



SOCIOLOGY 9147: Stratification
Winter 2025
Tuesday, 1:30 to 4:30pm, SSC-5235

Professor: Dr. Lora A. Phillips

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Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Sociology, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course Description

This course will explore sociological approaches to understanding social stratification, with a focus on the contemporary North American context. Specifically, we will: engage debates regarding the conceptualization of social class; explore the causes, consequences, and relevant trends associated with class inequality; and investigate the intersection between class inequality and gender, race/ethnicity, geography, and other pertinent features of the social world. Course grades are based on participation, written reflections, reading probes, and a take-home final exam.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- Identify, describe, compare, and apply key theoretical concepts related to stratification.
- Synthesize and critically evaluate published research related to stratification.
- Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly and articulately through effective oral and written communication.
- Demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly discussion and debate.

Course Material(s)

All of the required readings are available electronically from Western Libraries, the course OWL website, or will be provided in class. There is no additional cost associated with the course materials.

Evaluation Breakdown

Your grade is determined by a weighted average of four elements. A brief description of each, and its associated weight for the final grade, is listed below.

Participation (15%)

As in most graduate courses, active participation by all members of the class is absolutely essential for the course to succeed. I will expect everyone to contribute to each class session. While I realize that variation in experience and temperament will lead some to talk more than others, you should come to class ready to engage. I see discussion as an opportunity for all of us to work out our ideas and learn from alternative perspectives.

Written Reflections (15%)

A written reflection (1 page, single-spaced) on the readings is due each week after the first week. While some summary of the readings may be appropriate, these reflections should not primarily rehearse the main points, but rather should offer your appreciation and/or critique of the readings, connections to other ideas, and questions that the readings provoked for you. I particularly encourage contemplations on how the readings affect your thinking about your research agenda. The purpose of the reflections is to encourage you to use writing as a tool for thinking and to facilitate our class discussions by deepening your engagement with the material. Written reflections should be emailed to me by 12pm on the day of class. No late reflections will be accepted, but each student may skip one reflection during the term.

Reading Probes (30%)

Throughout the term, each student is required to complete three reading probes (each worth 10% of the course grade, for a total of 30%). To complete the reading probes, students will identify one peer-reviewed article that complements the assigned weekly readings, read that article, and provide a short reflection (1 page, single-spaced) that: (a) summarizes the main findings and research methods, (b) explains why the article is relevant to the class as a whole, and (c) links the article to the assigned weekly readings. During class, students will be asked to provide an informal, 5-minute presentation of the article they selected. Selected articles can address the weekly topic across any geography, but at least one reading probe must focus on the Canadian context. To ensure adequate coverage across the term, students will be asked to indicate their top four choices for reading probe weeks and will, subsequently, be assigned to three of those weeks. Reading probes should be emailed to me by 12pm on the day of class. No late reading probes will be accepted.

Final Exam (40%)

A final take-home essay exam will be handed out on the last day of class and due two weeks later, on Tuesday, April 15, by 4pm. You will be required to answer 3 to 4 questions, with some choice between alternative questions. The exam will evaluate: 1) your familiarity with and comprehension of the course material; 2) your capacity to make a critical, cogent, and interesting argument incorporating that material; and 3) evidence of your own original, creative assessment of the literature (in other words, not simply a restatement of someone else's position). The structure and content of the questions will be loosely modeled on a typical comprehensive exam.

Tentative Course Schedule and Readings

Readings will be selected prior to the beginning of the term. Students should expect to be assigned approximately two readings per week.

Week 1 – January 7: Introduction

Week 2 – January 14: Defining & Measuring Social Class

Week 3 – January 21: Defining & Measuring Social Class

Week 4 – January 28: Defining & Measuring Social Class

Week 5 – February 4: Income Polarization

Week 6 – February 11: Job Polarization

Week 7 – February 18: Reading Week (no class)

Week 8 – February 25: Economic Insecurity

Week 9 – March 4: Gender Stratification

Week 10 – March 11: Racial & Ethnic Stratification

Week 12 – March 18: Indigenous Stratification

Week 13 – March 25: Immigrant Stratification

Week 14 – April 1: Spatial Stratification

Policies for Assignment Deadlines

To receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted on the date they are due. To request special accommodation(s) for exceptional circumstances, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to discuss options. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office.

Statement on Academic 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:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the 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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Completion of Course Requirements

Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:

http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.