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SOCI 325.01: Social Stratification

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SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
SPRING 2018
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Course Number: 35606 – SOCI 325
Day: Tuesdays & Thursdays
Time: 11:00am – 12:20pm
Class Location: JRH 204 (Jeanette Rankin Hall, 2nd Floor)

TEACHING TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: D'Shane Barnett
Email: dshane.barnett@umontana.edu
Office Phone: (406) 243-5281
Office Location: Social Science 315
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Fridays 11:30am – 12:30pm
By appointment (when available)

Preceptor: Payton Anderson
Email: payton.anderson@umconnect.umt.edu
Office Location: To be announced in class
Office Hours: To be announced in class

Preceptor: Sara Humphers-Ginther
Email: sara.humphers-ginther@umconnect.umt.edu
Office Location: To be announced in class
Office Hours: To be announced in class

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) Conflict; 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 preceptors 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-to-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 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 Lommasson 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 required 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) assigned in the preceding section of the course. Exam 1 will cover all material from January 30th through February 15th. Exam 2 will cover all material from February 22nd through March 13th. Exam 3 will cover all material from March 20th through April 12th. Exam 4 will take place during the final exam period on **Thursday, May 10th at @ 8:00am**. (I have no control over the 8:00am start time!) Exam 4 will be partially cumulative. Roughly 75% of the final exam will cover all material from April 19th to May 3rd, 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 at 12:00pm and 5:00pm 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 48 hours prior to the exam. It is your responsibility to provide legitimate written verification of your excuse to me. If I do not receive appropriate written verification, you will not be allowed to take a make-up exam and will receive no credit for the missed 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 comprised of five components. The weight of each component is:

1) Exam 1	20%
2) Exam 2	20%
3) Exam 3	20%
4) Exam 4	25%
5) Take-Home Exam	15%
TOTAL	100%

EXTRA CREDIT

This course deals with the real-life topic of inequality within society. In addition to learning about the theories, concepts, and research related to social stratification, opportunities to apply this knowledge outside of the classroom setting are important tools for improving understanding. Because of this, I try to make several extra credit opportunities available throughout the semester. Students can earn up to a maximum of nine (9) extra credit percentage points. It is entirely within the discretion of the instructor to identify and assign extra credit opportunities.

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:

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

If you plan to use your tokens on a take-home exam deadline extension, you must notify 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 or revise in-class exams.

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOK

David Grusky and Szonja Szelenyi, eds. 2011. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender*. Boulder: Westview Press.

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 and videos are required for this course. These materials are marked with ** on the syllabus. 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. Videos will be shown in class. If you do not attend the class session in which a video is shown, a link to the videos will be posted on the course Moodle page. Students are responsible for any costs to view videos outside of classroom sessions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

IMPORTANT DATES

Tues.	Feb 20	In-Class Exam 1
Fri.	Feb 23	Take-Home Exam 1 due 12:30pm via Moodle
Thurs.	March 15	In-Class Exam 2
Sun.	March 18	Take-Home Exam 2 due 12:30pm via Moodle
Tues.	April 17	In-Class Exam 3
Fri.	April 20	Take-Home Exam 3 due 12:30pm via Moodle
Thurs.	May 10	In-Class Exam 4 (Final Exam) at 8:00am No Take-Home Exam Available

See next two pages for detailed course schedule.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Introduction to Course</i>	Tues. Jan 23 Thurs. Jan 25		*No class on Thursday, January 25th*	
<i>Inequality: Necessary Evil or Just Plain Evil?</i>	Tues. Jan 30	David B. Grusky Claude Fischer et al.	“The Stories About Inequality That We Live to Tell” “Inequality By Design”	2-14 20-24
<i>Measuring Inequality: Status & Power</i>	Thurs. Feb 1	C. Wright Mills	“The Power Elite”	101-111
<i>Measuring Inequality: Income & Wealth</i>	Tues. Feb 6	Melvin Oliver & Thomas Shapiro Emmanuel Saez	“Black Wealth/White Wealth” “Striking it Richer”	296-303 86-89

UNIT 2: THEORIES OF INEQUALITY

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Functionalist Perspectives</i>	Thurs. Feb 8	Kingsley Davis & Wilbert Moore	“Some Principles of Stratification”	16-19
<i>Marxist Perspectives</i>	Tues. Feb 13	Karl Marx Erik Olin Wright	“Classes in Capitalism & Pre-Capitalism” “Class Counts”	36-47 48-55
<i>Weberian Perspectives</i>	Thurs. Feb 15	Max Weber	“Class, Status, Party”	56-67
	Tues. Feb 20	In-Class Exam 1		

UNIT 3: SOME CAUSES OF INEQUALITY

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Systems of Production</i>	Thurs. Feb 22	William Julius Wilson	“The Declining Significance of Race”	282-295
<i>Incarceration</i>	Tues. Feb 27	Bruce Western	“Incarceration, Unemployment, & Inequality”	208-213
<i>Redlining</i>	Thurs. March 1	Douglas Massey & Nancy Denton ** PBS Documentary	“American Apartheid” “Race – The Power of An Illusion: The House You Live In”	170-181 Video
<i>Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Tues. March 6	Francine Blau & Lawrence Kahn	“The Gender Pay Gap”	426-445
<i>Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Thurs. March 8	Marianne Bertrand & Sendhil Mullainathan Devah Pager	“Are Emily & Greg More Employable Than Lakisha & Jamal?” “Marked”	254-259 260-268
<i>Inequality in Health</i>	Tues. March 13	** California NewsReel Documentary	“Unnatural Causes: In Sickness and In Wealth”	Video
	Thurs. March 15	In-Class Exam 2		

UNIT 4: HOW INEQUALITY IS LIVED

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Social Networks & Resources</i>	Tues. March 20	Mark Granovetter	"The Strength of Weak Ties"	589-593
<i>Lifestyles of the Wealthy</i>	Thurs. March 22	David Brooks	"Bobos in Paradise"	128-135
<i>Immigration & Assimilation</i>		Alejandro Portes & Min Zhou	"The New Second Generation"	237-249
<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>	Tues. March 27			
<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>	Thurs. March 29			
<i>Urban Poverty</i>	Tues. April 3	Jay MacLeod	"Ain't No Makin' It"	567-583
<i>Immigration & Assimilation</i>		Mary Waters	"Black Identities"	
<i>Rural Poverty</i>	Thurs. April 5	** Jennifer Sherman	"Coping with Rural Poverty"	891-908
<i>Discrimination, Self-Esteem & Achievement</i>	Tues. April 10	Joe Feagin	"The Continuing Significance of Race"	269-275
		Claude Steele	"Stereotype Threat & African-American Student Achievement"	276-281
<i>Native Americans</i>	Thurs. April 12	** Davis et al.	"American Indian Poverty in the Contemporary United States"	5-24
	Tues. April 17	In-Class Exam 3		

UNIT 5: SOLUTIONS FOR INEQUALITY

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Opting Out of Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Thurs. April 19	Lisa Belkin	"The Opt-Out Revolution"	332-336
<i>Reducing Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Tues. April 24	Claudia Golden & Cecilia Rouse	"Orchestrating Impartiality"	351-364
		Barbara Reskin	"Rethinking Employment Discrimination & Its Remedies"	378-388
<i>Integrating Neighborhoods</i>	Thurs. April 26	Stefanie DeLuca & James Rosenbaum	"Escaping Poverty"	214-219
<i>Antipoverty Spending</i>	Tues. May 1	Timothy Smeeding	"Poorer By Comparison"	153-158
<i>Investing in Children</i>	Thurs. May 3	James Heckman	"Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children"	711-716
CLASS FINAL: THURS. MAY 10 8:00AM – 10:00AM		In-Class Exam 4		