Course and Contact Information
Instructor: Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton
Office Location: DMH 210
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Office Hours: Tu. & Th., 12 pm-1 pm
Class Days/Time: Tu. & Th., 9-10:15 am
Classroom: Clark Hall 234
Prerequisites: SOCI 1 or equivalent

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.” In light of the catalog description, this class will explore what are the implications of the top 0.1% controlling as much wealth as the bottom 90% in the USA, why is inequality increasing between the wealthy and the poor, what is the relationship between the USA’s high poverty rate and it being the wealthiest nation in the world, and what are various solutions to our excessive inequality and poverty.

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.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the various components of social class.
2. Analyze data on stratification using quintiles and the gini co-efficient.
3. Explain why income and wealth inequality has increased in the USA.
4. Evaluate various solutions to income and wealth inequality.

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Required Texts/Readings

Textbook
The textbook is by Scott Myers-Lipton, and is entitled *Ending Extreme Inequality: An Economic Bill of Rights to End Poverty* (ISBN: 10: 9781612057279). It is available at Spartan Bookstore or on-line.

Other Readings
There is a reader for this course. The reader is available at San Jose Copies (408-297-6698), which is located on 109 E. Santa Clara Street, two stores down from the Chevron gas station.

Course Requirements and Assignments
Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

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

**Eight 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.

**One Take-Home Exam and Two In-class Exams (20% each; 60% of total grade)**
The three exams are your opportunity to demonstrate that you have done the reading, thought about it deeply, and can explain it.

**Creative Project (10%)**
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 1-page overview of your creative project.

**Participation (10%)**
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.

**Final Examination or Evaluation**

In this class, the final will be a final exam.

**Grading Information**

Since the various parts of the course add up to 100%, each percent equals a point. For example, your exam 1 is 20% of your grade; thus, this assignment is worth 20 points. The scale that I use to measure your work is the following:

- 98-100=A+
- 93-97=A
- 88-89=B+
- 83-87=B
- 78-79=C+
- 73-77=C
- 68-69=D+
- 63-67=D
- 59 & below =F

**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.
Classroom Protocol

1. **Cell Phones and Computers:** Please do NOT use your cell phone once the class starts. If you need to answer a text, step outside and do so. In addition, any type of social networking on your computer is NOT allowed. If you use your computer to take notes or do the reading, do not have it also open to Facebook, gmail, etc. This makes me very unhappy, as it is a block to your participation, as well as the group process.

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.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 ([http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/)
Course Schedule

WEEK 1:
1/23 DISCUSS SYLLABUS AND CLASS

WEEK 2:
1/28 SOCIAL CLASS

Reader:
Alhanati, “Which Income Class...?”, p. 4-6
Frankenfield, “Which Income Class...?”, p. 7-15
HM Harcourt, “What Divides Us: Stratification”, p. 16-17

1/30 QUINTILES AND THE TOP 1% & .1%

Reader:
Investopedia, “Quintiles”, p. 18
Ginsburgh, “Incomes & Inequality: Executive Summary”, p. 19-23
EPI: Graph, “Cumulative Percent Change in Real Annual Wages, by Wage Group...”, p. 24
Advisor Perspective: Graph, “Real (Inflation-Adjusted) Average Household Income”, p. 25
Thomas, “How Do We Know Income Inequality is Getting Worse?”, p. 26-28

Video: Capitalism: A Love Story

WEEK 3:

2/4 USA INCOME INEQUALITY: WE ARE #1

Reader:
Gongloff, “U.S. Has the Worst Income Inequality in the Developed World...”, p. 29-30
Leonard, “Our Broken Economy, in One Simple Chart”, p. 31-33
Stewart, “One Chart that Shows How Much Worse Income Inequality is in America...”, p. 34-35
Peterson, “McDonald’s & Starbucks CEOs Make More than $9,200...”, p. 36
Washington Center, “Gender Wage Inequality in the United States”, p. 37-40
Kendall, “Income Inequality in the Bay Area is Among Nation’s Highest”, p. 41-42
Ingraham, “How Rising Inequality Hurts Everyone, Even the Rich”, p. 43-45

Video: We are #1, Jon Stewart
2/6 USA WEALTH INCOME INEQUALITY: WE ARE #1

**Reader:**
Sherman, “America is the Richest, and Most Unequal, Country”, p. 46-47
Bruenig, “Top 1% Up $21 Trillion. Bottom 50% Down $900 Billion”, p. 48-49
Hjelmgaard, “Vast Majority of New Wealth Last Year Went to Top 1%”, p. 50
Amadeo, “What is Average American Net Worth?”, p. 51-54
Thompson, “The Racial Wealth Gap: Addressing America’s Most Pressing Epidemic”, p. 57-58
Thompson, “How You, I, and Everyone Got the Top 1 Percent All Wrong”, p. 64-67

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**WEEK 4**

2/11 USA POVERTY HISTORY: Native American Contributions to Egalitarianism; Early Republic & Pre-Civil War America; After the Civil War

**Reader:** Myers-Lipton, p. 68-84

*Video: ABC Diane Sawyer*

2/13 USA POVERTY HISTORY: The (Un) Progressive Era; Great Depression & New Deal

**Reader:** Myers-Lipton, p. 85-102

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**WEEK 5:**

2/18 USA POVERTY HISTORY: War on Poverty; Dismantling New Deal & War on Poverty

**Reader:** Myers-Lipton, p. 103-123

2/20 TODAY’S POOR (BOTTOM 20%): U.S. is ‘World Leader’ in Child Poverty

**Reader:**
Graph, Childhood Poverty, p. 128
UNM Open Library, “Explaining Poverty” p. 129-135
UC Davis, “How is Poverty Measured in the United States?”, p. 136-137
Santa Clara County Housing Authority, “Income Limits”, p. 138
Graphs, “Poverty Rates”, p. 139-140
Sauter, Faces of Poverty”, p. 141-147

*Video: 60 minutes*
WEEK 6:

2/25 HOUSELESS: People Without Homes

Reader:
Cooper, “Rent is Obscene Here”, p. 148-153
Graff, CSU Shocker, Up to 57,000 students Homeless, p. 154-155
Deruy, “Shocking Number of Homeless Students in San Jose Sparks Outrage”, p. 156-158
Martin, “Silicon Valley Housing Shortage Worsens for Lowest Income Earners”, p. 159-160
National Law Center, “Homelessness in America: Overview of Data and Causes”, p. 163-165

DUE: Take-Home Exam 1

Video: SHA

2/27 BOTTOM 60%: Working and Middle Classes (4th and 3rd Quintiles)

Reader:
Tavernise, With His Jobs Gone, an Autoworker Wonders, “What Am I as a Man?”, p. 167-172
White, “So Long, Middle Class: Middle-Income Jobs are Disappearing the Fastest”, p. 173-174
Krause & Sawhill, “7 Reasons to worry about the American Middle Class”, p. 175-188
Kochhar, “The American Middle is Stable in Size, but Losing Ground…”, p. 189-193

Video: A Divided Class

WEEK 7:

3/3 CAPITALISM: Changes in Past 40 years

Reader:
Johnson, “Forest and the Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice, and Promise”, p. 194-197
Amadeo, “Six Problems with NAFTA”, p. 200-201
Burton, “Hedge-fund Billionaire Ray Dalio Says Capitalism Needs Urgent Reform”, p. 204-206
Svat, “Capitalism Isn’t Broken, It’s Working All Too Well”, p. 207-208

Video: Frontline: Left Behind / Life and Debt

3/5 .01 (and .1) PLAN

Reader:
Fortune 500 Graphs, p. 213-215
Fortune, “List of Largest Corporations by Revenue”, p. 218
Gilson, “It’s Not the 1 Percent Controlling Politics. It’s the .01 Percent”, p. 219-220
McKibben, The Koch Brothers New Brand”, p. 221-228

Video: Born Rich
**WEEK 8:**

3/10 TAX POLICY

**Reader:**
- Ingraham, “For the First Time in History…”, p. 229-231
- Myers, “91 profitable Fortune 500 companies paid $0…”, p. 232-234
- NY Times: Graph, “Effective Income Tax Rates”, p. 240
- Senate Joint Comm., “A Millionaire’s Tax Rate, Now and Then”, p. 241
- Our World, “Redistribution through Tax-and-Transfer Policies”, p. 244-245

3/12 MINIMUM WAGE

**Reader:**
- Leonhardt, What it’s Like Trying to Live on Minimum Wage, p. 246-249
- Cooper, “Congress Has Never Let the Federal Minimum Wage Erode For This Long”, p. 250
- Thompson, “How Students in San Jose Raised the Minimum Wage”, p. 253-255
- Tedeschi, Pay is Rising Fastest for Low Earners”, p. 257-258
- Cooper, “Raising Federal Wage to $15 by 2025 Would Lift Wages for Over 33…”, p. 259-261

  *Video: Walk the Walk*

**WEEK 9:**

3/17 UNIONS

**Reader:**
- Pearce, “Red-State Revolt Continues”, p. 269-271
- Eidelsen, “Union Power Is Putting Pressure on Silicon Valleys’ Tech Giants”, p. 272-274
- Semuels, “Fewer Unions, Lower Pay For Everyone”, p. 277-279
- Schmitt and Zipperer, “Union Busting is Big Business,” p. 280-281
- Graph: Public vs. Private Sector Union Rate…”, p. 282
- Fairchild, “Middle Class Decline Mirrors the Fall of Unions in One Chart”, p. 283-284

  *Video: The High Price of Low Prices*
3/19  TRUMP’S “AMERICAN CARNAGE”

**Reader:**
Gillon, “Why Are So Many White Men So Angry”, p. 287-290
Fredericks, “Trump Dredges Up ‘Mexican Rapists Comment…’”, p. 291-292
Reuters, “I Will Be the Greatest Jobs President that God has Ever Created’: Trump”, p. 293-294
Beauchamp, “A New Study Reveals the Reason Obama Voters Switched to Trump”, p. 295
Graphs, “Education and Race”, “Education Among Whites by Sex”, p. 296-297
Rucker, Wagner & Fahrenthold “Trump Takes Office, Vows an End to American Carnage”, p. 298-301
O’Neil, “Here’s Trump Hating on America”, p. 304-306

*Video: What Trump Thinks of Americans*

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**WEEK 10:**

3/24  TRUMP’S RESPONSE to “AMERICAN CARNAGE”

**Reader:**
Amadeo, “President Donald Trump’s Economic Plan”, p. 307-314
Gomez, “All the Ways President Trump is Cutting Legal Immigration”, p. 317-320
Scott, “GOP Tax Law’s Lopsided Giveaway to Corps, Explained in 1 Sentence”, p. 326-327

*Video: Frontline*

3/26  EXAM 2 (In-Class)

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March 30-April 3: SPRING BREAK

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WEEK 11:

4/7 SOLUTION TO INCOME AND WEALTH INEQUALITY: Tax Reform

Reader:
Glenn, “Ocasio-Cortez’s 70-percent Tax Rate,” p. 330-332
Saez & Zucman, “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Tax Hike Idea is Not About Soaking…”, p. 333-335
Stein and Ingraham, “Elizabeth Warren to Propose New ‘Wealth Tax’ on Very…”, p. 338-341
Maggiulli, “Are Wealth Taxes a Good Idea”, p. 347-353

Video: AOC and Warren

4/9 SOLUTION TO WEALTH INEQUALITY: Reparations

Reader:
Syndicated, “As a Nation Built on Slave Labor, it is Time to Finally Talk about…”, p. 356-358
Malveaux, “HR-40 and the Promise of Reparations for African Americans”, p. 359-361
Coates, “Ta-Nehisi Coates’ Testimony on Reparations”, p. 362-363
Robinson, “Ta-Nehisi Coates and the Struggle for Reparations”, p. 364-368

WEEK 12:

4/14 SOLUTION TO INCOME INEQUALITY: Federal Job Guarantee (Right to a Job)

Reader:
Kopf, “Trump’s New Chief Economist is Known for Arguing that US Inequality…”, p. 373-374

Book:
Myers-Lipton, “Prologue: ix-xv, Ch. 1, p. 1-8, 11-18

4/16 SOLUTION TO INCOME INEQUALITY: A Green New Deal

Reader:
Hess, “AOC’s Green New Deal Includes a Federal Jobs Guarantee…”, p. 375-376
Witt, “The Optimistic Activists for a Green New Deal”, p. 377-382
Irfan, “The Green New Deal is Fracturing a Critical Base for Democrats: Unions”, p. 383-387
Haskins, “Green New Deal would destroy American Dream, Create…”, p. 388-390

Video: AOC on the Green New Deal
WEEK 13:

4/21 SOLUTION TO INCOME INEQUALITY: A Living Wage (students choose campaign)

Book:
Myers-Lipton, Ch. 2, p. 23-25, 32-41

4/23 SOLUTION TO INEQUALITY: Right to Decent Housing (students choose)

Reader:
Alcindor, “Don’t Make Housing For the Poor Too Cozy, Carson Warns”, p. 391-393

Book:
Myers-Lipton, Chapter 3, p. 43-46, 55-64

WEEK 14:

4/28 SOLUTION TO INEQUALITY: Right to a Good Education (students choose)

Reader:
Nazaryan, “DeVos Is Coming for Your Public Schools”, p. 394-400

Book:
Myers-Lipton, Chapter 4, p. 65-72, 83-93 Problem & History

Video: From First to Worst

4/30 DUE: Creative Project
**WEEK 15:**

**5/5 SOLUTIONS TO INEQUALITY: Right to Adequate Medical Care**

**Reader:**
Scott, “The Trump Administration Latest Steps to Undermine the ACA, Explained”, p. 401-403

**Book:**
Myers-Lipton, p. 95-98, 109-119

**5/7 EPILOGUE: Where Do We Go From Here?**

**Reader:**
Myers-Lipton, “Dr. King’s Legacy For Today”, p. 404-406
King, “Where Do We Go From Here”, p. 407-418

**Book:**
Myers-Lipton, Epilogue

**5/19 FINAL: EXAM 3 (In-Class)**

Tu.: 7:15 am-9:30 am