

**Sociology 325 – Sociology of Inequality**  
**9:30 – 10:45 T/TH University Hall 102**

**Syllabus - Spring 2009**

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Office hours: Mon. 1:30 – 2:30  
Thurs. 2:30 – 3:30  
(or by appointment)

**Official course description (not written by me):** This course introduces students into the research on social stratification and inequality, one of the central subfields in sociology. After an introduction of the basic concepts, issues, and theories, this course will focus on the fundamental processes, such as class reproduction, social mobility, and discrimination that underlie the observed stratification in modern society. Readings include both introductory materials and research publications (theoretical and empirical) in the field. Students completing this course are expected to develop a general sociological framework of distribution and inequality, and to attain basic theoretical and methodological competence to analyze empirical problems about social stratification.

**Addendum to official course description:** The official course description is a fair description of what we will cover. Roughly the first half of the course will focus on broad theoretical perspectives on inequality. The second half will focus on inequality in the U.S. and selected international comparisons. While the course is primarily from a sociological perspective, we will also consider important work on inequality by economists and psychologists.

**Course time:** Course time will generally include some lecture and some discussion.

**Expectations:** My expectation is that you will do most of the course readings when assigned, come to class, turn in required assignments, and participate in the discussions. Missing more than three classes during the quarter will result in deductions from your final grade.

**Lectures:** Some course time each week will be taken up with lecture. Copies of the Powerpoint slides used in lecture will be available on the course website by 6 PM the day before class. I recommend you print them out and bring them to class so that you can take supplementary notes.

**Grading:** Course grades will be assigned based on two exams, the weekly discussion question answer, and in-class participation.

*Exams (48%):* We will have a midterm exam in week five (4/28) and a final exam (6/8). The exams will be closed-book, in class exams consisting of short answer, identification, and short essay. The exams will count for 23% and 25% of your final grade, respectively.

*Weekly Response (37%):* Students are required to submit a written response to a discussion question each week, except for week 1 and week 5. The response answers one of the starred (\*) discussion questions and the response is due on the day the question chosen is discussed. The weekly response should adequately answer the question but may be no more than one typed, single-spaced page of 12 point type. Answers must be typed. Late answers will be accepted, but will lose one point per day late.

*In-Class Participation (15%):* Participation is required. Students are expected to participate in in-class discussions of readings. To facilitate participation, a few discussion questions will be distributed before each class on the readings for that class. The discussion will include, but not be limited to, the distributed questions.

**Homework collaboration:** I expect that the weekly response you turn in will reflect your work and your work only. You may study with others to prepare for the exams.

**Academic integrity:** By signing up for this course, you accept the University's rules regarding academic integrity. They can be reviewed at: <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for breaking the rules. *Anti-plagiarism software may be used to check any work submitted in the course.*

**E-mail list:** There may occasionally be messages from me to the class. You are responsible for checking your e-mail daily to make sure you do not miss announcements.

**Feedback:** I am interested to know your reactions to the course, and your suggestions for improvement. Please feel free to e-mail me comments or suggestions to l-quillian@northwestern.edu or to stop by during office hours.

## Readings

Three required books have been ordered at the University bookstore. They are also available at all major online retailers:

Grusky, David B. and Szonja Szelenyi, Editors. 2006. *Inequality: Classic Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview. (Denoted **GS** below).

Loury, Glenn C. 2003. *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Okun, Arthur M. 1975. *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

Many of our readings will be articles or short selections from other books. These other readings will be available online as PDF through blackboard.

### **Preliminary Schedule**

Note: The schedule below is set for the first two weeks, but after that the schedule is likely to change somewhat as we go along. Changes will be announced in class and by e-mail. Final readings are listed on the handouts with discussion questions that will be passed out in class and are available on the web site.

The readings below are available from one of two sources. Some readings are from the four required books for the course. All other readings will be posted as PDF files (or as links to library PDF copies) on the course blackboard site under "Course Documents."

GS = The Grusky/Szelenyi *Inequality* reader

Week 1            The Functions and Dysfunctions of Stratification

**4/2:** Davis, Kingsley and Wilbert Moore. 1945. "Some Principles of Stratification." Selections in Chapter 1 of GS.

Tumin, Melvin. 1953. "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." Selections in Chapter 2 of GS.

Week 2            Modern Thinking on the Functional Theory

**4/7:** Okun, Arthur. 1975. *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings. Pages 1-34, 50-64 (Chapter 1 and parts of Chapter 2)

**4/9:** Lenski, Gerhard. 1994. "New Light on Old Issues: The Relevance of 'Really Existing Socialist Societies' for Stratification Theory." Pp. 55-61 in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, edited by David Grusky. Boulder, CA: Westview Press.

Claude Fischer, Michael Hout, Martin Sanchez Jankowski, Samuel Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss. 1996. *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. Pp. 126-144, 148-152, 156-157 (parts of chapters 5, 6).

Week 3 Marxist Approaches (4/14, 4/16)

Marx, Karl. Selections from *The Communist Manifesto*, *The Poverty of Philosophy* and “The Eighteenth Brumaire”. Chapter 3 in GS.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1995. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (pages 1-42).

Week 4 Weberian Approaches (4/21, 4/23)

Weber, Max. 1958. “Class, Status, Party.” Chapter 4 in GS.

Parkin, Frank. 1979. *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*. London: Tavistock Publications. Chapters 4 and 5 (pages 44-88).

Week 5 Exam, Bourdieu

Midterm exam on Tuesday of Week 5, 4/28

Bourdieu, Pierre. “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction.” Chapter 18 in GS.

Week 6 Gender and Race Inequality (5/5, 5/7)

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. and Shelley J. Correll. 2004. “Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations.” *Gender & Society* 18: 510-531.

Bonacich, Edna. “A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism.” Chapter 10 in GS.

Loury, Glenn. 2002. *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 7 Labor Markets (5/12, 5/14)

Excerpts from Reskin, Barbara. 1991. “Labor Markets as Queues.” Chapter 14 in GS.

Excerpts from William Julius Wilson. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. Chapter 8 in GS.

Note: Due to a schedule conflict, class on 5/14 may be cancelled. Stay tuned.

Week 8      Space and Schools (5/19, 5/21)

Excerpts from Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid*.  
Chapter 9 in GS.

Selection from Kozol, Jonathan. 1991. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's  
Schools*. New York: Harper Collins.

Selections from Rothstein, Richard. *Class and Schools*. 2004. Washington, DC:  
Economic Policy Institute and Teachers' College Press.

Week 9      Family, Poverty, and Policy (5/26, 5/28)

Excerpts from Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. "Cultural Reproduction and Social  
Reproduction." Chapter 18 in GS.

Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black  
Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review* 67(5): 747-776.

Shipler, David K. 2005. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Vintage.  
Chapter 1.

Ellwood, David. 1988. *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family*. New York:  
Basic Books. Chapter 2.

Final Exam    Monday, June 8, 3-5 PM