

Culture and Inequality
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Spring 2012
Tuesdays and Fridays from 12:30 to 1:45 in Canisius 2

This course will examine the cultural understanding of inequality, which we take to be foundational to any social order. In other words, what counts as “fair” or legitimate sorts of difference, and what sorts of difference need to be ameliorated or eliminated, is a distinction at the root of every cultural (and therefore economic) system. Students will examine the moralities implicated in our social order and compare them to other, especially non-Western, models. The books below will be augmented by a set of articles available online.

Evaluation and grades

Your grade will be determined by two exams (20% each), three papers (5%, 5%, and 20% respectively), and ten pop quizzes (3% each for a total of 30%). I will give at least 12 quizzes and count the best 10. The exams will involve short essay questions. We will build a study guide before each exam. If you miss either of them, I will substitute your other exam score after subtracting 20%. The first paper will be approximately 6 pages and requires you to choose four chapters from Browne and Milgram (see below) and relate them to the lectures. The second paper will be approximately 6 pages and requires you to relate our guest speaker’s talk and assigned readings to our course material. The final paper can be up to 20 pages and requires you to invent and describe a utopian society. You will address the questions: What sorts of inequality are expected, accepted, and encouraged? How are they encouraged? What sorts of inequality are expected but discouraged? How are they discouraged?

Late papers are not accepted. There are no make-up exams for any reason. Please do not ask.

Books

Graeber, David. 2011. *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. New York: Melville House Press.

Browne, Katherine E. and Barbara Lynne Milgram. 2009. *Economics and morality: anthropological approaches*. Landham, MD: Rowman Littlefield.

Articles

Crawford, David. 2007. “[The Temporality of Resistance](#)” in *Beyond Resistance: The Future of Freedom*, Ed. Robert Fletcher. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

-- 2008. [Moroccan Households in the World Economy](#). (Chap. 4) Baton Rouge: LSU Press.

Dahrendorf, R. 1969. [On the Origin of Inequality Among Men](#). In *Social Inequality*, edited by A. Béteille. Baltimore: Penguin.

Dumont, L. (1980). [Homo Hierarchicus](#). Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1-20

Fishman, Ted C. 2002. [Making a Killing: The myth of capital's good intentions](#). in Harper's Magazine. Vol. 305, No. 1827

- Gell, Alfred. 1986. [Newcomers to the world of goods: consumption among the Muria Gonds](#). In *The Social Life of Things*, ed. A. Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. [Argonauts of the Western Pacific](#). (Chap. XXII) Prospect Heights, IL.: Waveland Press.
- Phillips, Anne. 1999. [Which equalities matter?](#) Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 20-43
- Sen, Amartya. 1992. *Inequality Reexamined* (Pp. 1-30). New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Shipler, David K. 2004. [A Poor Cousin of the Middle Class](#). *New York Times Magazine*, January 18, 22-27.
- Shipton, Parker. 2009. [Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa](#). (Chap. 2) New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stille, Alexander. 2011. [The Paradox of the New Elite](#). *The New York Times*, October 22, 2011.
- Wardlow, Holly. 2006. [Wayward women: sexuality and agency in a New Guinea society](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schedule of Readings

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| January 17 | First day; no reading and nothing due. |
| January 20 | Introduction in Browne and Milgram; Stille |
| January 24 | Maurer in Brown and Milgram; Dahrendorf |
| January 27 | Dumont; Phillips |
| January 31 | Sen; Crawford (“Temporality of Resistance”) |
| February 3 | Review Introduction in Browne and Milgram and Maurer in Brown and Milgram |
| February 7 | Watch this video ; read Graeber chaps 1, 2 |
| February 10 | Robbins in Browne and Milgram |
| February 14 | Graeber chap. 3 |
| February 17 | EXAM 1 |
| February 21 | Go to MONDAY classes. |
| February 24 | Wardlow |
| February 28 | Graeber 4, 5 |
| March 2 | Shipton |
| March 6 | Graeber 6 |
| March 9 | Talk by Kim Hopper. Read this . Class is in the in the library multimedia room. PAPER 1 DUE |
| <i>Spring Break</i> | |
| March 20 | Graeber 7 |
| March 23 | Gell |
| March 27 | Graeber 8 |
| March 30 | Malinowski |
| April 3 | Graeber 9; PAPER 2 DUE |
| <i>Easter Break</i> | |
| April 10 | Graeber 10 |
| April 13 | Crawford (Chap 4. in <i>Moroccan Households</i>) |
| April 17 | Graeber 11 |
| April 20 | Graeber 12 |
| April 24 | Review |
| April 27 | EXAM 2 |

May 1 Conclusion
May 10 3 p.m. FINAL PAPER DUE

Just so you know...

“Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, data, work, or language of others and submitting them as one’s own to satisfy the requirements of a course. Plagiarism constitutes theft and deceit and really pisses me off. Students are often confused by just what constitutes plagiarism. When the ideas or writings of others are presented in assignments, these ideas or writing should be attributed to that source. Special care should be taken, when cutting and pasting materials from the Internet or when paraphrasing, to cite sources correctly and to use quotation marks around exact words from source materials. Actions that result in plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Consequently, students are responsible to understand the concept of plagiarism. When reading, processing, or using materials from any source, appropriate documentation is always essential. Resources such as the library (ext. 2178) and the writing center (www.fairfield.edu/writingcenter) are available on campus to assist you in your academic endeavors. You are encouraged to take advantage of these resources.”