

INEQUALITY AT WORK
Sociology 98Bd
Harvard University
Spring 2012
Tuesday 10-12
William James Hall, Room 510

Professor Mary C. Brinton
Department of Sociology, 580 William James Hall
brinton@wjh.harvard.edu
Office hours: Th 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? 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:

Attendance and participation:	25%
Short assignments:	15%
Research proposal:	20%
Peer review:	10%
Final research paper:	30%

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:

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.**

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

Week 2 (January 31)

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 (February 7)

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)

→ **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

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, 4, 6 ("Managers," "Secretaries," and "Opportunity").

Week 5 (February 21)

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 II: Studying inequality through ethnographic and field research

Week 6 (February 28)

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 (March 6)

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.

Yuko Ogasawara. 1998. *Office Ladies, Salaried Men*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Read Chapters 1 and 2.

SPRING BREAK

Week 8 (March 20)

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.

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

Week 9 (March 27)

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.

Uri Gneezy, Muriel Niederle, and Aldo Rustichini. 2003. "Performance in Competitive Environments: Gender Differences." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 1049-1074.

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?

Cedric Herring. 2009. "Does Diversity Pay? Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity." *American Sociological Review* 74: 208-224.

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.

David J. Maume and Rachel Sebastian. 2007. "Racial Composition of Workgroups and Job Satisfaction among Whites." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 609: 85-103.

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