

**SOC 260: Inequality and Social Stratification
Course Syllabus, FALL 2014 (72145)
University of Alberta**

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Lee Maroto

Email: maroto@ualberta.ca

Phone: 780.492.0478

Office: 6-23 Tory Building

Office Hours: W 2:00-4:00pm, and by appointment

Course Meeting: ESB 3 27, T R 11:00AM - 12:20PM

Teaching Assistant:

Janine Muster

muster@ualberta.ca

Required Course Reading:

The required course reading includes the following two books and a Coursepack reader available through the University of Alberta Bookstore (<http://www.bookstore.ualberta.ca/>).

McQuaig, Linda, and Neil Brooks. 2010. *The Trouble with Billionaires: Why Too Much Money at the Top is Bad for Everyone*. Penguin Books. ISBN: 9780143174547.

Stuber, Jenny M. 2011. *Inside the College Gates: How Class and Culture Matter in Higher Education*. Lexington Books. ISBN: 9780739148990.

Supplemental electronic readings available through the library are also listed on the website.

Prerequisite:

SOC 100 or consent of instructor

Technology Requirements:

This course utilizes eClass for the posting of certain content and for discussion forums. I will also make announcements via eClass, so please check the website regularly.

**Policy about course outlines can be found in §23.4(2) of the University
Calendar.**

Course Description

Stratification refers to systematic social inequality in the access of opportunities, resources, and rewards. It involves the uneven distribution of people across social categories based upon achieved and ascribed characteristics. Human societies differ greatly in the extent of stratification present within them. This course focuses on social stratification in Canada and the United States with some comparisons to other industrialized countries. We will address how stratification has varied throughout history and question why members of certain groups advance while others do not.

The course is divided into two primary parts. **Part I** describes the processes and theories behind stratification. During this part of the course we will discuss the social construction of categories, the mechanisms behind the unequal distribution of rewards, and explanations for varying levels of stratification. We will also address theories related to markets, capital, and segregation. **Part II** investigates multiple bases of stratification, such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class, along with different areas of stratification, including credit markets, work, health, consumption, and education. During this part of the course will apply the theories, mechanisms, and explanations discussed in Part I to these different areas and bases of stratification.

Course Goals

This course aims to create a better understanding of what stratification is, how it works, and the explanations behind it. In a society that values individualism, many students tend to focus on the individual-level explanations for inequality, believing that some groups get ahead of others because of only intelligence, ability, and hard work. However, the study of stratification goes beyond individual-level explanations for inequality, because for most people, it takes more than talent to be successful. In general, "stratification" refers to structural inequality that occurs through a systematic process, such that members of some groups get more social goods than members of other groups. My aim is for you to expand your thinking and focus on how groups' unequal locations in opportunity structures affect their locations in the stratification hierarchy.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing the course, you will be able to:

- describe the process of stratification;
- identify theories and mechanisms of stratification;
- examine individual, cultural, and structural level explanations for variation in stratification;
- describe how inequality in Canada and the United States has changed over the past century;
- compare inequality in Canada with other industrialized countries;
- apply theories of stratification to bases of race, gender, and class inequality;
- explain the extent and trends in stratification across multiple bases and areas; and
- assess policies related to social stratification.

Course Policies

Contacting Me:

If you have a question that can be answered with a couple sentences, please contact me through email. If your question requires a more detailed or lengthy response, I suggest that you attend my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me. Please be aware that I check email most weekdays but not always on weekends. If you email me, you can expect a response within 24 hours, unless it arrives on Friday.

Email Etiquette:

Remember that email communication for all courses should be formal and professional. Make sure to use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Absences:

If you are going to be absent from lecture, you do not need to contact me unless you will be missing an exam. However, if you miss a lecture, I suggest contacting another student in the class to copy his or her notes from that lecture.

As per §23.5.6 of the University of Alberta Calendar: *Excused absence for a missed exam is not automatic and is granted at the discretion of the instructor (in the case of term exams) or the student's Faculty (in the case of final exams). Instructors and Faculties are not required to grant excused absences for unacceptable reasons that include, but are not limited to personal events such as vacations, weddings, or travel arrangements. **When a student is absent from a term or final exam without acceptable excuse, a final grade will be computed using a raw score of zero for the exam missed.** Any student who applies for or obtains an excused absence by making false statements will be liable under the Code of Student Behaviour.*

If you miss an exam or are unable to complete assignments on the appropriate date because of an incapacitating illness, you may complete one of the following: a University of Alberta Medical Statement signed by a doctor, a Medical Declaration Form for students in Arts, or a Statutory Declaration for students from other Faculties to be completed by your Faculty office or the Registrar's Office. You should submit appropriate documentation for other acceptable absences. This could include a copy of the death certificate for a death in the family, a letter from the church or pastor for a religious conflict, or a copy of the accident report for a car accident. For other reasons, please consult with me for appropriate documents.

Disability Accommodations:

Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, mental, or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS), 2-800 Students' Union Building, 492.3381 (phone) or 492.7269 (TTY). Students registered with SSDS who will be using accommodations in the classroom, or who will be writing exams through SSDS, are required to provide a "Letter of Introduction."

Electronic Recording of Lectures:

As per §24.3 of the University Calendar: *Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor.*

Lecture Slides:

I will post lecture slides on the course website after each lecture for you to review. I do not post them before lecture because I share the slides to supplement, not to replace, note-taking in class. Oftentimes slides will contain figures and tables that you may want to refer back to when reviewing the material.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. GFC 23.4(2). Please see the following website for more details:

<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/StudentAppeals/DontCheatsheet.aspx>

Course Requirements**Grade Breakdown:**

Your grade in this course will be based upon four aspects, each worth a part of the grade:

- Midterm Exam: 30%
- Final Exam: 35%
- Written Assignment: 20%
- In-class Activities/Participation: 15%
- **Total: 100%**

Grading Policy:

Four components constitute your grade for this course: a midterm exam, a final exam, a written assignment, and in-class activities/participation. If you are having issues keeping up with coursework for any reason, notify me as soon as you start to have a problem. We will be more likely to come to an acceptable arrangement if we can attack the problem sooner rather than later. Student Counseling Services are also available. Please see the following website for more details: <http://www.mentalhealth.ualberta.ca>

Exams:

You will have two exams in this course: a midterm exam during Week 7 and a final exam at the end of the term. The exams are in-class, closed-book exams, consisting of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm will cover Part I of the course. The final exam will be cumulative, but it will stress Part II of the course. Example midterm and final exam questions will be reviewed in class and made available on the course website. The midterm exam is worth 30% of your total grade, and the final exam is worth 35%.

Written Assignment:

The written assignment consists of a short essay related to the course material. I will provide three options for this assignment on the course website, but you are required to complete only *one assignment*. Because you have multiple options, assignments cannot be made up if they are missed. The written assignment is worth 20% of your grade.

Details and due dates for the written assignment are posted on the course website. You should provide your answers in a separate Word document that you will upload to eClass. Spelling, grammar, and mechanics will be graded, so make sure to proofread. *The written assignments on the syllabus are due on Friday before 5:00pm on the week that they are assigned.*

In-class Activities and Participation:

Your in-class activities and participation grade will be based on 3 components: (1) in-class activities, (2) in-class participation, and (3) participation in the online discussion forums. Activities and participation account for 15% of your total grade.

In-class Activities

Most in-class activities are noted on the course schedule and syllabus; however, there will also be two to four unannounced activities during the semester. Activities will include group work, individual quizzes, and other written work, which will sometimes include specific questions about the day's material. For example, I might ask, "How does Marx define class?" However, many times I will simply ask, "What was the most important point from class today?" or "What questions do you still have about the material?" This helps me to gauge how well students understand the material.

Each activity will be graded as "full credit" (2 points), "half credit" (1 point), or "no credit" (0 points). You need to receive a total of 16 points on activities in order to receive full credit for this portion of your grade. In-class activities cannot be made up if they are missed.

In-class Participation

In addition to in-class activities, I also expect you to participate during class and on the online discussion boards. In-class participation includes speaking up in class, asking and answering questions, and completing group work. If you are a quiet person, take class as an opportunity to challenge yourself and share your thoughts. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior, such as talking out of turn, listening to music, playing around with cell phones, and sleeping through class, will negatively affect your participation grade.

Online Participation

There will also be weekly discussion forums for you to participate in. I will post weekly topics on the eClass website, where you will have the ability to discuss them with your fellow students. You are also welcome to start additional discussion threads. I do not expect you to participate every week, but if you are a student who does not usually speak up during class, the discussion boards are a good place to share your thoughts.

At the end of the semester you will then resubmit your “best” discussion post and describe how it reflects your online participation. At this time, you will also have the opportunity to assess your overall participation in the course.

Grade Conversion Scale:

Descriptor	Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	94-100	A+	4.0
	88-93	A	4.0
	83-87	A-	3.7
Good	79-82	B+	3.3
	75-78	B	3.0
	71-74	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	66-70	C+	2.3
	62-65	C	2.0
	58-61	C-	1.7
Poor	54-57	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	50-53	D	1.0
Failure	0-49	F	0.0

Course Schedule & Readings
(TENTATIVE)

Part I: Stratification: Process, Theories, and Mechanisms**Week 1: What is Stratification?**

Tues. (Sept. 2nd): NO CLASS

Thurs. (Sept. 4th): **What is Stratification and why does it matter?**

- Introduction to course and discussion of stratification systems

Week 2: Stratification Process and Trends

Tues. (Sept. 9th): Categorization

Required Reading:

- Fiske, Susan T., Amy J.C. Cuddy, Peter Glick, and Jun Xu. 2002. "A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow from Perceived Status and Competition." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82(6): 878-902. [Pages 878-883]
- Tilly, Charles. 2003. "Changing Forms of Inequality." *Sociological Theory* 21(1): 31-36.
- Project Implicit FAQs at:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/background/faqs.html#faq2>

Activity:

- Take an Implicit Association Test at
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html> - take the test before class and be prepared to write about it during class

Thurs. (Sept. 11th): Social Construction of Categories

Required Reading:

- West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125-151.
- "Sex = Gender?" 2013. Pp. 107-109 In *Gender and Women's Studies in Canada*, edited by Margaret Hobbs and Carla Rice. Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 1994. "Racial Formations" Pp. 3-13 in *Racial Formation in the United States*. Omi and Winant, eds.

Week 3: Stratification Process and Trends (cont.)

Tues. (Sept. 16th): Ranking, Unequal Treatment, and Distribution Mechanisms

- What does inequality look like today?

Required Reading:

- McQuaig and Brooks: Chs. 1-2

Activity:

- Inequality in Canada exercise

Thurs. (Sept. 18th): Trends in Inequality

Required Reading:

- McQuaig and Brooks: Chs. 3-4

Week 4: Theories and Mechanisms of Stratification

Tues. (Sept. 23rd): Individual, Cultural, and Structural Explanations for Inequality

Required Reading:

- Davis, Kingsley and Wilbert E. Moore. 1945. "Some Principles of Stratification," *American Sociological Review* 10: 242-249.
- Tumin, Melvin M. 1953. "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." *American Sociological Review* 18(4):387-394.

Thurs. (Sept. 25th): Mechanisms Justifying and Supporting Inequality

Required Reading:

- McQuaig and Brooks: Chs. 5-7
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Week 5: Theories and Mechanisms of Stratification (cont.)

Tues. (Sept. 30th): Markets and Labor

Required Reading:

- Marx, Karl. 1844 [1972]. "Alienation and Social Classes." Pp. 133-135 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert C. Tucker (ed.). Norton.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1848 [1972]. "Manifesto of the Communist Party." Pp. 473-483 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert C. Tucker (ed.). Norton.

Thurs. (Oct. 2nd): Class, Status, and Party

Required Reading:

- Weber, Max. [1922] 1946. "Class, Status, and Party." Pp. 180-95. In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills, editors. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press.

Activity:

- Quiz on Marx and Weber
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Week 6: Theories and Mechanisms of Stratification (cont.)

Tues. (Oct. 7th): Capital

Required Reading:

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 241-258 In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, J. Richardson, editor. Greenwood.

Thurs. (Oct. 9th): How to Make an Unequal Society

Required Reading:

- McQuaig and Brooks: Chs. 11-12

Activity:

- Building a society

Written Assignment #1: upload to eClass before Friday, Oct. 10th at 5:00pm

- How did you get to where you are today? – instructions on eClass
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Week 7: Midterm

Tues. (Oct. 14th): Review and Catch-up on Readings

Thurs. (Oct. 16th): MIDTERM

Part II: Bases and Areas of Stratification**Week 8: Social Class and Education**

Tues. (Oct. 21st): Why Class and Culture Matter for Educational Inequality

Required Reading:

- Stuber: Chs. 1-2

Thurs. (Oct. 23rd): Social Class and Education

Required Reading:

- Stuber: Chs. 3-4
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Week 9: Social Class and Education (cont.)

Tues. (Oct. 28th): Social Class and Education

Required Reading:

- Stuber: Chs. 5-6

Activity:

- Social class and privilege

Thurs. (Oct. 30th): Persistent Inequality

Required Reading:

- Stuber: Ch. 7

Written Assignment #2: upload to eClass before Friday, Oct. 31st at 5:00pm

- How has your background influenced your experience in college? – instructions on eClass
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Week 10: Racism and Sexism**Tues. (Nov. 4th): Race, Ethnicity, and Racism**

Required Reading:

- Miles, Robert, and Rudy Torres. 2007 “Does ‘Race’ Matter? Transatlantic Perspectives of Racism After ‘Race Relations’” Ch. 8, pp. 65-73 in *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*.
- Essed, Philomena. 2007 “The Integration of Racism into Everyday Life: The Story of Rosa N.” Ch. 25, pp. 209-216, in *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*.

Thurs. (Nov. 6th): Gender Roles, Sexism, and Attitudes

Required Reading:

- Eckes, Thomas. 2002. “Paternalistic and Envious Gender Stereotypes: Testing Predictions from the Stereotype Content Model.” *Sex Roles* 47(3/4): 99-114.

Activity:

- Ambivalent Sexism Inventory
-

Week 11: Labor Markets**Tues. (Nov. 11th): NO CLASS****Thurs. (Nov. 13th): Organizations and Labor Market Inequality**

Required Reading:

- Acker, Joan. 2006. “Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations.” *Gender & Society* 20(4):441–464.

Activity:

- Labor market inequality exercise

Week 12: Labor Markets (cont.)

Tues. (Nov. 18th): Gender and Family Inequality in the Workplace

Required Reading:

- Neysmith, Sheila, Marge Reitsma-Street, Stephanie Baker Collins, and Elaine Porter. 2013. "Provisioning: Thinking About All of Women's Work." Ch. 30, pp. 597-605 In *Gender and Women's Studies in Canada*.

Thurs. (Nov. 20th): Inequality in the Workplace by Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

Required Reading:

- Teelucksingh, Cheryl, and Grace-Edward Galabuzi. 2007 "Working Precariously: The Impact of Race and Immigrant Status on Employment Opportunities and Outcomes in Canada." Ch. 24, pp. 202-208, in *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*.

Written Assignment #3: upload to eClass before Friday, Nov. 21st at 5:00pm

- Race, gender, and work experiences – instructions on eClass
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Week 13: Health and Policy

Tues. (Nov. 25th): Health

Required Reading:

- Raphael, Dennis. 2012 "The Importance of Tackling Health Inequalities." Ch. 1, pp. 1-32 in *Tackling Health Inequalities: Lessons from International Experiences*, edited by Dennis Raphael. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- McQuaig and Brooks: Ch. 9

Activity:

- Health policy exercise

Thurs. (Nov. 27th): Persistent Inequality, Policy, and Change

Required Reading:

- Fortin, Nicole, David A. Green, Thomas Lemieux, Kevin Milligan, and W. Craig Riddell. 2012. "Canadian Inequality: Recent Developments and Policy Options." *Canadian Public Policy* 38(2):121-145.
- Perrucci, Robert and Carolyn C. Perrucci. 2014. "The Good Society: Core Social Values, Social Norms, and Public Policy." *Sociological Forum* 29(1): 245-258.

Week 14:

Tues. (Dec. 2nd): Review for Final and Catch-up on Readings

Thurs. (Dec 4th): NO CLASS

Tentative Final Exam Date: December 10, 2014 @ 9:00am

*****Please check your schedules for any changes to the final exam date*****

Sociology Deferred Final Exam Date: January 17, 2015 @ 9:00am

Location: Tory BW 2

Note: As per §23.3(2)c of the University Calendar: *A deferred final examination will not be approved if a student (a) has not been in regular attendance where attendance and/or participation are required, and/or, (b) excluding the final exam, has completed less than half of the assigned work.*