

SOC. 122GI: GLOBAL INEQUALITIES
Fall 2009, T, 5-8, GIRV 1004
PROFESSOR: WILLIAM I. ROBINSON
OFFICE HOURS: T AND TH, 3:30 – 4:30 PM
TAs: CHE RODRIGUEZ AND STEVEN OSUNA

This course offers a broad introduction to the topic of global inequalities. We will explore critical issues in the sociology of development and underdevelopment, poverty and inequality around the world. We will examine how the current global system emerged over the past 500 years and where it is headed. In the early 21st century, 20 percent of the world's people monopolized 85 percent of the world's wealth. In the United States, two out of every ten people have grown richer every year since 1974, while the relative income of eight out of every ten has declined, and continues to decline. This inequality in wealth and power around the globe is deepening dramatically in the new century. The following table shows one aspect of this sharp rise in global inequalities (world income distribution):

Table 4.1: Shares of World Income 1965-1990

Population	Percent of Total World Income			
	1965	1970	1980	1990
Poorest 20%	2.3	2.2	1.7	1.4
Second 20%	2.9	2.8	2.2	1.8
Third 20%	4.2	3.9	3.5	2.1
Fourth 20%	21.2	21.3	18.3	11.3
Richest 20%	69.5	70.0	75.4	83.4

This course will address several questions: What are the main sociological concepts, approaches, and insights that help us explore the topic of global inequalities? How do we account for the vast disparities in wealth, living standards, and levels of social and economic development among nations and among social groups in global society? How did this state of affairs come about, and what can we do about global inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power? There are three parts to the course. Part I deals with theory. Part II is an historical exploration. We will review what the world was like in the year 1400 and how Latin America, Africa, Asia, and other regions were brought into the world capitalist system. Part III involves several contemporary case studies. How many case studies we are able to get to in part III will depend on the time available. We will also see a number of videos and powerpoints.

Note that this course, **Global Inequalities**, emphasizes above all *historical* and *theoretical* dimensions. It is meant to complement my other courses: **Sociology of Globalization** and **Globalization and Resistance**, which spend more time on contemporary 21st century affairs, and **Development and Social Change in Latin America**, an in-depth case study of one region in the global system.

This course will require hard work, and will also be an *eye-opener* for those willing to

work hard and to **think critically**. I will challenge you at all times to engage in critical and creative thinking, to question everything (including my lectures), and to be open to new ideas. While you never need to agree with me you do need to be prepared to develop the critical thinking analytical skills and the historical perspective necessary to examine your own deeply held assumptions regarding poverty, development, and inequality, and to apply sociological inquiry in an attempt to provide explanations for these phenomena.

Required Readings

- 1) Jerry Kloby, *Inequality, Power, and Development*
- 2) Holt-Giménez and Patel, *Food Rebellions: Crisis and the Hunger for Justice*
- 3) Bales, *Disposable People*
- 4) Reading packet of selected articles, available from GrafikArts in Isla Vista

Optional Reading

- 1) Food First, *Earthsummitbiz*
- 2) Period articles and commentaries on a wide range of contemporary topics I will send to the class listserve for your interest and when, time allows for, for classroom discussion

Grading and Course Requirements

There will be four take home assignments, each of which will count for 15 points. There will be four quizzes for five points each. Details of all these assignments are contained in this syllabus and/or will be announced in class. There will be at least one opportunity for extra credit.

Four take home	4 x 15:	60
Internet Assignment:	1 x 20:	20
Four quizzes:	4 x 5:	20
TOTAL		100

You are expected to do ALL the assigned readings and to come to class prepared to discuss these readings. Please bring each week's reading to class with you. You are encouraged to ask questions, debate, and provide critical commentary on the readings and the lectures.

I do *not* accept assignments that are turned in late unless some prior arrangement has been made with me. I do not accept assignment turned in by e-mail; *hard copies only*. You should make back ups of all your assignments. I do not accept the excuse that your computer has crashed and you lost your assignment – please don't bother trying this as it will only waste your time and mine.

Students are expected to arrive on time to class and to not leave early unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. I also ask that you *turn off* cell phones and beepers while in class.

Also, I consider it extremely rude for students to use their lap tops and cell phones to send text messages and e-mails during class. If I see you doing this I will ask you to leave class. If it becomes a regular pattern I will prohibit the use of laptops during class. Please be mature and courteous in this regard.

Please note that attendance is not voluntary; it is required. I may take spot attendance checks at any time. You will lose two points for each absence. I may take attendance at any time....first five minutes, last five minutes, etc. Even if you are present for most of the class you will be counted as absent if you are not present when I take role. The only excused absences are medical and family emergencies, with proper documentation.

Take Home Assignment on Films:

For this assignment you should view outside of class any *two* of the following films, and then write up a 3-4 page (approximately) double spaced brief, focusing on how they are related to what we have been covering in the course. Your brief should *not be merely a description* of the films; you should *analyze them* in relation to the historical and analytical themes of the course and the course readings and lectures. I expect you to employ in your essay the terms, concepts, theories, and insights garnered from the course. *This should be a sociological paper not a film review.* You may also make reference, with appropriate citations, in the brief to class lectures and readings.

- The Last Emperor
- Lumumba;
- Central Station;
- Bread and Roses (the one that deals with the struggle of janitors to unionize);
- Roger and Me;
- Children of Heaven
- Khandahar
- Rabbit Proof Fence
- Salan Bombay
- Hotel Rwanda
- The Agronomist
- El Norte
- Darwin's Nightmare
- The Day I Became a Woman
- Taste of Cherry

- The Circle
- Quinceneira
- Sicko
- Traspatio
- Sleep Dealer
- Bordertown
- Others (to be announced)

Final Internet Assignment

For this assignment you will explore the websites for various organizations that deal with issues of this course - development and underdevelopment, global inequalities, and the struggle for social justice. You should explore *at least five* websites. At least one of these sites should be considered “pro” global capitalism/conservative. Below are some suggestions, but you are not limited to these suggestions. Those considered “PRO” are indicated as well:

World Development Movement: <http://www.wdm.org.uk/>
 “50 Years is Enough! Campaign, <http://www.50years.org/>
 The Global Exchange, <http://www.globalexchange.org/>
 The Maquila Solidarity Network, <http://www.maquilasolidarity.org/>
 Zianet, <http://www.zmag.org/ZNETTOPnoanimation.html>
 International Forum on Globalization, <http://www.ifg.org/>,
 Focus on the Global South: <http://www.focusweb.org/>
 Third World Network: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/>
 Transnational Institute: <http://www.tni.org/>
 Institute for Policy Studies: <http://www.ips-dc.org/>
 World Trade Organization: <http://www.wto.org/> (PRO)
 Open Society Institute (George Soros’s website) http://www.soros.org/about/bios/a_soros
 (PRO)
 Globalization Research Center: <http://www.cio.com/research/global/> (PRO)
 Global Issues: <http://www.globalissues.org/>
 World Bank homepage: <http://www.worldbank.org/> (PRO)
 The Globalist: <http://www.theglobalist.com/> (PRO)
 World Economic Forum: <http://www.weforum.org/> (PRO)
 International Monetary Fund: <http://www.imf.org> (PRO)
 International Relations Center: <http://www.irc-online.org/>
 Food First: <http://www.foodfirst.org/>
 MADRE: <http://www.madre.org/>
 AllAfrica: <http://allafrica.com/>
 Center for Civil Society (South Africa): <http://www.nu.ac.za/ccs/>
 Green Left: <http://www.greenleft.org.au/>

Toward Freedom: <http://www.towardfreedom.com/home/>

Upside Down World: <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/>

You will need to spend a number of hours on the web exploring these websites, reading some of the articles and commentaries, and gaining an understanding of some of the popular literature and features on the web that have to do with the theme of development and global inequalities. Then you will write up a report, between 4-8 pages approximately (double spaced), on your experience and your analysis of the exercise. At the top of your report you should list the websites that you visited. Please be prepared as well to discuss in class your experience on the web.

Pop Quizzes:

There will be four pop quizzes, administered in the first few minutes of class. Each of these quizzes will be on the readings due on the day the quiz is given. If you have done the readings you will have no problem answering the question and receiving five points. You will receive a zero if you arrive late to class and miss a quiz.

Course Overview

Each class will include a lecture and time set aside for class discussion on the lectures and the readings. Powerpoints will serve as a guide to the lectures and will be distributed to the class via a class listserve. There are three parts to the course:

- 1) **Social Inequality, Poverty, Development, and Underdevelopment in the Global System, and Theories of Development and Global Inequalities**
The first part will include a conceptual discussion of social inequalities and an empirical overview of global inequalities currently and historically. We will also look at the concepts of poverty, development and underdevelopment, power and social change. We will then examine competing theoretical explanations for social inequalities worldwide.
- 2) **The World from the Year 1400 to the Year 2009**
This second part will take a fresh look at humankind's history over the past 600 years. We will examine how Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe and North America have become incorporated into the current global system.
- 3) **Case Studies and Topics in the Global System:**
The third part will involve several case studies on the contemporary global order, including Israel/Palestine, the “new slavery in the global economy”, world hunger, and if time permits, population control, global gender, and transnational migration. How many themes we cover in this section will depend on available time.

**Tentative Week-by-Week Course Outline
& Schedule of Readings (subject to change)**

PART I OF COURSE:

- Sept. 29: Topics:
Introduction to course: What is Inequality? Empirical Overview of Inequalities in the 21st Century.
The Nature of Power and Inequality; Classifying Inequalities; Inequality, Production and the World Economy, Part I
- Oct. 6: Topics: The Nature of Power and Inequality; Classifying Inequalities; Inequality, Production, and the World Economy, Conclusion
- Read: “Before Class”, “The Neolithic ‘Revolution’”, “The First Civilizations”, “The First Class Divisions”, “Women’s Oppression” (in reading packet)
 “Poverty and Inequality in the Global Economy” (in reading packet)
 “What are ‘Class’ and ‘Inequality’” (in reading packet)
 Kloby, chapters 1-3
- Oct. 13: Topics: Theories of Development and Global Inequalities.
- Read: Kloby, chapters 4-6
- Film screening:** “Boom: The Sound of Eviction”

PART II OF COURSE STARTS HERE:

- Oct. 20: The World from the Year 1400 to the Year 2009, part I: The World Before European Expansion, start of part II, Latin America and Eastern Europe
- Read: Kloby, chapter 7-8
 Brewer, “Imperialism, Dependency, and World Capitalism” (in reading packet).
 Amin, World Poverty, Pauperization, and Capital Accumulation (in

reading packet)

Possible Film, if time allows: TBA

First take-home assignment due today: Film Essay (see above in this syllabus).

Oct. 27: Topics: The World from the Year 1400 to the Year 2009, Continuation: The Creation of the World Capitalist System: Latin America, Eastern Europe

Read: “Africa a Peripheral Area”
“Beginning of the Third World in Latin America”
“Asia an External Area” (all in reading packet).

Possible Film, if time allows: TBA

Nov. 3: Topics: The World from the Year 1400 to the Year 2009, continuation, The Creation of the World Capitalist System: Africa

Read: “Class and Globalization” (in reading packet)
“A Precarious Existence: The Face of Billions?”
Africa and the Middle East: Fractured Nations in the Global Economy (in reading packet)

Film: “The Battle of Algiers”, first part

Nov. 10: Topics: The World from the Year 1400 to the Year 2009, Part III, Middle East and Asia

No readings this week: get a jump start on next week’s readings.

Film: “The Battle of Algiers,” second part.

PART III OF COURSE STARTS HERE:

Nov. 17: Topics: First Case Study: The Palestinian Struggle against Israeli Colonialism

Read: Khalidi, *The Iron Cage* (you will read fully most of book and skim over two chapters, to be announced)

Film: Occupation 101

Second Take Home Assignment Due Today: In 4-5 pages, discuss the main reasons given by Khalidi for why a Palestinian state has not come into existence. Make reference to his historical discussion and also to the more contemporary situation as discussed in the book. How does Khalidi's account contrast to mainstream and media accounts of the Palestinian plight in the United States? What was your understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict before reading this book and how has that understanding evolved, if at all, through this reading? How might you relate this topic more broadly to global inequalities?

Nov. 24: Topics: Second Case Study: World Food and Hunger

Read: "Why Can't People Feed Themselves?" (6 pages in reading packet)
Food rebellions (excerpts, to be announced)

Third Take Home Assignment Due: Write a 3-4 page essay that analyzes the Holt-Gimenez and Patel book. This should not be a book review that merely describes the book. You must first identify the main themes the book raises. Then you should analyze how these themes are related to the distinct topics we have covered in this course. You should relate the book to other course readings. You should use the sociological concepts and terms we have acquired in the course. I will look for a serious sociological analysis of this book that demonstrates the general knowledge you have acquired in this course. If you turn in a mere book report you will get a low score.

Film: "The World According to Monsanto"

Dec. 1: Topics: Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Case Studies: Population and Inequality; Transnational Migration and the New Citizen/Immigrant Axis of Inequality; "New Slavery in the Global Economy"; Course Conclusions: An Experiment in Overcoming Global Inequalities (case study on Venezuela)

Read: "Politics, Population, and the Pathways to Poverty" (3 pages in reading packet)

Read: Bales, *Disposable People*. Read Preface and Chapter 1. Then, of the chapters on Thailand, Mauritania, Brazil, Pakistan, and India, pick any

two and read them. Then read the concluding chapter, “What Can Be Done”?

Fourth Take Home Assignment: Write a 3-4 page essay that analyzes the Bales book. Specifically, how does his discussion in chapter 1 on the “new slavery” relate to the historical-analytical themes of the course? How is the seemingly anachronistic institution of slavery actually an integral part of the modern 21st century world capitalist system? How do you analyze the two country studies you chose to read? Do you think Bale’s suggestions on “what can be done” are sufficient? If not, what other changes do you think are necessarily in the global system to address this new slavery? Note: you will get a low score if you merely express your feelings (eg, surprise, outrage) over what you read.

Film, if time allows: Venezuela: Revolution From the Inside Out

NOTE: FINAL INTERNET ASSIGNMENT WILL BE DUE IN FINAL EXAMS WEEK. THE DATE AND DELIVERY DETAILS WILL BE ANNOUNCED
