

Structured Inequality

Sociology 6420 Fall 2007

Tues. and Thurs. 9:30-10:45 Baldwin 114A

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Office hours: Tuesday 10:45-11:45 (or by appointment)

This course examines structured inequality (also known as stratification) by reviewing some of the most important answers to the question that drives most research on inequality: "Who get what and why?" We will read theoretical and empirical works that discuss the origins of inequality as well as the different forms it takes. We will also study social mobility and examine how and, more importantly, why a person's place in the social hierarchy is connected to race, gender, social networks, labor markets, and other social structures. By the end of the course, you will be able to discuss and critique many of the major sociological approaches to the study of inequality and make your own contributions to our understanding of inequality.

Policies

Things to Do in the First Week of Class

Know what you should expect and what I expect.

The readings for this course are theoretical and empirical, quantitative and qualitative, and they are designed to provide you with an overview of many topics that are important for the study of inequality. Since sociologists have studied inequality for many years and from many different perspectives, the required reading list is long, and most topics include suggestions for optional further reading.

Your job is to complete the reading for every class without getting lost in the details. To help you get the most out of the readings and think about inequality in new and creative ways, I have provided reading questions to help guide you.

Get the Required Readings.

All required readings and most supplementary readings are available through WebCT.

Explore the Course Website.

The WebCT course website will serve as the definitive source of information about the course. Please refer to its pages (rather than the hard copy of the syllabus) for the most up-to-date information, links to readings, reading questions, assignments, and supplementary materials.

Other Information

Grades

You will be graded on an A through F scale with plus/minus options on the items below.

attendance/participation	20%
short essays	30%
final paper updates	15%
final paper	35%
Total	100%

Attendance/Participation

Attendance and class participation are essential, and I will expect everyone to come to class and make frequent, insightful contributions to our discussions.

Short Essays

You will be asked to write three short essays (10 or fewer typed pages) that summarize and synthesize what we have read. You should treat these essays as practice for the comprehensive exams.

Final Paper Updates and Final Paper

You will also be asked to produce a final paper on some topic of your choice that is related to inequality. The paper can include data analysis, but data analysis is not required. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and 15-25 pages without the bibliography. The most important thing, however, is that the paper should be about something you find interesting enough to develop into a master's thesis, dissertation proposal, or publication. I want your time and effort to be well spent! As indicated on the course calendar, I will require periodic updates to ensure that you are making progress. See the course calendar and the link on the sidebar for more information about the final paper.

Disabilities

If you have a disability and would like to request classroom or other accommodations, please contact me. You may also want to check out the services available on campus. ([See the course website for more information.](#))

Withdrawing from the Course

If you plan to withdraw from this course, you should be aware of the University regulations regarding withdrawals. ([See the course website for more information.](#))

Grievances

Any student who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner should follow the Department of Sociology grievance procedures. ([See the course website for more information.](#))

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Any student who feels that he or she has been discriminated against or sexually harassed in any class should review the documents below. The University encourages any person who feels he or she has been sexually harassed or discriminated against to contact the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Compliance Officer at (706) 542-0006.

([See the course website for information about sexual Harassment](#))

([See the course website for information about non-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#))

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty" (see especially section 7). Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

([See the course website for more information.](#))

Calendar

Thursday August 16 **Welcome to Sociology 6420**

Reflections on inequalities and the purpose of this course.

[Harrison Bergeron](#) -

by Kurt Vonnegut Jr.


"[Are Justice and Inequality Compatible?](#)"

by Isabel V. Sawhill and Daniel P. McMurrer, 1996

More Sources about This Topic

"[Fair" Inequality? Attitudes Toward Pay Differentials: The United States in Comparative Perspective.](#)"

by Lars Osberg and Timothy Smeeding *American Sociological Review* 71:450-473, 2006.

Check out the 1995 film, [Harrison Bergeron](#) 

The Past, Present, and Future of Inequality

Tuesday August 21 **Ecological-Evolutionary Theory (Part 1)**

"[The Dynamics of Distributive Systems](#)" (excerpt from chapter 3) and "[The Structures of Distributive Systems](#)" (chapter 4) from *Power and Privilege* by Gerhard Lenski, 1966

"[Types of Human Societies](#)" (Chapter 4, pages 72-84) from *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology* by Gerhard Lenski, Jean Lenski, and Patrick Nolan, 1999.

More Sources about This Topic

Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies by Jared Diamond, 1998

See also the related [PBS website for Guns Germs and Steel](#).

(This book focuses on a subset of the topics considered by Lenski. It emphasizes the importance of geography in explaining inequality between societies.)

Thursday August 23 **Ecological-Evolutionary Theory (Part 2)**

"[Industrial Societies: Part I](#)" (excerpt from chapter 10) and "[Retrospect and Prospect](#)" (chapter 13) from *Power and Privilege* by Gerhard Lenski, 1966

More Sources about This Topic

Ecological Evolutionary Theory: Principles and Applications by Gerhard Lenski 2005.

Tuesday, August 28 **Reactions to Lenski**

"[Between Modernism and Postmodernism: Lenski's Power and Privilege in the Study of Inequalities](#)"

by Ann R. Tickamyer *Sociological Theory* 22(2): 247-257, 2004.

"[Gendered Power and Privilege: Taking Lenski One Step Further](#)"

by Janet Chafetz *Sociological Theory*, 22(2), 269-277, 2004.

More Sources about This Topic

Sociological Theory 22(2), 2004 was devoted entirely to Gerhard Lenski.

Theories of Class in Industrial Societies

Thursday, August 30 **Marx in His Own Words**

"[Bourgeois and Proletarians](#)" (Chapter 1 from the *Communist Manifesto*)

"[Value, Price, and Profit](#)" (sections VI-VIII)

"[Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas](#)" (excerpt from *The German Ideology*)

More Sources about This Topic

The full texts for all the works above (and many others) are available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf.htm>

["On Work and Alienation"](#)

by Kai Erikson *American Sociological Review*, 51(1), 1-8 1986.

In the mood for a humorous use of Marx's ideas?

Watch the animated film, [Antz](#)  or the film, [Goodbye Lenin](#) 

["The Structural Basis of Social Inequality"](#)

by Aage Sørensen *The American Journal of Sociology*, 101(5): 1333-1365, 1996.

Tuesday, September 4 **Marx According to Others**

[Introduction](#) to *Alternative Foundations of Class Analysis* by Eric Olin Wright (Pages 1-6)

["Foundations of Class Analysis in the Marxist Tradition"](#)

by Eric Olin Wright Chapter 1 in *Alternative Foundations of Class Analysis* by Eric Olin Wright (Pages 6-41)



One paragraph on possible topic for final paper due.

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

Thursday, September 6 **More on Exploitation: A Key Concept in Marxist Thought**

["The Parable of the Shmoo" and "The Concept of Exploitation"](#) (pages 4-17) in *Class Counts* by Erik Olin Wright, 1996

Tuesday, September 11 **Max Weber**

["Class, Status, and Party"](#)

by Max Weber

["A Weberian Approach to Class Analysis"](#)

by Richard Breen Chapter 2 in *Alternative Foundations of Class Analysis* by Eric Olin Wright (Pages 42-69)

More Sources about This Topic

[Max Weber on Sociosite](#)

["The Changing Picture of Max Weber's Sociology"](#)

by Richard Swedberg *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 283-306, 2003.

Thursday, September 13 **Pierre Bourdieu on Class**

["Pierre Bourdieu on Social Class and Symbolic Violence"](#)

by Elliot B. Weiniger Chapter 4 in *Alternative Foundations of Class Analysis* by Eric Olin Wright (Pages 116-166)

More Sources about This Topic

["What Makes a Social Class?: On the Practical and Theoretical Existence of Groups."](#)

by Pierre Bourdieu in *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 22 (1987).1-18.

Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste

by Pierre Bourdieu, Harvard University Press, 1984.

Tuesday, September 18 **Recent Treatments of Class**

Find an article published in the last five years that talks about class.

Bring it to class, and be ready to discuss how it reflects (or fails to reflect) the ideas of Marx, Weber, and Bourdieu.

Thursday, September 20 **Class in the Media (Part 1)**

[People Like Us](#) (a PBS film and website) 

(124 minutes)

More Sources about This Topic

["Class Matters"](#) a *New York Times* website about class.

Class Matters. 2005. New York: Times Books.

(A book about class drawn from a series of New York Times articles.)

Tuesday, September 25 **Class in the Media (Part 2)**

Finish viewing and discuss the film, [People Like Us](#)



Short Essay # 1 Due

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

Free-market Inspired Perspectives on Inequality

Thursday, September 27 **Functionalism and Its Critics**

["Some Principles of Stratification"](#)

by Davis and Moore, *American Sociological Review* 10(2): 242-249, 1945.

["A Modification of the functional theory of Social Stratification."](#)

by Richard Simpson, *Social Forces* 35(2) :132-137, 1956.

["Functional Causal Imagery"](#)

by Arthur Stinchcombe, 1987 (Pages 80-101 in *Constructing Social Theories*)



Two paragraphs on topic for final paper due.

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

More Sources about This Topic

["Some Empirical Consequences of the Davis-Moore Theory of Stratification."](#)

by Arthur Stinchcombe, *American Sociological Review* 28(5): 805-808, 1963.

Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons made some of the most important contributions to the development of functional theory. For very brief overviews of their work, see the excerpts below.

Social Stratification and Inequality by Harold Kerbo, 2000.

Durkheim: Pages [103-107](#) Parson: Pages [119-125](#).

["Functionalism and Feminism: Is Estrangement Necessary?"](#)

by Miriam Johnson, 1993 Ch. 6 in Paula England (ed.), *Theory on Gender/Feminism on Theory*

Tuesday, October 2 **Status Attainment (part 1)**

["The American Occupational Structure: Reflections after Twenty-Five Years"](#)

Excerpts from the Symposium on Blau and Duncan's 1967 book, *The American Occupational Structure*

["Status Attainment Research and Its Image of Society."](#)

by J. David Knottnerus *American Sociological Review* 52(1): 113-121,1987.

More Sources about This Topic

See [Contemporary Sociology 21\(5\)](#), 1992 for a number of articles that reflect on status attainment research.

["Comparative Intergenerational Stratification Research."](#)

by Harry Ganzeboom, Donald Treiman, and Wout C. Ultee *Annual Review of Sociology* 17: 277-302,1991.

(This article reviews nearly 40 years of social mobility research.)

["Inequality of opportunity in comparative perspective: Recent research on educational attainment and social mobility."](#)

by Richard Breen and Jan Jonsson. *Annual Review of Sociology* 31:223-243, 2005.

(This article reviews comparative social mobility research since 1990.)

["Economic Mobility in the United States"](#) by Isabel V. Sawhill and Daniel P. McMurrer

["The Declining Importance of Class"](#)

by Daniel P. McMurrer and Isabel V. Sawhill 1997 (Number 4 in Series, "Opportunity in America")

Thursday, October 4 **Status Attainment (part 2)**

["Women, Family, and Class."](#)

by Annemette Sørensen *Annual Review of Sociology* 20: 27-47,1994.

["Class, Gender, and the Family Unit: A Dynamic Model of Stratification and Class Politics"](#)

by Eric Plutzer and John F Zipp in *Social Science Research* 30 (3): 426-448, 2001

["Is America Becoming More Equal for Children? Changes in the Intergenerational Transmission of Low- and High-income Status"](#)

by Yunju Nam *Social Science Research* 33: 187-205, 2004.

More Sources about This Topic

["Social Structure, Homegenization, and The Process of Status Attainment in the United States and Great Britain"](#).

by Michael Burawoy *American Journal of Sociology* 82(5): 1031-1042, 1977.

["Class as Conceived by Marx and Dahrendorf."](#)

by Robert Robinson and Jonathan Kelley *American Sociological Review* 44: 38-58, 1979.

(This article discusses how Marx and Darhrendorf may be combined with Blau and Duncan.)

A Return to Structures

Tuesday, October 9 **Social Networks (Part 1)**

["The Strength of Weak Ties"](#)

by Mark Granovetter *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380, 1973.



Short Essay # 2 Due

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

Thursday, October 11 **Social Networks (Part 2)**

["The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited"](#)

by Mark Granovetter *Sociological Theory* 1: 201-233, 1983.

More Sources about This Topic

["Networks, Race, and Hiring"](#)

by Roberto M. Fernandez and Isabel Fernandez-Mateo in *American Sociological Review* 71 (1): 42-71, 2006.

["Structural Holes and Good Ideas."](#)

by Ronald S. Burt *American Journal of Sociology* 110(2): 349-399, 2004.

Midpoint withdrawal deadline in Tomorrow, Friday, October 12

Tuesday, October 16 **Macrostructures**

["Multilevel Structural Analysis"](#)

by Peter Blau *Social Networks* 15(2): 201-215, 1993.

["A Fable about Social Structure"](#)

by Peter Blau *Social Forces* 58(3): 777-788, 1980.

More Sources about This Topic

["Social Structure and Intergroup Interaction"](#)

by Scott South et al. *American Sociological Review* 47(5): 587-599, 1982.

Thursday, October 18 **Racial Segregation**

["When Work Disappears: New Implications for Race and Urban Poverty in the Global Economy"](#)

by William Julius Wilson in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22:3, 479 - 499, 1999.

["American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass"](#)

by Douglas S. Massey in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 96, No. 2. (Sep., 1990), pp. 329-357.

More Sources about This Topic

["Secession of the Successful"](#)

by Robert Reich *New York Times*, 1991.

["How Segregation Concentrates Poverty"](#)

by Douglas S. Massey and Mary J. Fischer in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Volume 23 Number 4 July 2000 pp. 670-691.

[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#) (A PBS film and website--see part III about housing discrimination)

["Space in the Study of Labor Markets"](#)

by Roberto Fernandez and Celina Su *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 545-569, 2004.

Tuesday, October 23 **Discussion of Final Paper Topics**



Two-page summary of literature review due.

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

Thursday, October 25 **No Class: Fall Break**

*If you wish you were in class rather than on vacation, try reading the two articles below. They might make you feel better.

["American Schooling and Educational Inequality: A Forecast for the 21st Century"](#)

by Adam Gamoran *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 74, Extra Issue: Current of Thought: Sociology of Education at the Dawn of the 21st Century. (2001), pp. 135-153.

["Are Schools the Great Equalizer? Cognitive Inequality during the Summer Months and the School Year"](#)

by Douglas B. Downey, Paul T. von Hippel, and Beckett A. Broh in *American Sociological Review* 69(5): 613-635, 2004.

Hot Topics in the Study of Race, Class, and Gender

Tuesday, October 30 **Topic 1: "Intersectionality"**

["The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market"](#)

by Irene Browne and Joya Misra *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 487-513, 2003.

More Sources about This Topic

["Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection."](#)

by Patricia Hill Collins in *Race, Sex, & Class*, 1, no 1, Fall 1993.

["Race-Class-Gender Theory: An Image\(ry\) Problem."](#)

by Ivy Kennelly. Forthcoming in *Gender Issues*.

["Making, Baking, Tasting, and Being: Sugar as a Metaphor for Race, Class, and Gender."](#)

by Ivy Kennelly. Forthcoming in *Sociological Theory*.

[ASA Race, Class, and Gender Bibliography](#)

Thursday, November 1 **Approaches to Studying Intersectionality**

["The Complexity of Intersectionality"](#)

by Leslie McCall in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(31): 1771-802, 2005.

More Sources about This Topic

["Intersectionality"](#)

by Phoenix and Pattynama in *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (3): 187-192, 2006.

Tuesday, November 6 **Intersectionality and Wage Inequalities**

["Sources of Racial Wage Inequality in Metropolitan Labor Markets: Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences"](#)

by Leslie McCall *American Sociological Review*, 66 (4) 520-541, 2001.



One-page outline of final paper due.

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

Thursday, November 8 **Intersectionality in Workplaces**

["Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations"](#)

by Joan Acker in *Gender & Society*, 20(4): 441-464, 2006.

["Race, Gender, and Workplace Power"](#)

by James Elliott and Ryan Smith *American Sociological Review* 69 (3): 365-386, 2004.

More Sources about This Topic

["The Determinants and Consequences of Workplace Sex and Race Composition"](#)

by Barbara Reskin, Debra McBrier, and Julie Kmec *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 335-361, 1999.

Tuesday, November 13 **Intersectionality and Public Policy**

["Family Leaves, the FMLA and Gender Neutrality: The Intersection of Race and Gender"](#)

by Amy Armenia and Naomi Gerstel *Social Science Research* 35(4): 871-891, 2006.

["Multiple Inequalities, Intersectionality and the European Union"](#)

by Mieke Verloo in *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13(3): 211-228, 2006.

More Sources about This Topic

["Gender, Race, and Affirmative Action - Operationalizing Intersectionality in Survey Research "](#)

by Amy C. Steinbugler, Julie E. Press, and Janice Johnson Dias in *Gender and Society* 20(6): 805-825, 2006.

Thursday, November 15 **Topic 2: Mechanisms of Inequality**

["Including Mechanisms in Our Models of Ascriptive Inequality"](#)

by Barbara Reskin *American Sociological Review* 68 (1): 1-21, 2003.

More Sources about This Topic

Understanding Social Inequality: Modeling Allocation Processes. [\(Chapter one\)](#)

by Herbert M. Blalock Jr., 1991.

Tuesday, November 20 **Mechanisms of Inequality in Organizations**

["Rediscovering the Color Line within Work Organizations"](#)

by Steven Vallas *Work and Occupations* 30(4): 379-400, 2003.



Short Essay # 3 Due by Wednesday

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

More Sources about This Topic

["Social closure and processes of race/sex employment discrimination"](#)

by Vincent J. Roscigno, Lisette M. Garcia, and Donna Bobbitt-Zeher in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 609(1):16-48, 2007.

Thursday, November 22 **No Class: Thanksgiving**

Tuesday, November 27 **Presentation/Discussion of Final Paper Topics**

Thursday, November 29 **Presentation/Discussion of Final Paper Topics**



Share a draft of your final paper with two classmates.

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)

Tuesday, December 4 **No Class: UGA follows a Friday schedule today**

Thursday, December 6 **Writing Workshop**



Provide two classmates with written comments on their drafts.

(We will use this class period to discuss the comments.)

[\(See the course website for details.\)](#)



Your final paper must be in my mailbox by Wednesday, December 12th at 5:00pm.