



SOCI399

Social Inequality

S1 Day 2019

Dept of Sociology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Assoc Prof Shaun Wilson

shaun.wilson@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email is best

Level 2, South Wing of Australian Hearing Hub Building

11.10-12pm Fridays (email appointments also fine)

Externals Convenor, Tutor

Dr Lukas Hofstaetter

[to be advised](#)

Contact via email

Level 2, South Wing of the Australian Hearing Hub Building

Externals contact point

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp at 100 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:

1. An advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality.
2. An understanding of the technical and sociological measurement of inequality.
3. An ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Weekly participation</u>	15%	No	weekly
<u>Assignment</u>	30%	No	Monday 6 May at 11.55PM
<u>Exam</u>	55%	No	End of semester

Weekly participation

Due: **weekly**

Weighting: **15%**

Participation has a minimum attendance requirement of 8 classes for the semester (8 or more = 5/5). This includes 8 lectures and 8 tutorials.

Participation will be assessed out of a total 10 marks based on (i) evidence of reading (ii) contributions to discussion and (iii) responses to comments and contributions of others.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. An advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality.
- 3. An ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality.

Assignment

Due: **Monday 6 May at 11.55PM**

Weighting: **30%**

Responses to six questions about interesting readings and problems in the field of social

inequality. The assignment will be 2,000 to 2,500 words in total.

The assignment questions and guidelines will be available in the latter part of March, so you will have around 5 to 6 weeks to complete it.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. An advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality.
- 3. An ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality.

Exam

Due: **End of semester**

Weighting: **55%**

Final exam of 2 hours consisting of multiple choice responses and longer answers.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. An advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality.
- 2. An understanding of the technical and sociological measurement of inequality.

Delivery and Resources

Readings will be available via the SOCI399 I-Learn webpage (and shortly) a Library web-page dedicated to readings for this Unit.

Unit Schedule

WEEK	TOPIC	TUTORIAL DISCUSSION
One (1 March)	Intro: the challenge of inequality in the era of Trump	No tutorial/seminar this week
Two (8 March)	The economics and sociology of measuring inequality	Processes of 'active discrimination'
Three (15 March)	Better or worse? Trends in global inequality	Does inequality actually matter? The most recent debates
Four (22 March)	Piketty's Capital in the 21st Century: Trends and reactions	Countries with very high inequalities
Five (29 March)	Two concepts: exploitation and opportunity hoarding	Precarious workers
Six (5 April)	Inequality and the idea of justice	Restorative justice and prisoners

Seven (12 April)	Equality of opportunity and debates about affirmative action	Work, the labour market and gender inequality
Eight (3 May)	Inequality and the labour market	Class structures of Australian society
Nine (10 May)	Building blocks of mobility: secure work, housing and education	No tutorial/seminar this week Assignment due Monday 6 May
Ten (17 May)	Inequality and the politics of identity	Black Lives Matter and #MeToo
Eleven (24 May)	Inequality and the politics of retribution	One Nation and voting in Australia -- Is there a 'white backlash'?
Twelve (31 May)	Jobless futures: AI, automation and the basic income	Basic income trials around the world
Thirteen (7 June)	Can social democracy be renewed?	Unit review + study guide

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). 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](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

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

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of

Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/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 ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

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

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

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.

Graduate Capabilities

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able

to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. An advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality.
- 2. An understanding of the technical and sociological measurement of inequality.

Assessment tasks

- Assignment
- Exam

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- 3. An ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality.

Assessment tasks

- Assignment
- Exam

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- 3. An ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality.

Assessment task

- Assignment

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- Weekly participation

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. An advanced understanding of the foundations, generative mechanisms and multi-dimensional nature of social inequality.
- 3. An ability to interpret debates and policy, political and social-movement responses to inequality.