



Western University
SOCIOLOGY 3324G
Social Inequality over the Life Course
Winter 2017
Tuesdays 9:30 SSC 3014

Instructor: Dr. A. Willson

Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Description:

This half-year course focuses on social factors that affect social inequality in later life from a life course perspective. A life course perspective emphasizes the intersections of individual lives, social change, and social structure. It calls attention to the patterns and trajectories based on gender, race-ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation that span across human lives, and are shaped by broader social structure and historical time.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 from Sociology 1020, 1021E, 1025A/B, 1026F/G, 1027A/B

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite: Sociology 2285

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- * Understand and explain how continuity and change in human lives affect social inequality.
- * Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, strategies, and empirical examples from life course analysis related to social inequality.
- * Write a paper that clearly utilizes class concepts and makes an evidence-based, sociological argument to discuss social inequality from a life course perspective.

Expectations:

1) Students are expected to attend all lectures and are responsible for all material presented in lectures and from course readings. Class sessions include lectures, discussion, and in-class exercises designed to help you understand assigned readings. Lectures will often cover material not discussed in the course readings, but for

which you are responsible. You also are responsible for the material covered in the readings, even if the material is not reviewed in class.

- 2) You are encouraged to participate in class discussions and raise questions throughout class.
- 3) You should do the assigned readings in preparation for class on the date indicated on the course outline.
- 4) I do not provide notes to students who miss class. It is important that you get to know at least one of your classmates because you will need to ask another student for notes from missed classes.

Required Text(s):

There is no textbook for this course; all of the following required readings are available electronically.

Method of Evaluation:

There are two exams, a mid-term and a final, both multiple choice. The final exam includes the material covered after the midterm and is not cumulative. However, the material covered later in the course builds upon material covered earlier in the course, so to be successful you must keep up. Exams are multiple choice and will require knowledge of assigned readings, lectures, films, and guest lectures. You are responsible for all the material in the readings even if this material is not covered in class.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Midterm test 35% February 14

Final exam 30%

Final essay 35% Due April 4

Exams

Exams will consist of multiple-choice and short essay questions covering the lectures, films, and reading assignments. You are responsible for all the material in the assigned readings even if this material is not covered in class. The final exam covers the material covered after the midterm and is NOT cumulative. You will not be allowed to use any electronic devices during the test. Please write legibly. Answers that the instructor cannot read cannot be graded.

Essay Assignment

This assignment involves applying the sociological tools and knowledge that you gain in this course to understand the intersection of individual biography, social change, and social structure in an individual's life. Papers must be at least 10 pages in length. I will provide detailed instructions in class. Unexcused late papers will be penalized 5% per day.

Note: All written work (including exams) is expected to meet the standards of university work. Grades will be based on mechanics, style, clarity and diction, in addition to ideas. This is a sociology class, so the major focus will be on learning sociological ideas. But clear thinking is related to clear writing, and the grading will reflect this. Marks are based on the following:

- A+ = outstanding work that far exceeds basic requirements
- A = outstanding work that significantly exceeds basic requirements
- B = work that exceeds basic requirements
- C = work that satisfies course requirements in all respects (average)
- D = substandard work
- F = performance that fails to meet course requirements

How to contact me:

Email is the best way to contact me. During weekdays, allow for 24 hours until response. During weekends, allow for 48 hours until response. You should not email me with questions that can be answered by referring to this course outline, or to Western's website.

How to get important information:

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings.

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines and Medical Accommodation:

If you miss the due date for an assignment or exam due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor's documentation, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam or hand in your assignment at a later date without penalty. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized 5% per day (including weekend days). Make-up exams may be of a different format (i.e. essay exam). Late assignments are to be placed in the Sociology drop box (5th floor SSC) upon completion.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Policies on Examinations

Electronic devices are not allowed during tests and examinations.

Computer-marked multiple choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites or disruptive, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western

(http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule and Readings:

****The following outline is subject to change****

Please check Department of Sociology web site (<http://sociology.uwo.ca/>) for class cancellations or changes

Note: (S)=available on course website; (O)=available from Western Libraries online

WEEK 1, January 10: Introduction, Overview

Overview of course, course outline and requirements

WEEK 2, January 17: Overview and Theoretical Perspectives

(S) McPherson, Barry D. 2004. "Social Structures and the Life Course: Social Inequality and Social Change." Pp. 170-195 in B.D. McPherson, *Aging as a Social Process: Canadian Perspectives*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

(S) Elder, Glen H., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe. 2003. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory." Pp. 3-22 in J.T. Mortimer and M.K. Shanahan (Eds.) *Handbook of the Life Course*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

WEEK 3, January 24: The Economics of Aging, Stratification, and Social Inequality—combine the 2, use End Game

(S) Settersten, Richard and Barbara E. Ray. 2010. "Education, Education, Education." Pp. 3-28 in *Not Quite Adults: Why 20-somethings are Choosing a Slower Path to Adulthood, and Why It's Good for Everyone*. Bantam: New York.

(S) Abramson, Corey M. 2015. "The Uneven Playing Field." Pp. 39-70 in *The End Game: How Inequality Shapes Our Final Years*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

WEEK 4, January 31: Gender, Employment, and Inequality in Later Life

(S) Evans, Patricia. 2010. "Women's Poverty in Canada: Cross-currents in an Ebbing Tide." Pp. 151-173 in G. Schaffner Goldberg (Ed.) *Poor Women in Rich Countries: The Feminization of Poverty Over the Life Course*. Oxford University Press: New York.

(O) Vartanian, T.P., & McNamara, J.M. (2002). Older women in poverty: The impact of midlife factors. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64(2), 532–548.

WEEK 5, February 7: Gender, Employment, and Inequality in Later Life, cont.

(O) Beaujot, Roderic, Zenaida Ravanera and Jianye Liu. 2009. "Models of Earning and Caring: Determinants of the Division of Work." *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 46(4):319-337.

(O) Evans, John M. 2002. "Work/Family Reconciliation, Gender Wage Equity and Occupational Segregation: The Role of Firms and Public Policy." *Canadian Public Policy*, 28:Supplement: Occupational Gender Segregation: Public Policies and Economic Forces: S187-S216.

Midterm Q & A

WEEK 6, February 14: Midterm

WEEK 7, February 21: Reading week

WEEK 8, February 28: Race/ethnicity, Aging, and Social Inequality

Kaida, Lisa (2015) "Ethnic Variations in Immigrant Poverty Exit and Female Employment: The Missing Link" *Demography* 52(2): 485-511.

Mitrou, F., Cooke, M., Lawrence, D., Povah, D., Mobila, E., Guimond, E. and Zubrick, S. (2014) Gaps in Indigenous disadvantage not closing: a census cohort study of social determinants of health in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand from 1981–2006. *BMC Public Health* 14:201.

WEEK 9, March 7: Race/ethnicity, Aging, and Social Inequality, cont.

(O) Kaida, Lisa and Monica Boyd. 2011. "Poverty Variations Among the Elderly: The Roles of Income Security Policies and Family Co-Residence." *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 30(1):83-100.

(O) Adamuti-Trache, Maria, Paul Anisef and Robert Sweet. 2013. "Impact of Canadian Postsecondary Education on Occupational Prestige of Highly Educated Immigrants." *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 50(2):178-202.

WEEK 10, March 14: Health, Inequality, and Aging

(O) Pavalko, E.K., & Caputo, J. (2013). Social inequality and health across the life course. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(8), 1040–1056.

(S) Ferraro, Kenneth F. 2011. "Health and Aging: Early Origins, Persistent Inequalities?" Pp. 465-475 in R.A. Settersten and J.L. Angel (Eds.) *Handbook of the Sociology of Aging*, New York: Springer.

WEEK 11, March 21: Health, Inequality, and Aging, continued

(S) Kobayashi, Karen M. 2009. "Immigration, Ethnicity, Aging, and Health." Pp. 204-220 in *Health, Illness, and Health Care in Canada*, 4th edition. B.S. Bolaria and H.D. Dickinson, editors. Toronto: Nelson.

(O) Goosby, Bridgette J. 2013. "Early life course pathways of adult depression and chronic pain." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 54(1), 75–91.

WEEK 12, March 28: Diverse Families, Aging, and Social Inequality

(O) Pong, Suet-Ling, Jaap Dronkers, and Gillian Hampden-Thompson. 2004. "Family Policies and Children's School Achievement in Single- versus Two-Parent Families." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65(3):681-699.

(O) Biblarz, Timothy J. and Judith Stacey. 2010. "How Does the Gender of Parents Matter?" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(1):3-22.

WEEK 13, April 4: Diverse Families, Aging, and Social Inequality, continued, Conclusion

(O) Gaymu, Joëlle, Marc-Antoine Busque, Jacques Légaré, Yann Décarie, Samuel Vézina, and Janice Keefe. 2010. "What Will the Family Composition of Older Persons Be Like Tomorrow? A Comparison of Canada and France." *Canadian Journal of Aging*, 29(1):57-71.

(O) McDaniel, Susan A., Amber Gazso and Karen A. Duncan. "Relative Prospects of Children as They Age: Canadians and Americans in Midlife in the Great Recession Frame Future Generations." *Journal of Aging Studies* 37:69-80.

Final Exam Q & A