

# soc850: Social Stratification and Inequality

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[link to main class webpage](#)

Class schedule and syllabus

Note: **This pdf is not the official version of the class schedule and syllabus. The official schedule is the “online schedule and syllabus” linked on the course web page and [linked here](#)**

## 1 class schedule

date	class
8-24	<a href="#">intro class</a>
8-31	<a href="#">Class A: Marx, Weber, and classical perspectives in U.S. sociology</a>
9-7	<a href="#">Class B: Non-class forms of inequality</a>
9-14	<a href="#">class C: Marxian and class based perspectives</a>
9-21	<a href="#">class D: Weberian perspectives and Status</a>
9-28	<a href="#">class E: Occupations and Labor market perspectives</a>
10-5	<a href="#">class F: Education and childhood</a>
10-12	<a href="#">class H1: Race 1, theoretical foundations</a>
10-19	<a href="#">class H2: Race 2, applications</a>
10-26	<a href="#">class I: Organizations</a>
11-2	<a href="#">class J1: Gender 1, foundations</a>
11-9	<a href="#">class J2: Gender 2, applications</a>
11-16	<a href="#">class K: Mobility</a>
11-23	<a href="#">class L: Comparative and international</a>
11-30	<a href="#">class M: Distributive justice and attitudes about inequality</a>

# 2 overview and requirements

This is a graduate level seminar on social stratification and inequality, and is intended as a broad introduction to the literature in sociology on inequality, social class, and mobility, while also incorporating an in-depth look at overlapping topics in race and gender inequality. Special attention will also be paid to relevant research and perspectives from economics (as it relates to human capital perspectives on inequality) and social-psychology (with respect to questions about the psychology of status and perceptions of distributive justice). Overall, I believe that social inequality is a key connecting theme among many of the subfields in sociology, and I think that a critical introduction to this literature is really important for one's development as a sociologist, a social scientist, or as a citizen in a democratic society more generally.

## 2.1 class format

The class will be almost entirely based on discussion and preparation for class will be essential. A two-page reaction paper is due the Monday before each class (see the requirements below), and students will take turns leading class discussion.

## 2.2 readings and references

Each class period has a set of required readings. In addition, this document provides additional lists of references by topic (in the tabbed sections on the html version). Some of these are on the comprehensive exam reading list. This lists are a work in progress, in that I will keep adding relevant articles by topic. In addition to the comp list and articles that I think are interesting, new, or important, the list also reflects a survey of syllabi of other graduate level courses in stratification. The motivation for doing this is not to scare you by providing long lists of references, but to give you a glimpse of what is out there on these topics and

After the first couple of weeks, the reading load will typically be 200-240 pages per week. If the list of articles in the required section for a week is more than 240 pages long, I will provide a guide to reduce the page count to 240 pages, and then you should skim the rest. Learning how to read efficiently is a key skill in academia in this class and beyond.

### 2.2.1 adding reading

One of my goals in redesigning this syllabus was to make it easy to update and allow it to grow over time. I welcome your thoughts and recommendations in terms of adding reading to the lists, adding notes and annotations to the list, or even adding additional topics (see the list of additional topics at the bottom). If you want to add an additional article for the required reading for a particular topic, let me know. If you have a new item to add to the list and the pdf to go along with it.

### 2.2.2 Notes and reading tips

Everyone probably develops their own process for reading and taking notes. Over the past couple of years, I have started reading pdfs using my android phone and Moon reader pro, which allows me to highlight passages and take notes with Google voice. Then, I use sumnotes ([www.sumnotes.net](http://www.sumnotes.net), I am sure that there are other equivalent approaches as well) to extract the notes and add them to docuwiki that I use to keep track of notes and projects that I am working on. Basically, I wanted an approach that allowed me to save the notes as soon I was done reading on my phone, and access the notes simultaneously from my phone or computer. I wish I had started doing this in graduate school (but, obviously, this kind of digital approach didn't exist).

### **2.2.3 comp exam prep**

In addition, one of the key goals of this (2021) revised version of the course is to provide an introduction to the sociology comprehensive exam in stratification. Any reading that is listed in the required reading or reference reading below that is currently on the comp exam list will have a \* in front of it. Note that the list of articles on the list is different than the subset of ~100-120 articles that might be on the comp list for a particular semester (I can discuss this in more detail).

I will plan on incorporating some previous comp exam questions into our class discussions linked to the relevant weekly topics if there is sufficient interest (discuss).

## **2.3 requirements**

### **2.3.1 A note on these requirements**

Some of these requirements may seem super serious or even draconian, but that really doesn't reflect my personality or my philosophy of teaching per se, which (I hope) is friendly. However, I really want to have effective and inclusive discussions in class, and that requires everyone to prepare and show up. My assumption is that everyone is in graduate school voluntarily with the best of intentions (to fully engage), but I also know that there are competing pressures and demands on your time (and my time) that increase as the semester goes on. Consider the requirements listed here as a way to ensure that you build enough time into your weekly schedule to adequately prepare for class. (discuss)

### **2.3.2 attendance**

Class attendance is required. Because this is a seminar format and we are only meeting once per week, it is really important that you attend all of the classes. As of Fall 2021, I believe it will be possible to have a remote option if you are unable to physically attend class. For example, if you are attending a conference, the expectation is that you will use zoom to attend class from your hotel room. If for someone reason you miss class, we should schedule in advance to have a zoom meeting that evening ~ 9 p.m. for approximately 45 minutes to go over the questions from the class while they are still fresh (discuss).

**If your schedule indicates that you are going to miss more than one class during the semester, then this is probably not the right semester to take the class.**

### 2.3.3 reaction papers

A two page (minimum) paper (double spaced, 11 or 12 pt font, around 600 words) is due at 9 a.m. on Sakai on the Monday before each class (you will see the assignment tab in Sakai; if it is not there, just send me an email). **Late papers after 9 am will receive partial credit.** After the introductory class, I will share these reaction papers on the class dropbox folder with the class. The goal of using the dropbox folder is so that your classmates (and, importantly, the class discussion leaders, see below) can read your reaction to readings before class. I will read the reaction papers, and the class discussion leaders will use them in planning the discussion.

Note: For the first class period (August 24), the length requirement is 1.25 pages (~400 words).

Format: These papers should be critical reactions to the reading, not summaries. Your paper should tie together the majority of the reading. If there are readings that you don't touch on in your essay, then you include several specific questions or reactions from each reading (not covered in your essay) that you would be willing to discuss in class.

Q: Why assign these reaction papers?

A: I recognize that writing reaction papers takes time, and I remember doing them as well when I was in graduate school. However, having a high-level discussion on these topics requires preparation.

Q: Why are they due at 9 am the day before class?

A: So that the day's discussion leaders have time to integrate them into their preparations to lead class discussion.

### 2.3.4 Leading discussion

Each class session, after the initial introductory session, 1-2 people will be assigned to lead class discussion. Discussion leaders will lead the class for the first half of class, and I will be in a supportive role, occasionally asking followup questions but following their lead. In the second half of the class, after a 5 minute break, we will reverse roles.

Discussion leaders should prepare a **list of questions** that will help guide class discussion. This list should be considered to be a general narrative to provide structure to the discussion, and 12-14 questions should be sufficient. During discussion, we should follow the thread of the conversation and be flexible with the list itself. In addition to doing all the required reading, discussion leaders should read the reaction papers and integrate insights, questions, and themes from those papers into the list of questions. Here is a good observation from Eric Grodsky's stratification syllabus about good questions: "Discussion questions should help us talk about the key points of the readings. They should be open-ended and thoughtful. Questions like "How did Coleman define social capital?" are neither and you should avoid them. On the other hand, questions like "How does Coleman's notion of social capital inform or constrain our understanding of social inequalities in educational attainment?" may provoke some interesting discussion."

### 2.3.5 class participation

Because this is a small seminar, the goal is that everyone will make multiple voluntary contributions to class discussion each class period. In order to achieve that goal, I would like to circulate questions around the room (real or virtual), so that those who have already spoken multiple times allow others to talk as well. If, for example, you don't get called on for a particular point because you have spoken multiple times so that someone else can speak, don't take it personally.

I will call on you to get your opinion and response, particularly if you haven't spoken much during a particular class. If I have caught you off guard, you can say "pass" and I will move on to someone else, but please follow up promptly with a voluntary comment so I can see that you are engaged in the class.

I am committed to helping make the classroom a conducive environment for participation and discussion. I want to hear your opinion and critiques about the material that we are covering; the windows of time for actual intellectual dialogue are actually pretty brief, even in academia, and I want to make sure that we make use of the time that we have in class. Please let me know right away if there is an issue preventing you from fully participating so that we can work towards improving it.

### **2.3.6 final research paper**

**A final research paper of at least 20 pages is due 12/1/21.** A rough draft of 6 pages (+ outline of the rest) of the paper is due on 11/15/21. [I will add more here as we get into the semester]

## **3 introductory class: Caste and Capital**

### **3.1 reading**

- [3.1.1 required reading](#)
- [3.1.2 references](#)

[Isabel Wilkerson, 2020. Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, pages 11-57](#)

[Piketty 2014 capital in the 21st century, selections part 1 \(52 pages\)](#)

[Introduction, Grusky, Weisshaar, and Szelenyi, pages 21-49](#)

## **4 Class A: Marx, Weber, and classical perspectives in U.S. sociology**

### **4.1 class A reading**

- [4.1.1 required reading](#)
- [4.1.2 reference](#)

A. Basic debates 1: classical perspectives, Marx vs. Weber

[Levine, p.20-35, 44-138 = 109 pages].

[Levine, 2006 Social Class and Stratification, “introduction”, p7-17](#)

[Marx, in Levine, p19-35, 44-45 17 pages](#)

[Weber, in Levine, p46-56 , 10 pages](#)

[Warner, Meeker, and Eells, 1960, “What Social Class is in America” in Levine 2006, p.58-78](#)

[Davis and Moore, 1945. “Some Principles of Stratification,” in Levine 2006, p.79-88](#)

[Tumin, 1953, “Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis”, in Levine 2006, p.89-98](#)

[Parkin 1979, “Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique,” in Levine 2006, p. 100-117.](#)

[Wright, Erik Olin, 1997, “Class Analysis” in Levine 2006, p. 118-138](#)

## **5 Class B: Non-class forms of inequality**

Basic debates part 2: non-class forms of inequality

### **5.1 class B reading**

- [5.1.1 required reading](#)
- [5.1.2 reference](#)

[Levine, 2006, “Non-class forms of inequality: Statements on Gender and Racial Stratification” p.139-140, “Conclusion”, p. 212-214](#)

[Acker, Joan. 1973 “Women and Social Stratification: A Case of Intellectual Sexism”, in Levine 2006, p. 141-149](#)

[Hartmann, Heidi “Capitalism, Patriarchy, and the Subordination of Women”, in Levine 2006, p. 150-157](#)

[Zinn, Maxine Baca and Bonnie Thornton Dill, 1997. “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism.” In Levine 2006, p.158-165.](#)

[W.E.B Du Bois, “Double-Consciousness and the Veil,” in Levine 2006, p.167-172.](#)

[Cox, Oliver, 1959. “Race and Class” in Levine 2006, p. 173-175.](#)

[Wilson, William Julius, 1978. "The Declining Significance of Race: From Racial Oppression to Economic Subordination., in Levine 2006, p. 176-189.](#)

[Omi and Winant, 1994. "Racial Formation," in Levine 2006, p.190-198.](#)

[Collins, 1993, "Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection," in Levine 2006 p. 198-210.](#)

[75 pages]

-add Tily ch 1 -add Wilkerson part 2

## **6 Class C: Marxian and class based perspectives**

### **6.1 class C reading**

- [6.1.1 required reading](#)
- [6.1.2 reference](#)

*Blaug, Mark. 1996. "Classical Economics" / "Marxian Economics". Economic Theory in Retrospective (pp. 215-219), Ch. 7(pp. 224-235)*

Elster, Jon. 1986. An Introduction to Karl Marx . pp. 41-59, 60-100, 122-139, 186-200

*Parkin, Frank. 1979. "Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique. GRU4e, pp. 193-202*

Sorensen, Aage. 2000. "Toward a Sounder Basis for Class Analysis". AJS

Wodtke 2018 social class and income inequality in the united states

[Piketty 2014 capital in the 21st century, selections part 2 \(52 pages\)](#)

## **7 Class D: Weberian perspectives and Status**

### **7.1 class D reading**

- [7.1.1 required reading](#)
- [7.1.2 reference](#)

*Giddens, Anthony. 1973. "The Class Structure of Advanced Societies". GRU4e, pp. 183-193*

Kingston, Paul. 2000. *The Classless Society*. Ch. 1-3 (p. 1-52) Ch. 4 (p. 60-86)

*Ridgeway, Cecilia. 2014. Why Status Matters for Inequality. ASR 79(1)*

Breen, Richard. 2002. "A Weberian Approach to Class Analysis". Pdf

*Dahrendorf, Ralph. 1959. "Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society." . GRU4e, pp. 143-149*

Villarrubia-Mendoza, Jacqueline. 2017. "The Emergence of Hispanic immigrant occupational niches: Employer preferences and the search for the subservient worker".

Weeden, Kim A. 2002. "Why Do Some Occupations Pay More than Others? Social Closure and Earnings Inequality in the United States." *AJS* 108:55-101.

\*Freeland and Hoey. 2018. The structure of deference modeling occupational status using affect control theory. *ASR*, 83(2)

## **8 Class E: Occupations and Labor market perspectives**

### **8.1 reading**

- [8.1.1 required reading](#)
- [8.1.2 reference](#)

*Becker, Gary. 1994 [1961]. Human Capital. Intro and Ch. 2*

Alderson, Arthur S. and Tally Katz-Gerro. 2016. Compared to Whom? Inequality, Social Comparison, and Happiness in the United States. *Social Forces* Vol 95 issue 1

*Osberg, Lars. 1981. Economic Inequality in the United States. Ch.2, 8, 9*

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties". *GRU4e*, pp. 653-657

\*Ashenfelter and Rouse. 1999. "Schooling, Intelligence, and Income in America". pp. 89-110)

Petersen, Trond, Ishak Saporta, and Marc-David L. Seidel. 2000. "Offering a Job: Meritocracy and Social Networks." *AJS* 106:763-816.

-add structural article



# 9 Class F: Education and childhood

## 9.1 reading

- [9.1.1 required reading](#)
- [9.1.2 reference](#)

Lareau, Annette. 2003. "Unequal Childhoods", selections from the book. [see also GRU4e, pp. 1013-1022]

Jimenez, Tomas R. and Adam L. Horowitz. 2013. "When White Is Just Alright: How Immigrants Redefine Achievement and Reconfigure the Ethnoracial Hierarchy". ASR 78(5)

Torche, Florencia. 2011. "Is a College Degree Still the Great Equalizer? Intergenerational Mobility across Levels of Schooling in the United States." . AJS 117(3):763-807

Card, David. 2001. "Estimating the Return to Schooling: Progress on Some Persistent Econometric Problems." *Econometrica* 69:1127–60.

Armstrong, Elizabeth and Laura Hamilton. 2015. Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality. [selections]

Status attainment \*Horan, Patrick M.. 1978. "Is Status Attainment Research Atheoretical?". ASR 43:534-541

Blau, Peter M., and Otis Dudley Duncan. 1967. The American Occupational Structure. New York: Wiley. Ch. 1, 5 [Pp. 1-22, 163-205]. (W) [Read previously for Week 2; review for this week.]

# 10 Class H1: Race 1, theoretical foundations

## 10.1 reading

- [10.1.1 required reading](#)
- [10.1.2 reference](#)

Pager, Devah and Karafin, Diana. 2009. "Bayesian Bigot? Statistical Discrimination, Stereotypes, and Employer Decision Making".

Monk, Ellis P. Jr.. 2014. Skin Tone Stratification among Black Americans, 2001–2003. *Social Forces* 92(4)

Flores, Rene and Ariela Schachter. 2018. *Who are the "Ilegals"?: The Social Construction of*

*Illegality in the United States . ASR 83(5)*

Reskin, Barbara F.. 2012. "The Race Discrimination System". ARS 38:17-35

Kendi 2019 how to be an antiracist, chapters 1,2, and 17 (21 pages total)

Stanford encyclopedia of psychology 2019 implicit bias

-add more

-audit study review article

## 11 Class H2: Race 2, applications

### 11.1 reading

- [11.1.1 required reading](#)
- [11.1.2 reference](#)

*Wingfield, Adia Harvey. 2009. "Racializing the Glass Escalator: Reconsidering Men's Experiences with Women's Work". Gender & Society 23(1):5-26*

Chetty, Hendren, Jones, and Porter. 2018. "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States.". pdf, also Paper and website

\*Oliver, Melvin L.. 2006. "Black Wealth/White Wealth". GRU2e, pp. 636-642, also book (1st ed 2006, 2nd ed 2013)

-add more

## 12 Class I: Organizations

Organizations and inequality Attitudes, distributive justice, and social-psychological processes

### 12.1 reading

- [12.1.1 required reading](#)
- [12.1.2 reference](#)

*Tomaskovic-Devey, Donald, and Avent-Holt, Dustin. 2019. Relational Inequalities.*

Amis, John, Mair, Johanna, and Munir, Kamal. 2020. "The Organizational Reproduction of Inequality".

*Bielby, William. 2012. "Minority Vulnerability in Privileged Occupations: Why Do African American Financial Advisers Earn Less than Whites in a Large Financial Services Firm?."*

Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007. "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?". GRU4e, pp. 831-842

Tilly, Charles. 1998. Durable Inequality. Ch. 1, 5, and 6

-add Ray 2019, Acker

## **13 Class J1: Gender 1, foundations**

### **13.1 reading**

- [13.1.1 required reading](#)
- [13.1.2 reference](#)

*Blau, Francine D. and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2016. "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations" . NBER Working Paper*

Bettie, Julie. 2003. Women without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity.. Selections: Chapters 1,2,5, and 7.

\*England, Paula. 2010. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled". Gender & Society 24:149-166

-more to be added

## **14 Class J2: Gender 2, applications**

### **14.1 reading**

- [14.1.1 required reading](#)
- [14.1.2 reference](#)

*Rivera, Lauren A. and Andras Tilcsik. 2016. "Class Advantage, Commitment Penalty: The Gendered Effect of Social Class Signals in an Elite Labor Market." . ASR 81(6):1097-1131*

Cha, Youngjoo and Kim Weeden. 2014. "Overwork and the Slow Convergence in the Gender Gap in Wages. ASR 79(3):457-484

*Budig, Michelle J. and Paula England. 2001. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood". ASR 66:204-225*

Cech, Erin. 2013. "The Self-Expressive Edge of Occupational Sex Segregation". *AJS* 119(3):747-789

-more to be added

## 15 Class K: Mobility

Inter and intragenerational mobility

### 15.1 reading

- [15.1.1 required reading](#)
- [15.1.2 reference](#)

Spilerman, Seymour. 1977. "Careers, Labor Market Structure, and Socioeconomic Achievement." *AJS* 83:551-93. (W)

*Corak, Miles. 2013. Income Inequality, Equality of Opportunity and Intergenerational Mobility. Institute for the Study of Labor*

Torche, Florencia. 2015. Analysis of Intergenerational Mobility: An Interdisciplinary Review. *ANNALS, AAPSS* 657

*Kalleberg and Mouw. 2018. Occupations, Organizations and Intragenerational Career Mobility. Annual Review of Sociology 2018*

Chetty, Raj, David Grusky, Maximilian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca, Jimmy Narang. 2017. "The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility since 1940". *Science* 356:398-406

\*Hertel, Florian and Groh-Samberg, Olaf. 2019. "The Relation between Inequality and Intergenerational Class Mobility in 39 Countries". *ASR* 84(6)

## 16 Class L: Comparative and international

International comparisons, comparative perspectives, & world systems theory Affluence, Poverty, and working poverty

### 16.1 reading

- [16.1.1 required reading](#)
- [16.1.2 reference](#)

Szelenyi, Szonja. 1998. *Equality by Design: The Grand Experiment in Destratification in Socialist Hungary*. pp. 1-20, 26-28, 59-77

Krugman, Paul. 1997. "In Praise of Cheap Labor". Pdf (comp)

Kuznets, Simon. [1955] 1965. "Economic Growth and Income Inequality". Pp. 257-287 in *Economic Growth and Structure* (comp)

Lee, Cheol-Sung, François Nielsen, and Arthur S. Alderson. 2007. "Income Inequality, Global Economy, and the State.". SF 86(1):77-111 (comp)

-add more

## **17 Class M: Distributive justice and attitudes about inequality**

Distributive justice and attitudes about inequality Affluence and Poverty

### **17.1 reading**

- [17.1.1 required reading](#)
- [17.1.2 references](#)

## **18 Additional topics**

### **18.1 immigration**

- [18.1.1 notes](#)
- [18.1.2 references](#)