



SOCI3070

Social Inequality

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

School of Communication, Society and Culture

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Professor of Sociology and Unit Convenor

Shaun Wilson

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Contact via Email for quick consultations or Zoom appointments on request

Room 250 Level 2, 25B Wally's Walk

By email appointment or Zoom

Tutor

Kais Al-Momani

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Sociology offices, Level 2, 25B Wally's Walk

via email

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

130cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The organisational and institutional dynamics of modern societies are powerful generators of social inequality and yet they equally generate resources through which inequalities can be identified and challenged. This unit explores the social mechanisms that drive inequalities and surveys the impact of socio-economic inequality on a wide range of areas of social life (gender, culture, employment, and the economy). The unit considers how sociological theory can explain the emergence and persistence of social inequalities, the normative conflicts and struggles that inequalities produce, and the ways social institutions overcome, respond or merely adapt to inequality. We conclude the unit by looking at whether democratic societies can survive widening socio-economic inequalities and how we might explain the improvement in some types of inequality and discrimination and the curious persistence of others.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: demonstrate an advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality

ULO2: demonstrate an understanding of the technical and sociological measurement of inequality

ULO3: demonstrate an ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality

General Assessment Information

Late penalties

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Problem set 1	50%	No	Sunday 27 April at 11.55pm
Problem set 2	50%	No	Friday 6 June at 11.55pm

Problem set 1

Assessment Type ¹: Problem set

Indicative Time on Task ²: 28 hours

Due: **Sunday 27 April at 11.55pm**

Weighting: **50%**

1250 word responses to questions about readings and problems in the field of social inequality.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate an advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality
- demonstrate an understanding of the technical and sociological measurement of inequality
- demonstrate an ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality

Problem set 2

Assessment Type ¹: Problem set

Indicative Time on Task ²: 29 hours

Due: **Friday 6 June at 11.55pm**

Weighting: **50%**

1250 word responses to questions about readings and problems in the field of social inequality.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate an advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality
- demonstrate an understanding of the technical and sociological measurement of inequality
- demonstrate an ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Welcome to SOCI 3070 - our unit on the vast subject of Social Inequality.

Some basics:

SOCI3070 lectures go for 2 hours on Tuesday mornings from 10am to 12pm. They are held

in **25WW A207 Tutorial Room**

Face-to-face tutorials are held on the same day, at 12pm and 1pm in **01CC 218 Active Learning Space**.

There is **no tutorial in the first week of classes**, so the first tutorials start on Tuesday 4 March.

There is an I-Learn page with readings and a guide to the tutorials.

Enjoy the semester!

Shaun Wilson

Unit Schedule

week	Topic	Tutorial	
1	Intro: the challenge of social inequality in the 21st century (25 Feb)	No classes in week 1 - see readings for that week	
2	The economics and sociology of measuring inequality (4 Mar)	Origins and significance of social inequality	
3	Better or worse? Trends in global inequality (11 Mar)	Should we focus on poverty or inequality? A look at current debate	
4	Thomas Piketty on inequality: Trends and reactions (18 Mar)	Inequality and authoritarian politics	
5	Two concepts : exploitation and opportunity hoarding (25 Mar)	Precarious workers	
6	Status and the role of hierarchical social organisation (1 Apr)	Status anxiety	
7	Inequality and social justice: theory, equal opportunity & affirmative action (8 Apr) Mid semester break follows	How does work reinforce gender inequalities? Assignment due Sunday 27 April	
8	Inequality and the labour market (29 Apr)	How does social class shape life chances & Australian society?	
9	Building blocks of mobility: the education system (6 May)	Battle of the generations	
10	Inequality and sport (13 May)	A look at contemporary social movements focused on inequality	
11	Inequality, identity movements and Trump backlash (20 May)	The 'Trump electorate' in the US and the Australian federal election of 2025	
12	Social futures: AI, automation and the basic income (27 May)	Basic income trials around the world, the Jobs Guarantee	
13	Unit revision and extensions (3 June)	The future of inequality Assignment due Friday 6 June	

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from **Policy Central** (<https://policie>

[s.mq.edu.au](https://students.mq.edu.au)). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Changes from Previous Offering

New content on the conservative defence of social inequality and hierarchy (Scruton) and an analysis of the 2022 election results from an inequality perspective.

Unit information based on version 2025.02 of the [Handbook](#)