Spring 2-1-2017

SOCI 325.01: Social Stratification

D'Shane Barnett

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Course Number: 31677 – SOCI 325.01  
Day: Tuesdays & Thursdays  
Time: 11:00am – 12:20pm  
Class Location: CHEM 123

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**Teaching Team Contact Information**

Instructor: D’Shane Barnett  
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Office Location: Social Science 315  
Office Hours:  
  - Tuesdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm  
  - Fridays 11:30am – 1:00pm  
  - By appointment (when available)

Preceptor: Claire Babcock  
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Office Location: TBA  
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**Course Overview**

**Course Description**

Social stratification is the study of social divisions based on class, power, status, rank, and a host of other factors. Sociologists, social critics, policymakers, and social activists have long been concerned with inequalities that exist in society, how they are generated, and what consequences they have for society and for individuals.

Stratification is a broad topic that encompasses complex theories and various methodologies. It is also a dynamic area of sociological research, since systems of inequality change over time in response to changes in the economy, politics, social policies, and attitudes.
We will use a combination of theoretical readings, empirical works, lectures, class discussions, and exercises to examine the phenomenon of inequality in the United States. Some lectures and class discussions will explore how theories of stratification relate to current events and contemporary debates about inequality in the U.S.

Course Objectives
First, students will get to consider the role of inequality in society today. We will be introduced to some common measures of inequality, including status, power, income, and wealth. Next, we will explore three theories of stratification: (a) Functionalist; (b) Marxist; and, (c) Weberian. We will learn the logic of each theoretical perspective and consider how proponents of each perspective would make sense of contemporary inequalities.

We will then examine how inequality is lived by exploring the lifestyles, consumption patterns, and experiences of people of color, people living with low incomes, women, and immigrants. Next, we will gain insight into the mechanisms that produce and sustain inequality, including systems of production, incarceration, redlining, labor market discrimination, and social networks. Finally, students will examine several strategies for reducing or eradicating inequality as well as debate the merits of each.

Expectations of Students

Preparation
Be prepared for class. Always read the assigned material before the class so that you can fully participate in class discussions. Bring the assigned reading material with you to class so that you can refer to it during lectures and group discussions.

Take careful lecture notes. If you are unable to attend class, you should obtain lecture notes from another student. Neither the instructor nor other members or the teaching team will provide lecture notes or presentation slides to students who miss class.

Participation
Class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, discussion, and exercises. You are encouraged to participate actively during all discussions and exercises. To maintain a respectful, open, and inquisitive classroom environment, please observe the following guidelines:

- Explain your views using reasoned arguments and provide evidence for assertions of fact. Avoid personal anecdotes and story-telling—these by themselves will not count toward participation.
- Respect others’ views and listen. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but try your best to give them your full attention and consideration when they are talking during class discussions.
- Texting, talking on your phone, emailing, and surfing the web should be done outside of class time. They disrupt your classmates and are disrespectful to your teaching team.

Communication
Outside of class time, I will communicate regularly with students via the messaging function of Moodle. These messages can be viewed either through your assigned UM email account or by logging into
Moodle. **You are responsible** for logging in to the UM Moodle system regularly and for all information contained in these messages.

I strongly encourage you to ask questions about the syllabus and assignments during class time. For more in-depth discussions (such as guidance on assignments), please plan to meet with me or another member of the teaching team during regularly scheduled office hours. If you cannot meet during office hours and would like to request an appointment, you should send an email that clearly states “Student Meeting Request” in the subject line. Your message should include at least two possible times when you would like to meet and a brief (one-two sentence) description of the reason for the meeting. I will do my best to accommodate your request.

**Email**

Email is a valuable tool for setting up a one-on-one meeting with me if the regularly scheduled office hours conflict with your schedule. **Please note** that email messages sent for any other reason may not be considered or acknowledged. University policy prohibits me from responding to emails sent from personal, non-UM email accounts (such as Gmail, Yahoo, private companies, etc).

**A Note about Classroom Culture**

My classroom is a somewhat casual environment for learning; I use jokes, short stories, and pop culture references to animate the course material, and I encourage students to engage with me and each other during class sessions. However, this does not mean that this is an easy course. The assigned readings are dense and theoretical and the exams (both in-class and take-home) are quite challenging. To pass the course, you must prepare carefully, pay close attention to details, and demonstrate accurate understanding of the course material on the exams.

**A Community of Diverse Learners**

I start each semester with the assumption that I will have a diverse group of learners in my courses. I assume that the students in my classes have assorted worldviews and experiences, disparate learning styles, varied levels of academic preparation, and dissimilar amounts of prior exposure to the discipline of sociology. I view this diversity positively, believing that it makes the teaching and learning experience more interesting, dynamic, and relevant. I encourage students to interrogate and, in some cases, respectfully challenge the course material when it does not make intuitive sense to them. While my pedagogy welcomes and celebrates a diverse community of learners, my exams focus exclusively on the course material. Students will not earn points on exams (in-class or take-home) for describing their personal worldviews, experiences, opinions, or information that they gleaned in other sociology courses. While diversity of worldview, experience, opinion, and prior exposure to sociology enrich the teaching and learning experience, they will not be assigned value by the instructor or other members of the teaching team.

**Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).
Accessibility
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact them in Lommason Center 154 or (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.

Course Requirements

In-Class Exams
There are four in-class exams in this course. All in-class exams have the same format; they will contain a combination of identifications and short answers. There will be no multiple-choice questions on any of the in-class exams.

In-class exams will cover all material (readings, lectures, exercises, media, discussions, etc) covered in the preceding section of the course. Exam 1 will cover all material from January 24th through February 14th. Exam 2 will cover all material from February 21st through March 9th. Exam 3 will cover all material from March 16th through April 11th. Exam 4 will take place during the final exam period on Tuesday, May 9th at @ 8:00am. Exam 4 will be partially cumulative. Roughly 75% of the final exam will cover all material from April 18th to May 2nd, and roughly 25% will cover major concepts and theories from the entire semester.

The teaching team will hold at least one review session before each in-class exam. The teaching team will also monitor a Moodle forum where students can post questions about upcoming in-class exams. The teaching team will check the forum twice a day in the five (5) days leading up to each in-class exam.

Students who arrive late to an in-class exam will not get extra time to complete the exam. Make-up exams are available only under two conditions: 1) you must have a valid excuse (this almost always means a legitimate medical excuse with adequate documentation); or 2) you must receive my permission to miss the exam at least 24 hours prior to the exam. It is your responsibility to provide legitimate written verification of your excuse to me. If I do not receive verification from you, you will not be allowed to take a make-up exam.

Take-Home Exams
In addition to the in-class exams, students must complete one take-home exam. Take-home exams consist of one essay question, which students answer outside of class time. Students will have 72 hours following the in-class exam to complete their take-home exams. The essay questions cover the same material as the in-class exams to which they correspond. There will be take-home components for in-class exams 1, 2 and 3. There will not be a take-home component for exam 4.

Students can earn between zero and 15 points on take-home exams. Students must complete at least one take-home exam to pass the course. Students may attempt as many take-home exams as they like, but only the highest score earned will count toward your final grade.
Course Grade
Students’ final grades are on five components. The weight of each component is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Extra Credit
Students can earn up to five (5) points of extra credit by participating verbally during class. Students who ask insightful questions about the course material and/or make thoughtful contributions to class discussions will earn extra credit points. Students who ask questions that indicate that they are not paying attention, repeat points that their fellow students have already made, or talk about personal experiences will not earn points. The instructor and preceptors will track verbal participation throughout the semester and any extra credit points that students earn will be posted to the Moodle grade book in the last week of the course.

Tokens
Deadlines are necessary for academic courses. They enable instructors to predict their grading workload during the semester and make it possible for students to plan ahead for periods of intensive studying. They create an even playing field by ensuring that all students have the same amount of time to complete assignments. Firm deadlines are particularly essential for courses that have exams. Without firm exam times, instructors would have to schedule (and proctor) dozens of individual exams throughout the semester, which is not practical.

As we all know, however, real life sometimes interferes with academics. When this happens, it becomes challenging (or impossible, in some cases) for students to meet academic deadlines. Students in this situation often experience tremendous anxiety. Many throw themselves on the mercy of the instructor, hoping that the instructor will be understanding and/or be able to offer flexibility about deadlines. This course uses “tokens” both to provide students with some flexibility around take-home exams and to reward wise planning and careful time management.

Every student in this class will start the semester with ten tokens. During the semester, students can exchange their tokens for the following:

- 48-hour extension on a take-home exam (8 tokens)
- 24-hour extension on a take-home exam (6 tokens)
- The opportunity to revise and re-submit a take-home exam after it has been graded (4 tokens)

If you plan to use your tokens on a take-home exam deadline extension, you must contact the instructor via email at least two hours before the original deadline. If you plan to use your tokens on a take-home exam
revision, contact the instructor via email at least 5 days before the last day of instruction. Revisions must be
turned in by Monday of finals week (Monday, May 8).
At the end of the semester, students may exchange any remaining tokens for the following:

- 1 extra credit point (4 tokens)
- 2 extra credit points (6 tokens)
- 3 extra credit points (8 tokens)

**Important:** Students may not use their tokens to reschedule in-class exams or revise in-class exams.

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**Course Materials**

**Required Book**
David Grusky and Szonja Szelenyi, eds. 2011. The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational

I have assigned the second edition of this book. I strongly recommend that students buy this edition and
not the previous edition of the book. Some of the required articles for this course are not included in the
previous edition. The page numbers also differ by edition, which will make it difficult for students to
follow along during lectures and class discussions if they are using the previous edition of the book.

**Required Articles**
In addition to the book, supplemental readings are required for this course. These readings will be available
on the course Moodle page. Students are encouraged to bring an electronic or hard copy of these readings
to class with them the day they are assigned. These readings are marked with ** on the syllabus.

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**Course Schedule**

**Important dates**

- Thurs. Feb 16  In-Class Exam 1
- Sun. Feb 19  Take-Home Exam 1 due 12:30pm via Moodle
- Tues. March 14  In-Class Exam 2
- Fri. March 17  Take-Home Exam 2 due 12:30pm via Moodle
- Thurs. April 13  In-Class Exam 3
- Sun. April 16  Take-Home Exam 3 due 12:30pm via Moodle
- Tues. May 9  In-Class Exam 4 (Final Exam) at 8:00am

*See next two pages for detailed course schedule.*
### Unit 1: Introduction to Social Stratification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>Tues. Jan 24</td>
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### Unit 2: Theories of Inequality

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<th>Author</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functionalist Perspectives</td>
<td>Tues. Feb 7</td>
<td>Kingsley Davis, Wilbert Moore</td>
<td>“Some Principles of Stratification”</td>
<td>16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marxist Perspectives</td>
<td>Thurs. Feb 9</td>
<td>Karl Marx, Erik Olin Wright</td>
<td>“Classes in Capitalism &amp; Pre-Capitalism” “Class Counts”</td>
<td>36-47, 48-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weberian Perspectives</td>
<td>Tues. Feb 14</td>
<td>Max Weber</td>
<td>“Class, Status, Party”</td>
<td>56-67</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thurs. Feb 16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In-Class Exam 1</strong></td>
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### Unit 3: Some Causes of Inequality

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<th>Article Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration</td>
<td>Thurs. Feb 23</td>
<td>Bruce Western</td>
<td>“Incarceration, Unemployment, &amp; Inequality”</td>
<td>208-213</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redlining</td>
<td>Tues. Feb 28</td>
<td>Douglas Massey, Nancy Denton</td>
<td>“American Apartheid”</td>
<td>170-181</td>
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<td>Tues. March 14</td>
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<td><strong>In-Class Exam 2</strong></td>
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# Unit 4: How Inequality is Lived

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<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Break – No Class</strong></td>
<td>Tues. March 21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Break – No Class</strong></td>
<td>Thurs. March 23</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Poverty</strong></td>
<td>Thurs. March 30</td>
<td>Jay MacLeod, William Julius Wilson</td>
<td>“Ain’t No Makin’ It”, “Jobless Poverty”</td>
<td>567-583, 159-169</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Poverty</strong></td>
<td>Tues. April 4</td>
<td><strong>Jennifer Sherman</strong></td>
<td>“Coping with Rural Poverty”</td>
<td>891-908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Americans</strong></td>
<td>Tues. April 11</td>
<td><strong>Davis et al.</strong></td>
<td>“American Indian Poverty in the Contemporary United States”</td>
<td>5-24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thurs. April 13</td>
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**In-Class Exam 3**

# Unit 5: Solutions for Inequality

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<th>Author</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reducing Labor Market Discrimination</strong></td>
<td>Thurs. April 20</td>
<td>Claudia Golden, Cecilia Rouse, Barbara Reskin</td>
<td>“Orchestrating Impartiality”</td>
<td>351-364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrating Neighborhoods</strong></td>
<td>Tues. April 25</td>
<td>Stefanie DeLuca, James Rosenbaum</td>
<td>“Escaping Poverty”</td>
<td>214-219</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Antipoverty Spending</strong></td>
<td>Thurs. April 27</td>
<td>Timothy Smeeding</td>
<td>“Poorer By Comparison”</td>
<td>153-158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investing in Children</strong></td>
<td>Tues. May 2</td>
<td>James Heckman</td>
<td>“Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children”</td>
<td>711-716</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Review &amp; Wrap-up</strong></td>
<td>Thurs. May 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Final: Tues. May 9</strong></td>
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**In-Class Exam 4**