

University of Calgary

Sociology 365 L 20: Social Stratification and Inequality Spring 2008

Instructor: Ali Rezaei
Office: SS 940
Class: MW 11- 13:45
Classroom: EDC 284
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Course Description:

This course is an introductory survey of theoretical concepts and empirical research in social inequality, its sources and consequences.

Course Objectives:

1. To familiarize students with the concept and different sources of inequality: class, race, gender, status, and regional disparities.
2. To examine major sociological theories of social inequality. Class discussions will be focused on the relevance of theoretical concepts to the study of inequality in contemporary societies.
3. To study concrete forms of social inequality in Canadian society.

Required Texts:

Edward G. Grabb (2007) *Theories of Social Inequality*, Fifth Edition, Toronto: Thomson-Nelson.

Book of Readings: SOCI 365, Inequality and Social Stratification, 2008, prepared by A. Rezaei, available at the University of Calgary bookstore.

Student Evaluation:

1. Research Project: 35%

The project has two parts. The **first part** is a 1 page, double spaced, **descriptive account** of the worst case of social inequality you have personally known in your life experience (**due date: June 4 , in class**). This can include any story related to social inequalities (i.e. gender issues, class and economic issues, forms of racial and ethnic discrimination, issues related to religion, regional disparities, disability, dressing and cultural practices or symbols) that has had a lasting impact on you. The story should include an introductory statement of the problem, a concept such as gender, class, ethnicity, etc. that this particular story can be related to, and a description of the ways that you think this problem can be related to broader social structures, legal arrangements and power relations in society. This topic could be any empirical question such as income inequality between genders, differential treatment in the job market, unequal distribution of educational investments in rich and poor regions/ neighborhoods and its consequences,

differential access to scarce resources, such as educational and artistic skills according to social class, cultural stereotypes, policing and similar issues.

The **second part** is a 6-7-page, double-spaced, **paper (due: June 25, in class together with the original proposal)** that investigates the topic you submitted as your **descriptive account**. At this stage you should be able to **relate the isolated ‘personal problem’ to broader social structures, trends, and power relations in society using theoretical concepts covered in class and other material (statistical data, facts and figures)**.

2. Examinations:

There will be two mid-term and a final exam composed of multiple-choice and short essay questions. The dates and assigned weights are as follows:

Mid-term	June 9	30%
Project Paper	Due: June 25 (in Class)	40%

Final Exam	Date to be announced by the Registrar	30%
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Exam dates are strictly enforced. In case you miss the mid-term exams you must contact me immediately. If you provide a documented legitimate reason, you will be given a makeup test at a date determined by the Department of Sociology.

Grading Scale:

Letter grades will be assigned on the basis of the following scale:

A ⁺	95-100
A	90-94
A ⁻	85-89
B ⁺	80-84
B	75-79
B ⁻	70-74
C ⁺	67-69
C	63-66
C ⁻	60-62
D ⁺	57-59
D	50-56
F	0-49

To receive a passing grade in this course, all exams must be completed.

Intellectual Honesty: Integrity in scholarly activity should be strictly observed. Please consult the University Calendar, pages 53-56, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism and other academic misconduct.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

May 14; Plan of the course, Course outline, Review of basic concepts;

-Chapter 1, in Grabb 2007, pp. 1-7

-Equality and Inequality: B. Turner, “Types of Equality,” *Book of Readings*, pp 1-12.

Week 2: Marx and Weber; a multi-dimensional concept of social inequality

May 19- May 21

-Chapter 2, in Grabb 2007, pp. 8-33

-Chapter 3 in Grabb 2007, pp.34-65

Week 3: Social Class and inequality in Canada

May 26- May 28

-James Conley, 2004, "Working Class Formations in Canada," in *Book of Readings*, pp. 13-28.

-J. Davis, "the Distribution of Wealth and Economic Inequality", in *Book of Readings*, pp. 29-41.

-"Frank Parkin: the Bourgeois Critique of Marxism," in Grabb, 2007, pp. 163-171

Week 4: Durkheim and functionalist theories of inequality

June 2- June4; Chapters 4 and 5 in Grabb, 2007, pp. 66-113

Project Proposal due: June 4 (in class)

June 9: Midterm Exam

Week 5: Social Mobility and 'Social Reproduction'

June 9- June 11

-R.A. Wanner, "Social Mobility in Canada: Concepts, Patterns, and Trends," in *Book of Readings*, pp. 42-58.

- Video: Sociology is a Martial Art (I)

Week 6: Forms of Capital and 'Social Reproduction'

June 16- June 18

Pierre Bourdieu, 1985, "The Forms of Capital", in *Book of Readings*, No 5.

Video: Sociology is a Martial Art (II)

Pierre Bourdieu, 1987, "What Makes a Social class? On the Theoretical and Practical existence of Groups," *Book of Readings*, pp.69-77.

Week 7: Education, Gender, Race and Social Inequality

June 23-June 25

-Harvey Krahn, 2004, "Choose your parents carefully: social class, post-secondary education, and occupational outcomes," in *Book of Readings*, pp.78-94.

-Janet Siltanen, 2004, "Inequalities of Gender and Class: Charting the Sea Change," in *Book of Readings*, pp.100-115.

-Sean P. Hier and Kevin Walby, 2006, "Competing Analytical Paradigms in the Sociological Study of Racism in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 38(1): 83-104, in *Book of Readings*, 128-149.

Final Exam Review

Research paper due: June 25 (in class)

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If

you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor’s office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.