

CLASS, STATUS AND POWER 4302.001

The University of Texas at Dallas

Fall, 2015

Professor: Sheryl Skaggs, Ph.D.

Office: GR 2.234

Phone: 972-883-4460

email: *slskaggs@utdallas.edu*

Lectures: T TH 1:00 – 2:15PM

Room: ECSS 2.415

Office Hours: Tues. 2:30 – 3:30 (or by appointment)

Email is my preferred method of contact – please allow at least 24 hours for me to receive and respond to your email. Be sure to include your full name and the class number (SOC 4302) in the subject heading of your email.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

SOC 1301: Introduction to Sociology **or** SOC 3303: Social Theory

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Why do some people have more than others – more power, money, opportunities, etc.? In this course we will explore the nature and extent of inequality primarily in the U.S. While most of the material is based on contemporary society, the course will also examine topics in a historical perspective. The course presents both sociological theories and empirical research. We will begin the course by investigating inequality based on race, gender and class and then cover such topics as the American class system, poverty, and social mobility. The goal of this course is to understand the causes and consequences of inequality and to assess ways in which particular societal discrepancies can be alleviated.

Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.

--Barry Switzer

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. understand basic sociological concepts describing social inequality and the various forms it takes in society.
2. identify causes and consequences of social inequality through the examination of related theoretical perspectives and empirical research presented in course readings, films, class discussions and group assignments.
3. assess ways in which particular social inequalities can be alleviated through policy application.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

American Society: How it Really Works (2nd edition). Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, 2015.

Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations & Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood. Jay MacLeod. Westview Press 2008 (3rd edition reissue).

Reserved readings from McDermott Library – noted as CR in the “Tentative Course Outline and Reading Assignments” section of the syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- There will be two **in-class examinations*** based on course readings, lectures, films and class discussions. Each exam will comprise **25%** of your grade and will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions.

***Make-up exams** will be permitted only under extreme documented circumstances. If a make-up exam is deemed necessary, it will be your responsibility to contact the professor within 24 hours of the originally scheduled exam to make such arrangements. The make-up exam will be given no later than one week following the originally scheduled exam.

- A **third exam** is required and will be given in a **“take-home” format**. This exam will consist of several complex essay questions that will require you to bring together ideas presented throughout the semester, but will primarily focus on topics discussed after exam 2. This exam will comprise **30% of your course grade** and will be **due no later than Tuesday, December 8, 2015 @ 3:00pm on eLearning through the Turnitin.com link**. Because you will be given 2 weeks to complete the exam, absolutely no late submissions will be accepted! You should type the exam using 1” margins all around and 12 point font (either Times New Roman or Arial).
- A short **writing assignment*** will be required during the semester. The assignment will comprise **20% of your final grade**; due dates are indicated under the “Tentative Course Outline and Reading Assignments” section. The assignment should be approximately 6-7 pages in length. Details will be provided on eLearning.

*Writing assignments will be evaluated for both content and style; while what you say and how well you support your argument is important, you will also be evaluated on the organization of your thoughts and how well the paper is written (check for spelling and grammar before turning in). Remember, these are not opinion based assignments but instead require that you integrate the course material into your paper and properly cite information or ideas “borrowed” from other authors (using APA or ASA citation format). Failure to give proper credit to an author’s work will result in significant grade deductions and/or failure of the assignment.

- All assignments should be type written with double spacing and 1” margins all around (double spaced) and submitted as indicated through eLearning. No late assignments will be accepted!
- **ASA or APA** style for references is required. The references should be listed in a separate section at the end of your assignment. See links: http://www.asanet.org/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

You must cite the reference for any idea, quotation, or factual information you get from an article, book, or website.

- Any statements copied directly from a source must be put in quotation marks (a page number should also be included in the in-text reference that follows).
- To cite a source within the body of the paper, you should use a parenthetical reference such as (Brown 2000, p. 118) or (118: Brown 2000). You only need to use page numbers if it is a direct quote. Otherwise, the author’s name and year of publication will suffice (with a full citation in the reference section).
- If you are uncertain of the rules regarding proper citation, please ask me.

If you need additional help with your writing, you should contact the writing lab in McDermott Library several weeks prior to the due date.

COURSE EVALUATION/GRADING:

Evaluation of the student will be based upon performance on examinations, class participation, attendance and a term paper. The grade will be determined on a percentage of the total points earned. If the student earns 93% of total points or more, the grade will be an A; 90% - 92% will be an A-; 87% - 89% = B+; 83% - 86% = B; 80% - 82 % = B-; 77% - 79% = C+; 73% - 76% = C; 70% - 72% = C-; 69% - 67% = D+; 66% - 63% = D, 62% - 60% = D-, 59% and below an F.

COURSE-RELATED POLICIES:

- All students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. If for some reason you are unable to attend a class, it will be your responsibility to obtain class notes, announcements, assignments and handouts prior to the next class session.
- Participation in class discussions is an important part of the learning experience but should remain relevant to the particular readings and lecture materials.
- Students are expected to always be respectful of other's opinions and beliefs in the classroom. Personal attacks and racially/sexually harassing behaviors are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Anyone involved in such behaviors will be asked to leave the class session.
- As a courtesy to your fellow students and professor, **all cell phones should be turned off before class begins**. If, however, you are expecting an important call during class, you should place your phone on vibrate mode and find a seat near the door for that session.

Students are expected to conform to the university policy for academic honesty. **Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated (i.e., cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records).**

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing (misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another), submitting the same assignment, or substantially similar assignments to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval of all instructors, working in conjunction with another student on your assignments or exams, depriving another student of necessary course materials, or interfering with another student's work. If in doubt about the ethics of your actions, consult the university catalog to see the stated policy. Violations of this policy will be punished severely and according to the fullest extent of the policy.

GENERAL POLICIES

For UT Dallas policy related to the following go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

Field Trip Policies

Academic Integrity

Withdrawal from Class

Incomplete Grade Policy

Religious Holy Days

Student Conduct & Discipline

Email Use

Student Grievance Procedures

Disability Services

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Aug. 25-27: ***General Introduction to Social Inequality***
Readings: Wright and Rogers – Chapters 1 and 2
- Sept. 1: ***Inequality***
Readings: Wright and Rogers – Chapters 11 and 12
- Sept. 3–8: ***Explaining Inequality and Stratification in Society***
Readings: Keister and Southgate, pp. 29-60 (McDermott Library CR)
- Sept. 10 - 15: ***Forms of Inequality***
Readings: The Roots of Durable Inequality – Charles Tilly, pp. 432-442 (CR)
Forms of Capital – Bourdieu, pp. 443-456 (CR)
- Sept. 17: ***Power and Representation***
Readings: Representation and Roots of Inequality – Caliendo, pp. 15-37 (eLearning)
- Sept. 22: ***Review***
- Sept. 24: **Exam 1**
- Sept. 29: ***Social Class in America***
Readings: Wright and Rogers – Chapter 12
- Oct. 1: ***Poverty***
Readings: Keister and Southgate, pp. 173-195 (CR)
- Oct. 6-8: ***Neighborhood Context***
Readings: Jobless Poverty: A New Form of Social Dislocation in the Inner-City
Ghetto – William Julius Wilson, pp. 503-512 (CR);
Abandon Spaces, Forgotten Places – Sernau, pp. 239-256 (CR)
- Oct. 13: ***Ending Poverty***
Readings: Wright and Rogers – Chapter 14
- Oct. 15: ***What it Means to Be in the Middle Class***
Readings: Keister and Southgate, pp. 156-168 (CR)
- Oct. 20-22: ***Upper Classes***
Readings: The American Upper Class – Domhoff, pp. 156-164
Upper Class and Elite - eLearning
- Oct. 27: **Review**
- Oct. 29: **Exam 2**
- Nov 3: ***Education Inequality***
Readings: School Inequality: What Do We Know? – Neckerman, pp. 467-511 (CR)

Nov. 5:

Education Inequality Continued:

Readings: Excluding Beauty – Kozol (CR);
Savage Inequalities – Kozol (CR);
Locating Curriculum in Emergent Scholarship – Schultz (eLearning)

Nov. 10:

Film – Education Inequality

Nov. 12-19:

Aspirations and Attainment

Readings: Ain't No Makin It – MacLeod (chapters 1, 3-7; 9-11)

Writing Assignment Due: Nov. 19th

Nov. 23–25:

Fall Break

Dec. 1-3:

Inequality and Policy Implications

Readings: Challenging the System –Sernau, pp. 295-319 (CR)

Dec. 8:

Exam 3 – Take Home Due - eLearning

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.