Course Overview

The American workplace has become much more diverse over the past 30 years, with women and minorities moving into greater positions of authority. But significant inequalities remain. Why? In this course we will consider which issues are similar or different when we look at gender and race inequalities. We will look at how sociologists try to untangle the reasons for inequalities in the workplace using ethnographic and observational research, survey research methods, historical-comparative research, and even experimental studies. As we explore how social scientists use these methods, each class member will develop a research question and a plan for collecting and analyzing data to answer their question. It is anticipated that most students will choose to either conduct a series of interviews or to do some basic analyses of existing survey data such as the General Social Survey or the World Values Survey (both of which will be introduced in class).

The semester is organized around three major themes:

Social patterns: What do we mean by inequality at work? How do we measure inequality in the rewards women and men, blacks and whites, receive from work? How much change has there been in the U.S. over time?

Social processes in the workplace: Through what processes are some individuals and groups advantaged over others in the workplace? What does it mean to speak of sex and race as “primary” frames? What are the causes of discrimination? Do markets automatically eradicate discrimination and other processes that give advantages to members of some social groups over others?

Future prospects: What are the consequences of sex and race job segregation? What are the outcomes of diverse workplaces in terms of productivity and employee satisfaction?

Requirements

This is a seminar course, and participants are expected to do each week’s readings in advance of class, to attend each class, and to actively participate. Your attendance and participation
will determine the quality of your experience in the course and your success in the research project you undertake.

The major written work for the course is:

1) Research proposal (5-6 pages)—DUE AT NOON ON FEBRUARY 26
2) Final research paper—DUE AT 5 PM ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 4

As we move through the course, I will also assign some short exercises and assignments to keep us tuned in to the research questions and methods used in the works we are reading. These will constitute your “short assignments” grade (below). I will distribute these by Thursday morning of the week preceding their due date (9 AM Monday of the following week).

Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Peer review</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Please submit the research proposal and final paper as MS Word attachments via e-mail to brinton@wjh.harvard.edu. The short assignments should be uploaded to the course dropbox.

You should feel free to come in during my office hours or to contact me at any time to make an appointment at a different time. It is especially important for you to come and talk with me if you are having any difficulties with the course material or expectations; we can head off problems together if I know about them as they are happening.

Readings:

All of the course readings are available on the course i-site. You are required to do the readings carefully before class each week and come to class with notes that prepare you to discuss the major questions the authors are addressing, a summary of the answers they have come up with, and questions that you have about any aspect of the readings (why the authors chose these research questions, how they went about finding the answers, why they used the methods they did, etc.) Starred readings are optional; we will assess how the course is proceeding and decide if a class member(s) would like to take charge of a particular starred reading.
SEMESTER OUTLINE

PART ONE   SOCIAL PATTERNS

Week 1 (January 24)
Women and African-Americans in the Workplace: A Historical View

Read for background:


Week 2 (January 31)
Measuring Inequality at Work: Jobs and $$$


Week 3 (February 7)


Discuss figures on changes in sex and race segregation, 1960s-present (handout in class from Tomaskovic-Devey et al. 2006)

Methods workshop I: Using survey data (the World Values Survey and the General Social Survey) to study attitudes towards sex and race inequalities
PART TWO  SOCIAL PROCESSES IN THE WORKPLACE

Week 4 (February 14)
Primary Frames: Sex and Race


Week 5 (February 21)
Ethnographic Research on Tokenism

Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 1977. Read Chapter 8 (“Numbers: Minorities and Majorities”).


Methods workshop II: Studying inequality through ethnographic and field research

Week 6 (February 28)
Does Market Competition Eradicate Discrimination?


Peer review of research proposals

Week 7 (March 6)
Ethnographic Research on Workplace Dynamics


**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8 (March 20)**

*Comparative-Historical Research into Job Segregation and Resegregation*


⇒ **Methods workshop III: Studying inequality through the combination of historical and ethnographic methods**

**Week 9 (March 27)**

*Experimental Research on Competition and Hiring*


**PART THREE  SOCIAL CHANGE AND CONSEQUENCES**

**Week 10 (April 3)**

⇒ **Check-in and discussion of research design and paper progress**

**Week 11 (April 10)**

*Does Diversity Pay?*


**Week 12 (April 17)**

➔ Paper presentations and peer/professor feedback

**Week 13 (April 24)**

➔ Paper presentations and peer/professor feedback

**May 4**    Final research paper due at 5 PM