



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3347G-001
Current issues in stratification
Winter 2022
Mon 1:30-4:30pm; UCC-54B

Instructor: Anders Holm
Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11 am.
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5327

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Course Description:

Social inequality is a fundamental and contentious issue in almost all societies that exist and that have ever existed. Together with social stratification it forms one of the most studied issues in the discipline of sociology. Although some patterns of social inequality are specific to a certain country or region due to unique historical experience, there are some common social structural factors explaining the root causes of inequality. In this class we will discuss many causes and consequences of inequality both in Canada and in global contexts. In this course we will study the distribution of wealth, power and influence; how these factors that influence inequality can be measured; and how their relative importance can change.

Prerequisite(s):

Third or fourth year standing in any module in the Department of Sociology.

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.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will:

- 1) Learn about recent and important empirical facts and theories of inequality and social stratification.
- 2) Further develop their critical thinking and analytical skills regarding societal issues.
- 3) Apply sociological theories to their understanding of social inequality.

Required Text(s):

Required Text(s): The readings for this class are excerpts from the book: Grusky, D. B. (ed.) Social Stratification, Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective (4th ed.), Westview Press. It is available at the UWO bookstore. In addition, research paper and articles will be used. They are available for download via OWL.

Method of Evaluation:

There will be one midterm test, an essay assignment and a final exam.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Midterm test 30%

Student essay 30%

Final Examination 40%

Essay:

Each student is expected to write a research essay for the course. Students are required to pick a topic of their choice that deals with social inequality, either globally or in Canada. This research essay must be about a topic that is relevant to the course and the instructor **MUST** approve the topic. The essay should not exceed 5 pages and be double-space typed. This essay should specify the main questions raised in the essay; begin with a thesis statement; contain a relevant literature review; and conclude with your position on the topic. I will hand out detailed instructions for the essays.

How to Contact Me:

Email: aholm@uwo.ca, Phone: 519 6612111 ext. 2111

How to get important information:

All course material except textbooks will be made available through OWL or provided in class.

Important Policies***Policies for Assignment Deadlines:***

Policies for Assignment Deadlines: Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day (including weekends) except in the case of extreme and serious documented circumstances, discussed with me in advance and following the same procedures describe above related to missed exams. Please note that computer problems are not an excused circumstance. You are expected to follow good computer practices, including backing up your work.

A Note on 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

Crip sheets are allowed both during the midterm and the final exam.

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 such as Facebook or Twitter, 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.

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: https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html

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 519 661-2111 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 course text is Grusky, D. B. (ed.) Social Stratification, Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective (4th ed.), Westview Press.

Jan. 10. Introduction.

Introduction David B. Grusky and Katherine R. Weisshaar: The Questions We Ask About Inequality

David B. Grusky and Szonja Szelényi: The Stories We Tell About Inequality

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore: Some Principles of Stratification

Jan. 17. Introduction to mechanisms of stratification

David B. Grusky and Katherine R. Weisshaar A: Compressed History of Inequality

Melvin M. Tumin: Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis

Claude S. Fischer, Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez, Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss: Inequality by Design

Jan. 24. Trends I

Anthony B. Atkinson, Thomas Piketty, and Emmanuel Saez: Top Incomes in the Long Run of History

Robert Frank Why: Is Income Inequality Growing?

Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson: Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States

Gøsta Esping-Andersen and John Myles: The Welfare State and Redistribution

Jan. 31. Trends II

Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz: The Race between Education and Technology

Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld: Unions, Norms and the Rise in the U.S. Wage Inequality

Yujia Liu and David B. Grusky: The Winners of the Third Industrial Revolution

Feb. 7. Segregation

Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton: American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass

Stefanie DeLuca and James E. Rosenbaum: Does Changing Neighborhoods Change Lives?

Robert Sampson: Legacies of Inequality

Feb. 14. Mechanisms I

James J. Heckman: Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children

Greg J. Duncan and Katherine Magnuson: The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty

Gary W. Evans, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, and Pamela Kato Klebanov: Stressing Out the Poor

Feb. 21. Reading week

Feb 28. Mechanisms II

Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, with the collaboration of Andrea Tyree: The Process of Stratification

Christopher Jencks, Marshall Smith, Henry Acland, Mary Jo Bane, David Cohen, Herbert Gintis, Barbara Heyns, and Stephan Michelson: Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America

Mar. 7. Midterm Exam

Mar. 14. Mobility I

David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser: A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility

Richard Breen: Social Mobility in Europe

Jan O. Jonsson, David B. Grusky, Matthew Di Carlo, and Reinhard Pollak: It's a Decent Bet That Our Children Will Be Professors Too

Mar. 21. Mobility II

Gary Solon: Intergenerational Income Mobility

John Ermisch, Markus Jäntti, Timothy Smeeding, and James A. Wilson: Advantage in Comparative Perspective

Mar. 28. Education I (assignment due)

Richard Breen and John H. Goldthorpe: Explaining Educational Differentials

Sean F. Reardon: The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor

Richard Breen, Ruud Luijkx, Walter Müller, and Reinhard Pollak: Nonpersistent Inequality in Educational Attainment

April 4. Education II

Sigal Alon: Towards a Theory of Inequality in Higher Education

Florence Torche: Does College Still Have Equalizing Effects?

Jennie E. Brand and Yu Xie: Who Benefits Most From College?

Apr. Final Exam