

COURSE OUTLINE
Soci365-60: Social Stratification
Summer 2013

Lecture: MW 12:00 PM – 14:45 PM in SS006 (Social Science Building)

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Office hours: W 11:00 AM – 11:45 AM; or by appointment

“An oppressive system often seems stable because it limits people’s lives and imaginations so much that they can’t see beyond the limitations. This is especially true when a social system has existed for so long that its past extends beyond collective memory of anything different. As a result, it lays down terms of social life - including various forms of privilege - that can easily be mistaken for some kind of normal and inevitable human condition.

But this situation masks a fundamental long-term instability caused by the dynamics of oppression itself. Any system organized around one group’s efforts to control and exploit another is ultimately a losing proposition, because it contradicts the essentially uncontrollable nature of reality and does violence to basic human needs and values.”

-Allan G. Johnson

Course Objectives

Social inequality exists in multiple forms and is the result of processes, or social relations that limit the access to resources (be it material, ideological or political) of groups and individuals based on specific sets of criteria. Over the course of the semester, we shall explore a selection of forms, explanations, and implications of social inequality. Focusing on social class, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality, we will examine how social inequality comes into existence and is perpetuated in social institutions such as the family, the education system, government policy and the media.

By the end of this course, you should be able to use different theoretical approaches to identify

and discuss different forms of social inequality. More importantly, you will be able to discern the dimensions of social inequality underlying ordinary experiences and occurrences. Hopefully, you will be able to pass this knowledge and critical outlook forward and educate others about forms of social inequality and their consequences in contemporary Canadian society.

READINGS

The following questions should guide your reading of course material and will help you prepare for class discussions: What are the author's main arguments? What new concepts/ideas/arguments does the author introduce? How do these readings relate to my learning in previous courses and to what I experience as a member of this society? How am I reacting to these findings/arguments? Do they support or challenge my values, beliefs, knowledge? Why and how? How would I respond to the author's arguments? What questions remain unanswered? What is confusing/difficult to understand or brilliant about this reading? Bring your notes!

REQUIRED TEXT (available in the bookstore)

McMullin, Julie. 2010. *Understanding Social Inequality: Intersections of Class, Age, Gender, Ethnicity, and Race in Canada*. 2nd edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press

Supplementary Readings

A number of other readings will be assigned throughout the term. Each of the additional readings is available in digital form. Please check the "Assigned Readings" section on Blackboard 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.

STUDENT EVALUATION

1. Mid-Term Test, Wednesday 24 July at 12:00 p.m.

- Format: A mix of short answer, true/false and multiple-choice questions.
- Content: All course material covered between July 3rd-24th
- Value: 30%

2. Group presentation and short essay

At the beginning of the semester, we will form groups of 3-4 students. Each group will be responsible for preparing and delivering a short presentation on a chosen date (only two presentations per class will be allowed) and submitting a short essay that summarizes the main points covered in the presentation.

Each group will be responsible for bringing into focus key aspects of the issue assigned for the day of the presentation (see tentative schedule below). Groups will explore sources relevant for interpreting the topic and then present their findings in class. An example of such a presentation would be identifying patterns of gender coding in newspaper commercials, or gathering information regarding the terms of employment of food court workers on campus and discussing their findings in class. You can think about the presentations as a kind of "oral paper," in which the members of each group collaboratively investigate issues that can enrich the entire class's understanding of the topic.

Concerning the talks:

- (1) Make your presentation about 15 to 20 minutes long.
- (2) If possible prepare a short handout.

Concerning the short written reports in conjunction with the talk:

- (1) The reports do not have to be of any particular length, although I would suggest four or five (typed) pages.
- (2) Please include a copy of the sources you will be analyzing.
- (3) The written report is to be handed in on the day of the oral presentation.

- **Value: 20%**

3. Attendance, position papers, and participation

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion are essential to this course. Please note that, because of the unique nature of our course meetings, no more than 2 unexcused absences will be allowed and more will be grounds for lowering your course grade. After five, the student fails the course. Any questions about this policy should be raised with me as early as possible.

Position papers (2)

Come to class on the due date with a short paper (1 page) addressing your impressions of the reading we are doing. Take an interpretive position on that week's readings. The papers need not

involve outside research, but they should have a clear thesis statement supported by a logical argument and backed up with evidence from the texts under analysis. Position papers will be the basis of class discussion the week they are due, so extensions will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances.

- **Value: 20%**

4. Take-Home Final Exam

- Format: Essay questions
- Content: All course material.
- When handed Out: July 31st.
- When Due: The end of our penultimate class, Monday August 12th.
- Is this an Individual or a Group Exercise? It most definitely is an INDIVIDUAL exercise. Do not discuss or show your answers to any other students in the class.
- **Value: 30%**

Note: There is no registrar-scheduled examination for this course.

Tentative Course Schedule

Subject to change. Changes will be announced and discussed in class.

Date	Topic	Assigned readings
July 3	Introduction What is social stratification?	
July 8	Social stratification and social inequality	McMullin, Ch. 1
	1. Social Class	
July 10	Theoretical approaches	McMullin, Ch. 2

July 15	Class and employment	McMullin, Ch. 9 * Position paper due
July 17	Class and education	Mc Mullin, Ch. 10
	2. Gender	
July 22	Theoretical approaches	McMullin, Ch. 3
July 24	Midterm	No reading assigned
July 29	Gender and the family	McMullin, Ch. 8 position paper due
July 31	Gender and the media	No reading assigned
	3. Race and Ethnicity	
August 5	Heritage Day – no class	
August 7	Theoretical approaches	McMullin, Ch. 4
August 12	Race, ethnicity and the state	McMullin, Ch. 12
	4. Sexual Orientation	
August 14	Sexual Orientation and society	Reading to be assigned

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

A+	95 – 100%	B+	80 – 84%	C+	67 – 69%	D+	54 – 58%
A	90 – 94%	B	75 – 79%	C	63 – 66%	D	50 – 53%
A-	85 – 89%	B-	70 – 74%	C-	59 – 62%	F	49% or less

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms. To receive a passing grade in this course, **ALL** course requirements **MUST** be completed.

Contact Information

Blackboard will be used to post class outlines, assignment and test information, and general announcements, so please make sure you check Blackboard regularly. I will be available during office hours or by appointment, and it is during those times, and in person, that questions about course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with. Please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment – but please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss.

Emergency evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Food Court in the Professional Faculties Building.

Assignment Policies and Deferrals

If at all possible you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for a deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while you have the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements, misreading of the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment responsibilities are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. Late assignments are subject to a **5 percentage point deduction** for each day the assignment is late. Late assignments must be submitted within 7 days of the assignment deadline, and will **not** be accepted thereafter.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, I can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If I schedule a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. If you have missed an assignment deadline

for legitimate reason, it is your responsibility to contact me, the instructor, to discuss a new deadline.

Deferred Final Exam Form:

Please note that requests to defer a 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 can be found at:

http://ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form:

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

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals

If you are unhappy with a grade you received for an assignment, please refer to the University Calendar and follow the procedures outlined therein.

Ethics Research

Please be advised that any research involving 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, you must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing your plans with me, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Please be 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's main office. I will return written assignments individually during class, or during my office hours. If you are unable to pick up your assignment, you may provide me with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of your 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. You can also contact Campus Security 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, phone 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 in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and 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 be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.

