

Urban Inequality

Overview

Many, if not all, major forms of structural inequality in the US are connected to the histories, institutions, and politics of cities. Cities are engines of economic activity, stability, and opportunity. Because of this, they play a large role in determining who has access resources and safety in our society. Above all, they have been central in shaping racial inequality through patterns of residential segregation, policing, and education. In this class, we will examine some of these patterns and how they contribute to inequality. We will also look at why some ideas to address problems in cities haven't worked, what some obstacles to implementing better ideas are, and what some of those better ideas are that may be able to produce greater equity in cities.

Assignments and Grading

I believe that meaningful learning comes through *examining the beliefs you already hold, repeatedly engaging with new ideas in non-stressful ways, and being honest about how you may have been wrong*. The grading and assignments for the class are designed to facilitate this process.

- Attendance/participation 35%
- Short writing assignments 30%
- Final paper outline 15%
- Final paper 20%

Attendance (15%) and Participation (20%)

Attending class meeting and actively participating in them are the most fundamental way of engaging with the ideas the class covers. Attendance counts for 15% of your grade, but participation is more important and counts for 20%. I will take attendance at the start of each class. ***You'll get one free unexcused absence, but additional absences will be penalized.*** I will excuse additional absences if you communicate a valid need to miss a meeting ahead of time.

Your participation grade will be based on weekly self-assessments that ask you how you participated in class meetings. I will not necessarily follow your self-assessment, though, if it does not line up with my perception of your engagement during meetings. Classes will involve lectures, but there will also be many opportunities to ask and answer questions, share what you learned from readings and your own experiences, and discuss topics with one another. I recognize that not everyone is equally comfortable speaking up in front of the entire class, so there will be multiple ways you can earn your participation grade. Please see me in my student hours if you are struggling to participate fully in class meetings.

Short Writing Assignments, 30% (six assignments worth 5% each)

You will submit short, 2-5 paragraph, writing assignments frequently throughout the semester. Three of these will occur before we cover a topic in readings and lecture. I call these "anticipation" papers. Because they occur before we cover the material, you won't be graded on how accurately you refer to particular facts or ideas in them. Instead, these are meant to help you examine what you already know and believe about a topic. Doing this helps prepare you to take in new information and relate it to what

you already know and care about. ***You will be graded based on the extent to which you answer the specific prompt for each assignment.***

Each anticipation paper will be paired with a reflection assignment you will submit after we complete a course topic. These will ask you how the readings and course discussions influenced, or not, how you understand the topic. If what we covered didn't affect what you think about the topic, you should say why not. It may be that you already understood the concepts we covered. If so, how did you gain that understanding? You may have good reasons to disagree with the arguments we engaged with. If so, what do you think they're missing? ***You will be graded based on how accurately you refer to the material we covered and the extent to which you relate it to your broader understanding.***

Final paper outline (15%) and full draft (20%)

The final paper will be relatively short at 5-8 double spaced pages. It will ask you to do two things. First, you will summarize what you think two or three of the main sources of inequality connected to cities are and how they work together. This should refer to course materials, but it should also be related to your broader experiences and knowledge. Second, you to apply that understanding to a particular city you know about. This may be a large city or a smaller one, but you should be able to refer sources outside of the course materials for the paper. I will show you how to access several sources of data that should help you with this. You will write an outline of your final paper and receive feedback on it before the full draft is due.

Completing the outline and providing feedback to one of your peers will be worth 15% of your course grade. ***You will be graded on the basis of how accurately you reference course material, the external sources you use, and how clearly you explain your ideas. The final paper*** (worth 20% of your course grade) ***will additionally be graded based on how you incorporate feedback on your outline.***

Sensitive/Personal Topics and Discussion Guidelines

We will discuss topics in the class that may be, and probably are, important to you personally. This means it is important to have these discussions, but it also makes them harder and more emotionally demanding. If someone expresses a position or opinion that conflicts with your own and seems wrong, it is important to try to understand that person's perspective and to attempt to engage in a way that is productive for both of you before reacting negatively. At the same time, ***it is important to be careful to speak in ways that are respectful to others and inclusive of their experiences.***

Schedule

All course readings will be available on the course site

Week 1: Introduction

Wednesday

NO READINGS: Introductions, expectations, and syllabus

Friday

Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Chapter 2 "The Construction of the Ghetto"

Week 2: Segregation and Poverty

Monday

Thomas J. Sugrue. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Chapter 9 "‘United Communities are Impregnable’: Violence and the Color Line"

Wednesday

Patrick Sharkey. *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress Toward Racial Equality*, Chapter 3: "A Forty-Year Detour on the Path toward Racial Equality" **SKIP CASE STUDIES**

Friday

Patrick Sharkey. *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress Toward Racial Equality*, Chapter 4: "Neighborhoods and the Transmission of Racial Inequality"

Week 3: City Economies and Affluence

Monday

Jane Jacobs. *The Economy of Cities*. Chapter 4 "How Cities Start Growing"

Wednesday

Le Galès, Patrick, and Paul Pierson. 2019. "'Superstar Cities' & the Generation of Durable Inequality." *Daedalus* 148(3):46–72.

Friday

Reardon, Sean and Kendra Bischoff. "The Continuing Increase in Income Segregation, 2007-2012." Stanford CEPA Report.

Week 4: Policing and Incarceration

Monday

Victor Rios. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. Chapter 2 "The Flatlands of Oakland and the Youth Control Complex"

Wednesday

Max Felker-Kantor. *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD*. Chapter 5 "Police Crime and Power Abuses"

Friday

Western, Bruce, and Becky Pettit. 2010. "Incarceration & Social Inequality." *Daedalus* 139(3):8–19.

Week 5: Schools

Wednesday

Rucker C. Johnson and Alexander Nazaryan. *Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works*. Chapter 3 "Equality Promised, Equality Denied"

Friday

Rucker C. Johnson and Alexander Nazaryan. *Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works*. Chapter 5 "Putting the Pieces Together"

Week 6: Politics

Monday

Rucker C. Johnson and Alexander Nazaryan. *Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works*. Chapter 8 "The Battle of Jefferson County"

Wednesday

Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. 2019. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1):28–46.

Friday

Jonathan A. Rodden. *Why Cities Lose: The Deep Roots of the Urban-Rural Political Divide*. Chapter 3 "From Workers' Parties to Urban Parties"

Week 7: Failed Solutions and New (old) Ideas

Monday

P.E. Moskowitz. *How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood*. Chapters 4 "The New Detroit" and 5 "The 7.2"

Wednesday

Elizabeth Anderson. *The Imperative of Integration*. Chapter 7 "Understanding Affirmative Action"

Friday

Rucker C. Johnson and Alexander Nazaryan. *Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works*. Conclusion

Week 8: Solutions, Continued

Monday

McCormick, Kathleen. "Rezoning History: Influential Minneapolis Policy Shift Links Affordability, Equity." *Land Lines*, January 2020.

Amy DeNinno. "The Role of Zoning Regulations in the Perpetuation of Racial Inequality and Poverty: A Case Study of Oakland, California" [Story Map](#)