

Sociology 148E: Inequality and Jobs

<https://canvas.ucsd.edu/courses/67322>

Fall 2025, TTh 11am-12:20pm, CSB 005

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Office Hours: TTh 9:30am-10:50am

<https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/8072898735>

Course Description

Some people do much better than others in the world of work. Causes and consequences of this inequality will be examined: How do characteristics of individuals (e.g., class, gender, race, education, talent) and characteristics of jobs affect market outcomes? **Prerequisites:** upper-division standing. Will not receive credit for SOCI 148E and SOCC 148L.

Academic Integrity

All papers will be submitted electronically via TurnItIn (TII), which will detect plagiarism, including self-plagiarism (meaning you already submitted that paper for another course) and failure to cite your sources, including page numbers. No other means of submission will be accepted/read. Your TII score should be under 20%. Scores between 30%-50% is an automatic D grade, anything above 50% is an automatic F. Write in your own words! Papers without citations or references will not receive higher than a C grade. Acts of academic dishonesty, from plagiarism, utilizing AI software like ChatGPT to cheating on exams, and signing the sign-in sheet for other students will receive an F grade and be reported to the Academic Integrity Office (AIO). Dishonesty in all forms undermine any institution's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. If you're unsure about your writing, you can utilize the writing resources on campus, or simply visit the instructor during office hours and share what you've written up to that point via the Share Screen function on Zoom. For more, visit the academic integrity office: <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

Photo and Audio/Video Recording Policy

Taking pictures or audio/video recording/transcribing in class without the consent of *everyone* in the class violates the [UCSD Code of Conduct](#) 10.25 Privacy Policy: "Making a video recording, audio recording, taking photographs, or streaming audio/video of any person in a location where the person has a reasonable expectation of privacy, without that person's knowledge and express consent...of all recorded parties." That includes AI transcription—also prohibited!

Grading (all assignments submitted via Canvas)

Survey due first Friday, 5pm	10%
4/5 quizzes via Respondus Lockdown Browser	20%
Writing two 800-1000 word essays (submit to Turn It In via Canvas)	40%
Participation	10%
Final Exam Online (no fault)	20%
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Totals	100%
Mid-Quarter Evaluation via Canvas	(EC) 2%
SET Evaluation	(EC) 3%

Participation

Attendance is required. Please come to class on time. If you're late or can't attend for any reason, please be courteous and let me know in advance. It's difficult to teach when interrupted. However, there are good interruptions to have, such as asking questions in response to the teaching content/reading. Please attend and participate in order to receive full credit.

Late Work Policy

The Survey is the only non-extra credit assignment that *cannot* be submitted late. Quizzes will be held towards the end of class. You have four days to make up a missed quiz, which will be done via Canvas. The only excuses for missed quizzes are medical, family emergency, and proof of faulty internet connection that prevents your taking the quiz (please screen shot problem and send to instructor). Papers over one week late without valid excuse will not receive full credit.

Incomplete Policy

At the end of the quarter, if you need an Incomplete grade, only medical or other documented hardship will warrant it. That buys you ten more weeks to complete the missing assignment(s). If no work was submitted during the quarter, you will not be eligible.

Prompt Questions/Two Essays

For the writing assignment, you can respond to 1-2 questions per paper, so long as you have written 800-1000 words by the end of Week 5 and a *combined* 1750-2000 words by the end of the quarter. Write in Times New Roman font size 12, double-spaced with 1" margins. If you prefer to write a family history project or something else pertaining to immigration, please seek permission from me no later than the first Friday of the term. The first paper is due Week 5, at 11:59pm. Second papers are due Week 10, at 11:59pm.

Writing Rules/Guidelines, aka "Checklist"

• Writing Rules/Guidelines, aka "Checklist"

- Each Paper is 800-1000 words (not including headings, titles, and works cited).
 - For the first paper, choose *among* prompt questions 1-5.
 - For the second paper, choose *among* questions 6-10.
- *You can choose up to two questions to answer for each paper*, so long as you reach the word count of 800-1000 words (words in titles and works cited not included).
 - For a solo prompt, cite at least two course-assigned sources
 - For two prompts, cite at least three course-assigned sources
 - The strength of the source will affect your grade
 - More intense reads will weigh more heavily than the lightest reads
- Write prompt question that you're responding to *as your title*
 - Papers that don't follow this rule automatically lose 10% of points
 - Your thesis is your response to the question
- Cite facts and figures whenever you enter them in the text
 - Citation Format: (author last name year: page number(s))
- Write in your own words
 - Quotes should be no more than one sentence
- List all sources you cited in your Works Cited

- Have at least two in-class reading sources if you only respond to one prompt, otherwise have at least three in-class reading sources for the entire paper. If you want, you can also add scholarly sources that are not on the syllabus on top of the quota for in-class reading sources.
- **Reference readings, not lectures.** Prove that you read!
- **Works Cited formats:**
 - Article format: Author last name, first name. Year. "Article Title." *Journal Title* Volume.Number: page range of entire article
 - Example: Calderón-Zaks, Michael. 2022. "Technological Change before Globalization: Race and Declining Employment for Mexicans on Railroads, 1945-1970." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 28.1(Winter/Spring): 77-97.
 - Book format: Author last name, first name. Year. *Title*. Publisher home location: publisher.
 - Example: Ngai, Mae. 2003. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
 - Anthology Chapter *must be complete*. Format: Author last name, first name. Year. "Chapter title." Ed(s). Name(s). *Anthology title*. Publisher.
 - Example: Calderon-Zaks, Michael. 2021. "The First Wave of Mexican Migration to the US: Rail Construction and Maintenance's Contribution to World System Development, 1890-1929." Eds. Denis O'Hearn and Paul Ciccantell. *Migration, Racism and Labor Exploitation in the World-System*. Routledge.
- Your TurnItIn score should be under 20%. Scores between 30%-50% is an automatic D grade, anything above 50% is an automatic F
- If AI is detected via GPTZero, you will receive an F
- If all of the above criteria are met and you make sound arguments, you can get the full points

Readings

The readings (and films, too) can be found online while your Virtual Private Network (VPN) is on. If you do not have UCSD's VPN app, you can download it here:

<https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/network/connections/off-campus/VPN/index.html>

You may also have to log in to the UCSD [Library for some sources](#).

*Indicates first time featured on this syllabus.

Schedule

Week 0: Thursday, September 25: Introductions

Week 1: Tuesday, September 30 and Thursday, October 2: The Stratified World of Work

- Stephen McNamee. 2023. *The Meritocracy Myth: Who Gets Ahead and Why?* Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 1-18
- Jan Karlsson and Per Manson. 2017. "[Concepts of Work in Marx, Durkheim, and Weber.](#)" *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 2: 107-119

- Bill Fletcher. 2020. “[Race Is About More Than Discrimination: Racial Capitalism, the Settler State, and the Challenges Facing Organized Labor in the United States.](#)” *Monthly Review* 72.3: 21-31
- Barbara Ehrenreich. 2018. “[Nickel and Dimed.](#)” Eds. David Grusky and Jasmine Hill. *Inequality for the 21st Century: A Reader*. Routledge, pp. 107-114
- Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins. 2018. “[Why Race, Class and Gender Matter.](#)” Eds. David Grusky and Jasmine Hill. *Inequality for the 21st Century: A Reader*. Routledge, pp. 400-401
- **Prompt: What social processes do you find to be the root of today’s stratified world of labor/work?**

Week 2: Tuesday October 7 and Thursday October 9: How to Get the Job/Gain Promotion

- McNamee, [The Meritocracy Myth](#), pp. 69-88
- Elizabeth Higginbotham and Margaret Andersen, Eds. 2016. *Race and Ethnicity in Society: The Changing Landscape*.
 - Adia Harvey Wingfield. “Racializing the Glass Escalator,” pp. 167-173
 - Deidre Royster. “Race and the Invisible Hand,” pp. 186-195
- France Windance Twine. 2023. “[Whiteness as a Form of Geek Capital in Silicon Valley.](#)” Eds. Rikke Andreassen et al, *The Routledge International Handbook of New Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*. Routledge, pp. 27-43
- Quiz 1
- **Prompt: How critical is networking to getting the job or promotion?**

Week 3: Tuesday October 14 and Thursday October 16: Policy and Praxis

- Jennifer Pierce. 2013. “[White Racism, Social Class, and the Backlash against Affirmative Action.](#)” *Sociology Compass* 11: 914-926
- Ira Katznelson. 2005. “[When Affirmative Action was White.](#)” *History & Policy*, 10 November
- *Barry Eidlin. 2018. [Labor and the Class Idea in the United States and Canada](#). Cambridge University Press, pp. 256-271
- *Robin D.G. Kelley. 1997. “[Identity Politics and Class Struggle.](#)” *New Politics* 6.2:
- **Prompt: How does the state contribute to economic inequalities? What can it do to reduce them?**

Week 4: Tuesday October 21 and Thursday October 23: Unions’ Impact

- Ruth Milkman. 2013. “[Back to the Future? US Labour in the New Gilded Age.](#)” *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 51.4: 645-665
- Josh Bivens et al. 2017. “[How Today’s Unions Help Working People: Giving Workers the Power to Improve their Jobs and Unrig the Economy.](#)” *Economic Policy Institute*, August 24.
- Kwang-Yeong Shin, Arne Kalleberg, and Kevin Hewison. 2023. “[Precarious Work: A Global Perspective.](#)” *Sociology Compass* 17.12: 1-14
- Film: [Requiem for the American Dream](#) (2015):
- Quiz 2
- **Prompt: How have unions/collective action reduced inequality? What are their limits?**

Week 5: Tuesday October 28 and Thursday October 30: Racialized Labor Inequality

- Edna Bonacich, Sabrina Alimahomed, and Jake Wilson. 2008. "[The Racialization of Global Labor](#)." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52.3: 342-355
- Herbert Hill. 1995. "[The Importance of Race in American Labor History](#)." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 2: 317-343
- Josh Bivens et al. 2023. "[Unions Promote Racial Equality](#)." *Economic Policy Institute*, July 31, pp. 1-5.
- Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2018. "[Are Emily and Greg more Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination](#)." David Grusky and Jasmine Hill. *Inequality for the 21st Century: A Reader*. Routledge, pp. 304-308
- **Film:** *Salt of the Earth* (1954):
- **Prompt: How systematically widespread is racial discrimination in employment? What policies remedy racial discrimination?**

Week 6: Tuesday November 4 and Thursday November 6: Gendered Labor

- Emily Chang. 2018. *Brotopia: Breaking up the Boys' Club of Silicon Valley*. Penguin, pp. 22-44
- Abigail Saguy and Mallory Rees. 2021. "[Gender, Power, and Harassment: Sociology in the #MeToo Era](#)." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47: 417-435
- Adia Harvey Wingfield. 2021. "[The \(Un\)Managed Heart: The Racial Contours of Emotion Work in Gendered Occupations](#)." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47: 197-212
- Elise Gould and Katherine DeCourcy. 2023. "[Gender Wage Gap Widens Even as Low-Wage Workers See Strong Gains](#)." *Economic Policy Institute*, March 29
- Quiz 3
- **Prompt: Based on the readings, how has the social construction of gender artificially distinguished wages and working conditions?**

Week 7: Tuesday November 11 (no class—Veterans Day) and Thursday November 13: Immigration Status on Wages

- Jill Lindsey Harrison and Sarah Lloyd. 2012. "[Illegality at Work: Deportability and the Productive New Era of Immigration Enforcement](#)." *Antipode* 2: 365-385
- *Rianka Roy. 2024. "[Covert Carcerality for "High-Income Cheap Labor": Indian Tech Workers in the United States](#)." *Sociological Forum* 40.1: 50-64
- Daniel Costa. 2022. "[Threatening Migrants and Shortchanging Workers](#)." *Economic Policy Institute*, December 15
- Mathew Zuras. 2025. "[How Trump's Immigration Crackdown Could Fuel a Prison Labor Boom](#)." *The New Republic*, 4 February.
- **Prompt: Based on the readings, how does immigration status affect wages, across skill levels and education?**

Week 8: Tuesday November 18 and Thursday November 20 (Remote Class): Technological Changes

- James Boggs. 1963. *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook*. New York: Monthly Review, [Chapter 2](#): The Challenge of Automation
- Bruce Schneier and Davi Ottenheimer. 2023. "[Robots are Already Killing People: The AI Boom Underscores a Problem that has Existed for Years](#)." *The Atlantic*, 6 September.

- Michael Calderón-Zaks. 2022. “[Technological Change before Globalization: Race and Declining Employment for Mexicans on Railroads, 1945-1970.](#)” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 1(Winter/Spring): 77-97
- Karl Benedikt Frey and Ebrahim Rahbari. 2016. “[Do Labor-Saving Technologies Spell the Death of Jobs in the Developing World?](#)” Working Paper, 2016 Brookings Blum Roundtable
- Lois Beckett and Kari Paul. 2023. “[‘Bargaining for Our Veery Existence:’ Why the Battle over AI is Being Fought in Hollywood.](#)” *The Guardian*, July 22
- Billy Perrigo. 2023. “[What the Luddites Can Teach Us About Artificial Intelligence.](#)” *Time*, 26
- Quiz 4
- **Prompt: Based on the readings, how have technological changes mitigated or exacerbated economic inequality?**

Week 9: Tuesday November 25 (Remote Class) and Thursday November 27 (no class—Thanksgiving): Globalization

- Saskia Sassen. 1992. “[Why Migration?](#)” *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 2: 15-20
- Edna Bonacich and Richard Appelbaum. 2005. “[The Return of the Sweatshop.](#)” Ed. Nancy Kleniewski, *Cities and Society*. Blackwell, pp. 127-143
- Peter Cole. 2009. “[A Tale of Two Towns: Globalization and Rural Deindustrialization in the U.S.](#)” *Working USA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 12: 539-562
- **Prompt: Based on the readings, has globalization reduced economic inequality or widened it? Please explain.**

Week 10: Tuesday December 2 and Thursday December 4: Potential Directions

- McNamee, *The Meritocracy Myth*, pp. 207-232
- Celine McNicholas and Josh Bivins. 2023. “[It’s Not Just the Actors—Workers Across the Economy are Demanding Better Pay and Safer Jobs.](#)” *Economic Policy Institute*, July 18
- Hamilton Nolan. 2023. “[This is How it Spreads.](#)” *In These Times*, April 20
- Hamilton Nolan. 2023. “[Strikes are Stronger than Laws.](#)” *In These Times*, January 9
- Adia Harvey Wingfield. 2023. “[Race, Repression, and the Future of New Labor Activism.](#)” *Work and Occupations* 3: 351-358
- Quiz 5
- Second papers due
- **Prompt: Based on the readings, how do you predict the current wave of strikes will manifest? Are you optimistic or pessimistic? Please explain.**

No-Fault Final Exam: Wednesday, December 10, 11:30am-2:29pm

Student Resources

Learning Resources

- o The Writing Hub: <https://writinghub.ucsd.edu/>
 - o LATs at OASIS: <https://oasis.ucsd.edu/academic-services/lats-folder/index.html>
 - o Supplemental Instruction (i.e., study groups): <https://aah.ucsd.edu/supplementalinstruction-study-group/index.html>
 - o Chat with a Librarian for Research and Library Help: <https://library.ucsd.edu/askus/index.html>
- Technical Support

- o For help with accounts, network, and technical issues:
<https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/helpdesk/service-desk/index.html>
- o For help with electronic library resources: <https://library.ucsd.edu/computing-andtechnology/connect-from-off-campus/>
- o For help installing Zoom for virtual office hours:
<https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/filessharing/zoom/index.html>
- o EdTech Support: service@ucsd.edu or 858-246-4357
- o Canvas Tools Student Guide: <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/tkbp/student>
- o Discussions Overview (Students): <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Video-Guide/Discussions-Overview-Students/ta-p/383515>
- o Connecting Off-Campus Using a VPN (to view films on Course Reserves):
<https://library.ucsd.edu/computing-and-technology/connect-from-off-campus/>

Basic Needs and Wellness

- o CAPS Student Health and Well-Being:
<https://wellness.ucsd.edu/CAPS/Pages/default.aspx>
- o COVID-19 Resources: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/covid/index.html>
- o Food Security: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/food-security/index.html>
- o Housing Resources: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/housing-resources/index.html>
- o Financial Wellness: <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/financial-wellness/index.html>
- o Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):
<https://wellness.ucsd.edu/caps/Pages/default.aspx#students>
- o The Zone at UC San Diego: <https://wellness.ucsd.edu/zone/Pages/default.aspx>
- o National Suicide Hotline Number: 1-800-273-8255
- o Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741 (<https://www.crisistextline.org>)

Community Centers

Learn about the different ways UC San Diego explores, supports and celebrates the many cultures that make up our diverse community at Student Life Diversity:

<https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html>

Accessibility and Accommodations for Disability

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the UC San Diego Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: <https://disabilities.ucsd.edu/> | osd@ucsd.edu | 858.534.4382

Inclusion

I am committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, experience, and identity, and I encourage students to participate in discussion and contribute to the course from their valuable and respected perspectives.

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

858.822.3542 | diversity@ucsd.edu | <https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html>

Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC): <https://students.ucsd.edu/sponsor/sarc/>

Cross Cultural Center: <https://ccc.ucsd.edu/>

LGBT Resource Center: <https://lgbt.ucsd.edu/> University of California Diversity Statement:

<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4400.html>

The diversity of the people of California has been the source of innovative ideas and creative accomplishments throughout the state's history into the present. Diversity – a defining feature of California's past, present, and future – refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more.

Because the core mission of the University of California is to serve the interests of the State of California, it must seek to achieve diversity among its student bodies and among its employees. The State of California has a compelling interest in making sure that people from all backgrounds perceive that access to the University is possible for talented students, staff, and faculty from all groups. The knowledge that the University of California is open to qualified students from all groups, and thus serves all parts of the community equitably, helps sustain the social fabric of the State.

Diversity should also be integral to the University's achievement of excellence. Diversity can enhance the ability of the University to accomplish its academic mission. Diversity aims to broaden and deepen both the educational experience and the scholarly environment, as students and faculty learn to interact effectively with each other, preparing them to participate in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society. Ideas, and practices based on those ideas, can be made richer by the process of being born and nurtured in a diverse community. The pluralistic university can model a process of proposing and testing ideas through respectful, civil communication. Educational excellence that truly incorporates diversity thus can promote mutual respect and make possible the full, effective use of the talents and abilities of all to foster innovation and train future leadership.

Therefore, the University of California renews its commitment to the full realization of its historic promise to recognize and nurture merit, talent, and achievement by supporting diversity and equal opportunity in its education, services, and administration, as well as research and creative activity. The University particularly acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of talented students, faculty, and staff from historically excluded populations who are currently underrepresented.

Religious Accommodation

See: [EPC Policies on Religious Accommodation, Final Exams, Midterm Exams Links to an external site.](#)

It is the policy of the university to make reasonable efforts to accommodate students having bona fide religious conflicts with scheduled examinations by providing alternative times or methods to take such examinations. If a student anticipates that a scheduled examination will occur at a time at which his or her religious beliefs prohibit participation in the examination, the student must submit to the instructor a statement describing the nature of the religious conflict and specifying the days and times of conflict.

For final examinations, the statement must be submitted no later than the end of the second week of instruction of the quarter.

For all other examinations, the statement must be submitted to the instructor as soon as possible after a particular examination date is scheduled.

If a conflict with the student's religious beliefs does exist, the instructor will attempt to provide an alternative, equitable examination that does not create undue hardship for the instructor or for the other students in the class.

Discrimination and Harassment

See: Nondiscrimination Policy Statement:

https://ophd.ucsd.edu/policiesprocedures/nps_student.html

The University of California, in accordance with applicable Federal and State law and University policy, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services. The University also prohibits sexual harassment. This nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in University programs and activities.

CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center

858.534.5793 | sarc@ucsd.edu | <https://care.ucsd.edu>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

858.534.3755 | <https://caps.ucsd.edu>

[1] The Gradebook on Canvas only calculates combined assignments submitted. Late assignments that receive a zero aren't automatically graded, and are often late. To better calculate your current grade, add the points you received from completed assignments and divide them by the amount of points the assignments were worth—use this grading scale as your guide.