SOCI 333: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:35pm-1:25pm: Leacock-232

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DESCRIPTION
The study of social stratification is concerned with the unequal distribution of resources and how they are allocated to individuals or groups of individuals. Understanding social stratification is essential to being an informed citizen, as well as 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 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 the readings for this class will be available online on MyCourses. There is one book we will cover in its entirety:

EVALUATION:
Your grade assessment will be based on the following:
• Quizzes (60%): There will be four quizzes, weighted differently, and scheduled tentatively in the following dates.
  1st Quiz, Sep-29 – 10%
  2nd Quiz, Oct-27 – 20%
  3rd Quiz, Nov-24 – 15%
  4th Quiz: Dec-7 – 15%
• Participation (20%): You are expected to participate in conference discussions and in-class exercises. Some of these will involve group-work. Your grade will be based on completion of four (4) exercises during the conferences, each worth 4% of your final grade (for a total of 16%) and 1% for attendance to each of the other four conference sessions where there will be discussions instead of assignments (total 4%).
• Writing Exercise (20%): In the second part of the course, we will have an essay writing exercise. You will be given a set of topics to choose from and write a short or medium length essay. Then we will have a blind peer-review process, after which you will write a second draft based on the comments you receive from your class-mates. Half of your grade (10%) will be based on the reviews you write for your peers. Details of this will be covered later in the semester, in class and conferences.
POLICIES & NOTES:

**Tentative nature of the syllabus:** This syllabus is an approximate plan of how the semester will progress. Depending on the pacing of the course, we may have to update and change the material as we go along. Thus, I reserve the possibility to amend the items on this syllabus, including readings, order of topics, or dates of quizzes and conferences, at any point in the semester. Any changes will be announced at least one class in advance and posted on MyCourses.

**Academic Integrity:** 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)

**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.

**PLANNED SCHEDULE**

**September 6:**  
**Introduction**

**September 8, 11, 13:**  
**1. Socioeconomic Inequality: Does it matter? Should we care?**

**September 15, 18, 20:**  
**2. Socioeconomic Inequality: Contemporary Trends**
- Raj Chetty et al 2014. “Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the united states” Quarterly Journal of Economics. (Read also the summary in the NYT, and use associated interactive map) http://tinyurl.com/lz7qbu

**September 22:**  
**Conference**

**September 25, 27:**  
**3. Categories and Inequality I: Citizenship**

**September 29:**  
**QUIZ-1**

**October 2, 4:**  
**4. Categories and Inequality II: Gender**
• Judith Lorber. 1994. Paradoxes of Gender [Excerpt]
• Michelle Goldberg. 2014. “What is a woman?” New Yorker

October 6: Conference

(No class on Thanksgiving Monday, October 9)

October 11 (Wed): 5. Categories and Inequality II: Gender (ctd.)

October 13: Conference

October 16, 18: 6. Categories and Inequality III: Ethnicity and Race
• Cornell, Stephen and Douglas Hartmann. 1999. Ethnicity and Race [Excerpts]
• Rogers Brubaker. 2015. The Dolezal Affair: Race, Gender, and the Micropolitics of Identity.” Ethnic and Racial Studies

October 20: Conference

October 23, 25: 7. Categories and Inequality: Comparative approaches
• Charles Tilly. 1999. Durable Inequality [Chapter 1]
• Rogers Brubaker. 2015. Grounds for Difference [Chapter 1]

October 27: QUIZ-2/Midterm

October 30, November 1: 8. Categories and Inequality: Labour and Capital
• Eric Olin Wright. 1999. Class Counts [Chapter 1]

November 3: Conference

November 6, 8: 9. Status, Taste & Cultural Capital
• Max Weber. “Class, Status, Party” in Economy and Society
• Appendix B in Unequal Childhoods

November 10: Conference

November 13, 15: 10. Families and the Social Reproduction of Inequality
• Unequal Childhoods

November 17: Conference
November 20, 22:  
11. Families and the Social Reproduction of Inequality (ctd.)
  • Unequal Childhoods
  • Dalton Conley. 1999. The Pecking Order [Chapter 1]

November 24:  
QUIZ-3

November 27, 29:  
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]
  • Additional reading(s)

December 1:  
Conference

December 4, 6:  
13. Dynamics of Inequality and Stratification
  • Robert Frank and Philip Cook. 1995. The Winner Take All Society. [Chapter 1 & 2]
  • Thomas Schelling. 2006. Micromotives and Macrobehavior [Chapter 4]

December 7:  
QUIZ-4 and Wrap-up