

SYLLABUS
Summer 2009
SOCI 308 Social Stratification
SOCI 0308-501(10056) SOCIAL STRATIFICATION 3.00
July 6 – August 14

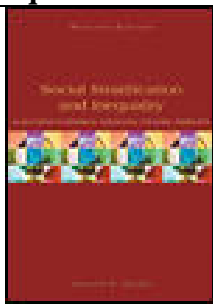
Professor Gabriel Aquino
Office Hours:
Or by appointment
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Description:

A systematic treatment of the ranking systems in various social structures in America. Theories of social stratification and mobility, analysis of social class studies in the United States, the interplay of power, status, and control. Prerequisite: SOCI 0101.

Grading:	Discussions	25%
	Assignments	25%
	Exam #1	25%
	Final Exam	25%
		100%

Required Texts:

	Social Stratification and Inequality, 7th Edition Harold R. Kerbo ©2009, ISBN-13 9780073380070
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A Note about Written Assignments:

All papers must be handed in 8½” by 11” paper, written using 12 New Times Roman font, with one inch margins all the way around. The papers must be double-spaced with no extra spacing between the paragraphs. Any directly quoted sections that are more than a paragraph (Use the three sentence rule) should have a 1½ margin on the left and right with size 12 fonts and single space. (DO NOT OVER QUOTE); shorter quotes or quotes that are one or two sentences long should be incorporated within the text.

Please make sure that you are familiar with Westfield State College’s Academic Conduct Policies in the College Bulletin. I expect us all to abide by it and to respect intellectual property.

Tests:

There will be two essay exams in this class, a midterm and a final. These exams are take-home and must be handed in on time, no extensions will be allowed. You will have until midnight on the day the exam is due to e-mail your exam in. **I will only accept e-mailed attached documents in MS WORD format.**

Sociological Imagination and Discussion/Readings:

Although the reading is extensive for some weeks, I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the material without exception. This not only requires that you read the material, but that you also interact with the reading. Failure to do so will be reflected in your participation grade.

I would like to keep the discussion-oriented. **This is only possible if you are willing to stay current with the reading schedule** and if you abide by the conventions of civilized discourse. This does not mean “political correctness” in speech, but it does mean that all points of view must be expressed politely and with due respect for differing opinions of others. Finally, your work should reflect sociology and not simply your own opinions. In other words, did you use your “sociological imagination” and base your conclusions and/or contributions on research, not simply anecdotal evidence? This principle applies to all contributions in this class, written and oral alike.

Grade distribution:

Letter Grade	=	Number Grade	=	If a letter grade is assigned this is the number equivalent
A	=	100-93	=	100
A-	=	92-89	=	92
B+	=	88-85	=	88
B	=	84-81	=	84
B-	=	80-77	=	80
C+	=	76-73	=	76
C	=	72-69	=	72
C-	=	68-65	=	68
D+	=	64-61	=	64
D	=	60-57	=	60
D-	=	56-53	=	55
F	=	52-0	=	0

Class Schedule:

May 19	Chapter 1: Perspectives and Concepts in the Study of Social Stratification Chapter 2: Dimensions of Inequality in the United States Chapter 3: Social Stratification in Human Societies: The History of Inequality
May 21	PART TWO: EXPLANATIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: STRATIFICATION THEORIES Chapter 4: Social Stratification Theory: Early Statements Chapter 5: Modern Theories of Social Stratification
May 26	PART THREE: THE AMERICAN CLASS STRUCTURE Chapter 6: The Upper Class Chapter 7: The Corporate Class

	Chapter 8: The Middle and Working Classes
May 28	Chapter 9: Poverty and the Political Economy of Welfare
June 2	Chapter 10: Gender Stratification and Inequalities: The Persistence of Ascription
June 4	Chapter 11: Inequalities of Race and Ethnicity: The Persistence of Ascription
June 9	PART FOUR: THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION Chapter 12: Social Mobility: Class Ascription and Achievement
June 11	Chapter 13: The Process of Legitimation
June 16	PART FIVE: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION BEYOND THE UNITED STATES Chapter 14: The World Stratification System: Dominance and Competition Among Core Nations
June 18	Chapter 15: Social Stratification in Japan Chapter 16: Social Stratification in Germany
June 23	Chapter 17: World Stratification and Globalization: The Poor of This Earth
June 25	Final

How to tackle the readings:

1. What is the issue being studied?
2. What does the literature claim about the issue?
3. What does the scholar think they will find?
4. Whom is the scholar studying?
5. What is the research design and methods?
6. What are the findings?
7. What are the scholar's conclusions?
8. Are there weaknesses to the author's conclusions? Why or why not?
9. Is this a major theoretical contribution or a minor one?

Grading Criteria

Your papers (as well as your exams) will be graded according to the following criteria:

Content

- A- Presenting a main point and using information to support your argument.
- B- Demonstration of your understanding of relevant concepts.
- C- Incorporation of course and outside reading.
- D- Incorporation of original insights.
- E- Responding fully to all questions.

- F- Developing a discussion that incorporates interesting details from multiple sources (personal experience, readings, and/or outside primary or secondary sources).
- G- Demonstrating critical thinking by moving in thought beyond merely summarizing, defining, or reporting to analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, drawing conclusions, or gaining insight.
- H- Engaging the reader through topic choice, original approach, thorough development, etc.

Organizational Factors

- ❖ Creating a coherent structure with an effective introduction/body/conclusion.
- ❖ Providing a clear introduction that identifies the topic/main point that establishes your intent in the paper.
- ❖ Using transitions where necessary within paragraphs and to introduce new ideas.
- ❖ Concluding in a way to draw main points together.

Language Use and Expression

- ❖ Using accurate and mature vocabulary to make the writing clear and appropriate for conveying your main points.
- ❖ Using clear, direct, complete, varied sentence structure (e.g., free of fragments or run-ons).
- ❖ Maintaining consistent verb tense and pronoun reference.
- ❖ Avoiding slang, colloquialisms, clichés, and jargon.
- ❖ Applying grammar and usage according to acceptable standards for writing.
- ❖ Applying correct mechanical skills (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)

Elements of Style

- ❖ Paper is typed or neatly word-processed.
- ❖ Paper is proofread and corrected for typos and other errors.
- ❖ Paper is printed on clean paper and stapled.

An 'A' Essay...

- ↻ Addresses the topic of the assignment fully and explores each aspect thoughtfully.
- ↻ Has a clear and substantial thesis.
- ↻ Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- ↻ Expresses ideas clearly and commands the reader's attention.
- ↻ Demonstrates clear, unified and coherent organization.
- ↻ Is fully developed and detailed with ideas supported by persuasive reasons and well chosen examples or references to class material.
- ↻ Has a superior style (interesting sentence patterns, smooth transitions between ideas, excellent use of vocabulary).
- ↻ Has few, if any, minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

An 'A-/B+' essay:

- ↻ Strongly addresses and explores each aspect of the assignment.
- ↻ Has a clear thesis explored fully in the essay.
- ↻ Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- ↻ Expresses ideas clearly and in an interesting manner.
- ↻ Demonstrates effective organization.

- ↳ Is well developed with supporting details and appropriate examples or references to class material.
- ↳ Has an effective style (good sentence patterns, transitions between ideas, accurate use of vocabulary).
- ↳ Has few errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

A 'B/B-' essay:

- ↳ Addresses and explores each aspect of the assignment in a satisfactory way.
- ↳ Has a clear thesis explored adequately in the essay.
- ↳ Shows clarity of thought, but may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively.
- ↳ Clearly communicates ideas.
- ↳ Is adequately organized.
- ↳ Is developed with sufficient examples, reasoning, or references for most of the ideas.
- ↳ Has an adequate style (some variety in sentence patterns, transitions between most ideas, vocabulary accurate for the most part).
- ↳ Has some errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

A 'C+/C' essay:

- ↳ Inaccurately responds to or neglects part of the assignment.
- ↳ Has a simplistic thesis that may show limited knowledge of the issues involved in the assignment.
- ↳ Lacks focus or demonstrates confused, stereotyped or simplistic thinking.
- ↳ May not always communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Is ineffectively organized.
- ↳ May not provide adequate or appropriate details or references to support generalizations, or may provide details without generalizations.
- ↳ Has a stylistic weakness (little variety in sentence patterns, few transitions, and imprecise vocabulary).
- ↳ Has an occasional major error in grammar, usage or mechanics or frequent minor errors.

A 'C-' essay:

- ↳ Indicates confusion about the assignment or neglects important aspects of the assignment.
- ↳ Has an unclear or confusing thesis which shows little understanding of the assignment or which demonstrates a misinterpretation of the assignment.
- ↳ Demonstrates confused thinking.
- ↳ Often fails to communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Has very weak organization.
- ↳ Has very little development of ideas; uses very few examples or references to support points.
- ↳ Has an ineffective style (monotonous or fragmented sentence structure, no transitions, simplistic or inaccurate vocabulary).
- ↳ Has many repeated errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

An essay containing one or more of the following would be considered unsatisfactory:

- ↳ An indication of an inability to comprehend or to respond meaningfully to the assignment.

- ☞ No thesis or has an incomprehensible thesis.
- ☞ Deliberately off-topic.
- ☞ An inability to communicate ideas clearly.
- ☞ Incoherent organization.
- ☞ Incomplete or inappropriate development of ideas.
- ☞ Incoherent style (difficulties with sentence structure, pattern of vocabulary errors).
- ☞ Pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, usage and mechanics.

Assignment #1: Current News on US Economy

Goal: The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to the economic activities that take place in the United States. Specifically, you are to consider how news on the economy is being reported. Who is it being reported to? And, why is it reported the way it is?

Guidelines: Do a search through newspapers, magazines, or any other popular media (non-academic) sources for the month of January. Find a news story that deals with the economy in the United States. It can be any facet of the US economy (*Hint: Search through news stories in business oriented newspapers, magazines, etc...first*). Follow the story through other news sources.

Step One:

Find a news story

Step Two:

Find at least three other articles, etc... on the same report.

Step Three:

Answer the following set of questions

1. Where else did you find the story?
2. Is the source a popular source or is it geared to a specific group (i.e. business people, entrepreneurs, or other professional group).
3. Was it the same story?
 - a. If yes, were there any editorials distinctions?
 - b. How?
 - c. Why do you think this occurred?
4. Was the story written by a different reporter/journalist/specialist?
 - a. How was the story similar
 - b. If yes, how did the story differ?
 - c. How would you explain the similarities and/or differences?

Step Four:

Rank the stories according to their quality and who you think their audience is.

I recommend that you find out something about your sources. Specifically, find out who are their subscribers. I want you to include this in your discussion about the news story and in your ranking of the source. What conclusions can you make?

Example:

Story in the Wall Street Journal is geared towards business people and those with ties to the economy. The same story in the New York Times is typically aimed at a more general and white-collar audience. However, the same story in the New York Post or Daily News is intended for a blue-collar reader. I want you to tell me if the same story is reported the same way in these three different sources. Tell me what is different, what is the same, and explain why this is so?

(Write it as a report, with subtitles for each section including an introduction telling me what you did).

Assignment #2: Income and Expense

Goal: This assignment challenges the myths and stereotypes surrounding popular media images of single parents. Students are to consider how much money they would have to make per hour to survive at their *ideal standard of living*, and determine whether their ideals are attainable.

Guidelines: Use your imagination to consider what life would be like if you were a single parent with two children (neither child is in school and one is in diapers). This family profile closely resembles the national profile of adults with dependent children who use social services (i.e. food stamps). After you calculate a family budget, answer the questions on the back of this page based on the course material.

Step One:

Calculate a budget of all living expenses for you and your children for one month including:

1. Shelter
2. Food (include everything you need for a balanced diet for an adult and children)
3. Utilities (heat, electricity, etc)
4. Daycare expenses
5. Household items (soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, etc)
6. Entertainment (video rentals, movie or play tickets, etc)
7. Transportation (car insurance, gas, bus tokens, taxi fare, etc)
8. Laundry (how much does each load cost? How many loads a month?)
9. Medical insurance
10. Phone (local and long distance)
11. Cable
12. Clothing

This is not an exhaustive list: if you can think of any additional expenses, add them to it.

1. Visit a grocery store and price diapers (you will need at least four packs a month), baby food and formula, etc. Price items that can be eaten by adults and children (i.e. soft foods, fruits, juice, etc); however, keep in mind that adults and children also require different types of food to maintain a balanced diet.
2. Check different day care centers to find out how much it costs for two small children all day long. Include the name and phone number or advertisement of the center you decide on in your paper. What are their hours of operation? Does it cost more if you work a late shift and cannot pick up the children at 5:00 pm? Or if you need to drop them off before 7:30am?
3. Check the paper for the current going rent of a two-bedroom apartment *in your area you would want to live in*. Consider the apartment's accessibility to bus routes, Laundromats, or stores if you do not have a car. Additionally, determine how comfortable you feel in the neighborhood (i.e. would you let your children

- play outside?). Cut out the advertisement or include the phone number of the rental office or contact person in your paper.
4. Type out an itemized list of all your expenses for the month. Explain your expenses (for example, if you are not paying for heat or electricity, is it included in your rent?).
 5. Total the cost of everything on the list. Divide the total amount by 160; this is the amount that you would have to bring home per hour to cover your expenses given a forty-hour workweek.

***Students who fail to take this assignment seriously (i.e. creating unrealistic figures) will receive a low grade. For example, a family of three cannot live on \$50.00 a month for groceries, nor would a two-bedroom apartment rent cost \$200/month.

Step 2:

1. Given the amount that you would have to bring home per hour in order to cover your expenses, do you envision your current job enabling you to raise two children? If no, what categories are you willing to cut down on in order to afford your expenses?
2. For families who cannot meet the budget as listed above, what are some alternative arrangements in regards to childcare, living arrangements, food, etc? Which of these arrangements are becoming, or have been, popular within the U.S. society?
3. Given the gender norms in our society today, as a single parent would you envision more or less help from others if you were in this situation? Please justify your answer.