

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
(www.soci.ucalgary.ca)**

SOCIOLOGY 365 (Social Stratification)

Course Outline, Fall 2015

Safewalk/Campus Security: 220-5333, ANYTIME

This course makes use of Desire2Learn to communicate information to students. To access D2L go to: d2l.ucalgary.ca OR my.ucalgary.ca

Instructor: Tom Langford langford@ucalgary.ca Office: SS 924

Office Hours between September 8 and December 8:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, immediately after class, 17:15 - 18:00.

Monday afternoons by appointment (please send me an email to set up a time).

NOTE: Office hours are cancelled on Thanksgiving (Monday Oct. 12), Thursday Nov. 12 (Reading Day), and Thursday Nov. 19 (Langford at Carleton University).

Email guidelines: Please use email to inform me of something important (e.g., you are sick and will be missing the mid-term test), to ask a question that I can answer with a simple Yes or No (e.g., Are functionalist explanations of inequality covered on the mid-term test?) or to book an appointment on Monday afternoons. For more complicated questions and discussions, please speak to me in person.

Classroom Decorum: We should all conduct ourselves in ways that are respectful of everyone else in our learning environment. How this general principle applies to coming to class late, using electronic devices during lectures, chit chatting with the person next to you, attempting to multitask during lectures, etc., will be discussed at our first class and whenever needed throughout the term. As the lecturer, I will let you know (often right on the spot) if something you are doing disrupts my concentration. In addition, since you should be paying attention to lecture material at all times, I will not hesitate to ask you a question coming out of the flow of the lecture, whether you seem to be paying attention or not! Always be prepared to participate since you never know when I will call upon you.

COURSE DESCRIPTION and LEARNING OUTCOMES

In *Power and Inequality*, Gregg Olsen defines social stratification as “the hierarchical arrangement or ordering of groups or strata in society” (p. 14). One approach to conceptualizing and studying social stratification is to take a valued resource (e.g., income, wealth or health), rank order a population in terms of that resource and then use a conventional method for dividing the rank ordering into hierarchical strata. This approach results in the study of social strata such as income deciles or wealth percentiles (e.g., the 1% versus the 99%). A second approach to conceptualizing and studying social stratification begins by identifying relationally connected social groups of interest (e.g., economic classes, genders, generations or racialized groups) and then studies whether there are patterned inequalities among these social groups that are sustained over time. In line with this second approach, social stratification refers to a situation of patterned inequalities among particular social groups that are sustained over time – it leads to the study of gender stratification, ethnic stratification, class stratification, etc. In Sociology 365 we will move back and forth between these two conceptual approaches in order to gain the widest possible understanding of the different ways that contemporary societies are stratified. We will also study and critically evaluate some of the prominent theoretical explanations for the existence of social stratification.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- * identify, describe and critically discuss the major theoretical approaches to understanding social stratification
- * compare the patterns of social stratification in Canada to the patterns in Britain, the United States, Finland, Sweden and Norway
- * define and critically discuss sociological conceptualizations of class stratification, gender stratification, and stratification involving racialized groups
- * explain basic quantitative measures of income and wealth inequalities, including the Gini coefficient
- * demonstrate the consequences of social stratifications for people’s lived experiences
- * explain and critically evaluate recent research on the ways that more equal societies are superior to more unequal societies.

REQUIRED BOOKS (available in the bookstore)

(1) Olsen, Gregg M. 2011. *Power & Inequality: A Comparative Introduction*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

(2) Wilkinson, Richard and Kate Pickett. 2010. *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, with a new postscript. London: Penguin.

OTHER READINGS, ASSIGNMENT OF READINGS, and SERVING AS A “KEY DISCUSSANT”

A few additional readings will be assigned throughout the term. Each of the additional readings will be available in digital form. Please check the “Assigned Readings” section on D2L throughout the term to keep on top of what you should be reading at each point in Soci 365. I expect you to read the assigned material very carefully and be prepared to discuss each reading during our lecture periods. To make sure you are keeping up on your reading, on at least two occasions during the term each student will be randomly chosen (at the beginning of a class) to be a “key discussant” for the readings assigned for that day. I will turn to the “key discussants” first when facilitating classroom discussions on assigned readings. Therefore keeping up with the assigned readings AND showing up to every class are important to your success in this course. Your participation as a “key discussant” will be worth 10% of your final grade in the course (details are below).

STUDENT EVALUATION**(1) Mid-Term Test, Tuesday 20 October at 4:00 p.m.**

- (A) Format: A mix of short answer, short essay, T/F and multiple-choice questions.
- (B) Content: All course material covered between September 8 and October 20
- (C) Value: 25% or 35%, whichever is most favourable to you.

(2) Short Essay, due Sunday 22 November at 11:59 p.m. in the D2L Drop Box

(A) Topic: You must write on one of the essay topics provided by the instructor and you must answer all parts of the assigned essay topic. If you do not follow this instruction you will be assigned a mark of zero for the essay. A list of essay topics will be available during the 3rd week of classes.

(B) References: Your key references for the essay must be academic books and/or academic journal articles.

(C) Style: You must follow the ASA (American Sociological Association) style of referencing sources. This means that page numbers should be included in the in-text citations.

(D) Length: Between 1250 and 1500 words, excluding references. You must indicate the word count for your essay at the top of the first page. Essays that exceed the word count will be penalized 10 per cent of the assigned grade for every 100 words, or part thereof, over 1500 words.

(E) Submission: Please submit an electronic version of your essay in the Drop Box available on D2L no later than 11:59 p.m. on Sunday 22 November.

- (F) Value: 30%

(3) Participation as a “Key Discussant” of Assigned Readings

(A) Format: In most of our classes (starting on September 22 after the drop and add dates have passed), several “key discussants” will be chosen at the beginning of a class. During a class I will turn to the “key discussants” first when facilitating classroom discussions on the assigned readings for that day.

(B) Evaluation: In order to receive full credit for your randomly assigned “key discussant” participation you must (a) be in attendance at that class, and (b) participate in a way that demonstrates you have carefully read the assigned readings for that class.

(C) Total Value: 10% (with each “Key Discussant” assignment equally weighted). Therefore if you are randomly assigned to the “Key Discussant” role in three classes, your participation in each of these classes will be worth 3.33% towards your final grade, etc.

(D) Valid Reasons for Missing a “Key Discussant” assignment (you need to communicate with me on this): 1) Documented illness; 2) A compassionate reason; 3) An important commitment, scheduled prior to the beginning of classes, which you let me know about prior to our September 22 class.

(4) Registrar-Scheduled Final Examination

(A) When: To be scheduled by the registrar in the December 11-22 exam period. Please do not book your vacation airline seat until after you see when the Soci 365 final is scheduled.

(B) Format: A mix of short answer, short essay, T/F and multiple-choice questions.

(C) Content: The final will emphasize material covered between October 22 and December 8. However it will also include a few questions repeated from the mid-term and assigned reading questions from the first part of the course, so in these regards it covers the entire course.

(D) Value: 25% or 35%, whichever is most favourable to you.

LETTER GRADES

At the end of the term numerical marks are totalled and a final letter grade is assigned on the following basis:

<u>Percentage Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
Less than 50	F	72-75	B-
50-53	D	76-79	B
54-58	D+	80-84	B+
59-62	C-	85-89	A-
63-66	C	90-94	A
67-71	C+	95 and higher	A+

IMPORTANT NOTES

(1) Late Penalty. Except in the cases of documented illness, or extenuating circumstances brought to the instructor's attention before the due date of the short essay, a penalty of 5% of the assigned mark per day will be assessed a late essay.

(2) A student who has a legitimate reason for being unable to write the mid-term test must discuss an alternative course of action with the instructor. At his discretion, the instructor will transfer the percentage weight to another component of the course, or (most likely) set a make-up test. Make-up tests must be written as soon as possible at a scheduled Department of Sociology make-up test session.

(3) *Deferred Term Work Form:*

Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out. It's available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/forms>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Student Centre (SS 102) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

(4) *Deferred Final Exam Form:*

Please note that requests to defer the Registrar-scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which is available at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/forms>

(5) The quality of a student's writing is a factor in the evaluation of a student's work in this course.

(6) "Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge" (*Calendar 2015-16*, p. 48). Please review the University of Calgary's policies for dealing with student misconduct, particularly plagiarism and cheating at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

(7) The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. You must contact me if you have any questions about the evaluation of your work, etc.

(8) Your mid-term test will be returned in class. You can also make an appointment to pick your test up from my office.

(9) Your essay must be submitted through the D2L Drop Box. No paper copy please. Your marked essay will be returned by email.

(10) **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 Faculty 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.

(11) **Academic Accommodation**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (MSC 452, telephone 220-8237). Student Accessibility Services will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

(12) The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

(13) **Emergency evacuations.** In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of the lecture classroom (Science B 142), please proceed to the assembly point in the ICT Food Court. Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

(14) **Student Representation.** The 2015-16 Students' Union VP Academic is Stephan Guscott: email: suypaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>