In responding to a reporter’s assertion of pervasive inequality in the world, such that “the richest 2%” -- mostly Americans and Europeans -- “own more than half of global total wealth,” former NY Times correspondent and Pulitzer winner Chris Hedges declared that poverty and economic inequality “has been created by design” through colonial policies and predatory programs implemented by domestic governments and collaborated with by international organizations, including the WTO, IMF, WB, and transnational corporations. In particular, Hedges asserts that most Americans are “no different than Third World inhabitants subjugated by foreign colonialism,” suggesting that the difference in national identity, the privilege of American exceptionalism, and even the geopolitical state boundary in North America has failed to pose any effective barrier to indiscriminate colonial predation and exploitation in the U.S.

This course examines the effect of colonialism on inequality and identity. The class encompasses three distinct segments of critical inquiry. The first segment examines how the institutional use of such socially constructed identities as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other cognitive categories has facilitated discriminatory policies and institutional practices. We begin by paying close attention to the legal and political construction of race, exploring how the identity of race has helped ensure the unequal distribution and discriminatory allocation of social privileges, propertied rights, and legal freedoms. This segment also explores individual identity in relation to property, probing the evolution of the concept of “private property” and the effect of propertied rights on the capacity to “own” commodified objects, including human bodies.

The second segment examines individual identity in relation to the state, as well as how “self” is identified by the state. As former CIA computer system administrator Edward Snowden recently revealed, the NSA’s secret dragnet surveillance of people around the globe reflects the state's increasing interest in collecting private information on individuals, including their political activities and affiliations, in the name of national security. How the state views the sanctity of the nature and environment is another topic that is addressed. We examine how the state applies the Judeo-Christian notion of “human supremacist” (“men’s domination over nature”) in the formulation of environmental programs and policies. The discussion also includes how the state deals with the problems of global warming, emerging pollutions and environmental devastation, including the rapid eradication of indigenous populations, culture and identity around the globe.

The third and final segment examines how people identity with political activism, including de-colonial strategies and tactics. We first question and critique the efficacy of “non-violent” and “peaceful” means of social protest and civil disobedience adopted by most social activists and grassroots organizations around the globe. We then explore alternative de-colonizing efforts such as the use of devolutionary strategies, the means of “multi-faceted” tactics of social engagement,
and the applicability of direct participatory democracy in the construction of a more equitable society.

Evaluations:

(1) Weekly In-Class Presentation of Our Reading

• Facilitation: In the first week, each seminar participant may sign up to be responsible for organizing and leading a seminar discussion based on a close reading of the articles/book for one week; s/he can also bring into class a relevant news story, media/video clip, film or TV excerpt, photos/songs/poems, a guest appearance in person or via a skype, etc., which is relevant to the reading topics for that day so that we can make application of the readings and concepts to contemporary events and politics, and consider the utility (or lack thereof) of the ideas put forth by various authors.

• Please remember that the success of a seminar depends on active participation and collectively developed discourse, and keeping up with the weekly reading is the most important requirement of this topical course. Come to class prepared to share your ideas and/or cogent perspective on the material by exploring the equity and adequacy of particular themes and arguments, evaluating the logic or a theory or a concept, and reflecting on the readings’ implications for work of your own.

• Participation: Every student is expected to present a reaction/reading paper (200-400 word) of assigned paper in class and show how they relate to themes of the week’s topic as well as other assigned readings (5-15 min each, based on the facilitator’s discretion). It would be most ideal if you can relate the readings to issues that you are interested in exploring in your individual research and/or final paper.

• In order to facilitate discussions, your critical reaction/reading paper to be posted to ecommons by 12 noon Tuesday every week. To post your paper, please log onto our ecommons and submit your paper using Communication tool (on the left side of the screen) called Discussion Forums and upload your file for everyone to share.

• You can present it orally. You can also distribute copies of your synopsis and explain your arguments accordingly. Or you can do so in an imaginative way as it suits your objectives.

Final Research Paper

(1) You must identify a key subject matter related to some aspects of inequality and identity, environmental effects, policy, movements, and strategies for social change. Students may choose any relevant topic covered in class and develop it into a full paper.

(2) The concept paper (3 page max, excluding a cover sheet and a bibliography) is due on the 5th week, and the final paper (20 page max) is due on the final's week.

Oral Presentation of Your Research Paper:

(1) The later part of this quarter (9th & 10th week) will be reserved for students to present findings on their research topic. The presentation evaluation will be based on how well s/he speaks about their research objectives and presents findings and arguments in an effective and engaging fashion.

Use of Wikileaks Document for Research Paper:
In 2010, Wikileaks documents revealed more than a quarter million cables sent from 274 U.S. embassies strategically located around the globe to the U.S. State Department in Washington D.C. The cables contained information from December 28, 1966 to February 28, 2010. Critical analysis of its documents has already been felt around the globe, including so called “the Arab Spring” in 2010 which was instigated by Wikileaks’ revelations of Tunisian elites’ deep-rooted corruptions and media-constructed mass deceptions. Critical analysis of its contents has also exposed multitudes of ethically and legally questionable U.S. operations abroad, such as secret information gatherings on foreign dignitaries, reportings by surrogate agencies and intelligence assets on the emergence of democratic and socialist movements in the global south and elsewhere, investigative summaries of specific anti-U.S. protests and activities in individual states or regions, and clandestine plots to neutralize foreign targets, among many others.

Students are free to access, examine, and investigate the content of the wikileaks document for the final paper. The 1.7 GB document will be made available for students’ use. Brief instructions on how to extract information from the document are given in class.

Textbook (Please obtain through Amazon or other internet outlets):

- Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison (1975)

The weekly reading will be posted on eCommons every week.

Course Contents: Some weeks may show short videos, photos, and/or pictures to gain deeper understandings of weekly subjects. New reading materials, videos, or photo magazines may be added, depending upon the topics covered in individual weeks.

Additional information enlisted in Supplement is not part of weekly reading, though these materials may provide additional information for students’ research for the final paper.

SEGMENT 1: COLONIALISM, IDENTITY & INEQUALITY

(1) Introduction to Inequality & Identity, Colonialism, and the Commodification of Humans & Nature

- Vandaha Shiva, Principles of Earth Democracy (preface), in Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability and Peace (2005),
Supplemental Readings/Videos

- Derrick Jensen, Preface in DEEP GREEN RESISTANCE (eds. By Arc McBay, Lierre Keith, & Derrick Jensen) (2011) (preface can be accessed through Amazon.com)
- Vandana Shiva, “Capitalist Patriarchy Has Aggravated Violence Against Women,” DEMOCRACYNOW!, Mar. 8, 2013 (10 min video)
- Growing Backlash Against NSA Spying Shows Why U.S. Wants to Silence Edward Snowden, Democracy Now! July 18, 2013 (25 min segment)
- The End of Internet Privacy? Glen Greenwald on Secret Program to Crack Online Encryption, Democracy Now! September 6, 2013 (10 min video)

(2) Social & Legal Construction of Race, Racial Capitalism, & Subservience of Nature

- Nancy Leong, Racial Capitalism, 126 Harv. L. Rev. 2151 (2013)

Supplement Reading


(3) Identity with Property – Private Property & Propertied Rights of Human Bodies & Natural Environment

Supplemental Reading/Video

- Tim DeChristopher, “Posing as a Bidder, Utah Student Disrupts Government Auction of 150,000 Acres of Wilderness for Oil & Gas Drilling, Democracy Now! Dec. 22, 2008 (18 min)
- Garret Hardin, The Tragedy of Commons, 162 Science 13 (1968)

SEGMENT 2: IDENTITY WITH THE STATE -- EMERGENCE OF THE CENTRALIZED STATE, SURVEILLANCE, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

(4) Identity with the State – The Nationalism, Jingoism, or Racism?

- Chris Hedges, “the Plague of Nationalism, in War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning (2006)
- Marjorie Cohn, Teaching Torture at the School of Americas, 35 T. Jefferson L. Rev. 1 (2012).

Supplemental Reading/Videos

- Nick Turse, Kill Anything That Moves (2013) (selected chapters)
- Craig R. Shagin, Deporting Our Troops, 60 Fed. L. 46 (2013)

(5) Identity with the Nature & Environment – Propertied Environment & Effects of Human Suprematism

- Vandana Shiva, Living Democracies, 73-108 & Living Cultures, 109-144, in Earth Democracy (2005),
- ARC MC BAY, LIERRE KEITH, & DERRICK JENSEN, Deep Green Resistance (2011) (selected chapters)


**Supplemental Reading**

- Earth Day Special: Vandana Shiva and Maude Barlow on the Rights of Mother Earth, *Democracy Now!* Apr. 22, 2011 (35 min segment).

**(6) How “Self” is Identified by the State in the Name of National Security – Genocide & Governmental Crimes**

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) (select chapter)

**Supplemental Reading/Videos**

- Jeffrey Reiman, “... and the Poor Get Prison” in *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison* (Jeffrey Reiman), pp.103-146.
SEGMENT 3: NEW IDENTITY & DECOLONIALIZATION OF MINDS

(7) Identity with Political Activism -- Efficacy of Non-Violent Tactics & Politics of Comfort Zone

- Ward Churchill, Derrick Jensen, & Mike Ryan, *Pacifism as Pathology: Reflection on the Role of Armed Struggles in North America* (2007) (Please read Mike Ryan’s article first, 125-151, then Jensen’s preface)

Supplemental Reading:

- Revisiting *Unabomber Manifesto* (Week 5 reading)

(8) Developing New Identity – Anarchism, Direct Democracy, and De-Colonial Strategies for the Construction of Equitable Communities


Supplemental Readings:

- Dan Jakopovich, Revolution and the Party in Gramsci’s Thought, *International Viewpoint*, Nov. 17, 2008 (please pay attention to the tension between the application of “democratic centralism” & “direct democracy”)

(9) Wrap Up Discussions & Student Presentation

(10) Student Presentation