

## **SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

SOC 331  
1:20 – 2:50 TR  
Sage 4224  
Spring 2017

Jeremiah Bohr, Ph.D.  
bohrj@uwosh.edu  
Office: Sage 4617  
Office Hours: 3:00 – 4:00 TR  
Phone: 424-3494

### **Course Description**

This course will examine social stratification and inequality. Although most topics will focus on the United States, some attention will be given to global issues as well. Since the emergence of sociology as a discipline, stratification and inequality have been primary questions guiding research and theory. Generally speaking, social stratification refers to the ways in which people get divided into groups that are “ranked” in systematic (and usually hierarchical) ways. This course will discuss topics such as institutionalized inequality based on class, status, gender, race and ethnicity.

### **Course Expectations**

- You will attend class regularly, show up on time, and participate in discussion.
- All assigned readings must be read before class begins.
- No laptops or cell phones allowed during class. Exceptions for laptops will be made on a case-by-case basis if you discuss your needs with me.
- You should regularly check your email and D2L course site for updates about the class.
- You will reference the Sociology Department’s Writing & Citation Guide when formatting writing assignments, where applicable.

### **Course Goals**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain sociological theories of social stratification
- Understand how these theories relate to contemporary issues of inequality
- Engage in discussions of social inequality while making evidence-based arguments

Completing these course goals will help you develop a sociological perspective on inequality in society while refining your critical thinking and quantitative literacy skills.

### **Required Materials**

*The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*, edited by David B. Grusky and Szonja Szelényi (2011, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

(Additional readings will be made available on the D2L course page.)

### **Class Attendance and Participation**

You are expected to attend class and participate in discussion on a regular basis. Questions for the assigned readings will be supplied to you before every class, and you will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss them. If you have an extenuating circumstance regarding your absence, please contact me as soon as possible.

### **First Exam**

This exam will cover the first half of course materials, including lecture content, class discussions, and assigned readings.

### **Second Exam**

This exam will cover the second half of course materials (not cumulative), including lecture content, class discussions, assigned readings, and an in-class film.

### **Discussion Papers**

Throughout the semester, you will have five opportunities to turn in four discussion papers on a topic that I determine. These papers will address “big” questions and are intended to help you articulate a position on the origins or features of major topics within the study of social stratification. These papers will not be graded as “right” or “wrong,” but rather on the basis that you have put together a coherent argument defending a particular position. You must cite at least three relevant assigned readings in your response. Discussion papers will be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins). Discussion papers must be submitted to the D2L dropbox prior to the beginning of class on the due date.

### **Research Proposal**

For this assignment, you will create a research proposal on a topic within social stratification. You will not actually conduct the research, but will instead think about research design. The goal of this assignment is for you to understand the practical limitations of studying social inequality while also realizing what *can* be studied.

### **Grading**

Exams (2)	50%
Discussion Papers (4)	20%
Research Proposal	20%
Attendance/Participation	10%

**Late work** will be accepted up to three days after the due date, with a 10% penalty deducted for each day late.

**Academic misconduct** will not be tolerated. You must do your own work and properly cite ideas that belong to other people. More information on plagiarism can be found here:

<http://www.english.uwosh.edu/shaffer/policies/plagiarism.htm>.

## **Campus Resources**

All UWO students are eligible for one-to-one conferencing at the Writing Center. Their free, confidential tutoring is designed to help students work through assignments and gain additional writing skills. The Writing Center is located in the academic support suite of the Student Success Center and here: <http://www.uwosh.edu/wcenter>.

The Center for Academic Resources (CAR) provides free, confidential tutoring for students in most classes on campus. CAR is located in the Student Success Center, Suite 102. Check the Content Tutoring page on CAR's website (<http://car.uwosh.edu/>) for a list of tutors. If your course is not listed, click on a link to request one, or call 424-2290. To schedule a tutoring session, simply email the tutor, let him/her know what class you are seeking assistance in, and schedule a time to meet.

UWO is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Please contact the Disability Services [Dean of Students Office, 125 Dempsey Hall, 424-3100 (Voice), 424-1319 (TTY)] for the University's accommodation request form and documentation requirements or visit their website at: <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/disability-services>.

Please visit this page to read about all the campus services available to support your success: <http://www.uwosh.edu/home/resources>).

Your final grade will be computed on the following percentage scale:

A	92.5-100%
A-	90.0-92.49
B+	87.5-89.99
B	82.5-87.49
B-	80.0-82.49
C+	77.5-79.99
C	72.5-77.49
C-	70.0-72.49
D+	67.5-69.99
D	62.5-67.49
D-	60.00-62.49
F	0-59.99

## **Grade Interpretation**

- A – Indicates truly superior work and active participation in the learning environment. Students at this level demonstrate an ability to think critically in oral and written form, integrate concepts and theories, level of knowledge relevant to the course that is beyond expectations and far above average, and the ability to use this knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

- B – Demonstrates a level of knowledge relevant to the course that is beyond expectations and above average. Will be able to use and extend this knowledge in some situations.
- C – Demonstrates an acceptable and average level of knowledge relevant to the course in terms of familiarity with readings, integration of concepts and theories, level of critical thinking, and active participation. Students at this level should be able to continue learning in this field of study.
- D – Demonstrates less than satisfactory performance in the course requirements and barely adequate level of knowledge relevant to the course. Unlikely to be able to apply knowledge, nor successfully continue studies in this direction.
- F – Demonstrates insufficient knowledge to be given credit for this course, and/or dismal performance and no class participation.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Week 1      Introducing Social Stratification**

Jan 31      Introduction to the course

Feb 2      GS Ch. 2 – Davis and Moore – “Some Principles of Stratification”

GS Ch. 4 – Krueger – “Inequality, Too Much of a Good Thing”

Turnbull – “The Giver of Law,” in *The Forest People* (D2L; optional)

### **Week 2      Social Class I**

Feb 7      GS Ch. 5 – Marx – “Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism”

Feb 9      GS Ch. 6 – Wright – “Class Counts”

### **Week 3      Social Class II**

Feb 14      GS Ch. 7 – Weber – “Class, Status, Party”

Weber – “Open and Closed Relationships” (D2L)

Feb 16      GS Ch. 18 – Wilson – “Jobless Poverty”

GS Ch. 19 – Massey and Denton – “American Apartheid”

**Week 4      Social Class III**

Feb 21      Warren – “Vanishing of the Middle Class” (D2L)

Banerjee and Duflo – “What is Middle Class about the Middle Classes around the World?” (D2L)

Feb 23      GS Ch. 11 – Mills – “The Power Elite”

GS Ch. 12 – Domhoff – “Who Rules America?”

GS Ch. 14 – Brooks – “Bobos in Paradise”

**Week 5      Status & Stratification**

Feb 28      GS Ch. 8 – Chan and Goldthorpe – “Is There a Status Order in Contemporary British Society?”

Milner (1994) – “Status and Sacredness” (D2L)

**DUE: Discussion Paper #1 (Social Class)**

Mar 2      GS Ch. 59 – MacLeod – “Ain’t No Makin’ It”

GS Ch. 60 – Conley – “The Pecking Order”

**Week 6      Social Networks & Mobility**

Mar 7      GS Ch. 61 – Granovetter – “The Strength of Weak Ties”

GS Ch. 62 – Lin – “Social Networks and Status Attainment”

Mar 9      GS Ch. 50 – Egan – “No Degree, and No Way Back to the Middle”

GS Ch. 54 – Jonsson et al – “It’s a Decent Bet That Our Children Will Be Professors Too”

<b>Week 7</b>	<b>First Half Review</b>
Mar 14	Catch-up & Review DUE: Discussion Paper #2 (Status)
Mar 16	<b>Exam I</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	No class (Spring Break, March 19-26)
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Race &amp; Stratification</b>
Mar 28	Bonacich – “Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market.” (D2L)  McDermott – “Experiences of White Racial Identity” (D2L)
Mar 30	GS Ch. 28 – Bertrand and Mullainathan – “Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination.”  GS Ch. 31 – Steele – “Stereotype Threat and African-American Student Achievement”
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Race (continued); Gender &amp; Stratification</b>
Apr 4	GS Ch. 32 – Wilson – “The Declining Significance of Race”  GS Ch. 30 – Feagin – “The Continuing Significance of Race”  GS Ch. 33 – Oliver and Shapiro – “Black Wealth/White Wealth” (optional)
Apr 6	GS Ch. 40 – Jacobs and Gerson – “The Time Divide”  GS Ch. 38 – Belkin – “The Opt-Out Revolution” & Boushey, “Are Women Opting Out?” (optional)  Brines (1994) - “Economic Dependency, Gender, and the Division of Labor at Home.” (D2L; optional)
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Gender (continued); Education &amp; Stratification</b>
Apr 11	GS Ch. 47 – England – “Devaluation of Pay of Comparable Male and Female Occupations”

GS Ch. 48 – Blau and Kahn – “The Gender Pay Gap”

Jackman (1994) – “The Structure of Intergroup Contact” (D2L; optional)

**DUE: Discussion Paper #3 (Race)**

Apr 13 Turner – “Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System” (D2L)

Torche (2011) – “Is A College Degree Still the Great Equalizer?” (D2L; skim)

**Week 12 Policy & Politics**

Apr 18 GS Ch. 21 – Hays – “Flat Broke with Children”

GS Ch. 76 – Cohen and Sabel – “Flexicurity”

Apr 20 Bishop and Cushing – selections from *The Big Sort* (D2L)

**DUE: Discussion Paper #4 (Gender)**

**Week 13 Culture & Stratification**

Apr 25 GS Ch. 68 – Lareau – “Unequal Childhoods”

Bourdieu – “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste” (optional)

Apr 27 Film - *People Like Us*

**Week 14 Film Week**

May 2 Film - *People Like Us*

**DUE: Research Proposal**

May 4 Catch-up & Review

**DUE: Discussion Paper #5 (Campus)**

**Week 15**

May 9 **Second Exam**