

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Social Class and Poverty**  
**SOC 3600 – Section 1 (3 Hours), Spring 2018**  
**TR 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm**  
**Daniel Hall 415**

**Instructor:** **Dr. Kenneth L. Robinson**  
130-E Brackett Hall  
864-656-1449  
E-mail: [krbnsn@clemsn.edu](mailto:krbnsn@clemsn.edu) (preferred)

**Office Hours:** TW 3:30 – 4:30PM or by appointment

**Required Texts:**

Sernau, Scott. 2017. *Social Inequality in a Global Age*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-4833-7397-3. On order at the Campus Bookstore.

**Recommended Texts:**

Falk, William W. 2004. *Rooted in Place: Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. ISBN 0-8135-3465-8.

Vance, J.D. 2016. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publisher. ISBN 978-0-06-230054-6

Florida, Richard. 2017. *The New Urban Crisis*. New York, NY: Basic Books. ISBN 9780465079742

Not required but also on order at the Campus Bookstore. May purchase online via Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.

**Course Description:** Societies and most social groups, including communities, rank households and household members hierarchically. Some individuals and families have more prestige, power or wealth than others. Some sociologists argue that it occurs because of differences in functional importance. Others suggests that it a matter of differential power with certain groups given more power than others. Similarly, poverty is often assumed to be a primarily economic phenomenon, but in reality it is much more complex. Poverty contains multiple political, social, structural and spatial dimensions. The underlying objective of this course is to expand our understanding of these dimensions and the effect of social inequality and poverty on the welfare of people and places. Together, readings and lectures will provide you with a “big picture” of what both social class and poverty are from an interdisciplinary point of view. This learning process will help us generate a new appreciation for the complex world in which we live.

**Course Objectives:** The objectives of this course is to facilitate student learning, to contribute to student’s willingness to explore ideas contrary to one’s own beliefs, knowledge of when information and data are relevant to an issue, and how to find

relevant information. Specifically, the course will enable students to: 1) integrate and synthesize social class and poverty in terms of current major themes of interest; 2) construct and evaluate sound arguments that trace continuities between the social inequality perspective and sociological point of view; and 3) to acquire a body of knowledge regarding the findings and methodologies used to better understand social inequality and poverty.

These objectives contribute to overall course goals:

(1) Developing *critical thinking skills*. The class discussions, readings, writing assignments and exams are designed to encourage you to develop and use higher-order thinking skills, including analytical, synthetic and applied thinking.

(2) Understanding the *social structures and processes* that condition our lives. A basic goal of all sociology courses is to help you understand the nature and workings of these social structures, and how they open opportunities and impose constraints on individuals operating within these structures. C. Wright Mills called this using your "sociological imagination;" activities in this course are designed to encourage you to use *your* sociological imagination.

Students may vary in their competency levels on these abilities. You can expect to acquire these abilities only if you honor all course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of you as a student or team member in this course.

**Course Format:** Students must wait a minimum of 15 minutes for the professor if the professor is late for class. The course will include traditional lecture for the purposes of orientation and theoretical analysis of the subject. A portion of the class will use the seminar and discussion format. The course will also involve analyzing several case studies.

**Electronic Devices:** No laptops/iPads unless instructed or working on a group project. Please turn off your cell phones before class. If you expect an urgent phone call you may leave it on silent/vibrate and leave the classroom when/if the urgent call arrives.

**Late Assignments:** Students are expected to turn in assignments on or before the due date. Unless an excused absence is provided, five (5) points per day will be deducted for late assignments.

**Attendance/Class Participation:** Engagement includes attendance, class participation, constructive class discussion, and performance on class projects and assignments, and reporting on supplemental readings and activities. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain assignments, instructions, and lecture material presented during classes that he or she has not attended. Although the classroom format includes lecture, both the student and instructor benefit from spontaneous class discussion and exchange of ideas. Engaged

students demonstrate qualities such as motivation, extra effort, interest in the course material, improvement over the course of the semester and leadership. Lack of engagement is manifested by frequent absences, talking with others or dozing off in class, lack of interest in the course material, lack of preparation, and lack of participation in course activities. For further information, see class participation and attendance policy (to be posted on CANVAS).

To give you an opportunity to further improve your grade during the semester, there may be several opportunities for extra credit. Up to a total of four bonus and extra credit points may be added to your final grade.

**Title IX Policy:** Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/non-discrimination-policy.html>. Alesia Smith serves as Clemson's Title IX Coordinator and may be reached at [knightl@clemson.edu](mailto:knightl@clemson.edu) or (864) 656-3181.

**Student Disabilities Services Policy:** If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, you must notify the professor in writing during the first week of classes. It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services to discuss their individual needs for accommodation. Specifically, students with disabilities requesting accommodations should make an appointment with Ms. Margaret M. Camp, M.Ed. (656-6848), Director of Disability Services, to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disability Services when they meet with instructors. Accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester.

Please refer to the Student Disability Services – Student Guide on the Clemson University website for additional information:

[http://www.clemson.edu/sds/student\\_guide.html](http://www.clemson.edu/sds/student_guide.html)

**Academic Integrity:**

*“As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of this institution as a ‘seminary of higher learning.’ Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.”*

Work from other courses will not be accepted for credit in this course. Now, a word about plagiarism: Cheating includes plagiarism which refers to *using the work, ideas, or knowledge of other people as your own*. With the rise of the Internet there have been a growing number of plagiarism cases. For questions on how to avoid plagiarism, go to <http://www.lib.clemson.edu/Plagiarism/index.htm>.

If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism please do not hesitate to ask.

### Testing and Grading

Your grade in this course is based upon a combination of student profile, research paper, thesis statement and outline, two exams (Scantron cards will be provided), a team project, research paper, and a participation score. These activities will carry the following point values:

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2 (during exam week)	100 points
Team Project	50 points
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>50 points</u>
Total:	300 points

Grades will be assigned based upon the total number of points you have accrued at the end of the semester. Below is the *approximate* range of points that equates to each letter grade.

270 or higher	A
240-269	B
210-239	C
180-209	D
208 or below	F

In the calculation of interim and final grades, scores of 0.5 or higher are rounded up. I will not consider any requests for adjustments to your final grade at the end of the semester.

### Key Dates During the Semester (Spring 2018)

January 10	Classes begin
January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
January 24	Last day for students to drop without record
March 16	Last day to drop without final grades
March 19 – 23	Spring Break
April 30 – May 4	Final Exams
May 10 - 11	Graduation (Please let me know if you are a graduation candidate.)

Note: If for some reason you choose to drop the course, please note that it is **your responsibility** to actually drop the course. If you fail to drop, I reserve the right to give you the grade you earned should you stop attending class. **If you experience difficulty or have extenuating circumstances, you are encouraged to communicate with the instructor via e-mail and during office hour appointments.**

## Course Outline and Topics

Date(s)	Topics and Readings
January 11	<p><b>Introduction, Course Outline</b>  <b>Class Activities:</b> Review course objectives and outline of sessions; list learning objectives. Complete information sheet; and write what “social class” and “poverty” mean to you, their importance, and how they influence our daily lives.  <b>Reading to be completed by next class period, A Grim Bargain</b>  <a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/business/2015/12/01/a-grim-bargain/?utm_term=.4c331e2d3419">http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/business/2015/12/01/a-grim-bargain/?utm_term=.4c331e2d3419</a></p>
January 16	<p><b>Review Syllabus, A Grim Bargain</b>            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 3-12</p>
January 18	<p><b>Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender</b>            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 12-27</p>
January 23	<p><b>Evolution of inequalities: subsistence technologies and modes of production</b>            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 29-55</p>
January 25/30	<p><b>The great debates: historical and sociological</b>            Making Connections In the Media -- Bring to class a newspaper editorial or column related to the economy and society from a viewpoint or position of your choice and be prepared to summarize and discuss with class. For details, see pp. 54-55.            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 57-73</p>
February 1	<p><b>The Global Divide – Worlds Coming Apart and Coming Together</b>            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 73-87            Potential guest speaker (not yet confirmed)</p>
February 6	<p><b>Globalization: The Ties That Bind</b>            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 89-116</p>
February 8/13	<p><b>Class Privilege</b>            Video: <i>Born Rich</i>, “...personal documentary about one of the smallest and least-likely-to-agree-to-be-interviewed minorities on the planet: children of the vastly rich.”2003 Sundance Film Festival            Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 117-152</p>

- February 15/18**      **Racial and Ethnic Inequality: Cultures and Structures of Poverty**  
 Introduce group project  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 157-178
- February 20/22**      **Changing Norms on Gender and Sexuality**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 201-225
- February 27/Mar 1**      **Power and Politics The Power Elite Debate**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 227-243  
 Video and/or group exercise
- March 6**              **Education and Social Mobility**  
 Review for Exam #1
- March 8**              **Exam # 1 (Proposed)**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 243-253 and  
 Supplemental Readings “What did you learn in school today?” and  
 Washington Post Grade Point Perspective on SC Schools by Duke  
 sophomore (to be posted on Canvas)
- March 8**              **Social Mobility and Ladders with Broken Rungs**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 255-263
- March 13/15**        **Forgotten Places: Poverty and Place**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 264-277, and  
 Supplemental Reading *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and  
 Culture in Crisis* (Chapter 1 Introduction) (to be posted on Canvas)  
 Group Exercise
- March 19 – 23**      **No Class – Spring Break**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 281-303
- March 27**            **Reversing the Race to the Bottom: Poverty and Policy**  
 Guest speaker (not yet confirmed) to address local poverty  
 alleviation effort  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 304-313
- March 29**            **Extreme Poverty within Advanced Industrial Nations**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 315-346
- April 3/5**            **Social Movements in a Global Age**  
 Reading to be completed by next class period: pp. 315-346, and  
 Supplemental Reading from ASA Newsletter the Concerns of

Student Protesters and What Sociology Has to Offer (to be posted on Canvas)

- April 10/12**      **Viewing and discussion of video about capitalism, labor and ongoing populist movements**
- April 17/19**      **Team Presentations and Final Report**
- April 24/26**      **Wrap-up: Continue discussion of current issues, set aside time for course evaluation/self and peer evaluation of team project**
- April 24/26**      **Review for Exam #2 (during exam week) and Complete In-Class Presentations and Submit Final Project Report**
- April 30 – May 4**      **Final Exam Week**