



湖北工業大學
HUBEI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Course Title	Inequality
Course Code	ECON 2811
Semester	Summer 2026
Course Length	4 Weeks, 60 Contact Hours
Credits	4
Instructor	TBA
Office	TBA
Email	TBA
Prerequisite	ECON 1111 Microeconomics

Course Description:

This course is designed to enable a deeper understanding of the causes, dimensions, and consequences of social inequality in the United States and in the global context. The course is divided into two sections: the first section will examine various theoretical perspectives on social inequality. In the second section, we will explore multiple dimensions of social inequality, including wealth and income inequality, racial and gender inequality, educational inequality, health inequality, and the intersection of class, race/ethnicity, and gender in producing unequal outcomes.

Course Goals:

Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate competency in the following general education core goals:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts, and constructing solutions.
- **Communication skills** – Students will demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork** – Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal and consider different points of view.
- **Social responsibility** – Students will demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- critically analyze inequality from a sociological perspective focusing on the structural contexts that create and reproduce it;

- understand the specific dimensions of social inequality involving class, race/ethnicity, gender, and their intersections;
- evaluate everyday lived experiences through insights provided by various theories of social inequality.

Textbooks/Supplies/Materials/Equipment/ Technology or Technical Requirements:

Hurst, Charles E., Heather M. Fitz Gibbon, and Anne M. Nurse. *Social Inequality: Forms, Causes, and Consequences*. Routledge, 2017.

Course Requirements:

Participation

We aim to foster an atmosphere of participation given that discussion among peers is, by far, the best way to learn the contents of this course. If you participate fairly regularly in class, you will be able to obtain a perfect mark in this section.

Quizzes

Short quizzes will be administered randomly throughout the term, typically during the first 15 minutes of class. Each quiz will assess material from the assigned readings and lectures of the week, and other course materials. Quizzes may include multiple question formats, such as multiple-choice, short answer, and other brief response types.

Final Paper

The final assignment will be a final research paper on a topic discussed during the course. This paper will be between 1800 and 2000 words.

Book Presentation

In the last week of the semester, you and your group will deliver a 20-minute presentation summarizing your book and the important social processes going on in it that generate or maintain inequality.

Take-Home Exam

For the take-home exam, you will write 2-3 short reflective essays that synthesize and apply material and discussions covered in class along with the required readings. The take-home exam will test your comprehension and application of class material. As this is a take-home exam, you can refer to your book, lecture slides, and class notes while answering them. However, this means that the bar is set much higher, and I expect your essays to be high quality. Please proofread your exam essays before submitting them. I will consider grammatical and spelling errors while grading your exam.

Assessments: Activity	Percent Contribution
Participation	10%
Quizzes	15%
Final Paper	30%

Book Presentation	20%
Take-Home Exam	25%

Grading:

Final grades will be based on the sum of all possible course points as noted above.

Grade	Percentage of available points
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	64-69
D-	60-63
F	0-59

Course Schedule:

The schedule of activities is subject to change at the reasonable discretion of the instructor. Minor changes will be announced in class, major ones provided in writing.

ECON 2811 Schedule		
Lecture	Topic	Readings
L1	Introduction to class An Introduction to the Study of Social Inequality	Chapter 1
L2	Class, Income, and Wealth Emerging Issues in the Shaping of the U.S. Class Structure	Chapter 2
L3	Income and Wealth Inequality in the United States U.S. Mobility Over Time The Global Context and the Impact of Globalization	Chapter 2
L4	Poverty and Welfare Historical Roots of U.S. Perspectives on Poverty	Chapter 3
L5	Who Are the Poor? Current Poverty Programs Perceptions of People on Welfare	Chapter 3
L6	Status Inequality The Theory of Social Status Spheres of Status in the United States	Chapter 4
L7	Power Portraits of National Power Structure Distribution of Political Power	Chapter 5
L8	Interlinkage of Economic and Political Power Ruling-Class Unity Power Inequality in the Work Experience	Chapter 5
L9	Classical Explanations of Inequality Karl Marx Max Weber	Chapter 6
L10	Émile Durkheim W.E.B. Du Bois	Chapter 6

L11	Contemporary Explanations of Inequality Inequality as Individual Difference Categorical Inequalities	Chapter 7
L12	Identities, Interactions, and Inequalities Theories of Intersectionality	Chapter 7
L13	Sex and Gender Inequality Terms Relating to Sex and Gender U.S. Gender Relations: A Historical Sketch Gender Inequality Today Mobility and Gender Globalization and Gender	Chapter 8
L14	Sexual Orientation and Inequality The Complexity of Sexuality The Law and Sexual Orientation Globalization and Sexuality	Chapter 9
L15	Racial and Ethnic Inequality Racial and Ethnic Inequality Today Mobility	Chapter 10
L16	Class, Color, and Race Theories of Racial and Ethnic Inequality	Chapter 10
L17	Immigration, Place, and Religion Immigration and Inequality	Chapter 11
L18	Religion and Inequality Place and Inequality	Chapter 11
L19	Consequences of Social Inequality Inequality, Health, and the Environment	Chapter 12
L20	Inequality, Crime, and Criminal Justice Perspectives on Crime and the Law The Measurement of Crime	Chapter 13
L21	Social Change Social Inequality and Social Movements The Labor Movement	Chapter 14
L22	The Civil Rights Movement The Women's Movement	Chapter 14
L23	Policy Alternatives Redistributive Policies Developing the Capacity for Self-Sufficiency	Chapter 15
L24	Addressing Spatial Inequalities Expanding and Guaranteeing Political Representation Is Education an Equalizer?	Chapter 15
L25	Book Presentation Take-Home Exam submission Final Paper submission	---

Accommodation Statement:

Academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in coursework may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

Other Items:**Attendance and Expectations**

All students are required to attend every class, except in cases of illness, serious family concerns, or other major problems. We expect that students will arrive on time, be prepared to listen and participate as appropriate, and stay for the duration of a meeting rather than drift in or out casually. In short, we anticipate that students will show professors and fellow students maximum consideration by minimizing the disturbances that cause interruptions in the learning process. This means that punctuality is a must, that cellular phones be turned off, and that courtesy is the guiding principle in all exchanges among students and faculty. You will be responsible for the materials and ideas presented in the lecture.

Assignment Due Dates

All written assignments must be turned in at the time specified. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior information has been obtained from the instructor. If you believe you have extenuating circumstances, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Make-Up Work

The instructor will not provide students with class information or make-up assignments/quizzes/exams missed due to an unexcused absence. Absences will be excused and assignments/quizzes/exams may be made up only with written documentation of an authorized absence. Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling appointments during class. An excused student is responsible for requesting any missed information from the instructor and setting up any necessary appointments outside of class.

Access, Special Needs and Disabilities

Please notify the instructor at the start of the semester if you have any documented disabilities, a medical issue, or any special circumstances that require attention, and the school will be happy to assist.