



The mission of Concord University is to provide quality, liberal arts based education, to foster scholarly and creative activities and to serve the regional community (<http://www.concord.edu/academics/>).

Course Prefix, Number and Title: SOC 320 Special Topics in Sociology Wealth & Poverty

Course CRN # and Section: 20340 (03)

Semester Taught: Spring 2019

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: None

Course Time: W 4:00-6:30pm

Building and Room Number: HEC W33

Professor: Courtney B. Ross

Office Location: Admin 117

**Office Hours: HEC W 11-1 and
Athens TR 11-12, 3:30-4:40, and by
appointment**

Email: cross@concord.edu

Phone: 304-384-5227

Office Fax: 304-384-6094

**College/Department Website:
www.concord.edu/sws**

Contact Details:

Email is the best way to contact me – I will respond within 24 hours through the week. I can be reached by phone during office hours or you may leave a message. If you do *only* leave a voice message, please note that I am off campus usually two days a week so response time will vary.

Course Description/Rationale:

In this course we will answer two simple questions, “Who gets what?” and “Why?” It is essential that we answer both questions. The American ideology provides a general path for answering the second question, “Why?” According to our dominant system of beliefs, what one gets is determined by one’s talent, skill, and hard work. But when we answer the first question, “Who gets what?,” we discover that our egalitarian answer to the second question is overly simplistic and somewhat naïve. In the course of answering the first of our two structuring questions, “Who gets what?,” we will establish that in the U.S., rewards, particularly economic rewards, are unequally distributed. This inequality, as we will uncover, is structured by at least three dimensions of stratification: class, race, and gender. By answering the second of our two structuring questions, “Why?,” we will develop an understanding of how race, class, and gender interact to create social inequality both in historical and contemporary contexts.

Course Management System: Blackboard

Text Requirements:

Domhoff, G. William . 2014. *Who Rules American?: The Triumph of the Corporate Rich, 7d ed.* New York: NY: McGraw.

Edin, Kathryn J. and H. Luke Shaefer. 2015. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America.* Boston, MA: Mariner Books.

*Additional readings will be provided in class and/or on Blackboard

National Standards: N/A

Specific Learning Outcomes:

- 1) articulate the past and present contestations of the social categories of race/ethnicity, and gender/sex, and how people challenge these social classifications.
- 2) recognize how social structures reproduce and perpetuate differential power and privilege across the color line, as well as how people embrace and resist power and privilege differently.
- 3) describe the methods used by social scientists to measure inequality, wealth, poverty, and pertinent concepts in the United States.
- 4) identify the ways that violence is institutionalized, hidden, and stealthily promoted in contemporary social arrangements.
- 5) explain the causes and consequences of corporate power and elite networks by using sociological theoretical perspectives.
- 6) evaluate potential solutions to persistent inequality in the United States

Course Requirements:

This is a class that explores a range of issues regarding the complex interrelationships of individuals and collectives in countries around the world. The exchange of ideas among all students is an important element of the course, and open discussion is a necessary element of sociological studies. You will have the opportunity to discuss and respond to course materials that include assigned readings and other. Therefore, you must be prepared when you get to class. Read the assignments ahead of time, so you and your classmates can fully analyze content and context of the readings.

Scholarly exchange of ideas requires maturity and open minds. You may encounter issues and concepts in our discussion that you have not explored before. Every student must respect the viewpoints and comments of every other student in this class, even though we differ in our standpoints, opinions and experiences. Some of the topics we explore may be uncomfortable and/or unfamiliar. However, if you approach the subjects from an academic viewpoint, you will be able to analyze and evaluate sensitive material in an objective manner.

Course Requirements (325 total points available):

1) Attendance (50 points; 15.5% of total grade)

Learning is not just reading, although that is a major part of the process. Becoming critical thinkers means engaging in intellectual exchanges, which will be rewarded in this specific grade evaluation.

Attendance is taken every class meeting. You can miss **TWO** classes without being penalized. Because two weeks of class is more than generous for a heavily weighed portion of the total grade, absences can NOT be excused except for official university business. One day past the TWO absences will result in a loss of 50% of the total points; Extenuating circumstances are taken into consideration.

Perfect attendance will earn you +5 (1.5%) to your final score in the course.

2) Exams (2 x 100 = 200 total points; 61.5% of total grade)

There are two open-note/book exams in this class. The questions on the exams are multiple-choice and short answer. Exam #1 covers Who Rules America? And pertinent material presented in lectures, class discussions, videos, etc. to the text. Exam #2 is on \$2.00 a Day. And pertinent material presented in lectures, class discussions, videos, etc. to the text.

3) Class Discussion Leader (75 total points; 23% of grade)

You will be in charge of leading discussion of the course material on a particular book section/chapter for one class session during the semester, and possibly with another student. Organizing the class discussion involves presenting the required readings assigned, raising specific questions and issues, relating the material to previous readings and class discussions, and contribution of outside material/information about the particular information. You are encouraged to use graphic or auto-visual aids, and to be creative (for example, creating class exercises). Your role as presentation/discussion leader will not be in “lecturing” on the material, but facilitating a thoughtful and active discussion of these materials.

The day of your class discussion lead, or prior to, you are required to provide copies (contact me if you need assistance with printing) of Handout with the following information:

- 1) Overview (try to keep as brief as possible) of the section/chapter material, including key points and facts.
Furthermore, include what you find particularly interesting and/or troubling and explain why.
- 2) Terminology with definitions/conceptualization,
- 3) 2-3 discussion questions, and 5-8 multiple-choice questions (can have one T/F question).

Students are expected to, not required to bring the Handouts to every class session. However as a perk, at the end of the semester, students can earn an additional 10 points to their total score by sharing how the handouts and speaking to how they organized and used the cumulative information to make sense of wealth and poverty. Class time will be provided for this by Instructor.

Paper Logistics:

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1” margins on all four sides, Times New Roman 12 point-font or Arial 10 point-font, page numbered, and black ink. Please single-space your name, date, course title and section number in the upper Left Hand corner. Please follow this format verbatim; I take points off for incorrect formatting.

Grading Policy and Scale, Make-up Policy, Late Work:

Grading Scale:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 325-291 = A | 225-194 = D |
| 290-259 = B | 193-0 = F |
| 258-226 = C | |

Late Policy:

- I will **NOT** accept late submissions of the **Handout** for the Class Discussion Leadership assignment. Students are given multiple opportunities for leading the Class Discussion Leadership assignment.
- I give make-up EXAMS grudgingly. If you have a compelling and verifiable reason for missing an exam (hospitalization is compelling; vacation plans, work schedules, and other class requirements are not), you must speak with me about your situation at least one week (seven days) in advance or, in case of true emergencies, you must contact me within one week (seven days) to reschedule. Make-up exams will not be given if failure to adhere to this one week courtesy policy. Extenuating circumstances taken into consideration.

Classroom Courtesy: This is an inclusive and safe classroom. Racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, or other negative, pejorative, and/or discriminatory language will not be tolerated and students who insist on such behavior or who disrespect folks in the classroom will be asked to leave the classroom. Certain things that we discuss in class may make you feel uncomfortable, because many of the topics are controversial. I expect and encourage you to disagree with some perspectives. Your disagreement is welcome. But, your argument needs to be supported with reason and evidence. We are concerned with the scholarly, rather than emotional. If you continue to feel uncomfortable with class material and/or discussion and/or have any other problems in the course, please contact me.

A valuable tool for successful learning is listening to other’s perspectives and experiences. Following some ground rules, establishes a good learning environment: 1) We will respect others and their ideas, even when we disagree, 2) We will create a safe atmosphere in the classroom, 3) No one will dominate class discussions, 4) No one will discriminate, harass, or intimidate other students, 5) NO CELLPHONES, 6) We will respect the role of the instructor as moderator and facilitator, 7) We will observe common sense courteous behavior in the class, and 8) If you bring food to class do not let it be a distraction.

Computers: Laptops are permitted every class.

Extra Credit: There is NO extra credit initially worked into the course.

Course Timeline (Schedule of Assignments/Assessments/Presentations)

BB = readings available on BLACKBOARD

Weeks 1-2, 1/9 & 1/16: Introductions and unfolding Who Rules America?

READ:

- Domhoff – preface, Introduction, and chapter 1
- BB = Wright, Foundations of Class Analysis: A Marxist Perspective

Week 3, 1/23:

READ:

- BB = Acker, Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?
- Domhoff - chapter 2

Section I-IV _____
 Section V-IX _____

Week 4, 1/30:

READ:

Domhoff - chapter 3

Section I-IV _____

Section V-VIII _____

Section VIII-XII _____

Week 5, 2/6:

READ:

Domhoff - chapter 4

Section I-IV _____

Section V-X _____

Week 6, 2/13

READ:

Domhoff – chapter 5

Section I-III _____

Section IV-VII _____

Weeks 7-8, 2/20 & 2/27:

READ:

Domhoff – chapters 7 and 8

Week 9, 3/6: EXAM #1

Week 10-11, 3/20 & 3/27:

READ:

\$2.00 – Introduction and chapter 1

Week 12, 4/3:

READ:

\$2.00 - chapter 2

Week 13, 4/10:

READ:

\$2.00 - chapter 3

Week 14, 4/17:

READ:

\$2.00 - chapter 4

Week 15, 4/24:

READ:

\$2.00 - chapter 5, conclusion, and acknowledgements

EXAM #2, May 8 @ 4:00-6:30p

Accessibility/Accommodations:

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform your instructor at the beginning of the class semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. It is your responsibility to self-disclose that you are requesting accommodations. The University and instructor will provide you with a reasonable accommodation. You should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry and Jean Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone is 304-384-6086 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at nellison@concord.edu for assistance.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is morally unacceptable as well as destructive to the learning and teaching atmosphere. Academic dishonesty includes the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or assignments, falsifying documents, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another). Such dishonesty can lead to a variety of penalties — including but not limited to failure of assignment, failure of course, loss of institutional privileges, or dismissal from the University. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

Concord University Honor Code:

A Concord University Honor Code was approved by students, staff, faculty, administration, and the CU Board of Governors. The Code states:

"As a member of the Concord University Community I will act with honesty and integrity in accordance with our fundamental principles and I will respect myself and others while challenging them to do the same."

The Honor Code is intended to unite the Concord community behind a culture of honesty, integrity, and civility.

Class/Online Attendance Policy:

Regular class attendance is part of a student's academic obligation at Concord. Irregular attendance may affect academic performance adversely and is detrimental to the atmosphere of a class. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

Emergency Alert System

In an effort to increase safety and security on our campus, Concord University encourages everyone to register for instant text message alerts. Alerts will only be used for security and safety notices. All students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive text message alerts on their cell phones or email alerts. Please contact the IT Help Desk for further assistance (304-384-5291).

Emergency Information:

Emergency/courtesy telephones are located at the main entrance of each residence hall and at various other locations on campus. Emergency telephones can be identified by the flashing blue light and will provide the user with a direct link to Public Safety at the press of a button. To report an on-campus emergency, call 304-384-5357 or 911. The Office of Public Safety is located on the bottom floor of the

Rahall Technology Center. For further emergency information go to:
<http://www.concord.edu/administration/office-public-safety>.

Inclement Weather Policy:

As a general policy, the University will remain in normal operations during adverse weather conditions. In the event of severe weather conditions, the following may occur:

University Closure

No students or employees are to report.

Classes Cancelled

Students do NOT report BUT employees are expected to report to work at their normal time.

Operating on an Inclement Weather Delay

Under this schedule, all 8 a.m. classes will start at 10 a.m. Students and faculty will follow the Inclement Weather Schedule. (See <http://www.concord.edu/emergency-alerts> for Athens/Beckley Inclement Weather Schedules.)

**Announcements invoking the late schedule or other options referenced above are aired on area radio and television stations and are sent as text and email messages to those enrolled for this service.*

Student Conduct:

In classrooms, online, laboratories, and during any activities that are part of course requirements, students are expected to observe reasonable rules of conduct.

Sexual Harassment & Assault:

Federal law, Title IX, and Concord University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (Including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential counseling support through the Concord University Counseling Center (304-384-5290). Alleged Violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Concord University Title IX Coordinator at 304-384-6327 or titleix@concord.edu. Reports to Campus Security can be made at (304-384-5357). As an employee at Concord University, I am a mandatory reporter which means I must report any sexual misconduct I am made aware of. This includes verbal or written (such as in an assignment) disclosures of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Technology Services:

Contact the CU Help Desk at extension 5291 from campus or 304-384-5291 off campus. You may also e-mail cuhelpdesk@concord.edu.

Syllabus Disclaimer

"This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Please check it regularly."