

Capstone: Inequality and Social Justice
(GRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS)

Course Information

- Professor: Kathy Kuipers
- Office: Social Science, room 311
- Hours: Tuesday (2-4:00) and Wednesday (3-5:00) and by appointment
- Phone: 243-4381 (office); 327-9777 (home—only in emergencies)
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Course Objectives:

This course is designed as a capstone course for senior sociology majors in either the ISJ option with reading, discussion, and graduate level thinking about inequality and social justice OR the REaCH option focusing also on rural and environmental change. It also may satisfy a social science course credit for the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Graduate Certificate. Graduate students may take the course for graduate credit by meeting all of the requirements for undergraduate work and completing several different assignments designed to give more experience in analysis, teaching, and presentation. For all students, the focus of the course will be on writing while also exploring the differences between inequality and inequity; the use of justice rules and how we decide what's fair and what's not, how inequality influences social interaction, and how what we know about inequality plays out within different contexts including rural and environmental settings.

After some initial discussion and a review of editing techniques and revising requirements, we will discuss the process of sociological research within the context of inequality and social justice. In addition to the substantive readings, you will be required to formulate a research question, investigate a topic of your choice, collect data to help you answer that question, and analyze and compile the results to disseminate to others. You will spend most of the semester investigating your question and writing (and rewriting) drafts of smaller writing assignments to be combined into a larger sociological research paper. The paper will be formatted for publication in a sociological journal or for presentation to sociologists and you will be required to give a presentation on your work in class.

Learning Outcomes for Writing in Sociology:

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for sociological inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information on inequality and social justice and/or rural and environmental change effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives on an inequality and social justice topic or on a rural and environmental change topic. Write a literature review, drawing together the key sources on your research topic.
- Recognize the purposes and needs of sociological audiences and adopt the sociological voice in your writing and presentations
- Use multiple drafts, revisions, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing your written work
- Follow the American Sociological Association's conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation
- Gain experience leading a class by facilitating discussion on readings.

- Gain experience in disseminating the results of your research by giving a presentation on your research study similar to a presentation given at an academic research conference.

Course Requirements:

As a graduate level course, this is an active participation seminar. You are expected to participate in discussions every class session. The readings are designed to help your writing, to emphasize the sociologist's point of view in conducting and writing about research, or to provide the contextual background for your proposed project. You should complete the assigned readings before you come to class to ensure active participation in class discussions and activities. You are responsible for raising questions that you have about the readings or about problems in preparing and writing your assignments and in-class discussion is the best way of doing this. Since class participation, especially in small-group settings, is such an important part of this class, **your attendance at all class meetings is mandatory**. Your class participation (in-class discussions, small group participation, informal presentations on your project at different stages, and in-class writing assignments) will be worth 15% of your final grade (100 points). (Reading Questions are posted on Moodle to guide you in your reading and to prepare you for participation in class discussions.)

In addition to a discussion of the readings, students will have written assignments due each week. Three types of writing assignments are due for this course: drafts of your own work, comments on others' work, and strategies for revision of your own work. You will also write a final research paper, formatted for publication in a sociological journal, combining your five revisions with additional writing. All of these must be submitted electronically to Moodle by class time on the day that they are due. They **MUST** be in WORD-readable format so that I can make comments on them and return them to you. A written "test" on ethics also will be due in the 4th week. Paper copies of certificates for the completion of the "test" and the Writing Center form (due in the 3rd week) are due **IN CLASS**. Written work is worth approximately 67% of your final grade and **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS will be accepted**. (Point distribution is as follows: 5 drafts, worth 20 points each; 5 sets of peer reviews, each worth 20 points; 4 strategies for revision, each worth 10 points; an IRB assignment worth 10 points; the final paper worth 200 points.)

You will be required to present informally in class on several occasions: briefly on your research topic and on your final paper. We will also spend class time working in small groups (your group will be made up of graduate students) for focused discussion and evaluation of your written work. This constructive peer criticism will help you improve your written communication skills and respond to those criticisms in your written descriptions of strategies. These sessions will require that students submit their written work and give feedback on each other's work as indicated in the syllabus schedule. Other students will rely on your drafts in order for them to write their peer reviews, or on your reviews in order for them to write their strategies for revision and you will let them down with late assignments. The functioning of a class like this depends upon the timely submission of work, especially peer reviews and drafts to be distributed to other students, so no exceptions or excuses will apply for late work.

You will also be required to present formally at the end of the semester—a Power point presentation and discussion of your research--to the class followed by a question and answer session. This assignment is designed to give you experience in presentations of academic work and is worth 67 points/10% of your final grade.

Throughout the semester, readings for the course will come from both pedagogical material about writing and articles and chapters related to inequality and social justice. A graduate student will be responsible for leading the discussion on days when we read inequality and social justice material. This is intended to give you experience leading a class. **You will each facilitate 2 class discussions**. In order to account for improvement, the second facilitation will be weighted somewhat more heavily and both, together, will count for 10% of your final grade.

Please note that to receive a high grade in this course, you must not only satisfy the standard requirements, but also demonstrate **excellence** in participation, your written work, your contribution to improvement in peer work and your development of your own revisions, your data collection, and your final project. The basic requirements for the course are listed above. Additional demonstrated **excellence** in writing and analysis includes the following: intellectual and imaginative seriousness, complex engagement with the elements of sociological research, a research question and analysis that makes a contribution to the discipline, a serious commitment to revision, and a mastery of writing fundamentals (and no typographical errors).

Readings: Five books are required as primary texts for the class and are available from the bookstore.

1. Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008 *The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition*. The University of Chicago Press.
2. American Sociological Association. 2007. *ASA Style Guide, Fifth Edition*. (The formatting basics of the *ASA Style Guide* are also available yearly in each of its journals. A student version may be downloaded from the ASA website—free of charge.)
3. Greene, Anne E. 2013. *Writing Science in Plain English*. University of Chicago Press.
4. Gladwell, Malcolm. 2008. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. Little, Brown and Co.
5. Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press.

Additional readings are required and will be available on *Moodle*. Books will be put on reserve when/if available.

Students also **must** use and participate on the *Moodle* course supplement where all of the additional readings and handouts will be posted. In order to be prepared for class, you will need to check *Moodle* regularly—at the very least, well before each class meeting—for announcements, readings, and extra information. Written assignments (in WORD-readable format) should be uploaded to *Moodle* by the due date and students may access comments and feedback on assignments in the *Moodle gradebook*. Direct your browser to <http://umonline.umt.edu> or access *Moodle* by clicking on “my.umt.edu” on the University of Montana homepage. “UM Online/Moodle” is one of the buttons at the top of the page. In the future, the syllabus, schedule, additional readings, handouts, assignments, grades, and other information will be posted on the site. I recommend that you bookmark this site and visit it regularly.

A few words about plagiarism and academic dishonesty: “Plagiarism is the representing of another’s work as one’s own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion.” (Taken from the [Student Conduct Code](#), available for review online, http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php.) Plagiarism includes:

- Copying from another’s paper or allowing another to copy from one’s own paper
- Unpermitted collaboration: working together on an assignment
- Copying words or ideas from sources and failing to give credit to the source.
- Giving or receiving unpermitted aid on a take-home examination or paper.

Make sure that your work is your own. In this class, discussion of ideas is permitted, and even encouraged among classmates. Giving and accepting comments on each other’s writing is also allowed. Neither using another student’s paper as a template for your own nor copying from any written a document (without giving proper credit) is acceptable. If this is unclear, please ask. Be careful!

Email: My email address is listed at the top of the syllabus. I will use your University of Montana

email address to contact you, and I remind you that email is an official form of communication at UM—that means that **you should check yours regularly for updates** from me. Please use a clear subject line when emailing me. I will generally respond—if a response is deemed necessary or is requested—within 24 hours, except on weekends. Note: While I am delighted to communicate with you and answer questions over email, please do NOT email me drafts of papers or attachments unless asked to do so.

Writing Center

I strongly encourage all students to consult with the Writing Center as you work through your assignments. Note that the Writing Center does not edit or correct papers, but helps students plan and execute papers in one or more tutoring sessions. [Schedule appointments](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/) (online at <http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/>). Note that for at least one of your draft papers, you will be required to complete at least one consultation with writing center staff and have the writing center staff complete a certificate indicating that you have consulted with him or her.

Class Facilitation

When we discuss content-specific readings having to do with inequality and social justice, a graduate student will be responsible for leading the class discussion. The goal is to give graduate students experience in leading class discussion. Each graduate student will facilitate 2 class discussions and should choose the days that they will facilitate early in the semester. (Sign up with Professor Kuipers.) Choices may be based on the topics covered in the readings and whether it coincides with student interests or students may facilitate on days that fit within their schedules. I expect that students will improve in their facilitation so the second facilitation will be weighted more heavily than the first.

Presentation of Research

Graduate students will be expected to have a more sophisticated research paper at the end of the semester. This means that research questions will be more complete, data collection more thorough, and analysis more in-depth. At the end of the semester (April 28, May 3, or May 5), graduate students will present the results of their research projects to the class. These presentations should be similar in format to a presentation at an academic conference: 15-20 minutes in length and include a Power Point presentation. After your presentation, the presenter will respond to questions from the class. This simulates the experience of presenting one's work at a research conference and emphasizes important skills for graduate students who will conduct research and disseminate their findings.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

Course Schedule: See undergraduate syllabus.