This course will explore contemporary sociological approaches in the study of social inequality. The enduring structure and reproduction of inequalities along axes of class, race and gender are core problems of sociology. This seminar will examine these issues by first considering various theoretical and methodological issues in the field. We will then examine how different thinkers have implemented these theories and concepts through a variety of innovative case studies.

**Required Readings:**

Noah, Timothy: *The Great Divergence: America’s Growing Inequality Crisis*
Sherman, Rachel: *Class Acts: Service and Inequality in Luxury Hotels*
Kennedy, Randall: *The Persistence of the Color Line: Racial Politics and the Obama Presidency*
Pascoe, Peggy: *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*
Fine, Cordelia: *Delusions of Gender: How our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference*
Price-Glynn, Kim: *Strip Club: Gender, Power, and Sex Work*

**Course Requirements:**

1. Come prepared to discuss the assigned readings and offer constructive/critical comments on the course materials. Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will count against your final grade.
2. There will be one long research paper (20-24 pages). The instructor must approve the topic. The paper will make up 75 percent of your final grade.
3. You are required to bring a one-page response essay to the readings to class each week. You will be graded on your in-class participation and your comprehension of the course materials. Your in-class participation will make up 25 percent of your final grade.

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**Week 1) Introduction**
Feb 4: Mapping the Conceptual Terrain

**Week 2) Understanding Social Class**
Week 3) Stratification and the New Social Order
Feb 18:  B. Western, “Mass Imprisonment and Economic Inequality,” in Social Research, pp. 509-532

Week 4) The Winner-Take-All Society
Feb 25: T. Noah, The Great Divergence, chapters 1-6
“Rising Wealth Inequality: Should We Care” New York Times, March 21, 2011

Week 5) Class, Status, and Culture

Week 6) Racial Formation
H. Gans “Race as Class” Contexts, 2005, 262-268

Week 7) The Color Line
March 18: P. Pascoe, What Comes Naturally, whole book

March 25: Spring Break

Week 8) Boundaries in Flux
“How Race Affects the Messages You Get” OKCupid (online dating research)

Week 9) Post-Racial America?
(blackboard)

Week 10) The Social Construction of Gender
April 15:  C. West and D. Zimmerman “Doing Gender” Gender and Society, June 1987 pp.125-151
T. Meadow, “A Rose is a Rose: On Producing Legal Gender Classification” Gender and Society, 2010, 814-837

Week 11) Gender Frames
April 22:  C. Fine, Delusions of Gender, ps. 3-130 & 189-239

Week 12) Making and Remaking Gendered Inequalities
April 29:  K. Price-Glynn, Strip Club: Gender, Power and Sex Work, whole book
Week 13) Enduring Inequalities

Final Paper: **Due Date TBA**

**Honor Code:** This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please contact me if you have any questions about citation, or the relationship of the Honor Code to your work in this course. For more information on the Honor Code, see [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html).