SYLLABUS for SYD 4530:
Social Inequality

Description: How does what looks like the current “melt-down” of contemporary capitalism affect people sociologically? It creates greater social inequalities of wealth and power. This course provides a sociological perspective on the current global economic crisis. We begin and end with economic effects on an everyday, grass-roots level. But we also analyze the macrosociology of what Reich calls “supercapitalism.” Should society and government play a role in mitigating economic and social inequalities when economies sink into recession or even depression? What should our roles as citizens be?

Required Readings: The following texts can be purchased at the university bookstore, local book stores or on-line and they are all in paperback:


Requirements: Successful completion of the following assignments done on time (assignments turned in late will not be accepted; no make-ups):
1. In class oral presentations of the required readings (4 worth 5 points each, 20 points total). If you are not here the date your reading is due, you will not receive points. Students can earn extra credit with extra presentations.
2. Essay exam #1 on the readings (3 questions @ ten points each, 30 points)
3. A research project with a research bibliography (20 sources each) presented to the class (20 points)
4. Essay exam #2 on the readings (3 questions worth ten points each, 30 points) Final points add up to 100 possible (20+30+20+30=100)

NOTE: I do not accept emailed assignments. You must turn in a hard copy in class or in my box in the sociology department on the due date.
Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction to the sociology of wealth and power. Part Two of the *Penguin Atlas*
Recommended: *Penguin Atlas*.

**Required Reading**: Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* all.

No class January 19--Martin Luther King Day

Week 4-5: How do we negotiate privilege, power and difference when there are dramatic social inequalities? Johnson’s take.
**Required Reading (RR)**: Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* all.

Week 6-7: What is the “social meaning” of money? Zelizer’s take.
**RR**: Zelizer all. Week 6: Your research project topic DUE. Week 7: ESSAY EXAM #1 DUE.

Week 8-10: What is “supercapitalism?” Reich’s take.
**RR**: Reich all.

Week 11: SPRING BREAK No Classes

Week-12-13: How does supercapitalism affect kids?
**RR**: Milner all. Week 12: Your research bibliography DUE with 20 citations.

Week 14-15: Your research PRESENTATIONS.
ESSAY EXAM #2 DUE.