

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

SOCIOLOGY 365 (Social Stratification)

Course Outline, Winter 2017

Safewalk/Campus Security: 220-5333, ANYTIME (Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus)

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 Office: SS 924 langford@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: Thursdays, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., or by appointment (please email a request).
NOTE that office hours are **cancelled** on Thursday Feb. 23 and Thursday March 16.

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., Is the structural-functionalist theory of inequality covered on the mid-term test?) or to book an appointment outside of the scheduled times for office hours. For more complicated questions and discussions, please speak to me in person.

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, consider how class stratification in the 21st century is

different from the class stratification that existed in the hey-day of industrial capitalism, and consider research on the reasons for and consequences of rising levels of economic inequality in contemporary societies.

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
- * identify the strengths and weaknesses of a model of class stratification that focuses on individual-level patterns of economic, cultural and social capital rather than on groupings of class/occupational positions in the economic structure of society

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! I know that this is a fairly large class, but you should stay on your toes and always be prepared to participate since you never know when I will call upon you. In any particular class I often invite participation from students sitting in a particular row or zone of the classroom. This is a way to include everyone in classroom discussions on a rotating basis.

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

(2) Savage, Mike et al. 2015. *Social Class in the 21st Century: a Pelican Introduction*. Penguin, Random House, UK.

OTHER READINGS/VIEWINGS/LISTENINGS

In addition to readings from the two required texts, a few additional readings, viewings or listenings will be assigned throughout the term. Each of the additional assignments will be available in digital form through D2L.

THE “Assigned Readings and Reading Questions” SCHEDULE

My hope is that you will complete assigned readings PRIOR to our classes so that you are prepared to engage with that material during our lecture periods. Sometimes I will assign several reading questions in order to provide some focus for a particular reading. Please check the “Assigned Readings and Reading Questions” section on D2L throughout the term to keep on top of what you should be reading at each point in Soci 365.

STUDENT EVALUATION

(1) Mid-Term Test, Thursday 16 February, 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.

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

(B) Content: All course material covered between 9 January and 16 February.

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

(2) Short Essay, due Sunday 19 March 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. ASA is like APA but differs in that relevant page numbers are 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 19 March.

(F) Value: 30%

(3) Participation in Small-Group, In-Class Discussions During the Term

(A) When: On a few occasions during the term we will hold small-group, in-class discussions. These could take place at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of our 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. time slot. The date on which discussions will take place will not be announced ahead of time.

(B) Value: 5%

(C) How your mark will be calculated: If you participate in a small-group discussion from start to finish in a particular class, you earn a “participation credit” for that discussion. I don’t know how many small-group discussions will take place during the term; most likely it will be in the range of three to six discussions but it could be higher. Your mark will be calculated according to the following formula:

$$[(\# \text{ of participation credits earned} + 1) / (\text{maximum number of possible participation credits})] \times 5\%$$

Note that you can miss one of the small-group discussions and still get 5% in this course component. Also note that if you earn the maximum number of possible participation credits you will get a mark higher than 5% on this course component.

(4) Registrar-Scheduled Final Examination

(A) When: To be scheduled by the registrar in the April 15-26 exam period. Please do not make plans for mid- to late-April until after the Registrar's exam schedule is released. No requests to write the final examination in a special time slot will be entertained.

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

(C) Content: The final will emphasize material covered between 16 February and 11 April. 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: 30% or 40%, whichever is most favourable to you.

LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENT

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

Percentage Range	Letter Grade
49 or less	F
50-53	D
54-58	D ⁺
59-62	C-
63-66	C
67-71	C ⁺
72-75	B-
76-79	B
80-84	B ⁺
85-89	A-
90-94	A
95 or higher	A ⁺

IMPORTANT NOTES

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

(2) A student who has a legitimate reason for being unable to write the scheduled 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 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) All requests for deferral of the mid-term test or an excused absence from a small-group discussion 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 health issue rather than after recovery. Please note that travel arrangements, holiday plans, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment are not normally valid reasons for requesting a deferral or an excused absence. A deferral or excused absence will not be granted unless, in the instructor's opinion, a just cause for the deferral or excused absence has been shown and documented by the student.

(4) How to arrange for deferred work at the end of a term.

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

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

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

(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" (see section K.4 of the Academic Regulations in the 2016-17 *Calendar*, found on the U. of C. website). Please review the University of Calgary's policies for dealing with student misconduct, particularly plagiarism and cheating, found in section K.5 of the *Calendar*.

(7) Handing in assignments outside of class, return of tests and assignments, and release of final grades.

1. When students are unable to submit assignments as scheduled in class, they should make arrangements to hand in the assignments directly to one of the teaching assistants. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.

2. Assignments and mid-terms 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 any of their work

returned by mail must supply a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the instructor. Otherwise unclaimed assignments will be available for pick-up only from the instructor's office during schedule office hours or by appointment.

3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.

(8) **Ethics of 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.

(9) **Academic Accommodation**

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with Student Accessibility Services (MSC 293, telephone 220-8237) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities available at <http://ucalgary.ca/access/>. 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 Student Accessibility Services and to request academic accommodation, if required.

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

(11) **Emergency evacuations.** In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of our classroom in EEEL, please proceed to the emergency assembly point at ICT -- Food Court. You can check the emergency assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

(12) **Student Representation.** The 2016-17 Students' Union VP Academic is Alicia Lunz (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>

(13) **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 220-53333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help"phones located around Campus.