Sociology 65: The Social Psychology of Inequality

Fall 2019, Dartmouth College
Tuesday/Thursday, 2:25-4:15
X-hour: Wednesday 4:35-5:25
Classroom: Blunt 007

Professor: Dr. Kimberly B. Rogers
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Office: 308E Blunt Hall
Phone: 603-646-8212

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00-2:00 pm, or by appointment

**Course Description.** Sociological social psychology examines the relationship between individuals and the larger social systems in which they are embedded, such as interactions, groups, institutions, and cultures. This course will introduce key social psychological concepts (e.g., status, power, justice, stigma, identity, cultural meanings, socialization) and use them to explore how inequality is created, reproduced, and resisted. We will study how inequality operates in different social and institutional contexts (e.g., work, family, schools, neighborhoods) for members of different social groups (e.g., race, class, gender, age, nationality, health), and consider how inequalities can be intersectional. Students who wish to enroll in this course should have previously completed an introductory course in sociology – either Socy 1 (Introduction to Sociology) or Socy 2 (Social Problems). This requirement may be waived for students who have taken certain other sociology courses; contact the instructor to find out if you are eligible.

**Course Format.** This course has an experiential learning component. Dartmouth has community partners throughout the Upper Valley that work to offset different forms of social inequality. With support from the Dartmouth Center for Social Impact, students in the course will apply the concepts learned in class to real issues faced by a chosen community partner, completing a research portfolio that includes a literature review and field research on a matter of concern for the organization. In lieu of quizzes or exams, students will complete weekly written reflections on the material throughout the term that draw linkages between concepts and readings and participate in full class and small group discussions of the assigned material. We will not meet during X-hour unless it is necessary to reschedule a regular class meeting for this time.

**Learning Objectives.** By the end of the course, you will: (1) become familiar with social psychological concepts and their relevance to inequality; (2) understand how these concepts operate across different social and institutional contexts, and for members of different social groups; (3) independently read and critique the academic literature, producing thoughtful weekly reflections; (4) construct a literature review that applies a core concept introduced in the course to a social problem addressed by one of Dartmouth’s community partners in the Upper Valley; (5) carry out field research on behalf of this community partner, observing social psychological concepts in action; (6) produce a final report that connects your literature review and field research, reflecting on what you have learned about the problem of inequality and its possible solutions from a social psychological perspective.

There are no required textbooks for this course, but you may find the optional book below helpful. It is available for purchase at Wheelock Books and on reserve at Baker-Berry. All required readings are available on our course Canvas site: [http://canvas.dartmouth.edu](http://canvas.dartmouth.edu).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Research Portfolio (40%)

This course involves a social impact practicum, in conjunction with Dartmouth’s Center for Social Impact. Dartmouth has community partners throughout the Upper Valley that work to offset different forms of social inequality. You will apply the concepts learned in class to real issues faced by a chosen community partner (e.g., housing security, healthcare access, violence prevention), completing a research portfolio that includes a literature review and field research on a matter of concern for the organization. Community partners will vary from year to year, but will include organizations like: Dismas House, The Haven, LISTEN Community Services, COVER Home Repair, WISE, Twin Pines Housing, Child and Family Services, the Aging Resource Center (DHMC), and Good Neighbor Health Clinic. The specifics of your field research experience will also vary by year and depend on the goals of your chosen community partner. You can find more information about our partnerships for this term on Canvas.

You will choose a community partner in Week 1, and complete background research on the organization in Week 2 (5% of your final grade). In Week 4, you will write and submit a literature review together with your team that applies concepts from class and presents knowledge from the academic literature to offer insights about the issue faced by your chosen partner (10%). Before Week 6, you will complete field research on the matter of concern to your community partner. This will require site visits during which you will make observations, take field notes, and perhaps even conduct qualitative interviews. You will submit the notes from your site visit in Week 6 (5%). In Week 8, your team will submit a formal report on your field research (10%). Your final project for the course, due during finals week, is a research portfolio including a revision of your literature review and the formal report on your field research, completed as a team (10%). One-third of your grade on the literature review, the formal report on your field research, and your revision of these documents for the final portfolio will be determined by peer evaluations of each team member’s contributions to the assignment.

Written Reflections (50%)

You will complete weekly written reflections on the material throughout the term in lieu of quizzes or exams (worth 5% of your grade per week). These reflections, due each Sunday, should be approximately 1,000 words in length and consider the relationship between what you read that week and the topics discussed in class, as well as how the concepts covered that week can be applied to the issue of concern to your community partner. You will find a prompt for each weekly reflection on Canvas. All students will complete and respond to the same foundational readings in Weeks 1-4. Starting in Week 5, you will select your readings from reading lists provided by the instructor. You will present your chosen readings in class and respond to them in your weekly reflection. No more than two students may sign up for a given reading; sign-ups are due by 11:59 the Sunday before the class meetings when this reading will be covered. One letter grade will be deducted from your grade on the weekly reflection if you fail to sign up for readings before the Sunday deadline.
**Class Discussions (10%)**

A significant portion of our time in class will be structured around small group and full class discussions of the assigned reading. The effectiveness of these discussions is a shared responsibility. You are expected to complete the assigned reading before class and come prepared to share your thoughts about the material with others. During the first four weeks of the term, all students in the class will complete the same foundational reading. I will give a brief lecture on the theories and principles covered and we will talk through the readings in small groups and as a class. Beginning in Week 5, you will sign up for readings from a provided list and be responsible for presenting your reading to the class (including its key findings and how it illustrates the implications of social psychological concepts and processes for inequality). We will move to smaller discussion groups after talking through the readings as a class, in which you will take rotating leadership roles. Consistent, active participation in these discussions will account for 10% of your final grade in the course.

**Final Grade**

Your final numeric grade in the course will be determined by the components of your research portfolio submitted throughout the term (40%), weekly written reflections (50%), and participation in discussions of the material during class (10%). Your numeric grade will be converted into a letter grade using the scale below. A description of the quality of work necessary to receive a certain letter grade in the course is available [here](#).

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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Academic Responsibility**

Dartmouth College is a community of scholars and learners committed to the principles of academic and personal honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. Students share with faculty and staff the responsibility for promoting a climate of integrity. As citizens of the Dartmouth community, students are expected to adhere to these principles at all times, in both their academic and non-academic endeavors. All students should conduct themselves in accordance with the regulations set forth in the [student handbook](#), particularly those relating to the [academic honor principle](#). Cheating, plagiarism, use of the same work in multiple courses, and unauthorized collaboration will not be tolerated. Minor violations of the academic regulations may result in loss of credit or failure for a given piece of work or in the course. Major violations of these regulations may result in suspension or expulsion from the College.

**Class Conduct**

Class participation is about thinking carefully, listening, and posing questions to others as much as it is about sharing your ideas. This requires us to be present, set aside distractions, and focus
our attention on engaging with one another. With this goal in mind, you are welcome to use laptops and tablets in class, but only for note-taking or other class-related activities. No cell phones may be used in class. Violations of this policy will impact your participation grade. The tone with which we engage one another is also extremely important; your comments in class should come from a place of mutual respect and understanding. Disrespectful behavior such as talking while others are talking, dominating the floor, or engaging in personal attacks will not be tolerated. You are expected to treat one another and me with respect at all times.

Absences

Attendance and participation are essential components of this course. Chronic absences will cause a significant loss of points from your grade, as will routinely showing up to class late or leaving early. You can miss up to three of our regular Tuesday/Thursday class meetings without penalty, no questions asked. Any more than three absences over the course of the term will cause you to lose a third of a letter grade from your final grade for each class missed (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+...). It is your responsibility to keep up with any material you miss because of an absence, including announced changes to the schedule. Class policies on late and missed work are outlined in more detail below. If you anticipate missing class meetings (e.g., due to participation on an athletic team, college-excused events, religious observances), please arrange a meeting with me at the start of the term and bring documentation of the expected conflicts.

Late Work Policy

Lots of unexpected things will come up over the course of the term. To make sure you don’t wind up in a difficult position, plan ahead: start your assignments early and finish them well in advance of the deadline. Speak with me at the beginning of the term if you anticipate any circumstances that might affect your ability to get your work in on time. Graded assignments that come in late will lose one letter grade per day, including written reflections as well as assignments related to your research portfolio. Assignments that are 5 or more days late will receive a zero. If the deadline has arrived and your work isn’t complete, it’s best to turn in whatever you have finished. Extensions will only be given on graded assignments if they are missed because of extreme circumstances beyond your control, such as severe illness requiring a doctor’s visit or hospitalization, death in the family, or college-excused events (which must be approved ahead of time). Generally not feeling well, oversleeping, forgetting about the deadline, having computer problems, or needing to help your friend or family member with something will not be considered extreme circumstances. If you believe you are eligible for an extension, it is your responsibility to notify me before missing the deadline. Students who have been granted accommodations by Student Accessibility Services should arrange to meet with me early in the term so we can plan ahead.

Canvas and Course Assignments

Canvas and email are important forms of communication for this class; be sure to check both regularly to stay informed. Course readings and assignments will be posted on Canvas. Canvas is
also the main forum by which most of your assignments will be submitted. If you have difficulties accessing the site or are unsure of how to use its necessary features, please contact me as soon as possible. Confusion about the use of Canvas is not a valid excuse for late submission of assignments.

**Re-Grading of Assignments**

If you believe there has been an error in the grading of an assignment, please provide me with a written explanation of why your grade should be changed, not to exceed one page. Based on your rationale and my careful examination of your work, *your grade may go either up or down*. You have one week from the date the assignment is returned to you to request that it be re-graded.

**Accommodations**

Students desiring academic accommodations, modifications, or auxiliary aids should contact Student Accessibility Services at Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu or 603-646-9900. Once you’ve established your accommodations with SAS, we should arrange a private meeting early in the term to discuss how I can best support you in the course.

**Student Wellness**

I recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding aspect of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate dean, counseling services, and the Student Wellness Center. I encourage you to take advantage of these resources, and to speak with me if you need support in the class. Please note that faculty and staff are required by law to report certain matters to relevant parties on campus, including disclosures of sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, relationship and interpersonal violence, and stalking. You can find more information about confidential versus non-confidential resources and support options here.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1: Introduction to Sociological Social Psychology
9/17  Review syllabus and community partnership options
9/19  Anderson and Snow, “Inequality and the Self”
      Choose a Community Partner
9/22  Weekly Reflection #1

Week 2: Status, Power, and Resources
9/24  Ridgeway, “Why Status Matters for Inequality”
      Hallett, “Between Deference and Distinction”
9/26  Molm et al., “Conflict and Fairness in Social Exchange”
      Background Research on Community Partner
9/29  Weekly Reflection #2

Week 3: Culture, Stigma, and Justice
10/1   Kay et al., “Inequality, Discrimination, and the Power of the Status Quo”
10/3   Link and Phelan, “Stigma Power”
       Hegtvedt and Johnson, “Justice Beyond the Individual”
10/6   Weekly Reflection #3

Week 4: Self, Identity, and Emotions
10/8   Schwalbe et al., “Generic Processes in the Reproduction of Inequality”
       Hunt, “Identities and Inequalities”
10/10  Hochschild, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure”
       Literature Review
10/13  Weekly Reflection #4 and Sign-Up for Week 5 Readings

Week 5: Socialization, Family, and Schools
10/15  One reading from Socialization list
10/17  One reading each from Family and Schools lists
10/20  Weekly Reflection #5 and Sign-Up for Week 6 Readings

Week 6: Work, Neighborhoods, and Crime
10/22  One reading from Work list
10/24  One reading each from Neighborhoods and Crime lists
       Documentation of Field Research
10/27  Weekly Reflection #6 and Sign-Up for Week 7 Readings

Week 7: Sex, Gender, and Sexuality
10/29  Two readings from Sex and Gender list
10/31  One reading from Sexuality list
11/3   Weekly Reflection #7 and Sign-Up for Week 8 Readings
**Final Research Portfolio due Sunday, November 24 at 11:30 am **
COURSE READINGS

Assigned Readings, Weeks 1-4

Kay, Aaron C., Danielle Gaucher, Jennifer M. Peach, Kristin Laurin, Justin Friesen, Mark P. Zanna, and Steven J. Spencer. 2009. “Inequality, discrimination, and the power of the status quo: Direct evidence for a motivation to see the way things are as the way they should be.” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 97: 421-34.
Link, Bruce G. and Jo Phelan. 2014. “Stigma power.” Social Science and Medicine 103: 24-32.

Socialization


Families

Schools

Work


Neighborhoods


Crime


Sex and Gender


Kane, Emily W. 2006. “‘No way my boys are going to be like that!’: Parents’ responses to children’s gender nonconformity.” *Gender and Society* 20: 149-76.


Sexuality


Pfeffer, Carla A. 2014. “‘I don’t like passing as a straight woman’: Queer negotiations of identity and social group membership.” *American Journal of Sociology* 120: 1-44.


Race/Ethnicity


**Class**


Shirley, Carla D. 2010. ““You might be a redneck if…”: Boundary work among rural, Southern Whites.” *Social Forces* 89: 35-61.


**Immigration**


Health


Life Course


Resistance


