This course draws on empirical scholarship to situate US society in global context. We ask what kind of society this is, and how it really works. We examine historical trends to understand why social institutions work the way they do, and ask what changes are needed to enhance liberty. These questions bring together ideas from sociology, political science, and economics to ground the inquiry in theory. In order to evaluate mechanisms for social change, we consider the different perspectives and values (e.g. freedom, prosperity, fairness) that inform our culture. We take an in-depth look at social hierarchy including class, gender inequality and racial inequality. With particular attention to the role of the state, we examine racism through the lens of civil rights and the system of mass incarceration. We explore possible futures through deepening democracy.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Required Texts:**


*In-class assignments (40 points):* We will regularly have in-class assignments. These will consist of small group discussions and individual writing assignments. If you miss class (or if you arrive late to class or leave early) and miss an assignment, you will receive no credit. Assignments cannot be made up. Assignments not receiving full credit cannot be revised. The two lowest assignment grades will be dropped.

*Writing assignments (40 points):* You will complete 4 short writing responses reflecting on what you have learned from class content. You may choose to make your writing assignments more personal and reflective or you can critique the readings in an academic style. See detailed instructions below. **Assignments are due via D2L on Fridays at 5pm. Do not email your work.**

*Tests (20 points):* There will be two tests, each worth 10 points towards the course grade. Tests will include the material covered in readings and material presented in class. The tests will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. Tests are not cumulative: test 1 covers weeks 1-5, test 2 covers weeks 6-10. If you miss a test, you will need to inform the instructor and schedule a makeup at the PSU testing center. Test 1 must be made up within one week and test 2 must be made up by the end of finals week.
POLICIES

Required Readings: Wright and Rogers 2015 is available for 2-hour loan at the library course reserves desk (behind the circulation desk, 1st floor). Alexander 2012 is available online as an e-book through the library. Use the following directions to access the e-reserves:

- Go to the library web site: http://library.pdx.edu/
- Click on Course Reserves
- Search by instructor last name (Carathers)
- Login with your Odin account and password
- Request 2-hour loan for Wright and Rogers 2015
- To access Alexander 2012: search New Jim Crow; click through to get to e-book; click on the e-book link to open

All reading selections in the e-reserves are held by the library. If you cannot access the readings through the course-reserves using the above directions, navigate to the readings from the library homepage.

Note on course content: Readings and discussions for this course will cover controversial topics related to racism and oppression, sexual practices, gender minority (e.g. transgender and non-binary) and sexual minority (e.g. gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer) identities and experiences, and other topics related to gender, sexualities, and race that some students may be uncomfortable reading and discussing. If you have concerns about the course content generally or any specific topics we may cover, please see the instructor at the start of the term.

D2L: The instructor will post course materials on D2L. Students will submit assignments via D2L. The instructor will also post comments and grades for assignments on D2L. Articles assigned as required reading are available in the ‘reading folder’ on D2L; navigate to readings in the syllabus without a hyperlink in the reading folder.

Email: The instructor will regularly communicate with the class via PSU email so be sure that you are receiving our emails. It is your responsibility to check your email daily during the school week and respond in a timely manner. In emails to the instructor, please put the title of the course in the subject line and sign your emails using your first and last name. Use the email addresses on the first page of the syllabus. The instructor will generally respond to email within 24 hours. Emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday will generally be answered by 5:00pm on Monday.

Academic Honesty: You are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU policies. Cheating or plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

Plagiarism: If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else’s words), you must include it in quotation marks and cite the source, including author(s) name(s), the date of publication, and the page number. If you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source, including author(s) name(s) and the date of publication. Failure to cite your sources,
whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the PSU Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) and the instructor at the beginning of the term to arrange accommodations. The DRC is located in 435 Smith and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their website at [http://www.pdx.edu/drc](http://www.pdx.edu/drc).

**Laptops/tablets/e-readers:** If you prefer to read electronic versions of the readings, you may bring these devices to class to reference the readings during in-class assignments and class discussions. You may also use these devices to take notes in class. However, if you use your device for non-class purposes, you will be asked to put away your device.

**Classroom Conduct:** You must demonstrate the highest level of respect for your peers and for the instructor. All points of view will be welcomed and respected; however, statements or behaviors that are disrespectful towards individuals or groups will not be tolerated. Behaviors that are distracting to your peers and to the instructor are not acceptable (e.g. coming in late, packing up or leaving early, using electronic devices for non-class purposes, and having side conversations).

**Guests in class:** The instructor does not allow people under age 18 to attend class. If you would like to bring a guest to class who is over 18, please ask the instructor in advance.

**Cancelled Classes:** In the case of inclement weather or other emergencies, please refer to the PSU web page: [http://www.pdx.edu/](http://www.pdx.edu/). In the event that the instructor has to cancel class, she will email the class as soon as possible. If the instructor has not arrived to class 10 minutes after the scheduled start time, consider class cancelled for the day.

**Absences:** In the event you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to ask a classmate for notes, announcements, and any other missed material. If you have any questions after you have checked with a classmate, please see the instructor before or after class or during office hours. If you miss a test, you will need to inform the instructor and schedule a makeup at the PSU testing center. Test 1 must be made up within one week and test 2 must be made up by the end of finals week.

**Late assignments:** Late assignments will be penalized at 5% per weekday late and late assignments will not be accepted after 5 weekdays. This policy applies only to weekly writing assignments. In-class assignments cannot be completed late or made up. Extra credit assignments will not be accepted late.
COURSE OUTLINE

Note: You are required to complete the readings before class on the day they are due. You are strongly encourage to bring the readings to class, either in hard copy or on an electronic device (e.g. laptop, tablet) with the readings on the screen at the start of class. You should refer to your copies of the readings to complete written in-class assignments and participate in class discussion. The instructor reserves the right to alter or modify the course schedule as needed.

Week 1 Thinking Sociologically

Monday 30 September
- No reading due
- Access D2L for course content

Wednesday October 2
- Carefully read the syllabus, including all assignment guidelines

Friday October 4

Week 2 Social Norms & Institutions

Monday October 7
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 1 perspectives and values

Wednesday October 9
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 2 what kind of society is American society?

Friday October 11
- Catch up!
- Writing assignment due via D2L by 5pm. Suggested prompt for first writing assignment: What do you already know about social institutions? What would you like to learn from this course?

Week 3 Capitalism

Monday October 14
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 3 capitalist market: how it is supposed to work

Wednesday October 16
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 4 capitalist market: how it actually works
Friday October 18
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 11 thinking about fairness and inequality

**Week 4 Gender Inequality**

Monday October 21
  [www.nature.com/news/sex-redefined-1.16943](http://www.nature.com/news/sex-redefined-1.16943)
- Greenfield, Charlotte. 2014. “Should We ’Fix’ Intersex Children?” *The Atlantic*

Wednesday October 23
- Rogers, Thomas. 2012. “The Invention of the Heterosexual” *Slate*
  [www.salon.com/2012/01/22/the_invention_of_the_heterosexual/](http://www.salon.com/2012/01/22/the_invention_of_the_heterosexual/)

Friday October 25
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 16 gender inequality
- **Writing assignment** due via D2L by 5pm

**Week 5 Mid-term**

Monday October 28
- Film screening: *Gender Revolution* (part 1)

Wednesday October 30
- Film screening: *Gender Revolution* (part 2)

Friday November 1
- **Test 1**

**Week 6 Racial Inequality**

Monday November 4
- Wright & Rogers, ch. 15 racial inequality

Wednesday November 6
- Film screening: *13th* (part 1)

Friday November 8
- Film screening: *13th* (part 2)
- **Writing assignment** due via D2L by 5pm
Week 7 Institutional Racism

Monday November 11
● NO CLASS – enjoy!

Wednesday November 13
● Alexander, New Jim Crow discussion part 1

Friday November 15
● Alexander, New Jim Crow discussion part 2

Week 8 Economic Inequality

Monday November 18
● Wright & Rogers, ch. 12 class

Wednesday November 20
● Wright & Rogers, ch. 13 persistent poverty and rising inequality

Friday November 22
● Wright & Rogers, ch. 14 ending poverty in America
● Writing assignment due via D2L by 5pm. Suggested prompt for final writing assignment: Considering the material we have covered in this course, choose some topics or issues that falls into any/all of the following categories (a) A topic or issue that you learned about for the first time in this class; (b) A topic or issue that you developed a stronger opinion about based on the material you learned in this class; (c) A topic or issue that you changed your mind about based on the material learned in this class.

Week 9 Poverty

Monday November 25
● Wright & Rogers, ch. 19 taxation and the attack on the affirmative state

Wednesday November 27
● NO CLASS – enjoy!

Friday November 29
● NO CLASS – enjoy!
Week 10 Social Change

Monday December 2
  ● Wright & Rogers, ch. 22 labor unions

Wednesday December 4
  ● Catch up!

Friday December 6
  ● Wright & Rogers, ch. 24 possible futures

Finals week

Thursday December 12
  ● Test 2 – 12:30-2:20

GUIDELINES FOR WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

TASK
You will complete 4 short writing assignments reflecting on what you have learned from class content, including lecture material, in-class assignments, films, and required readings. You may choose to make your writing assignments more personal and reflective or you can critique the readings in an academic style. Do not simply summarize the readings or material covered in class.

SOURCES
For writing assignments, you may draw on course readings or outside sources in addition to the reading selections for the week; however, drawing on outside sources is strongly discouraged. You should only incorporate additional sources if it enhances your analysis. You must include a references section at the end of the reading response only if you use sources other than the course readings.

When citing sources in the text, use the last name(s) of the author(s) and year. If using quotes, include the page number. You may use the title of the article (in quotation marks) or book (in italics) in the text if you wish, but this is not necessary. For the weekly writing assignments, you only need to cite the author and year for the reading selection once. Examples:

  Gerson (2011) draws on interviews with young men and women to examine attitudes towards marriage, family, and work.

  Acker defines “inequality regimes” as “loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations” (2006:443).
Reminder of the plagiarism policy: If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else’s words), you must include it in quotation marks and cite the source, including author(s) name(s), the date of publication, and the page number. If you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source, including author(s) name(s) and the date of publication. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

COMPONENTS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

You may choose to make your writing assignment more personal by reflecting on how what you this week learned relates to you and your life. Alternately, you can write more academic writing assignments, writing a critical analysis of the week’s readings and other material presented in class.

*Reflective essay*

If you choose to write a more personal and reflective essay, describe your personal response to the readings, material presented in class, or class discussion this week. The purpose of the reflection is to consider how you engaged with the ideas presented, not just summarize the ideas.

Some questions to consider discussing:

- Did you learn something new that surprised you? Did you reevaluate your views on an issue based on the arguments and evidence presented this week?
- Did you disagree with any of the arguments presented this week (if so, provide an argument and evidence to support your view)?
- Were there related issues you wished we had covered this week (if so, describe what would you have wanted to discuss)?
- Was there anything you would have liked to say in class discussion but didn’t?

*Critical analysis*

If you choose to write an academic critique one or more of the week’s readings, discuss the theoretical, methodological, and empirical strengths and weaknesses of the text. The purpose of the critique is to provide an original and critical response rather than a summary of the text. Note that your personal feelings, responses, or experiences are not appropriate for an academic analysis.

Some questions to consider discussing:

- What are the strengths and, more importantly, what are the weaknesses of the article (but be sure you are not simply summarizing points from the text)?
- For empirical articles, how does the research design shape the findings?
- What questions does the research raise that might be addressed by future studies?

*Additional guidelines for either type of writing assignment*
• You do not need to discuss all the readings and material presented in class. Just choose one or two readings or topics to focus on.
• Assignments should provide in-depth discussion and fully explain all ideas. It is best to choose just a few points to make rather than make superficial comments on many topics.
• If you are discussing one or more of the course readings, be sure to include the author(s) name and the year of publication once in the text. You do not need a references section unless you use outside sources.
• Use examples and quotes to support your points (for these short assignments, limit your use of quotes and use only short quotes).
• Assignments should show clear and concise writing and appropriate proofreading; assignments will not receive full credit if they show significant problems with grammar, spelling, word use, typos, and/or awkward sentences.

ACADEMIC AND OTHER CAMPUS SUPPORTS

Advising and Career Services (ACS): University Services Building room 402, (503) 725-4005, www.pdx.edu/advising-career-services/, “Advising and Career Services (ACS) supports the career development needs of all Portland State University students and provides academic advising for those who are exploring/changing majors.”

Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC): University Center Building 200, 503-725-2800, www.shac.pdx.edu/.

Disability Resource Center: Smith 116, 503-725-4150 (voice) and 503-725-6505 (TDD), www.pdx.edu/uasc/drc.html. “The mission of the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is to collaborate with and empower Portland State University students with disabilities in order to coordinate support services and programs that enable equal access to an education and university life. To accomplish this goal, the DRC provides pre-admission and disability counseling, advocacy, educational training, and a variety of accommodations for equal access to the educational process and campus at Portland State University.”

Multicultural Center: Smith 228, 503-725-5342, multicul@pdx.edu, http://culture.pdx.edu/ . “The Multicultural Center provides a forum for collaborative cultural, educational, and social experiences at PSU and beyond. Our mission is to bring together students, faculty, staff and the community to promote respect, understanding, equality, social justice, and interdependence among people of diverse backgrounds.”

Queer Resource Center (QRC): Smith 458, 503-725-9742, qrc@pdx.edu, www.qrc.pdx.edu/ . “The Portland State University Queer Resource Center strives to provide an inclusive safe space in advocating for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning students, staff, faculty and their allies. Our mission is to serve the PSU and surrounding communities through both outreach education and social programming that promotes awareness.”

Student Legal Services: Smith Center M343 (on the mezzanine), 503-725-4556, www.pdx.edu/sls/. “Student Legal Services (SLS) is a full service law firm available to serve eligible Portland State University students. The goal of SLS is to encourage students to fully
participate in and complete their academic endeavors by helping to alleviate legal obstacles to degree or program completion."

*Student Code of Conduct:* Know what your rights and responsibilities are by checking out this link: [www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct](http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct)

*Veterans Services:* Smith 425, 503-725-3876, [www.pdx.edu/veterans/current-students](http://www.pdx.edu/veterans/current-students)

*Sociology Department:* Cramer 217, 503-725-3926, [www.pdx.edu/sociology](http://www.pdx.edu/sociology).

*Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies:* Extended Studies Building 150, 503-725-3516, [www.pdx.edu/ws](http://www.pdx.edu/ws).

*Women’s Resource Center (WRC):* Basement of Montgomery Hall, 503-725-5672, [http://wrc.pdx.edu](http://wrc.pdx.edu/). “The WRC provides a great student lounge and event space, a Leadership in Action program that gives students the chance to get involved with grass roots feminist activism, The Empowerment Project which provides resources to non-traditional women students, and sexual assault and domestic violence advocacy and information.”

*Writing Center:* Cramer 188, 503-725-3570, [www.writingcenter.pdx.edu](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/)