



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

SOCIOLOGY 515
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
SPRING 2008

SYLLABUS

Professor: Dennis Condron
Office: 232 Tarbutton Hall
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Meetings: Tuesdays, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Location: 104 Tarbutton Hall

Course Description and Objective

This course provides graduate students with a comprehensive introduction to classical and contemporary theories and analyses of social stratification. The course emphasizes class but also addresses race/ethnicity, gender, and the intersecting nature of class, racial/ethnic, and gender inequalities. In doing so, the substantive material explores the role of institutional contexts (i.e., families, education, work, government) in generating, maintaining, and transforming stratification. One objective of the course is to provide students with an introductory overview of social stratification that promotes a solid, general knowledge of the field. A second objective is to facilitate the preparation of students considering or planning to take the Department's preliminary examination in Stratification. Third, the seminar will encourage students to think about and develop their own research interests.

Required Readings

- Conley, Dalton. 1999. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (ISBN: 0-520-21673-3)
- Grusky, David B. (editor). 2001. *Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective (2/e)*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (ISBN: 0-8133-6654-2)
- Johnson, Heather Beth. 2006. *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth: Choosing Schools and Inheriting Inequality in the Land of Opportunity*. New York: Routledge. (ISBN: 0-415-95239-5)
- Massey, Douglas S. 2007. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (ISBN: 0-87154-585-3)
- Rank, Mark Robert. 2005. *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All*. New York: Oxford University Press. (ISBN: 0-19-518972-8)
- Risman, Barbara J. 1998. *Gender Vertigo: American Families in Transition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (ISBN: 0-300-08083-2)

In addition, you will read several articles available online.

Course Requirements

Note: I will provide separate handouts with details on each of these course requirements.

Participation and discussion questions: Since this is a relatively small seminar, it is imperative that every student contributes – in a thoughtful and constructive manner – to in-class discussions on a regular basis. In addition to expecting volunteer participation, I will call on students to answer questions. To help facilitate in-class discussion, every Monday (no later than 5:00 p.m.) you will email me two to five questions that you would like the class to consider. I will compile these questions and distribute them when we meet. Your in-class participation and discussion questions together constitute 20% of your overall grade.

Response papers: You will write three 5-to-7-page papers in response to questions I distribute. The questions will be similar to ones you would see on a preliminary exam; as such, you will need to draw on and synthesize readings assigned both within and across weeks in constructing an argument. Papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on their due dates. Each is worth 10% of your overall grade (for a total of 30%).

Book review: You will review a book (not assigned in this course) that addresses some aspect of social stratification. I *strongly* encourage you to choose a book from the department's social stratification preliminary exam reading list. (See <http://www.sociology.emory.edu/downloads/stratlist.pdf>). This is because in addition to writing the actual review, you will provide classmates with a detailed outline of the book and discuss the book and field questions from student colleagues in class. As such, this assignment will contribute to students' preparation for the stratification prelim. It is worth 15% of your overall grade.

Term paper and presentation: You will write a term paper and present it in class in the style of a 15-minute conference presentation (together worth 35% of the overall grade). Term papers may take one of three forms: (1) A literature review in which you provide an overview of the research on a stratification-related topic and identify key questions that still need to be addressed; (2) A research proposal constructed like an actual grant that you would submit to a funding agency; (3) A report of your own empirical research that is essentially a draft of a paper you plan to submit for publication. Each student will meet with me individually to discuss the form that your particular paper will take, which largely depends on your stage in your course of study and therefore what kind of paper is most appropriate/relevant/useful to you. A 2-to-3-page prospectus of your term paper is due in class on March 18, presentations will occur on April 22, and final papers are due in my mail box (225 Tarbuton) one week later, April 29, at 5:00 p.m.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement	Due Date	Percentage of Grade
Participation and discussion questions	Each week	20%
Response papers	Three of the following: 2/5, 2/19, 3/25, 4/15	30%
Book review/outline/discussion	March 4	15%
Presentation and term paper	April 22 and 29	35%

Tentative Course Schedule and Readings

* Note: Within each week, I have listed the readings in the order in which I think it makes the most sense to read them.

1/22/08: *Introduction to the course.*

1/29/08: *Foundational concepts and questions in social stratification.* We will lay the foundation for the semester by considering the general contours of the field, as well as one of the most debated questions pertaining to stratification: Is it inevitable and positively functional for society?

From Part I of Grusky:

Grusky, "The Past, Present, and Future of Social Inequality" (p. 1)

Book:

Massey, Douglas S. 2007. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation. **Preface and Chapter 1.**

From Part II of Grusky:

Davis and Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification" (p. 55)

Tumin, "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis" (p. 65)

Fischer et al., "Inequality by Design" (p. 73)

Lenski, "New Light on Old Issues: The Relevance of 'Really Existing Socialist Societies' for Stratification Theory" (p. 77)

2/5/08: *Class, Racial, and Gender Stratification in the United States: An Overview.* We will draw mainly on Massey's recent book in exploring the system of social stratification in the U.S.

Book:

Massey, Douglas S. 2007. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation. **Chapters 2 through 7.**

From Part VII of Grusky:

Morris and Western, "Inequality in Earnings: Trends and Implications" (p. 875)

Note: I expect you to inform me of the book you have chosen to review on 2/12/08, and to soon discuss your ideas for a term paper with me. It is my hope that reading Massey's book early in the semester will illuminate the major issues in the field and generate ideas for both book reviews and term papers.

2/12/08: *Marxist and Weberian conceptualizations of the structure of stratification.* We will begin an overview of theories and conceptualizations of stratification by discussing Marx, Weber, and some more contemporary scholars who have both followed in the footsteps of, and extended, the work of these classical theorists.

From Part III of Grusky:

- Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes" (p. 87)
- Marx, "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism" (p. 91)
- Marx, "Ideology and Class" (p. 101)
- Marx, "Value and Surplus Value" (p. 103)
- Dahrendorf, "Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society" (p. 105)
- Wright, "A General Framework for the Analysis of Class Structure" (p. 116)
- Weber, "Class, Status, Party" (p. 132)
- Weber, "Status Groups and Classes" (p. 142)
- Weber, "Open and Closed Relationships" (p. 146)
- Weber, "The Rationalization of Education and Training" (p. 150)
- Giddens, "The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies" (p. 152)
- Parkin, "Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique" (p. 162)

Article on JSTOR:

- Kohn, Melvin L., Atsushi Naoi, Carrie Schoenbach, Carmi Schooler, and Kazimierz M. Slomczynski. 1990. "Position in the Class Structure and Psychological Functioning in the United States, Japan, and Poland." *American Journal of Sociology* 95:964–1008.

2/19/08: *Contemporary debates on conceptualizing stratification.* We will continue and close our overview of theories and conceptualizations of the structure of stratification.

From Part III of Grusky:

- Durkheim, "The Division of Labor in Society" (p. 178)
- Grusky and Sorensen, "Are There Big Social Classes?" (p. 183)
- Mills, "The Power Elite" (p. 202)
- Useem, "The Inner Circle" (p. 223)
- Blau and Duncan, "Measuring the Status of Occupations" (p. 255)
- Goldthorpe and Hope, "Occupational Grading and Occupational Prestige" (p. 264)
- Hauser and Warren, "Socioeconomic Indexes for Occupations: A Review, Update, and Critique" (p. 281)
- Sorensen, "The Basic Concepts of Stratification Research: Class, Status, and Power" (p. 287)

Note: I expect you to discuss your ideas for a term paper with me by 2/26/08.

2/26/08: *Status attainment and social mobility.* We will first discuss theory and research in the status attainment tradition, which attempts to understand the processes through which individuals reach their position in the stratification system. We will then consider social mobility and grapple with questions about the extent to which the stratification system in the U.S. is open or closed.

From Part IV of Grusky:

Blau and Duncan, "The Process of Stratification" (p. 390)

Jencks et al., "Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America" (p. 403)

Sewell, Haller, and Portes, "The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process" (p. 410)

MacLeod, "Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-income Neighborhood" (p. 421)

Piore, "The Dual Labor Market: Theory and Implications" (p. 435)

Sorensen and Kalleberg, "An Outline of a Theory of the Matching of Persons to Jobs" (p. 438)

Featherman and Hauser, "A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility" (p. 325)

Grusky and Hauser, "Comparative Social Mobility Revisited: Models of Convergence and Divergence in 16 Countries" (p. 336)

Gottschalk, "Inequality, Income Growth, and Mobility: The Basic Facts" (p. 373)

3/4/08: *Discussion of book reviews.* Each student will provide student colleagues with a detailed outline of the book they reviewed, briefly discuss the book, and answer questions from seminar participants. You are not required to email discussion questions this week.

3/11/08: NO CLASS

Note: A 2-3-page prospectus of your term paper is due in class on 3/18/08.

3/18/08: *Racial stratification: Origins and consequences of wealth inequality.* This week, we will begin to address material on the sources and consequences of racial disparities in wealth, which sociologists have come to recognize as a key stratifying element of contemporary society.

From Part VI of Grusky:

Massey and Denton, "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass" (p. 660)

Oliver and Shapiro, "Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality" (p. 636)

Book:

Conley, Dalton. 1999. *Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

3/25/08: *Racial stratification: Educational opportunities and outcomes.* Complementing last week's material, we will look more in depth and the relationships between race, wealth, and education.

Book:

Johnson, Heather Beth. 2006. *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth: Choosing Schools and Inheriting Inequality in the Land of Opportunity.* New York: Routledge.

Article on JSTOR:

Downey, Douglas B., Paul T. von Hippel, and Beckett A. Broh. 2004. "Are Schools the Great Equalizer? Cognitive Inequality during the Summer Months and the School Year." *American Sociological Review* 69:613–35.

4/1/08: *Poverty.* We will discuss patterns and explanations of poverty in the U.S. and evaluate the structural perspective advanced in Rank's book.

Book:

Rank, Mark Robert. 2005. *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All.* New York: Oxford University Press.

From Part IV of Grusky:

Gottschalk, McLanahan, and Sandefur, "The Dynamics and Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty and Welfare Participation" (p. 378)

4/8/08: *Gender stratification.* We will begin a two-week segment on gender stratification by considering the nature and sources of the gender pay gap.

From Part VI of Grusky:

Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union" (p. 673)

Bielby, "The Structure and Process of Sex Segregation" (p. 703)

Reskin, "Labor Markets as Queues: A Structural Approach to Changing Occupational Sex Composition" (p. 719)

Peterson and Morgan, "The Within-Job Gender Wage Gap" (p. 734)

Marini and Fan, "The Gender Gap in Earnings at Career Entry" (p. 743)

Kilbourne, England, Farkas, Beron, and Weir, "Returns to Skill, Compensating Differentials, and Gender Bias: Effects of Occupational Characteristics on the Wages of White Women and Men" (p. 761)

Tam, "Why Do Female Occupations Pay Less?" (p. 776)

4/15/08: *Gender stratification.* We will continue on the topic of gender stratification by considering what Risman calls “gender as structure” and the potential for challenging the gender structure.

Book:

Risman, Barbara J. 1998. *Gender Vertigo: American Families in Transition.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Article on JSTOR:

Bianchi, Suzanne M., Melissa A. Milkie, Liana C. Sayer, and John P. Robinson. 2000. “Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends in the Gender Division of Household Labor.” *Social Forces* 79:191-228.

4/22/08: *Term paper presentations.* You will deliver a 15-minute presentation of your term paper.