

The University of Texas at El Paso  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Spring 2024

Soci 3327-26754: Social Inequality  
Community Engagement & Leadership (CEL) designation  
Location: Old Main 211  
T/R 1:30-2:50 pm

**Professor:** Dr. Aurelia Lorena Murga  
Office location: Old Main 305  
Email: almurga@utep.edu  
Office hours: T/R 10:30-11:50 am & by appointment

### Course Description

This course takes a sociological view on the development of the modern labor relation focusing on the tensions and connections between unfree labor and capitalism, both in the U.S. and globally, paying particular attention to the relation between labor, gender, race, and citizenship. The question of free and unfree labor is ultimately a question about difference, and its relation to capitalism. It is also a question about what capitalism is, and how to understand it in relation with past modes of social organization and production. Finally, it's a question about how to conceptualize freedom, in relation to production but also more broadly. This class will hopefully spark more questions than it will answer and show you more possible paths of inquiry that we will be able to pursue during the term. This course is meant to be a joint learning adventure, where we come to class to work together in breaking apart what others have said, analyze debates that are being had in academia and outside of it, and get new tools to argue about what's happening around us.

\*This course has a "Community Engagement & Leadership" (CEL) designation. It is part of a certificate program at the College of Liberal Arts. This CEL course aims to strengthen students' understanding of their role in society as engaged citizens and build the knowledge and competencies that will enable them to be socially responsible and participating community leaders. Accordingly, course assignments and assessments are developed in line with the CEL program mission in Liberal Arts and within the broader framework and mission of UTEP's "Edge Advantages" goals.

### Course Objectives

This course emphasizes research from sociology but also draws from other academic disciplines to meet the following objectives:

- To theoretically discuss economic structures that give rise to wage and labor inequality.

- Learn about economic and labor market disparities in class, race/ethnicity, sex, gender, nationality, citizenship, and disabilities.
- Develop skills to communicate complex social, economic, and legal issues in-person and/or online social media that develop community engagement & leadership.

During this semester, you will:

- Engage in supportive and critical peer learning.
- Connect contemporary events and discussions with academic arguments.
- Take an informed stance on the role of social and civic responsibility in society and how individuals can affect social change.

### **Course materials**

1. Pdfs for the assigned readings are available via Blackboard (Bb) or through the UTEP library (use search engines).
2. 5x8 notecards (approximately 25 cards)

### **Assessments**

#### **CEL project 50%**

Students will be divided into groups this semester that will be working on projects that focus on “know your rights” presentations at high schools, setting up social media projects with Border Workers United and the Sin Fronteras Farmworker Center, and creating an active Instagram page for the class. I have set aside class time for you to work in your groups on these projects, but you will also need to meet on your own time outside of class.

#### **In-class participation & tickets to class 40%**

Full credit for participation will be earned by coming to class prepared to discuss the readings and by fully engaging in-class conversations. You will need to come to class prepared. You should come to class with the reading assignment for the day already completed and any notes on the readings written on your “ticket-to-class” and ready to submit on your 5x8 notecard.

#### **Gains report 10%**

Students will be required to complete and submit a list of 10 “things I learned” in class. You will make a list of 10 bullet points with each including 4-5 sentences of writing. I am not asking you to simply list the topics covered, but to thoughtfully engage with what you have learned during the semester, so if you simply list topics covered in the class, you will earn 0 points for this exercise.

### **Grading Scale**

A	90-100%
B	89-80%
C	79-70%
D	69-60%
F	59% and below

## **Course Expectations**

Workload: Generally, in any 3-credit hour course, students are expected to spend 3 hours per week in the classroom and 6-9 additional hours per week doing coursework outside the classroom. The time commitment may vary from week to week, depending on the amount of reading and other assigned work. Some weeks may require significantly fewer hours, some may require more.

Active Participation: As a friendly reminder, you should log on to Bb on a regular basis (I suggest at least once a day) to check for any announcements or emails. If you encounter any problems with Bb, contact the UTEP Helpdesk (747-4357) for assistance.

You are highly encouraged to attend every class if you expect to do well in this course. I will NOT drop students from the course. If you choose to drop the course, it is your responsibility to do so. Keep in mind that failure to withdraw from the course will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

Friendly reminder: Problems with your computer are NOT an acceptable reason for deadline extensions. If you encounter computer problems that cannot be resolved in time, you should use another computer to complete the work prior to the deadlines. It's a good idea to have an alternative computer identified BEFORE you run into problems.

## **Email Policy**

Please feel free to reach out to me via email with any questions you may have regarding the class or assignments. During the week (Monday-Friday) you can expect a reply from me within 24-48 hours. If you email me over the weekend, I will respond on the next weekday. Before emailing make sure the answer(s) to your question(s) cannot be answered from reading this syllabus. I will not respond to questions that could be answered in this syllabus. Finally, please include **Soci 3327** in the subject line of all your correspondence.

## **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 cell phones, and having side conversations).

## **Academic Integrity**

This course is based on the principle of academic integrity. Students are responsible for their own academic behavior, and for making themselves fully aware of UTEP's policies. Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test.
- Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own.

- Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students' Office for disciplinary action. In addition to receiving a failing grade in the class, the student may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Further information can be gained from the UTEP Dean of Students' web page. Go to <http://www.utep.edu/dos>, then click the "Student Conduct" tab on the top.

### **ADA Policy**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **Texas Senate Bill 17**

[Texas Senate Bill 17](#), the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Class guidelines and ground rules**

*Discussing to Learn:* Contribute ideas and views in the spirit of inquiring and learning together, rather than trying to debate or win arguments (unless the activity is designed as a debate or to assess best arguments).

*Mindful Listening:* Listen actively with attention and respect for what others are saying, without interrupting or tuning out to focus on preparing one's own contribution.

*Stepping Up/Stepping Back:* Pay attention to the voices in the room and be mindful of one's contributions. Are there patterns regarding which voices are being heard and which are not? How do I fit in these patterns? Is there need to step back and let others have opportunity to contribute? Is there need to step up and contribute more? Do we feel empowered to hold ourselves accountable for our class participation dynamics?

*Listening Lenience:* Remember that we are learning together and may not necessarily get something right the first or even second try. Practice being lenient with oneself and with others. Restating what someone just said can provide them an opportunity to clarify or revise their statement. Similarly, it is good practice to state when you say something not quite right and then try to state it again or ask for help in saying it.

*Seek Clarification:* Seek clarification when you are confused or have doubts, and also before you pass judgment on what another is saying. Practice statements such as “Are you saying that...?” or “What I hear you saying is...” or “If I understand you correctly...”

*Ideas not Individuals:* Focus on engaging others’ ideas not judging or criticizing individuals. Asking for clarification can be helpful, and using language such as “The idea I hear you saying is...” (rather than “you said”) or “I don’t agree with that idea...” (rather than “I don’t agree with you”).

*Support Our Statements:* Offer supporting evidence of some kind to back up your contributions, such as data, clear reasoning or reference to a text, and be aware that your own experience or an anecdotal story may not fit a larger pattern. Remember that being an exception does not discredit a rule.

*Emotional Awareness:* Recognize that emotions are part of learning, and everyone can get emotionally worked up at any time. Remember that feelings are real and common yet are often temporal and will pass. Feelings also tend to be reactive and shaped by past experiences or other factors not necessarily present in the moment – this means reflecting more deeply about one’s own feelings and why they might be arising, and being compassionate about what may be happening for others who express strong emotions. Feelings are also not inferences, meaning that one’s feeling about something is a feeling, not an attribute about something else (e.g. feeling discomfort does not mean another person is trying to make me feel uncomfortable; or, feeling another person’s anger does not mean they are angry at me).

*A Part is Not the Whole:* Remember that your view or experience is your view or experience, a partial opening onto the whole, and not necessarily a general view or experience of everyone; nor are the views or experiences of others necessarily going to match your own. And, just as you cannot represent an entire group of people, nor can anyone else represent a group of people. It is quite okay for everyone to speak their truth and their experience, but working from individual views and experiences to more general ideas or conclusions often requires considerable work.

*Complex Issues are Not Simple:* There are no easy answers or simple solutions for complex issues. The goal is not for one view to prevail over others or to arrive at consensus but to find ways to inquire and work together to advance inquiry and understanding.

*Acknowledge Offense:* If you feel offended or sense others may be offended, speak up and acknowledge that you feel offended or sense that others might be. Agree as a group to pause so

that everyone can consider their own feelings and consider what may or may not have been intended by a particular comment or moment.

Written or compiled by Jason Schreiner, Teaching Engagement Program, University of Oregon 3 updated February 2017.  
Some portions of this syllabus were taken from Lola Loustaunau's course SOC 446. Issues in Sociology of Work.

**Please note: Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus and/or schedule at any time during the semester. Any modifications to the syllabus and/or schedule will be announced during class and/or through Bb (check "announcements").**

Done	Date	Topic: Reading(s) & assignment
<input type="checkbox"/>	W1: T, 1/16	<b>First day INTRODUCTIONS.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W1: R, 1/18  Due: notecard on reading	Desmond, Matthew. 2019. "American Capitalism Is Brutal. You Can Trace That to the Plantation." <i>The New York Times</i> , August 14.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W2: T, 1/23  Due: syllabus notecard & notecard on readings	<p><b>Legal education</b></p> <p>Alan Dicker, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA)</p> <p><b>On Capitalism</b></p> <p>Wood, Ellen Meiksins. 2002. <i>The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View</i>. [New ed.]. London: Verso. Introduction (pages 1-8).</p> <p>Marx, Karl. 1990. <i>Capital: A Critique of Political Economy</i>. London ; New York, N.Y., USA: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review. Chapter 6: The Sale and Purchase of Labor Power.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W2: R, 1/25  Due: worksheet	<p><b>Legal education</b></p> <p>Alan Dicker, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA)</p> <p><b>Develop groups &amp; action plans*</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create groups &amp; begin brainstorming a detailed plan for the semester.</li> <li>2. Communicate with your group members about expectations moving forward.</li> <li>3. Submit dates &amp; bulleted ideas with students in charge of those assignments listed.</li> <li>4. Students in charge of group logistics should communicate with community leader, high school instructors, and with Dr. Murga.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W3, T, 1/30  Due: submit your notecard in box outside of Dr. Murga's office by 3:00pm	<p><b>Early American Industrialization</b></p> <p><b>Watch film in-class:</b> <i>Jane Addams: Together We Rise</i></p> <p>[Dr. Murga at candidate's research talk]</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W3, R, 2/1	<b>Group work - present updates to each other*</b>

	<p>Due: submit your notecard in box outside of Dr. Murga's office by 3:00pm</p>	<p>What work have you done on your project so far? Are you meeting your goals?</p> <p><b>Racial Capitalism</b></p> <p>De Genova, Nicholas. A Racial Theory of Labour: Racial Capitalism from Colonial Slavery to Postcolonial Migration  <a href="https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/racial-theory-labour">https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/racial-theory-labour</a></p> <p>[Dr. Murga at candidate's research talk]</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W4, T, 2/6</p> <p>Due: notecard on reading</p>	<p><b>Racial Capitalism</b></p> <p>De Genova, Nicholas. A Racial Theory of Labour: Racial Capitalism from Colonial Slavery to Postcolonial Migration  <a href="https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/racial-theory-labour">https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/racial-theory-labour</a></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W4, R, 2/8</p> <p>Due: notecard on readings</p>	<p><b>Group work in class - present updates to class (3-5 minutes &amp; 1 ppt slide with updates)</b></p> <p><b>On Capital &amp; Capitalism</b></p> <p>Johnson, Walter. 2004. "The Pedestal and the Veil: Rethinking the Capitalism/Slavery Question." <i>Journal of the Early Republic</i> 24(2):299-308. (read this one first!)</p> <p>Tomich, Dale W. 2004. <i>Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy</i>. Lanham: Rowman &amp; Littlefield. Chapter 3.</p> <p>[Dr. Murga leaves early for candidate's research talk]</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W5, T, 2/13</p> <p>Due: notecard on reading</p>	<p><b>On Capital &amp; Capitalism</b></p> <p>Salleh, Ariel. "Nature, Woman, Labor, Capital: living the deepest contradiction."</p> <p>(and review readings from 2/8)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W5, R, 2/15</p>	<p><b>Action plans - present updates (3-5 minutes each group)</b></p> <p>Student teams to present updates (powerpoint presentation with steps &amp;/or latest outcomes listed with examples of these show)</p> <p><b>The invention of free labor</b></p>



	Due: notecard on reading	Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2002. <i>Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Chapters 2 & 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W6, T, 2/20	<b>TBD</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W6, R, 2/22  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Environment, health, and work</b>  Clark, Brett, Daniel Auerbach & Karen Xuan Zhang. 2017. "The Du Bois nexus: intersectionality, political economy, and environmental injustice in the Peruvian Guano trade in the 1800s." <i>Environmental Sociology</i> 4(1):54-66.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W7, T, 2/27  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Occupational Health</b>  1. <u>John Bellamy Foster</u> , <u>Brett Clark</u> , and <u>Hannah Holleman</u> . (Jun 2021) "Capital and the Ecology of Disease." 2. Department of U.S. Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2022."
<input type="checkbox"/>	W7, R, 2/29  Due: notecard on reading & notecard on news report	<b>Occupational Health</b>  1. World Health Organization (WHO). "Occupational Health." 2. Watch news report in-class "Blood Cobalt: The Congo's Dangerous and Deadly Green Energy Mines."
<input type="checkbox"/>	W8, T, 3/5  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Working</b>  Terkel, Studs. <i>Working: People talk about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do</i> (Introduction, Preface I, II, & II, & Book One)
<input type="checkbox"/>	W8, R, 3/7  Due: notecard on episode	<b>Working</b>  Watch in-class <i>Working: What we do all day</i> (Netflix series)
<input type="checkbox"/>	W9, T, 3/12 - R, 3/14	<b>Spring Break</b>

<input type="checkbox"/>	W10, T, 3/19  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Action plans - present updates</b>  Student teams to present updates (powerpoint presentation with steps &/or latest outcomes listed with examples of these show)  <b>Prison Labor</b>  1. LeBaron, Genevieve. 2012. "Rethinking Prison Labor: Social Discipline and the State in Historical Perspective." <i>WorkingUSA</i> 15(3):327-51. 2. Convict leasing <a href="https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/sugar-land-slave-convict-labor-history/">https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/sugar-land-slave-convict-labor-history/</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W10, R, 3/21  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Prison Labor</b>  Hatton, Erin. 2018 "Either You Do It or You're Going to the Box": Coerced Labor in Contemporary America. <i>Critical Sociology</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	W11, T, 3/26  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Domestic Labor</b>  1. Hondagneu-Sotelo. <i>Doméstica</i> (pages TBA) 2. Tsui, Emma K. et al. 2022. Expanding the Conceptualization of Support in Low-Wage Carework: The Case of Home Care Aides and Client Death. <i>Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health</i> 19, 367. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010367">https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010367</a> 3. Watch in-class Ai-jen Poo's Ted talk "The work that makes other work possible"
<input type="checkbox"/>	W11, R, 3/28  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Domestic Labor</b>  1. Anderson, Bridge. 2000. <i>Doing the Dirty Work?: The Global Politics of Domestic Labour</i> . London; New York: New York: Zed Books; Distributed in the USA by St Martin's Press. Chapter 7 'Selling the self' 2. Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. 2015. <i>Servants of Globalization: Migration and Domestic Work</i> (2nd edition) (pages TBA).
<input type="checkbox"/>	W12, T, 4/2  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Child labor</b>  1. Florence Kelley's <i>Our Tiling Children</i> . 2. Watch in-class Vox's <i>These photos ended child labor in the U.S.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W12, R, 4/4	<b>Child labor</b>

	Due: notecard on readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monthly Labor Review “History of child labor in the United States.”</li> <li>2. Sherer, Jennifer and Nina Mast. 2023. “Child labor laws are under attack in states across the country.” Economic Policy Institute, pages 1-17.</li> <li>3. Watch in-class: “How does child labor still exist in America?”</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W13, T, 4/9  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Disability</b>  Matthews, David. Jan 01, 2021. “Disability and Welfare under Monopoly Capitalism.” <i>Monthly Review</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W13, R, 4/11  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Disability</b>  Ruppel, Emily H. 2023. “Disability and the State Production of Precarity.” <i>Work and Occupations</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W14, T, 4/16	<b>Note: no in-person meeting today</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W14, R, 4/18	<b>Note: no in-person meeting today</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W15, T, 4/23  Due: notecard on reading	<b>(Im)migrant labor</b>  Hagan, Jaqueline. “Defining Skill: The Many forms of skilled immigrant labor.”
<input type="checkbox"/>	W15, R, 4/25  Due: notecard on readings	<b>(Im)migrant labor</b>  Holmes, Seth M. 2013. <i>Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press. Introduction & Chapter 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W16, T, 4/30  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Claims Making</b>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gleeson, S. 2010. Labor Rights for All? The Role of Undocumented Immigrant Status for Worker Claims Making. <i>Law &amp; Social Inquiry</i>, 35(3), 561-602.</li> <li>2. Caitlin Patler and others, Contesting Inequality: The Impact of Immigrant Legal Status and Education on Legal Knowledge and Claims-Making in Low-Wage Labor Markets, <i>Social Problems</i>, Volume 69, Issue 2, May 2022, Pages 356–379, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa029">https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa029</a></li> </ol>

<input type="checkbox"/>	W16, R, 5/2	<b>Recap day: each group presents on what they did this semester.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finals Week	<b>Gains Report (submit via Bb)</b>

\*As part of a CEL designated course, students should plan to make time for projects outside of the scheduled class time. For example, meetings with community leaders and “know your rights” presentations to high schools will be completed outside of class & class time.