

INEQUALITY AT WORK
Sociology 108
Harvard University
Fall 2012
Tuesday, Thursday 10-11:20 AM

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Office hours: Thursday 1:30-3:00 and by appt.

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? This course explores how sociologists go about analyzing the reasons for workplace inequalities using a variety of methods from ethnography to surveys to experiments. Through readings, discussions, and writing assignments, we will move beyond stale debates about whether and how much workplace discrimination exists, to a deeper consideration of the implications of sex and race as “categorical forms of inequality.” Using case studies, we will pay particular attention to how work can be restructured in ways that increase participation and equality.

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? How are sex and race stereotypes enacted and/or broken down in the workplace?

Future prospects: What are the consequences of sex and race job segregation for individuals? For work organizations? How can managers and firms redesign work to maximize the contributions of all individuals?

REQUIREMENTS

This course is run in an “active lecture” style, meaning that every session is a combination of lecture and discussion. You are expected to do each session’s readings in advance, 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 on the midterm and in the research project you undertake. There are no section meetings for the course.

Your work in the course will consist of the following:

Attendance:	10%
Participation:	20%
Short assignments:	20%
Midterm exam:	30%
Final research paper:	20%

As we move through the course, I will 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 (above). I will distribute these by Thursday morning of the week preceding their due date (9 AM Monday of the following week).

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 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.)

SEMESTER OUTLINE (TENTATIVE)

PART ONE SOCIAL PATTERNS

Week 1 *Women and African-Americans in the Workplace: A Historical View*

Stanley Lieberson. 1980. *A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants since 1880*. Berkeley: University of California Press. **Read Chapters 1 and 12.**

Claudia Goldin. 1993. "The U-Shaped Female Labor Force Participation Function in Economic Development and Economic History" (Chapter 3 in T. Paul Schultz, ed., *Investment in Women's Human Capital*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. **Read pp. 61-68, 72-88.**

Mary C. Brinton. 2001. *Women's Working Lives in East Asia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. **Read Chapter 1.**

Week 2 *Measuring Inequality at Work: Jobs and \$\$*

Barbara Reskin and Irene Padavic. 1994. *Women and Men at Work*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press. **Read Chapter 4.**

Maria Charles and David Grusky. 2004. *Occupational Ghettos: The Worldwide Segregation of Men and Women*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. **Read Chapter 1, pp. 1-31.**

Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2006. "The Gender Pay Gap: Going, Going...but not Gone." Chapter 2 in Francine D. Blau, Mary C. Brinton, and David Grusky, *The Declining Significance of Gender?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Week 3 *Equal Employment Opportunity: How Much Has Changed? Is Law Sufficient?*

Donald Tomaskovic-Devey and Kevin Stainback. 2007. "Discrimination and Desegregation: Equal Opportunity Progress in U.S. Private Sector Workplaces since the Civil Rights Act." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 609. **Read pp. 49-51, 62-81.**

Paula England. 2010. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled." *Gender and Society* 24: 149-166.

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

PART TWO SOCIAL PROCESSES IN THE WORKPLACE

Week 4 *Primary Frames: Sex and Race*

Cecilia L. Ridgeway. 2009. "Framed Before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations." *Gender and Society* 23: 145-160.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 1977. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
Read Chapters 3 and 6 ("Managers" and "Opportunity").

Week 5 *Ethnographic Research on Tokenism*

Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 1977. **Read Chapter 8 ("Numbers: Minorities and Majorities").**

Christine L. Williams. 1992. "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in The 'Female' Professions." *Social Problems* 39: 253-267.

Catherine J. Turco. 2011. "Cultural Foundations of Tokenism: Evidence from the Leveraged Buyout Industry." *American Sociological Review* 75: 894-913.

→ Methods workshop: Studying inequality through ethnographic and field research

Week 6 *Does Market Competition Eradicate Discrimination?*

Cass Sunstein. 1991. "Why Markets Don't Stop Discrimination." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 8: 22-37.

Robert Frank. 1998. "Winner-Take-All Labor Markets and Wage Discrimination." Chapter 9 in Mary C. Brinton and Victor Nee, *The New Institutionalism in Sociology*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Philip Moss and Chris Tilly. 1996. "'Soft' Skills and Race: An Investigation of Black Men's Employment Problems." *Work and Occupations* 23: 252-276.

→ Peer review of research proposals

Week 7 *Ethnographic Research on Workplace Dynamics*

Kathryn J. Lively. 2000. "Reciprocal Emotion Management: Working Together to Maintain Stratification in Private Law Firms." *Work and Occupations* 27: 32-63.

Robin J. Ely and Debra E. Meyerson. 2010. "An Organizational Approach to Undoing Gender: The Unlikely Case of Offshore Oil Platforms." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 30: 3-34.

Loriann Roberson and Carol T. Kulik. 2007. "Stereotype Threat at Work." *Academy of Management Perspectives* 24-40.

→ Midterm exam (in-class)

Week 8 *Sex Segregation in Action*

Yuko Ogasawara. 1998. *Office Ladies, Salaried Men*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 9 *Comparative-Historical Research into Job Segregation and Resegregation*

Mary C. Brinton. 2007. "Gendered Offices: A Comparative-Historical Examination of Clerical Work in Japan and the United States." Chapter 4 in Frances McCall Rosenbluth, ed., *The Political Economy of Japan's Low Fertility*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Eva Skuratowicz and Larry W. Hunter. 2004. "Where Do Women's Jobs Come From? Job Resegregation in an American Bank." *Work and Occupations* 31: 73-110.

Week 10 *Experimental Research on Competition and Hiring*

David Neumark, Roy J. Bank, and Kyle D. Van Nort. 1996. "Sex Discrimination in Restaurant Hiring: An Audit Study." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 111: 915-941.

Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse. 2000. "Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of 'Blind' Auditions on Female Musicians." *The American Economic Review* 90: 715-741.

PART THREE SOCIAL CHANGE AND CONSEQUENCES

Week 11 *Walmart's Fight Against Discrimination*

→ Check-in and discussion of research design and paper progress

Week 12 *Restructuring the American Workplace*

Alexandra Kalev. 2009. "Cracking the Glass Cage? Restructuring and Ascriptive Inequality at Work." *American Journal of Sociology* 114: 1591-1643.

Robin J. Ely and David A. Thomas. 2001. "Cultural Diversity at Work: The Effects of Diversity Perspectives on Work Group Processes and Outcomes." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 46: 229-273.

Week 13 *Paper presentations and peer/professor feedback*