



**Sociology 327: Social Stratification
Fall 2016**

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Office hours: 2:15pm – 3:30pm - Tuesday/Thursday or by appointment

Class Location: C103

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00pm – 2:15pm

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: Soci 201(minimum grade of C-)

Class Dates: September 7, 2016 – December 9, 2016

Exam Period: December 12, 2016 – December 21, 2016

Last Day to Withdraw: November 18, 2016

Books and Readings: All of the materials for this class will be posted on Moodle or available for free online.

The Book of Bad Arguments

Almossowi, A. (2013). An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments. Retrieved April 1, 2015, from <https://bookofbadarguments.com>.

- We will visit this book regularly throughout the course of our semester together. Feel free to read it on your own, it's well illustrated and there is only one page of text per illustration.

Sept 8- Oct 2 Part I: Introduction to social stratification, concepts, and issues

This selection of readings will introduce students to the concepts of social stratification and inequality as well as problematic aspects of working/living with such concepts. Students will be introduced to functionalist, interactionist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives.

Week 1: Intro to Stratification and Intro to Writing

September 8

There are no readings assigned for the first day of class. However, we will discuss the course syllabus, introduce ourselves, and discuss our current understanding of social stratification.

- Video: If the world were 100 people - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFrqTFRy-LU>

Week 2: Intro to Stratification and Intro to Writing

September 13

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "The Promise". Pp.3-24 in *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Provides a brief introduction to the sociological perspective and its importance/usefulness.

September 15 Writing Workshop #1 & In Class Assignment Work Period

Muller, Jake. 2005. *Teaching the First Social Science Term Paper & Book Review*. Terrace, BC: Beachview Creations.

- **Read:** Jake Muller "Writing the First Social Science Term Paper" Chapter 2 and 3.
- These chapters provide instructions and examples on how to write the basic elements of a social science term paper. That is, how to write an aim statement, write an argument, define concepts, organize your arguments, write a conclusion, include in-text citations, and references.
- In this class we will go over some of these elements and you will have some time to work on developing arguments related to a topic on social stratification.

Week 3: Intro to Stratification and Intro to Writing Continued

September 20

Little, William and Ron McGivern. 2014. "Chapter 9. Social Stratification in Canada." P. 722 in *Introduction to Sociology*. Victoria, B.C., Canada: Open BC Campus. Retrieved August 5, 2016 (<https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter9-social-stratification-in-the-united-states/>).

- Provides a brief introduction to social stratification and key concepts.
- In class activity: writing arguments for social science term papers

September 22 Film: Requiem for the American Dream

Available: <http://requiemfortheamericandream.com/watch/>

OR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jw3UFioSzU>

- This film provides an overview of issues related to inequality in terms of access to opportunities and the distribution of resources in American society and incorporates many of the themes we have encountered thus far in the course.

Week 4: Intro to Stratification and Intro to Writing Continued

September 27

Grusky, David B. "Introduction" in David B. Grusky (ed.), *Social Stratification*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1994, pp.3-12.

- Provides an overview of perspectives on stratification.

September 29

Tilly, Charles. 2003. "Changing Forms of Inequality." *Sociological Theory* 21(1):31–36.

- Describes how categorization and how categories are produced by people to create inequalities.
- News article analysis assigned

Part II: Sociological Theories and Stratification

The selected readings for this part of the course were chosen to give students a more in-depth understanding some of the foundational approaches to society and stratification. These perspectives should not be merely understood as competing or mutually exclusive, instead students are encouraged to consider how these perspectives may complement each other or be integrated.

Week 5: Theories of Stratification and Inequality

October 4 (27 pages)

- Reviewed functionalism, critical theory, and symbolic interaction

October 6 – Midterm 1

Link, B.G. and J.C. Phelan. (1999). "Labeling and Stigma." in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, edited by C. S. Aneshensel and J. Phelan. New York: Kluwer Academic.

- Provides an example of symbolic interactionist type work with regard to mental illness and stigma.

Week 6: Theories of Stratification and Inequality Continued

October 11

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1978. "The Communist Manifesto" in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Second Edition), New York, W. W. Norton and Co., pp. 473-500.

- Declaration of workers rights written during the industrial revolution. Provides a basic understanding of issues between working classes and capitalist relations of labor.
- Played "Beat the Bourgeoisie"

October 13

Weber, Max. [1922] 1946. "Class, Status, Party". Pp.473-500. In H.H. Gerth and Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Describes Weber's perspective on relations of power and authority and society.

Week 7: First Exam and Writing Workshop 2

October 18

Videos

Weber "Class, Status, Party" Continued

- Slavoj Zizek, RSA: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=slavoj+zizek+rsa
- David Harvey, HardTalk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtyZY9sKv2w>

October 20 (20 pages)

Journalistic Article

Urban, Tim. 2013. "Why Generation Y Yuppies Are Unhappy." *Huffington Post*. Retrieved October 30, 2013 (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wait-but-why/generation-y-unhappy_b_3930620.html?utm_hp_ref=fb&src=sp&comm_ref=false).

- A bit of a break from our more academic reading. This article provides an easy to read and catchy account of how media and perceived inequality come to bear on personal beliefs and mental health.

Part III: Studies in social stratification and inequality

Week 8: Race and Ethnicity & One Day Break

October 25

- Watch writing videos
- Writing workshop

October 27 Introduction to race and ethnicity

- Students do independent work with online activities regarding race.
- Racialization and judgment activities online, see Moodle.

Week 9: Race and Ethnicity Continued

November 1 Video: Alice Goffman Ted Talk

Available:

https://www.ted.com/talks/alice_goffman_college_or_prison_two_destinies_one_blatant_injustice.

- This talk by sociologist Alice Goffman describes racial discrimination and inequality in the United States with particular emphasis on the “justice system”.

Bowker, G. C., & Star, S. L. (1999). 6 The Case of Race Classification and Reclassification Under Apartheid. In *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (pp. 195–226).

- Introduces students to the politics of classification and categorization with regard to race. Demonstrates how deviance can be defined and changed through political organizations and social groups.

November 3 Film: Highway of Tears Pt. 1

Available: <http://highwayoftearsfilm.com/>

- This film discusses the disappearance of Indigenous women in British Columbia. It raises questions about systematic discrimination against marginalized people in Canada, specifically Indigenous People and women. It illustrates how people can be marginalized by multiple social factors (e.g., racial/ethnic status, gender, socioeconomic status) that lead to discrimination in access to resources as well as human rights.

Week 10: Classification and Categorization

November 8 Highway of Tears pt. 2

Available: <http://highwayoftearsfilm.com/>

- We continue watching Highway of Tears

November 9, 10 - Reading days, no classes

November 11 - Remembrance Day, University closed

Week 11: Midterm exam 2 - Sex and Gender

November 15 – Midterm exam 2

November 17 No reading – exam review, final written assignment handed out

Michael Kimmel: Why gender equality is good for everyone – men included.

- https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_kimmel_why_gender_equality_is_good_for_everyone_men_included#t-238563

Week 12: Sex and Gender cont'd - Health and Mental Health

November 22

- Guppy, Neil and Nicole Luongo. 2015. “The Rise and Stall of Canada’s Gender-Equity Revolution.” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 52(3):241–65. Describes progress—and failures—in gender equity issues in Canada over the past several decades.

November 24

Barron, Gary R. S. 2016. “The Alberta Mental Health Act 2010 and Revolving Door Syndrome: Control, Care, and Identity in Making up People.” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 53(3):290–315.

- This paper describes the creation of the Alberta Mental Health Act 2010 and how events led to a new formal categorization of people diagnosed with mental illness that has implications for how they are viewed and treated in society. The paper also demonstrates how people with health problems and mental health problems are viewed differently as well as how social categories are made to do things to people with varying consequences.

Week 13: Education and Inequality

November 29

Rivera, Lauren A. 2015. “Introduction”. Pp.1-27 in *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

- **Read pages:** p.1-19 up to “methods” and p.23 from “Researching Elites” to end of chapter. The “methods” section is optional.
- Presents an overview of what we might call the “meritocracy myth” and basic factors in social stratification and inequality in North American Society.

December 1 Film: College Inc.

Available: <http://www.pbs.org/video/1485280975/>

- A documentary that examines inequality in education opportunities in the United States and the multi-billion dollar industry that is built on the backs of people with low incomes.

Dec 6 – Dec 8

Part III: Concluding thoughts, course review, final paper discussion

Week 14

December 6

No readings. We discuss options for this time in our class December 1.

December 8

FINAL EXAM

December 12 – 21 – Final exam period – NO EXAM – NO CLASS