.”

This class will explore why the USA has such a high level of poverty, what is the relationship between its high poverty rate and it being the wealthiest nation in the world, why is inequality increasing between the wealthy and the poor, and what are various solutions to this poverty and excessive inequality. This semester will also include a section on the rise of economic nationalism, the “Alt-Right”, and Donald Trump, and their connection to inequality.

Note that Sociologists are interested in examining social or public problems and solutions. As the renowned sociologist C. Wright Mills stated, “personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues - and in terms of the problems of history making.” For example, if in a nation, there is just a small minority of the population in poverty, then it is the individual’s personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the person and her or his skills. But if in that nation, there are 43 million people in poverty (15% of the population), then that is a social problem, and relief must come from a change in social structure (i.e., the arrangement of society). Mills called this approach to understanding reality the sociological imagination, which we will use throughout this course.

READINGS
The readings for this course are Ending Extreme Inequality and a course reader. The book, which I wrote, is available at the Spartan Bookstore or on-line. The reader is available at San Jose Copy (408-297-6698), which is located on 109 E. Santa Clara Street, two stores down from the Chevron gas station.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
This course has four course requirements: quizzes, essay exams, a creative project, and participation.

10 Very Short Quizzes (20% of total grade)
The purpose of these very short quizzes (i.e., less than 5 minutes) is to encourage reading. In order to encourage the reading process, you will be given short quizzes throughout the semester. If you do the reading for each class, these short quizzes will be very easy to answer.

Two Essay Exams in Class (20% each, 40% of total grade)
The exams are your opportunity to demonstrate that you have done the reading, thought about it deeply, and can explain it.

Creative Project (20%)
The creative project provides an opportunity to explore an issue from the course through a video, drawing, poster board, poetry, photography, or music. You will also write a one-page overview of your creative project.

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Participation (20%)
The purpose of evaluating your participation is to encourage and reward students who come to class prepared to discuss and engage with the reading. Your participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

Excellence (A) requires that you play a leadership role in the classroom discussion. This leadership role includes reading and thoughtfully considering the text, discussing points articulately and responding intelligently to other's views, asking insightful questions, and taking responsibility for the overall quality of the conversation.

Above average (B) requires that you participate regularly in the classroom discussions, demonstrate good knowledge of the text, discuss points articulately and respond intelligently to other's views; work to achieve understanding, listen to other viewpoints, ask sound questions, but you do not take a strong leadership role in the overall class discussion.

Average (C) requires that you follow the discussion actively in the classroom, make occasional comments, have a basic knowledge of the text, and sometimes ask questions.

Below average (D) requires that you occupy a seat and occasionally show signs of life.

Failure (F) requires that you occupy a seat but show no signs of life.

At the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate your level of participation. This evaluation will be taken seriously when participation grades are determined.

GRADING SCALE
Since the various parts of the course add up to 100%, each percent equals a point. For example, your participation is 20% of your grade; thus, this assignment is worth 20 points. The scale that I use to measure your work is the following:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>93-97</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>59 &amp; below</td>
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EXTRA CREDIT: SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT
Students who want to receive extra credit can be involved in a service-learning project focused on poverty and income inequality, and requires a 1-2 hour commitment per week throughout the semester. Students will be required to keep track of your hours in a log. In addition, you will be required to write 3-4 paragraphs about what you are learning in your project, to be turned in on the first of each month. If the service-learning hours and reflection papers are completed, students will receive a minimum of a 1/3rd to a full grade increase on your final grade, depending on the quality of the work.

There will also be other extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. To receive the extra credit, you need to go to the campus event, and then write 3-4 paragraphs reflection paper: (1) describing what you saw and heard (i.e., the major points and key lessons of the event), and (2) integrating your insights with the reading in Wealth, Poverty, and Privilege. If you do this, you will receive +2 on a quiz score and if you don’t, you will receive +1.5 or less. They must be turned in 1 week after the event. If not, they will receive +1 on a quiz score (or less). You can go to a total of 5 extra credit events.
SJSU WRITING CENTER
The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall in Room 126. Please take advantage of this resource. The Writing Center website is: http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter.

FACULTY WEB PAGE
My faculty web page is www.sjsu.edu/people/scott.myers-lipton. You can also get to my web page at the SJSU home page and go to More Quick Links>Faculty Pages link.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
According to the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, “cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means (see Section 1.1.1 through 1.1.7), while plagiarism is “the act of representing the work of another as one’s own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and/or submitting it to fulfill academic requirements (see Section 1.2.1 and 1.2.2). The university’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at: http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf.

If I determine there has been a violation of this policy, students will receive an automatic zero for the paper. In addition, I will file a report with the Academic Affairs Judicial Officer regarding the violation of the academic integrity policy. (Please note: I often checks papers on the web!) To learn more about student conduct and ethical development, go to http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT
Sociology 165 complies with campus policy regarding the American Disabilities Act. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability (e.g., if you need a note taker, you need to view the course readings on a screen, or you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated), please contact me as soon as possible. In addition, if your disability Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that a student with a disability register at SJSU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC, Admin 110, 924-6000) to establish a record of that disability.

OTHER INFORMATION
1. Cell Phones and Computers: All cell phones are BANNED from this classroom. Please do not have them out. If you have a cell phone out during class, I will give you a warning, and then the next time it is out, I will ask you to leave the class for the day. You are free to return the following class, of course, without the cell phone. In addition, any type of networking on the computer is not allowed. If you use your computer, and it is open to Facebook, gmail, etc, I will give you one warning, and then ask you to leave the class if it occurs again.

2. Office Hours: My office hours are on Tuesday and Thursdays. Office hours are generally used to help clarify information from lectures, discussions, group activities, readings, essays, or social action projects. However, at least once this semester, I would appreciate it if you stopped by my office so that I can get to know you better on a personal basis.
READING SCHEDULE

1/25  Discuss Syllabus and Course

1/30  Social Class and Privilege

          Alhanti, “Which Income Class are You?”, p. 4-6
          Eitzen and Johnson, “Social Class in America”, p. 7-8
          Scott and Leonard, “Shadowy Lines…”, p. 8-12

2/1   USA is #1 in Wealth and Income Inequality, Child Poverty & Mortality

READER:  Sherman, “America is the Richest and Most Unequal…”, p. 13-14
          Melendez, “American Number One in Wealth”, p. 15-16
          OECD, In it Together, p. 17
          Buchheit, “Numbers are Staggering: US is World Leader”, p. 18-20
          Trimble, “U.S. Kids More Likely to Die”, p. 21-22
          Peterson,” McDonald’s and Starbucks CEO Make More”, p. 23
          Oxfam, “People Own the Same as Half World…” p. 24-29

Video:  We are #1, Jon Stewart

2/6   Terms: Stratification, Quintiles, Un / Deserving Poor, and the 1%

READER:  What Divides Us, p. 30-32
          Myers-Lipton, “The Early Republic & Pre-Civil War”, p. 33-37
          Investopedia, “Quintiles”, p. 38
          US Census Bureau: “Table H1 and H3”, p. 39-40
          Investopedia, “Income Shares by Quintile, US”, p. 41
          Saez, “US Top 1 Percent…” p. 42-43
          Charts on Income Inequality p. 44-50

Simulation: Steps and wealth chairs and ThinkReality video

2/8   Pattern: Increasing Inequality and Lack of Social Mobility

READER:  Ashkenas, “9 New Findings About Inequality in the US”, p. 51-55
          Egan, “American’s Inequality Problem is Getting…”, p. 56-57
          Ginsburg, “Incomes & Inequality”, p. 58-65
          Semuels, “Poor at 20, Poor for Life”, p. 66-67
          Chatterly, “Improving Opportunities for Econ Opportunity”, p. 68-71
2/13  Terms: Income Inequality and the Gini Coefficient, and the .01%

READER: Thoma, “How Do We Know Income Inequality…”, 72-74
OurWorldinData.org, Redistribution Through Tax…”, p. 75-83
US States by Gini Coefficient, p. 84-86
Ballard, “Many of Trump’s Policies Will Further…”, p. 87-88

2/15  Terms: Wealth Inequality, .01% and Capitalism

READER: Amadeo, “What is Average American Net Worth?”, p. 89-93
Thompson, How You, I, and Everyone…”, p. 94-97
Johnson, “The Forest and The Trees”, p. 98-101
Thompson, “What is Poverty”, p. 102-104

Video: Capitalism: A Love Story

2/20  5th Quintile: The Bottom 20%, i.e., the Poor

Poverty In the US, p. 113-116
DeVore, “Poverty in America by The Numbers”, p. 117-119
Grimes, “What Poor Feels Like”, p. 120-121

Video: 60 minutes

2/22  5th Quintile: Poverty & People Without Homes

READER: Myers-Lipton, “Ed Markham, “Man with the Hoe”, p. 127-128
National Homeless.org, “Why are People Homeless”, 129-134
Har, “Silicon Valley’s Homeless”, p. 139-141

2/27  2nd to 4th Quintiles: Middle Classes – Patterns: Reducing and Lack of Social Mobility

READER: Pew Research, “The American Class Loses…”, p. 142-144
White, “So Long, Middle Class…”, 145-146
Lunby, “Why America’s Middle Class is Losing…”, p. 147-149
Avalos, “Income High but at What Price?”, p. 150
Egan, “No Degree and Now Way Back”, 151-152
EPI: “Median Household Income Made Historic Gains…”, 153-4

Video: Waging a Living
3/1 Extreme Inequality Analysis: The .01% Plan

Fortune 500 Graphs, p. 159-163
Gilson, “It’s Not the 1 Percent Controlling Politics…”, p. 164-165
McKibben, “The Koch Brothers’ New Brand”, p. 166-173

Video: Born Rich

3/6 Analysis on Inequality: Tax Policy

“A Millionaire’s Tax Rate”, p 179
EPI: The US Economy is Not Suffering…”, p. 180
Editorial: “The Tax Bill that Inequality Created”, p. 186-187
Tax Policy Center, “Preliminary Distributional Analysis”, 188-93

Video: Inequality in America, Reich on marginal tax rates

3/8 Analysis on Inequality: Minimum Wage

READER: Cooper, “The Federal Minimum Wage Has…”, p. 194-195
EPI: “The US Economy Can Afford…”, p. 196-197
Myers-Lipton, “Raise the Wage in San Jose”, 198-199
Noguchi, “Measure Set Sights on Wage Increase”, p. 200
Guevera and Krenek, Higher Minimum Wage…”, p. 201
Druzin, Berkeley Study: Here’s how SJ Min Wage”, 211-212

3/13 Analysis on Inequality: Unions

Graph: “Private vs. Public Sector Unionization Rate”, p. 220
Semuels, “Fewer Unions, Lower Pay…”, p. 221-223
Fairchild, “Middle Class Decline…”, p. 224-225
EPI, “When Workers Have More Leverage…”, p. 226-227
Schmitt and Zipperer, “UnionBusting is Big…,” p. 228-229
Eidelsen, “Union Power Is Putting Pressure on Silicon…”, 230-232

Video: The High Price of Low Prices

EXAM #1 on 3/20: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THE MATERIAL ABOVE
3/15 Analysis on Inequality: Intersectionality—Race and Class

READER: Definitions of Racism, p. 233
King, Speech, 10th Anniversary SCLC, “Curious Formula”, p. 234
Pew, “King's Dream Remains Elusive & Demographics”, p. 235-250
Bonk, “San Jose Statement”, p. 253-254
Myers-Lipton, “Re-establishment of SJSU’s EOP”, p. 255-255A

3/20 IN-CLASS, ESSAY EXAM #1

3/22 Extreme Inequality (Race and Class) in 3 Major Events→ Katrina, Occupy, BLM

READER: Quigley, “New Orleans Pain Index…”, p. 256-257
West, “Exiles from a City and from a Nation,” p. 258-259
Quigley, “How to Destroy an African American …”, p. 260-263
Gelder, “This Changes Everything”, p. 264-266
McClatchy-Tribune, “Rioting in Ferguson prompted…”, p. 270-274

Video: When The Levees Broke

4/3 Analysis on Inequality: Intersectionality—Race, Class, & Gender

Kerby, “How Pay Inequity Hurts…”, p. 277-284
Insight, “Lifting As We Climb”, p. 285-296

4/5 Analysis on Inequality: Rise of Trump, Economic Nationalism, and Alt Right

Green, “It was Cultural Anxiety that Drove…”, p. 299-300
Nelson, Steve Bannon Hails Trumps Economic…”, p. 301-302
Hirsh, “Why Trump and Sanders Were Inevitable”, p. 303 -306
Roy, “What is the Alt-Right”, p. 307

4/10 An Economic Bill of Rights: Right to a Job

BOOK: Prologue and Ch. 1, ix-xvii and p. 1-21
READER: Kopf, “Trump’s new chief Economist is Known…”, p. 308-309

4/12 The Right to a Living Wage

BOOK: Myers-Lipton, Ch. 2, p. 23-32: Problem & History Section
4/17  Ending Extreme Inequality: Living Wage (students choose campaign to discuss)
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 2, p. 32-41: Current Approaches

4/19  Ending Extreme Inequality: The Right to Decent Housing
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 3, p. 43-55: Problem & History

4/24  DUE: Creative Project

4/26  Ending Extreme Inequality: Housing (students choose)
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 3, p. 55-64: Current Approaches
READER:  Alcindor, “Don’t Make Housing For the Poor Too Cozy”, p. 310-312

5/1  Ending Extreme Inequality: The Right to a Good Education
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 4, p. 65-83, Problem & History

5/3  Ending Extreme Inequality: The Right to a Good Education (students choose)
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 4: Current Approaches, p. 83-93
READER:  Mead, “Betsy DeVos & Plan to Break Public Schools”, p. 313-317

5/8  Ending Extreme Inequality: Right to Adequate Medical Care
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 5, p. 95-109

5/10  Ending Extreme Inequality: Right to Adequate Medical Care (students choose)
BOOK:  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 5

Video: The Matrix

5/22  FINALS: IN-CLASS, ESSAY EXAM #2
9:45-12 pm