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SOCI 325.01: Social Stratification

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**Social Stratification
Spring 2019
University of Montana**

Course Number: 31541 – SOCI 325
Day: Tuesdays & Thursdays
Time: 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM
Class Location: JRH 204

Teaching Team Contact Information

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Office Location: Social Science 313
Office Hours: Thursdays 1:00-3:00 PM
Fridays 3:00-4:30 PM
and other times by appointment, when possible
Pronouns: She/her/hers

Teaching Assistant: Rachel Schafer
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Office Location: Social Science 322
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:30 PM
Pronouns: She/her/hers

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, economists, journalists, policy-makers, and social activists have long been concerned with inequalities that exist in society, how they are generated, and their consequences for individuals and societies.

Stratification is a broad topic that encompasses complex theories, various methodologies, and a number of academic disciplines. 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.

This courses employs a combination of theoretical readings, empirical works, lectures, class discussions, and exercises to examine the phenomenon of inequality in the U.S. 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 consider the role of inequality in today's society. They will be introduced to common measures of inequality including status, power, income, and wealth. Next, students will explore three theories of stratification; Functionalist, Post-Marxist, and Weberian. They will learn the logic of each theoretical perspective and consider how proponents of each perspective would make sense of contemporary inequalities.

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

This Course

Counts towards the concentration in Inequality and Social Justice in the Sociology department. If you would like to know more about this option, visit the Sociology department [website](http://hs.umt.edu/sociology/undergraduate/degree-options.php): <http://hs.umt.edu/sociology/undergraduate/degree-options.php>.

Counts towards the major and minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. If you would like to know more about the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program, you can drop by the program office (LA 138A-B) or visit their [website](http://hs.umt.edu/wgss/): <http://hs.umt.edu/wgss/>.

Counts towards the major and minor in African-American Studies. If you would like to know more about the African-American Studies program, you can visit their [website](http://hs.umt.edu/aas/): <http://hs.umt.edu/aas/>.

Expectations of Students

Active Learning

This is a challenging course. In order to pass it, you will need to adopt an active approach to learning. You will prepare carefully for each class session by reading the assigned material in advance of class and bringing it to class with you, so that you can refer to it during lectures and discussions. During class you will listen, take notes, ask questions, and participate in discussions. You will also refrain from texting, emailing, surfing the web, and using social media during class; they disrupt your classmates, and are disrespectful to your instructor. If you are unable to attend a class, you will obtain lecture notes from another student. Members of the teaching team will not provide lecture notes or PowerPoint slides to students, regardless of the reason for their absence.

Respectful Participation

This course covers topics that are controversial and uncomfortable. All students will participate respectfully, in order to help maintain a respectful, open and inquisitive classroom environment. This means:

- Explaining your views using reasoned arguments, and provide evidence for assertions of fact.
- Using personal anecdotes sparingly. When sharing a personal anecdote, always connect it back to the course material.

- Respecting others' views and listening. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but you should give them your full attention and consideration when they are talking during class sessions.

Communication

You should maintain a university email account and check it regularly for class announcements. You are responsible for all information contained in emails that I send to you. Feel free to contact me via email (or in my office hours) with questions or concerns about the course and/or your performance in the course. When emailing me, always:

- Use your UM email account
 - University policy prohibits faculty and staff both from responding to emails sent from students' personal, non-UM email accounts *and* sharing grade information via email.
- Include "SOCI 325" or "Social Stratification" in the subject line of your email
- Start your email with a professional greeting (Dear Professor Rooks or Dear Doctor Rooks are best)
- End your email by signing your full name (first and last)

Academic Honesty

You must practice academic honesty in this course. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/default.php), which is available for review online (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/default.php>).

Secure Permission Before Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas in this course, you must secure advance written permission from me before recording lectures, discussions, or review sessions. Students with permission to record may only use recordings for educational purposes; they may not modify, publish, copy, or distribute the recordings, even to other students in the class. Students whose accommodations from Disability Services for Students include recording class sessions must present their accommodation letter to me before recording any class sessions.

Accessibility

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think that you may have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Expectations of the Professor

Communication

I will communicate regularly with students in the course using their UM email accounts. These emails will contain important information about the class schedule, class content, exams, and assignments. I will do my best to respond to student emails within 48 hours during the week; I do not check my UM email account on the weekends. When I answer a question during class that a student emailed me, I consider the question answered.

Affirming Names and Pronouns

The teaching team for this course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. We will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and gender pronoun that you prefer. If you go by a different name than the name on the class roster, please let us know early in the semester so that we can make appropriate changes to our records. For information about [name changes](#) at the University of Montana, please go here: <https://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/name-change/default.php>.

Engaging a Community of Diverse Learners

Students in my courses have diverse worldviews and experiences, disparate learning styles, varied levels of academic preparation, and dissimilar backgrounds in Sociology. I view this diversity positively, believing that it makes teaching and learning more interesting, dynamic, and relevant than it would be in courses full of homogenous learners.

Over the years I have developed techniques to integrate diverse learners into my classrooms. I provide structured, linear class sessions. I encourage students to participate actively and frequently in class discussions. I encourage students to interrogate the course material closely when it does not make intuitive sense to them. I create a somewhat casual learning environment to spark students' interest, using jokes, short stories, and pop culture references to animate the course material.

Despite the casual learning environment, this is not an easy course. The assigned readings are dense and theoretical, and the exams are quite challenging. This is by design; it ensures that students develop a deep, accurate understanding of the course material. Finally, my exams and assignments focus exclusively on the course material. Students do not earn points on exams or essays for describing their worldviews, experiences, personal opinions, or information that they gleaned in other Sociology courses. I view this as a matter of fairness. While diversity of worldview, experience, opinion, and prior exposure to Sociology enrich the teaching and learning experience, they cannot and should not be assigned value by the instructor or the teaching team.

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing, and believes that this could affect their performance in this course, is urged to contact any or all of the following campus resources:

- Food Pantry Program
 - Starting February 1st, UM will have a food pantry that students can access for emergency food. The pantry will be open on Tuesdays from 9 to 2 and on Fridays from 10 to 5. The pantry will be located behind the west atrium desk near the west door in the UC atrium. Pantry staff operate several satellite food cupboards on campus (including one at Missoula College). For more information about this program, email umpantry@mso.umt.edu or kat.cowley@mso.umt.edu or contact the pantry on social media (@pantryUm on twitter, @UMPantry on Facebook).
- ASUM Renter Center
 - The Renter Center has compiled a list of resources for UM students at risk of homelessness or food insecurity [here: http://www.umt.edu/asum/Agencies/Renter%20Center/Homelessness-and-hunger/default.php](http://www.umt.edu/asum/Agencies/Renter%20Center/Homelessness-and-hunger/default.php).

- Students can schedule an appointment with Renter Center staff to discuss their situation and receive information, support, and referrals.
- TRiO Student Support Services
 - TRiO serves UM students who are low-income, first-generation college students, or have documented disabilities. TRiO services include a textbook loan program, scholarships and financial aid help, academic advising, coaching, and tutoring.
 - Students can check their eligibility for TRiO services online [here](http://www.umt.edu/trioss/apply.php#Eligibility): <http://www.umt.edu/trioss/apply.php#Eligibility>.
- If you are comfortable, please come see members of the teaching team. We will do our best to help connect you with additional resources.

Course Requirements

Exams

There are three exams in this course. All exams will have the same format; they will contain a combination of identifications and short answers. Exam 1 will cover all material from January 10th through January 31st, exam 2 will cover all material from February 12th through March 12th, and exam 3 will cover all material from March 19th through April 25th. Students must generate all information on their exams; there will be no multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank or true/false questions. To help students prepare for the exams, the teaching team will hold a review session before each one and will maintain a Moodle forum for each exam.

Make-up exams are available under two conditions: 1) you must have a valid excuse (this almost always means a legitimate medical excuse with adequate documentation); and 2) you must receive my written permission to do so at least 24 hours in advance. It is your responsibility to provide verification of your excuse to me. If I do not receive verification from you, you will not be allowed to take the make-up exam. If you receive permission to take a make-up exam, you will take the exam at Testing Services on campus for a nominal fee.

Essays

There are two essays in this course, which students will complete outside of class time. Essay 1 will cover material from unit 3. The essay assignment will be available on Moodle after class on February 28th and will be due on at 12:30 PM on March 5th. Essay 2 will cover material from unit 4. The essay assignment will be available on Moodle after class on April 4th and will be due at 12:30 PM on April 8th. Students must complete both essays. Failure to submit both essays will result in automatic failure of the course.

Course Grade

Students' final grades will be based on five components. The weight of each component is:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	15%

Extra Credit

Students can earn a maximum of 5 extra credit points in this course. To earn these points, students may pursue one or more of the following options.

For up to 5 extra credit points, students can participate verbally in class discussions.

- Students who ask insightful questions about the course material and/or make thoughtful contributions to the class discussions will be eligible to earn these points.
- Members of the teaching team will track verbal participation throughout the semester. Any extra credit points that students earn will be posted to the Moodle gradebook during finals week.
- Students will not earn extra credit points:
 - For asking questions that indicate that they are not paying attention.
 - For repeating points that their fellow students have already made.
 - If they attend class infrequently or erratically.
 - If they routinely arrive late to class or leave class early.

For up to 4 extra credit points, students can tweet about class content.

- Students who tweet about the course material will be eligible to earn these points. Tweets should include a direct reference to the course material (a concept, article title or author will do) and a link to some content external to the course material (for example, a video, news story, or photo).
- Students must tweet a minimum of 3 times during 2 course units to be eligible for these points.
- Students must tweet using the hashtag #UMSocialStrat to be eligible for these points.
- Students must register their twitter handles with the TA by the end of class on April 23rd.
- Students will not earn extra credit points:
 - For tweeting during class sessions.
 - For tweeting exam content.
 - For tweeting complaints about the teaching team or other students in the course.
 - For employing offensive or coarse language in their tweets.

The maximum amount of extra credit that any student can earn is 5 points.

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 make-up exams throughout the semester, which is not sustainable.

As we all know, though, real life sometimes interferes with academics. When this happens it becomes challenging (and in some cases impossible) 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.

The course uses “tokens” both to provide students with some flexibility around exams and essays, and to reward wise planning and careful time management. Every student in this course will start the semester with ten tokens. During the semester, students can exchange their tokens for the following:

- Make-up for an exam with valid excuse (described on page 5) (10 tokens)
- 48-hour extension on an essay (8 tokens)
- 24-hour extension on an essay (6 tokens)
- Opportunity to revise and re-submit an essay after it has been graded (4 tokens)

At the end of the semester, students may exchange leftover tokens for the following:

- 1 extra credit points (4 tokens)
- 2 extra credit points (6 tokens)
- 3 extra credit points (8 tokens)
- A 20 minute appointment with the instructor outside of office hours (10 tokens)
 - This appointment must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance
 - This appointment must take place during finals week

If you plan to use your tokens to extend your deadline for an essay, you must contact the instructor via email at least two hours before the original deadline. If you plan to use your tokens to revise and resubmit an essay, you must contact the instructor via email by 12:30 PM on April 25th. Revised essays must be accompanied by short revision memos and will be due at 12:30 PM on April 29th.

Important: students may not use their tokens to revise exams, and may only use their tokens to reschedule exams if they have a valid excuse (described on page 5).

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 previous edition. The page numbers differ by edition, which will make it hard for students to follow along during lectures and class discussions if they are using a previous edition of the book.

Required Article

In addition to the book, one supplemental reading is required for this course. This reading will be available on the course Moodle page. Students are strongly encouraged to bring an electronic or hard copy of this reading to class with them the day it is assigned. This reading is marked with ** on the syllabus.

Course Schedule

Important dates

Thurs. Feb 7	Exam 1
Mon. March 4	Essay 1 due on Moodle at 12:30 PM
Thurs. March 14	Exam 2
Mon. April 8	Essay 2 due on Moodle at 12:30 PM
Tues. April 23	(optional) Register your twitter handle with TA by 12:30 PM
Thurs. April 25	(optional) Email instructor if you intend to revise and re-submit an essay by 12:30 PM
Mon. April 29	(optional) Revised essay and short revision memo due on Moodle at 12:30 PM
Thurs. May 2	Exam 3

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>	Thurs. Jan 10			
<i>Inequality: Necessary Evil or Just Plain Evil?</i>	Tues. Jan 15	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: Income & Wealth</i>	Thurs. Jan 17	Melvin Oliver & Thomas Shapiro Emmanuel Saez	"Black Wealth/White Wealth" "Striking it Richer"	296-303 86-89
<i>Measuring Inequality: Status & Power</i>	Tues. Jan 22	C. Wright Mills	"The Power Elite"	101-111

Unit 2: Theories of Inequality

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Functionalist Perspectives</i>	Thurs. Jan 24	Kingsley Davis & Wilbert Moore	"Some Principles of Stratification"	16-19
<i>Post-Marxist Perspectives</i>	Tues. Jan 29	Erik Olin Wright	"Class Counts"	48-55
<i>Weberian Perspectives</i>	Thurs. Jan 31	Max Weber	"Class, Status, Party"	56-67
<i>Exam 1 review session</i>	Tues. Feb 5	<i>In-class review session</i>		
	Thurs. Feb 7	Exam 1		

Unit 3: Some Causes of Inequality

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Incarceration</i>	Tues. Feb 12	Bruce Western	"Incarceration, Unemployment, & Inequality"	208-213
<i>Systems of Production</i>	Thurs. Feb 14	William Julius Wilson	"The Declining Significance of Race"	282-295
<i>Redlining</i>	Tues. Feb 19	Douglas Massey & Nancy Denton	"American Apartheid"	170-181
<i>Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Thurs. Feb 21	Francine Blau & Lawrence Kahn	"The Gender Pay Gap"	426-445
<i>Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Tues. Feb 26	Marianne Bertrand & Sendhil Mullainathan Devah Pager	"Are Emily & Greg More Employable Than Lakisha & Jamal?" "Marked"	254-259 260-268
<i>Information, Social Networks & Resources</i>	Thurs. Feb 28	Mark Granovetter Eszter Hargittai	"The Strength of Weak Ties" "The Digital Reproduction of Inequality"	589-593 660-670
	Mon. March 4	Essay 1 due on Moodle @ 12:30 PM		

Unit 4: How Inequality is Lived

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Lifestyles of the Wealthy</i>	Tues. March 5	David Brooks G. William Domhoff	"Bobos in Paradise" "Who Rules America?"	128-135 112-117
<i>Culture & Consumption</i>	Thurs. March 7	Tak Wing Chan & John Goldthorpe	"The Social Stratification of Theatre, Dance & Cinema Attendance"	636-647
<i>Immigration & Assimilation</i>	Tues. March 12	Alejandro Portes & Min Zhou Mary Waters	"The New Second Generation" "Black Identities"	237-249 250-253
	Thurs. March 14	Exam 2		
<i>Urban Poverty</i>	Tues. March 19	William Julius Wilson	"Jobless Poverty"	159-169
<i>Rural Poverty</i>	Thurs. March 21	** Jennifer Sherman	"Coping with Rural Poverty"	891-908
	Tues. March 26	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>		
	Thurs. March 28	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>		
<i>Race, Intergenerational Poverty & Aspirations</i>	Tues. April 2	Jay MacLeod	"Ain't No Makin' It"	567-583
<i>Discrimination, Self-Esteem & Achievement</i>	Thurs. April 4	Joe Feagin Claude Steele	"The Continuing Significance of Race" "Stereotype Threat & African-American Student Achievement"	269-275 276-281
	Mon. April 8	Essay 2 due on Moodle @ 12:30 PM		

Unit 5: Solutions for Inequality

Topic	Date	Author	Article Title	Pages
<i>Opting Out of Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Tues. April 9	Lisa Belkin	"The Opt-Out Revolution"	332-336
<i>Reducing Labor Market Discrimination</i>	Thurs. April 11	Claudia Goldin & Cecilia Rouse	"Orchestrating Impartiality"	351-364
		Barbara Reskin	"Rethinking Employment Discrimination & Its Remedies"	378-388
<i>Integrating Neighborhoods</i>	Tues. April 16	Stefanie DeLuca & James Rosenbaum	"Escaping Poverty"	214-219
<i>Antipoverty Spending</i>	Thurs. April 18	Timothy Smeeding	"Poorer By Comparison"	153-158
<i>Investing in Children</i>	Tues. April 23	James Heckman	"Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing..."	711-716
	Tues. April 23	(optional) Register your twitter handle with TA by 12:30 PM		
<i>Course Review & Wrap-up</i>	Thurs April 25	(optional) Email instructor if you intend to revise and re-submit an essay by 12:30 PM		
	Mon. April 29	(optional) Revised essay and short revision memo due on Moodle at 12:30 PM		
	Thurs. May 2	8:00-10:00 AM	Exam 3	