

SOCI-333 Social Stratification McGill University, Fall Term 2016
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 13:35 to 14:25 MCMED 1034

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OVERVIEW

The study of social stratification is concerned with the unequal distribution of resources and how they are allocated to individuals or groups of individuals. Social stratification is one of the core concerns of sociology but it is far from being a solely academic matter. Understanding social stratification is essential to being an informed citizen. Furthermore a sociological perspective on inequality will be directly relevant in many professions such as teaching, social work, public administration, health-care, marketing and many others.

This course will provide you an overview of key theoretical debates of the field and the empirical data and case studies on which these debates hinge. We a look at socioeconomic inequality and examine the processes that create it and re-create it over time and generations. A central theme of this course is how inequality is related to stratification according to categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, or citizenship.

READINGS

All readings for this class will be available online through the course website. There is one book that we will read in its entirety (towards the end of the semester).

Annette Lareau. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press. The book is available as an e-book through McGill libraries. They also have a few hard copies. Still, I recommend you buy your own hard copy as this allows a better reading experience. We can assess early in the semester if I should order hard copies through the McGill bookstore.

In addition to the readings listed I may from time to time distribute, via the course website, short pieces such as newspaper articles.

EVALUATION

Your grade in this class will be based on the following components:

- Quizzes (45%): We will have four short quizzes during the semester. They are tentatively scheduled and weighted as follows.
 - Friday Sept 23, Quiz #1 - 10%
 - Friday October 21, Quiz #2 (Midterm) - 15%
 - Friday November 18, Quiz #3 - 10%
 - Monday December 5, Quiz #4 - 10%
- Participation (20%): You are expected to actively participate in conference discussion sessions and in-class exercises. Some of these exercises will involve group work.

- Annotating Readings (5%): In this class we will try a new online app called perusal that allows for collaboratively annotation of readings. I will provide more detail and introduce the app.
- Writing exercise (30%): In the second half of the semester we will have a peer review writing project that will consist of three parts. You will write a first draft (6%). In an anonymous process you will get comments and an evaluation from your peers. The comments you provide on your colleagues' work count for another 9%. Using the feedback from your peers you will write a second draft (15%). As this assignment nears we will provide additional instructions.

CONFERENCES / FRIDAYS

On many Fridays there will be conferences. These have two main purposes: A) They will allow for discussion of readings, review and clarification and B) they will be the venue for class/group exercises. As noted above discussions and exercises are a part of your grade so participation is important. Once the add/drop deadline has passed you will sign up for a conference section in Minerva. There are four section tentatively scheduled on Fridays at the following times:

12:30 – 1:30 - CRN 21669 MDHAR G-01
 1:30 – 2:30 - CRN 21667 OTTO MAASS 328
 2:30 – 3:30 - CRN 21668 MDHAR G-01
 3:30 – 4:30 - CRN 21670 SH688 391

On some Fridays we will meet in the lecture hall for quizzes or other class activities. It is important that you keep track of where to be on Fridays.

NOTES/POLICIES

Tentative nature of the syllabus: This syllabus is my best guess at how the semester will unfold. We may move faster or slower than I anticipate, or I may update some of the readings with newer/better material. Thus I reserve the possibility to amend the syllabus at any point during the semester. Any changes to readings will be announced at least one class in advance and posted on the course website. You are responsible for keeping up with any changes.

Language: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity and Misconduct: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Respect and use of electronic devices: Laptops and tablet devices are allowed only for note-taking in class. In consideration for other students, as well as for the instructor, please make sure you that you arrive on time, and do not leave class early. Cell phones should be turned off.

Contact: We will be using the course website tools. You are responsible for checking the website for announcements, and make sure you check the e-mail account that is associated with the course website. The best way to reach us is via e-mail. If you write make sure you put SOCI-333 in the subject line. If you do not, your e-mail may get buried and I may not respond. I will do my best to get back to you within 48h, but it may take me longer over the weekend or when I'm out of town.

PLANNED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND READINGS

0. **Introduction** (September 2)

1. **Socioeconomic Inequality: Does it matter? Should we care? No Class Monday (Labor Day)**

- John Rawls. 1972. *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press [pp3-17;60-62;126-127;136-137]– LIB e-book
- Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore. 1945. "Some Principles of Stratification." *American Sociological Review* 10(2):242-49.

2. **Socioeconomic Inequality: Contemporary Trends and Explanations**

- Morris, Martina, and Bruce Western. "Inequality in Earnings at the Close of the Twentieth Century." *Annual Review of Sociology* (1999): 623-657.
- Raj Chetty et al 2014. "Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the united states" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (long and involved article not to worry– we will read only excerpts). Read also the summary in the NYT, much more accessible and use associated interactive map)
<http://tinyurl.com/lz7qbvu>

3. **Categories and Inequality I: Citizenship**

- Ayelet Shachar. 2009. *The Birthright Lottery. Citizenship and Global Inequality*. Harvard University Press. [pp. 1 - 27]
- Lant Pritchett. *Let Their People Come: Breaking the Gridlock on International Labor Mobility*. [Excerpts] Available online at Center for Global Development

4. **Categories and Inequality II: Gender**

- Maria Charles and David Grusky. 2004. *Occupational Ghettos: The Worldwide Segregation of Women and Men*. Stanford University Press. [Excerpt]
- Judith Lorber. 1994. *Paradoxes of Gender* [Excerpt]
- Michelle Goldberg. 2014. What is a woman? New Yorker

5. **Categories and Inequality II: Gender ctd. / Ethnicity and Race**

- Sean Waite and Nicole Denier. 2015. Gay Pay for Straight Work. Mechanisms Generating Disadvantage. *Gender and Society*
- Erin Cech. 2013. "The Self-Expressive Edge of Occupational Sex Segregation" *American Journal of Sociology* (excerpts)
- Potentially one more article TBA

6. **Categories and Inequality III: Ethnicity and Race (No class Monday, Thanksgiving)**

- Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race* [Excerpts]
- Rogers Brubaker. 2015. The Dolezal Affair: Race, Gender, and the Micropolitics of Identity." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*,

7. **Categories and Inequality: Comparative approaches**

- Charles Tilly. *Durable Inequality* [Chapter 1] –LIB e-book.
- Rogers Brubaker. 2015. *Grounds for Difference*. [Chapter 1]

8. Categories and Inequality: Labor and Capital

- Marx, Karl. Communist Manifesto [Part I] Available online at:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>
- Eric Olin Wright: *Class Counts* [Chapter 1]

9. Status, Taste & Cultural Capital

- Max Weber. “Class, Status, Party” in *Economy and Society*
- Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press. [Excerpts]
- Appendix B in Unequal Childhoods

10. Families and the Social Reproduction of Inequality

- Unequal Childhoods

11. Families and the Social Reproduction of Inequality

- Unequal Childhoods
- Dalton Conley. *The Pecking Order* [Chapter 1]

12. Families and Inequality: Immigrant Families

- Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. [Chapter 3: Not Everyone is Chosen] – LIB e-book
- Additional reading TBA

13. Dynamics of Inequality and Stratification

- Robert Frank and Philip Cook. 1995. *The Winner Take All Society*. Free Press. [Chapters 1 & 2] - CP
- Thomas Schelling. *Micromotives and Macrobehavior* [Chapter 4]

14. Wrap up