

SOC 364.01
SOCIAL INEQUALITY
Fall Semester, 2008

- What are the origins of social stratification?
- What practices and institutions shape these divisions? Who benefits from the various social inequalities? Who is suffering from them?
- How is the experience of social class modified through its intersections with race and gender?
- How much inequality is there and how much do (can) we need (tolerate)?
- Is inequality increasing or decreasing in our society?

I. Instructor/TA

Instructor: Karen Manges Douglas
Classroom: ABI Room 307
Class time: MW, 10-11:20am
Office: ABI Room 311
Office hours: MW 1-3 pm; F 11-noon;
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TA:
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II. Course Catalog Description

This survey course studies the distribution of three primary resources: class, status and power. Special attention is given to the way birth-ascribed statuses such as age, sex and race interact with class, status and power stratification systems. Special attention is also given to the popular and scientific explanations of inequality, especially with respect to the high and low ends of the distribution of income and wealth. Prerequisite: SOC 261 or consent of instructor. Credit 3.

III. Course Objectives

The main purpose of this course is to examine Social Inequality from a Sociological Perspective. Social Inequality, or Social Stratification, is a major feature of our daily experience. Such stratification takes many forms: from differences in social prestige, social class, and income, to differences in power, career opportunities, and resources in communities. This course will

provide an overview of the field of Social Stratification. By the end of the course, we will have a working foundation of the study of inequality.

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Recall basic social facts -- e.g., distribution of income, wealth, status & power in the United States;
2. State major sociological explanations of stratification;
3. Recognize & apply relevant sociological concepts;
4. Identify social processes that distribute & redistribute money, honor and power in society.

IV. Textbook

(1) Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System, Douglas S. Massey, Russell Sage Foundation, ISBN: 978-0-87154-585-5

(2) Life After Welfare: Reform and the Persistence of Poverty, Authors: Laura Lein & Deanna T. Schexnayder with Karen Manges Douglas and Daniel G. Schroeder

The professor may assign other readings and video viewing as applicable.**

V. Rules of the Road

1. We start and end class on time
2. Turn off cell phones, pagers, and beepers
3. No mp3 players
4. No web-surfing or email checking on laptop computers during class
5. Check your email account frequently (but not during class!)
6. Check the course web page frequently

VI. The Classroom Experience

Social stratification/inequality is a stimulating and provocative subject. It can be quite controversial and there are few easy or obvious answers. Accordingly, I think these thorny topics are best addressed through thoughtful, civil discussion of an array of perspectives. To achieve this we must all enter class prepared to engage the issues of the day and open to ideas and contributions provided by the readings and by others in class. This preparation, at times, requires a good deal of time and energy, but its mastery provides the most exciting class discussion. On the web page, I will supply thoughts and questions to accompany each reading assignment to guide your study and introduce you to the topics we will consider together.

VII. Class Participation/Attendance

- University policy requires that a record of attendance be kept by the instructor. Attendance is mandatory. Your attendance at all face-to-face meetings is required. Roll will be taken. You are responsible for signing the class roster.

- Be on time for class and be prepared to stay for the entire class period. Chronically arriving to class late and/or leaving class early is NOT acceptable.

VIII. Grade Component

I. Exams

Two equally weighted multiple choice and short answer exams will be administered in class. Make up exams will be given only to students who have a **legitimate written excuse and must be scheduled and taken with three weeks of the missed exam.**

The exams will consist of the material presented in class and from the assigned readings.

2. Article Summary/ Presentation

- (1) Every student will be assigned two journal articles in which to prepare a summary. Written instructions regarding format and content will be provided. Points will be deducted for misspellings, incorrect punctuation, poor grammar, poor sentence construction, etc. PLEASE PROOFREAD your work before turning in your summary.
- (2) The summaries should be no more than two typed pages. Each summary will be worth 33 points.
- (3) Additionally, you will be required to make a brief presentation (Powerpoint) of one of your articles to the class. The Powerpoint presentation will be worth 34 points.

IX. Grading & Evaluation

Attendance/discussion	100 pts (20%)
Midterm Exam	100 pts (20%)
Final Exam	100 pts (20%)
Article Summary & Presentation	100 pts_ (20%)
Total Possible Points	400 points

A	360-400 points
B	320-359 points
C	280-319 points
D	240-279 points
F	239 and below

X. Key Course Dates

Oct. 8	Mid-term Exam
Dec. 15	Final Exam (11 am – 1pm)

XI. Course Calendar

This is a tentative schedule and subject to ongoing revision throughout the semester.

Week	Dates	Reading Assign.	Topic/Information
1	Aug. 25, 27	Syllabus/Massey Chpt. 1	Syllabus/Introduction to study of inequality
2	Sep. 1,3	Massey Chpt. 2	Theories of Class & Social Inequality
3	Sep. 8, 10	Massey Chpt. 3	American Class System
4	Sep. 15, 17	Massey Chpt. 4	Upper Class & Power Elite
5	Sep. 22, 24	Massey Chpt.5	Middle Classes & Changing Economy
6	Sep. 2, Oct. 1	Massey Chpt. 6	Poverty & the Poor
7	Oct. 6,8	Massey Chpt 7	Stratification systems & social mobility
8	Oct. 13,15	Lein et.al.	Public policy & the class system
9	Oct. 20,22	Lein et.al.	Racial/ethnic differentiation
10	Oct. 27, 29	Lein et.al. Assigned articles	Racial/ethnic stratification
11	Nov. 3,5	Assigned articles	Gender Inequality
12	Nov. 10, 12	Assigned articles	Political Inequality
13	Nov.17, 19	Assigned articles	Ideology & the Legitimation of Inequality
14	Nov. 24,26	Assigned articles	Thanksgiving week
14	Dec. 1, 3	Assigned articles	Article presentations
15	Dec. 8, 10	Assigned articles	Article presentations
16	Dec. 15		FINAL EXAM (11am-1pm)

*The professor reserves the right to modify this schedule as needed.

Academic Dishonesty

SHSU expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of the academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Students who cheat will automatically receive the grade of 0 (zero) in the exam, quiz or assignment in question. Students who cheat more than once will receive an automatic F in the class.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may be not penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. If a student plans to be absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day, he/she **MUST** provide the instructor with the dates to be missed for religious reasons.

Disabled Student Policy

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center . They should make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, this student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.