

SYLLABUS

SOCI 3330-001 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

Fall 2011

Internet Class

Professor: Milan Zafirovski

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Course Description

This is an undergraduate Internet-based introductory course dealing with social stratification—i.e. vertical societal differentiation or hierarchical inequality in society. The course analyzes the causes, processes and patterns of social inequality in its various forms. Emphasis is placed on the economic, political, ethnic/racial and other forms of social inequality, as manifested in socially conditioned and patterned differentials and inequities in terms of class, power, and status. While taking into due consideration the observation about the ubiquity of social inequality across human society and over historical time, the course centers its attention on the United States and other comparable contemporary societies. This course applies a thorough comparative-historical perspective on social stratification, by comparing and contrasting the United States and other developed societies over time.

The course combines theoretical concepts and principles with empirical observations and facts to objectively examine and, if needed to recommend ways to address and resolve, issues of social inequality, for example, poverty, wealth/income disparities, political inequality, and the like. Particularly emphasized is the usefulness of theoretical principles and concepts in understanding and addressing practical questions associated with social stratification in contemporary communities and larger societies.

The profile and perspective of this course is mostly sociological. Nonetheless, this sociological perspective on social stratification will often be combined with those of other social sciences, especially anthropology, political science and history. In this regard, the course will have a thorough inter-disciplinary orientation, which is necessitated by the (multi-disciplinary) character—economic, political, historical, and cultural--of the subject of social inequality. Given this orientation, the course can be interesting and challenging both for students with majors/minors in sociology and for those majoring in such social sciences as anthropology, history, political science, as well as psychology, economics, business, etc. However, the course is not limited to social-science students, but can also be of interest and use for those in the physical and other sciences, especially biology (e.g. the issue of the role of biological determinants in social inequality and human behavior overall). Preferably, students should possess some elementary preparation in sociology and related social sciences at the introductory level. Given its intermediate character, the course can serve as a stepping-stone for further studies of social stratification on undergraduate as well as graduate levels.

Course Objectives

This course will seek to attain the following goals:

1. to equip students with conceptual tools (theories, principles and concepts), methods and empirical facts concerning social stratification or the causes, patterns, processes and effects of inequalities in contemporary society;
2. to help students develop a realization and understanding of the presence and salience of social stratification in almost all dimensions of the life of individuals, groups and society;
3. to relate the phenomenon of social stratification to the larger societal structure and culture within which it emerges and persists, as the adequate way to understand and explain this phenomenon;
4. to situate social stratification within a comparative-historical and global setting by means of a comparison of its pattern in the United States with that in other contemporary societies over time (e.g. 19th-21th centuries) and in view of the current process of world integration or globalization;
5. to estimate the applicability of theoretical conceptions, principles and methods to understanding and resolving present-day practical questions in social stratification, including economic and political inequalities, in the United States and elsewhere;
6. to stimulate students' interest in continuation of the study of social stratification and related sociological subjects at the undergraduate level as well as in graduate schools.

Course Requirements

This course has simple requirements, namely objective exams only, simplifying and objectifying the grading process as much as possible. In this course there will be two exams, a midterm exam and a final examination (see course schedule). The format of midterm and final exams will have short, clear multiple-choice questions (usually 50). The exams will be objective such to evaluate students' reading, knowledge, and grasp of the readings. Exam scores will be computer-generated and so will be the final grade. Therefore there will be *no* subjective elements in how exam scores and the final grade are determined. The worth of each exam will be 100 points (maximum). Exams will be given and taken only online (UNT Blackboard) during the specified time period and with specific time limits (e.g., 1 hour).

Failure to take an online exam, without proper documented justification, during the specified time period (see below) will result in a *zero* (0) score for the missed exam. If an online exam is missed with documented justification during the specified period, make-up exams can be taken either online or in person (*closed* books and notes) in the department of sociology no later than 2 days after the specified exam period. This applies only to *midterm* exams, *no* final make-up exams will be given after the specified time period. Therefore, *no* incompletes will be given in

case of a failure to take an exam during the specified time period without documented justification.

Exams *cannot* be retaken or continued either online or in person because of ‘bad’ Internet connection and other computer ‘problems’. It is student responsibility to have a proper Internet connection and computer. Online computer-generated exam scores are final and *cannot* be changed by professor under any circumstances (just as SAT or GRE scores cannot be changed).

It is the policy of this course that *no* extra-credits or ‘special treatments’ will be given to any students. Online discussions are optional (not required), and used as the tool to better prepare students for exams, and *not* for extra-points. The only basis for dispensing credits/grades is objective performance and merit rather than needs, desires and other subjective considerations. This ensures maximum fairness in grading. It is students’ own responsibility for class notes, outlines, announcements, etc. The professor will be always and maximally available to students online and in office to address their queries and concerns.

Final grades will be calculated as follows.

Midterm Exam	100 points (maximum)
Final Exam	100 points (maximum)

Total points from exams (maximum)/divided by 2	200 points

The following grading scale will be applied:

Total Points/Divided by 2	Grade
180/2 and above	A
160-179/2	B
140-159/2	C
120-139/2	D
Under 120/2	F

Readings

Required.

Martin Marger. *Social Inequality: Patterns and Processes*. McGraw Hill (Latest edition). ISBN 978-0-07-352830-4

Recommended (optional).

Edward Wolff. *Top Heavy*. New Press.

Tentative Assignments by Weeks

(Please note that course schedule is subject to change when necessary)

August 25-September 05, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 1. An Introduction to the Study of Social Inequality, in Marger, pp. 1-25.
September 05-12, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 3. The American Class System, in Marger, pp. 53-80.
September 12-19, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 4. The Upper Class and the Power Elite, in Marger, pp. 81-107.
September 19-26, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 5. The Middle Classes and the Changing Economy, in Marger, pp. 108-140.
September 26-October 03, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 6. Poverty and the Poor in Marger, pp. 141-176.
October 03-10, 2011	Review for Midterm Exam
October 15-17, 2011	Midterm Exam Ch. 1, 3-6
October 17-24, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 7. Stratification Systems and Social Mobility, in Marger, pp. 177-212.
October 24-31, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 8. Ideology and Legitimation of Inequality, in Marger, pp. 213-246.
October 31-November 07, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 9. Public Policy and the Class System, pp. 247-277.
November 07-14, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 10. Racial and Ethnic Differentiation, in Marger, pp. 279-300.
November 14-21, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 11. Racial and Ethnic Stratification, in Marger, pp. 301-334.
November 24, 2011	Thanksgiving
November 28-December 05, 2011	Reading Assignment: Ch. 13. Political Inequality, in Marger, pp. 367-402.
December 05-09, 2011	Review for Final Exam
December 10-12, 2011	Final Exam Ch. 7-11, 13 (material since midterm exam)