



Course SOC 4302.001 Class, Status, and Power
Instructor Kara L. Sutton, PhD
Term Fall 2016
Meetings Tues. & Thurs.: 1:00pm – 2:15pm GR 2.530

Instructor's Contact Information

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Office Hours Please e-mail to set up an appointment

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, SOC 1301 Introduction to Sociology
Co-requisites, & OR
other restrictions SOC 3303 Classical Social Theory

Required Texts & Materials
Gilbert, Dennis L. *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*, SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014 (9th edition). ISBN: 1452203415
MacLeod, Jay. *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood*, Westview Press, 2008 (3rd edition). ISBN: 0813343585

Course Description:

This course examines the structure and dynamics of resource distribution using classical and contemporary perspectives on social class, prestige, and political assets. Inequality is a central concept in the field of sociology and, consequently, there are a number of approaches to understanding the differential distribution of societal resources. These areas of research also provide insight into the social processes by which social inequality comes to be seen as legitimate, natural, or inevitable.

Social stratification is patterned social inequality. It refers to the ranking system in society that determines which groups of individuals systematically experience advantages in society while other groups are systematically disadvantaged. This course addresses the nature, causes, and consequences of social stratification. We will focus on class, status, and power, and how such social structures propel and limit the individuals within it, creating and perpetuating social inequalities. Concentrating primarily on the United States, we will explore sociological explanations of how and why these patterns of social inequality occur and some of the consequences they produce.

This class will be framed around a number of key questions:

1. Examine the theoretical roots of stratification (e.g., *why does stratification exist?*)
2. Explore the nature of inequality as experienced by members of different social classes, ethnic groups, genders, and sexual orientations (e.g., *who has the power in our society and why?*)
3. Analyze social institutions that maintain stratification (e.g., *why does stratification persist?*)
4. And determine what, if anything, can be done about social inequalities (e.g., *is inequality inevitable?*)

Course Requirements:

Quizzes: There will be periodic, unannounced quizzes throughout the semester to help ensure that you are keeping up with the assigned readings. The quizzes will primarily consist of multiple-choice and fill in the blank questions. There will be no make-up quizzes but the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Critical Response: Each student will both lead a brief discussion and submit a short critical analysis essay (approximately 300 words) covering an assigned reading of his or her choosing. The paper is informal and can draw upon personal experience or current events related to the topic of interest. Suggested format for the discussion and guidelines for the critical analysis will be provided in class.

Exams: There will be two exams this semester, an in-class midterm and a take-home final. The final exam will primarily cover material post-midterm topics, but may require you to bring together ideas presented throughout the semester. Exams draw on readings, discussions, and all content covered in class. Makeup midterm exams will only be given in cases of legitimate documented reasons (e.g., illness supported by a note from the student health center). Final exams will not be accepted late.

Visual Project and Paper: A photo essay and presentation is required for this course. Students will work in small groups to visually capture and present some aspect of social stratification observed in everyday life. Although you will work together on the photos, the essays may be completed in groups or alone. Directions and additional details for the visual project will be provided in a handout.

Additional Course Information:

This course is purposefully discussion-based, and requires your attendance and participation to be most effective. Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material and make connections between the readings and any additional materials presented in class. I anticipate that we will discuss some topics that many of us feel strongly about. This class will be a safe place where you can share your critically thought-out views and ask questions without fear of reproach. Lively discussion and disagreement is encouraged but it should be done in a respectful manner at all times.

Grading Policy:

Because students tend to learn in a variety of ways and have different preferences and skills in demonstrating their knowledge, I attempt to provide a variety of opportunities for students to succeed. You will be evaluated in a number of ways in this course, including a major project paper, a smaller response essay, exams, quizzes, and presentations, determined on a percentage of the total points earned.

Quizzes30%
Midterm Exam25%
Final Exam20%
Visual Project15%
Critical Response10%

Course Schedule and Assignments:

The schedule provided serves as a guideline for the semester. As we proceed, we may discover that some topics take a bit longer than expected to cover while others take less time. We may also add or alter a few of the topics along the way to accommodate student interest. Readings associated with each topic are listed on the schedule and should be read prior to coming to class.

Course Schedule Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments/Activities
Aug. 23 rd Aug. 25 th	Syllabus Day and Course Introduction How Stratification Works	Reading: Masey, Chapter 1 (eLearning)
Aug. 30 th Sept. 1 st	Classical and Contemporary Theories Class Groups and Associations	Reading: Marger, Chapter 2 (eLearning) In-class Activity
Sept. 6 th Sept. 8 th	Social Class in America Social Class and College Choices	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 1 Student Critical Responses, Group One
Sept. 13 th Sept. 15 th	Position and Prestige Career “Funneling”	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 2 Student Critical Responses, Group Two
Sept. 20 th Sept. 22 nd	Social Class, Occupation, and Social Change Film: Park Avenue: Money, Power, and The Dream	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 3 None
Sept. 27 th Sept. 29 th	Distribution of Wealth and Income Why the Rich Think They’re Middle Class	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 4 Student Critical Responses, Group Three
Oct. 4 th Oct. 6 th	Socialization, Associations, Lifestyles, and Values Socialization and the 1 st Generation College Student	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 5 Student Critical Responses, Group Four
Oct. 11 th	Midterm Exam: October 11th	
Oct. 13 th	Social Mobility: The Societal Context	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 6 & Student Critical Responses, Group Five
Oct. 18 th Oct. 20 th	Family, Education, and Career Family, Education, Career Privileges	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 7 In-class Activity
Oct. 25 th Oct. 27 th	Class Consciousness and Class Conflict Economic Segregation and the Class Divide	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 9 Student Critical Responses, Group Six
Nov. 1 st Nov. 3 rd	The Poor, the Underclass, and Public Policy Consequences of Poverty	Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 10 Student Critical Responses, Group Seven
Nov. 8 th Nov. 10 th	Student Project Planning Day Class Structure and Growing Inequality	None Reading: Gilbert, Chapter 11
Nov. 15 th	The Future of Inequality	Student Critical Responses, Group Eight
Nov. 17 th	The Neighborhood Context	Reading: MacLeod, Chapters 1; 3-7 Student Visual Project Presentations
Week of November 21st No Class (Fall Break!)		
Nov. 29 th	Social Immobility	Reading: MacLeod, Chapters 9-11 Student Visual Project Presentations
Dec. 1 st	Aspirations and Attainment	Reading: MacLeod, Chapters 12-14 Student Visual Project Presentations
Dec. 6 th	Closing Thoughts and Review	Final papers due! Student Visual Project Presentations
Dec. 13 th	Final Exam Week (no classes)	FINAL EXAM DUE!

Grading Scale:

A+	97% – 100%	A	93% – 96%	A-	90% – 92%
B+	87% – 89%	B	83% – 86%	B-	80% – 82%
C+	77% – 79%	C	73% – 76%	C-	70% – 72%
D+	67% – 69%	D	63% – 66%	D-	60% – 62%

Extra Credit: If it is brought to my attention that there is a local event on or off campus that directly relates to issues discussed in the course, students can receive 5 extra credit points on a quiz. Students must (1) attend the event, (2) discuss it in class, and (3) write a one-page summary and reflection on the event. Any event considered must be brought to my attention at least one week in advance of the event in order to review and approve the event, and announce the opportunity to the class.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Regular attendance and active participation will be extremely helpful to you in terms of performing well in this course. If you are unable to attend class, it is strongly encouraged that you obtain class notes, announcements, and handouts as soon as possible, and talk with me if you need additional clarification.

Disability Accommodations: Please contact me as soon as possible if you require special accommodations. The Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098 or by email at disabilityservice@utdallas.edu. I will gladly work with you and the OSA to make sure these accommodations are made.

Technical Support: If you experience any problems with your UTD account you may send an email to: assist@utdallas.edu or call the UTD Computer Helpdesk at 972-883-2911.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.