



The University of Western Ontario

SOCIOLOGY 3347F-001
Current Issues in Stratification

Fall 2024

In-person

Instructor: Professor Edward Bell

Department of Sociology

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This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human actions, but to understand them. Baruch Spinoza, circa 1677

Course Description:

Calendar description: The course will examine current theories and research methods in stratification. Consideration will be given to both industrialized and developing societies.

Course overview: This course explores the multifaceted nature of inequality within contemporary societies. It provides a wide-ranging analysis of social stratification, including issues pertaining to class, ethnicity, gender, and other dimensions of social difference. Students will engage with both classical and contemporary sociological theories and research to understand the mechanisms and consequences of inequality.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above.

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, 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.

Anti-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

In this course we will endeavour to:

- understand key sociological theories and concepts related to inequality

- analyze the various forms and dimensions of inequality in society
- explore the historical and contemporary dynamics of social stratification
- critically examine the impact of inequality on individuals and communities

Course Material:

1) David B. Grusky, ed., (2014) *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press.

The readings in this book allow you to familiarize yourself with some of the most impactful research in the field of social stratification. It contains book and article excerpts that are taken from writings that shaped how we understand social inequality.

2) Additional material posted on OWL Brightspace or publicly available online.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

To contact the instructor: eabell@uwo.ca

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Note: Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or examination will be required to write a makeup test or exam. The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup. Students should be aware that the makeup will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original.

Evaluation breakdown:

1) Midterm test (October 24, in class, in person). Three hours. Weight = 30%.

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. *For this course, the midterm test has been designated as requiring supporting documentation.*

2) Research essay and its preparatory components (a separate document will be posted on OWL Brightspace that provides further information).

- A) Research question and statement of why the topic it covers is important. **Due September 26**, about 300 words. Worth 5% of final grade.
- B) Literature review pertaining to research question. **Due November 7**, about 750 words. Worth 10% of final grade.
- C) Full research essay which will include the already prepared research question and literature review, revised as needed. It will also include a thesis statement, and will conclude with your position on the topic. The research essay must integrate some concepts and theories discussed in class and/or in the readings. **Due November 21**, about 2000 words. Worth 23% of final grade.
- D) Every student will provide a 10-minute verbal summary of their research essay to the class, which will be followed by a 5-minute question/answer and comment session (to be booked for November 21, November 28, or December 5). You will receive a grade of 2/2 upon completion of this requirement. Worth 2% of final grade.

Note: You are expected to submit the research essay and the preparatory components by the deadlines listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit them up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their work more than 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 10% of the value of the essay per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade.

Because the submission deadline for the research essay and its preparatory components already includes flexibility in the form of a 72-hour submission window, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for work submitted after the end of the 72-hour period.

3) Final examination (in final examination period, in person; date and location TBA). Three hours. Weight = 30%.

Note: Departmental grade guidelines require that a 3000-level course have a mean for the final grades that is between 73% and 80%.

Course policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools only for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. Students must produce original written contributions, i.e., ***they must write their research essays and their preparatory components in their own words.*** The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Materials submitted for assessment must reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking and independent inquiry. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing of essays and other written assessments.

Students will be required to complete a form in which they describe the manner and the extent to which they used AI for the research essay.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic consideration must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found at the previous link. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note

that supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g., December and April exams). Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation (for this course it is the midterm test). Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Course Schedule and Readings: TBA

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology "[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)" document (https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf) for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence statement