The Basics
When to meet: Mondays, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Where to meet: Social Ecology 2, Room 2372
What to bring: a willingness to actively participate and share your insights
Why come: to learn and earn an academic unit in the process
Where to find the instructor: Social Ecology 2, Room 3305
How to contact the instructor: e-mail jenness@uci.edu
How to learn about the instructor: http://www.seweb.uci.edu/users/jenness/jenness.html

The Topic
Policymakers, politicians, and citizens alike debate the causes, manifestations, and consequences of inequality in America. Along the way, the nature and workings of human perception and morality, communities, the American dream, and current economic, political and social systems are implicated. Designed to provide an empirical and theoretical basis for thinking about inequality, this course examines a range of manifestations of inequalities in the U.S., including, for example: a growing share of income and wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few; disparities in health, education, incarceration, and other dimensions of human welfare are organized around race and ethnicity as well as region; and a small number of people exert a huge political influence on American democracy while others remain figuratively and literally disenfranchised. These and other types of concerns are discussed in this integrated freshman seminar series. This is the third of three integrated freshman seminars (one offered each quarter of the 2016-17 academic year).

The Objective
Ultimately, the goal of this course is to accomplish what good education always accomplishes: stimulate curiosity and the desire to learn more; acquire, critique, and apply knowledge; understand and respond to the complexities of life by using information tools, research skills, creative thinking, reasoning and analysis; benefit from the ability to communicate effectively, including in productive dialogue with people whose experiences differ from your own and who may be separated from you by time, space, culture, and station in life.
The Requirements
There are four requirements for this course:
1. Attend every meeting of the seminar;
2. Actively participate in every meeting of the seminar;
3. Read the assigned readings
4. Write three (3) two page, typed, single-spaced response papers in response to the assigned readings for any three weeks of the course. These response papers are due in class on the day we are discussing the assigned readings for that week.

This is a University of California class and, as with all UC classes, students are expected to abide by the student code of conduct as well as the most basic rules of etiquette, including: getting to class on time and coming prepared to engage; turning off all electronic devices other than a laptop computer; not talking about things unrelated to the class during the class; and remaining respectful of diverse views when engaging in classroom debate. All views are allowed and welcome; however, expressing them in a respectful way is required. Reasonable people can disagree, but disagreement needs to be expressed in ways that are conducive to the free exchange of ideas, productive dialogue, and meaningful learning. Finally, all students are required to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. For details on UCI’s policy on academic honesty, please see the UCI Catalogue or http://www.editor.uci.edu/catalogue/appx/appx.2.htm#gen0. It is every student’s responsibility to read and understand UCI’s academic honesty and integrity policies.

The Grading Policy
Course grades will be computed using the following criteria:
1. Attendance (40%)
2. Participation (30%)
3. Writing Assignments (30%)

To elaborate on the 1-2-3 above, regular class attendance and active participation, as well as successful completion of the writing assignment on time, will earn the student an A in the seminar. If you participate and do a good job on the assignments, but miss two classes, your grade will drop one whole letter grade. For example, if you miss two classes, your grade drops from an A to a B; if you miss 4 classes your grade drops to a C, etc. Note: any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor to discuss his/her specific needs. Also, contact the Disability Services Center at 949-824-7494 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

The Course Outline
The outline below indicates what we will be discussing and when we will be discussing it. Discussion topics are not chiseled in stone; all topics and dates are tentative and subject to change. If changes are made, they will be announced in class or over e-mail.

Week 1: Introduction to “inequality” and “inequalities”

Week 2:  Wealth Inequality in the United States  

Week 3:  Legacies of Inequality, Part I: 13th, a documentary available on Netflix  

Week 4:  Legacies of Inequality, Part II: Discussion of 13th  

Week 5:  Views of Poverty  

Week 6:  Views of Wealth  

Week 7:  Imagining Extreme Inequality, Part I: Snowpiercer, a film available on Amazon.com  

Week 8:  Imagining Extreme Inequality, Part II: Snowpiercer, a film available on Amazon.com  

Week 9:  The Veil of Ignorance and the Future of Inequality  

Week 10:  Wrap-up: Rethinking Inequalities in the Context of the Future  