

Social Stratification SOC 3540-01
Sociology Department, William Paterson University
Fall 2017

Professor: Dr. Wendy Christensen
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 11am-12pm, Tuesdays 2-4pm, by appointment.
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Class Website: <http://bit.ly/sociology3540>

"The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life." – Jane Addams

Course Description:

This course examines stratified inequality in the U.S. across intersectional race, gender and social class lines, including the distribution of power in its multiple forms. This course also considers how themes of social class and concepts of social inequality are (re)produced through various aspects of society such as income, housing, and educational segregation, and culture. The aim of the course is to educate students about varied structured social inequalities centered around gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, among others, and to recognize their own positions in our stratified society. Through community-based research and projects, this course provides a concrete sense of what it means to talk about structured inequality, and empower students to act as change agents who reduce social inequality.

Course Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Acquaint the student with the social structure of society;
2. Present theories of social class formation;
3. Analyze modern U.S. society in terms of its intersectional class, status and reference group structure;
4. Compare the U.S. with other modern nations in terms of social stratification;
5. Understand the abuses and consequences of racism, prejudice, and discrimination in contemporary U.S. society;
6. Appreciate the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in contemporary American society;
7. Understand the importance of inclusion and multiculturalism for contemporary U.S. society.

Required Text:

- Edin, Kathryn J. and H. Luke Shaefer. 2015. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Mariner Books.

Course Schedule:

	Reading	Due Dates
<i>Introductions</i> Wednesday 9/6	Introductions	
<i>Sociological Imagination</i> Monday 9/11	"The Promise of Sociology" by C. Wright Mills	
<i>Social Stratification</i> Wednesday 9/13	Chapter 9.1 "What is Social Stratification?"	
<i>Class and Mobility</i> Monday 9/18	FILM: <i>Born Rich</i>	
<i>Class and Mobility</i> Wednesday 9/20	Chapter 9.2 "Social Stratification and Mobility in the United States"	
<i>Global Stratification</i> Monday 9/25	Chapter 9.3 "Global Stratification and Inequality"	
<i>Global Stratification</i> Wednesday 9/27	"We Just Feel Like We Don't Belong Here Anymore" by Becca Andrews	
<i>Theories of Inequality</i> Monday 10/2	Chapter 9.4 "Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification"	
<i>Theories of Inequality</i> Wednesday 10/4	No reading.	You must have 4 Key Concept Papers handed in by Friday 10/6.
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i> Monday 10/9	"Just Calling the White Nationalists at Charlottesville "Nazis" Erases America's Own Racism" by Lindsey E. Jones	
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i> Wednesday 10/11	"Why Intersectionality Can't Wait" by Kimberlé Crenshaw	

	Reading	Due Dates
<i>Racial Inequality & Crime</i> Monday 10/16	FILM: <i>13th</i>	
<i>Racial Inequality & Crime</i> Wednesday 10/18	"How to End Institutional Racism" by Grad Team	
<i>Sex & Gender</i> Monday 10/23	"Divided America: Gender Equality in 2016? It's Complicated." by Associated Press	
<i>Sex & Gender</i> Wednesday 10/25	FILM: <i>Paycheck to Paycheck</i>	
<i>Welfare</i> Monday 10/30	<i>\$2.00 a Day</i> : Introduction and Chapter 1	
<i>Welfare</i> Wednesday 11/1	"The 'Welfare Queen' is a Lie" by Rachel Black and Aleta Sprague	You must have 7 total Key Concept Papers handed in by Friday 11/3
<i>Work</i> Monday 11/6	<i>\$2.00 a Day</i> : Chapter 2	
Tuesday 11/7	VOTE	
<i>Work</i> Wednesday 11/8	"To Understand Rising Inequality, Consider the Janitors at Two Top Companies, Then and Now" by Neil Irwin	
<i>Housing Security</i> Monday 11/13	<i>\$2.00 a Day</i> : Chapter 3	
<i>Housing Security</i> Wednesday 11/15	"The remarkable thing that happens to poor kids when you help their parents with rent" by Max Ehrenfreund	
<i>Survival Strategies</i> Monday 11/20	<i>\$2.00 a Day</i> : Chapter 4	

	Reading	Due Dates
<i>Survival Strategies</i> Wednesday 11/22	"My Mother Wasn't Trash" by Joshua Wilkey	
<i>Urban/Rural Poverty</i> Monday 11/27	<i>\$2.00 a Day</i> : Chapter 5	
<i>Urban/Rural Poverty</i> Wednesday 11/29	"Why well-off black families end up living in poorer areas than white families with similar or even lower incomes." by John Eligon and Robert Gebeloff	All 10 Key Concept Papers must be handed in by Friday 12/1.
<i>Solutions?</i> Monday 12/4	<i>\$2.00 a Day</i> : Conclusion: Where, Then, From Here?	
<i>Solutions?</i> Wednesday 12/6	"How to Get Out of Your Bubble and Start Making Change in Your Community" By Beth Skwarecki	
<i>Making Change</i> Monday 12/11	"Meet the Badass Moms Leading the Fight for Clean Water in Flint" by Katie McDonough	
<i>Making Change</i> Wednesday 12/13	"The Calling" by KK Ottesen	
Wednesday 12/20	Final Stratification Paper Due	

Course Policies:

Attendance:

- Attendance will be taken during each class.
- Regular attendance will help boost your final grade in the course.
- If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student. You cannot make up the in-class group work.
- You will not pass this class if you miss it more than 4 times.

Classroom Respect:

We are all responsible for maintaining a respectful environment in this class. I encourage you to participate in class discussions and to raise questions and make observations. Sociology often

touches on areas of deeply held beliefs, on controversies, and sensitive issues. While you should feel free to explore your own perspectives on these issues, you are also expected to be respectful of others' views. To do your part, I ask that you listen with an open mind while others are speaking. When you're speaking, refrain from personal attacks and back up your statements with supporting evidence. This does not mean that you can't disagree, only that you must do so respectfully.

Google Drive:

- We will use Google Drive for turning in and grading assignments during the semester.
- You will need to have a working Gmail account for this class.
- Course Materials such as readings, assignments, handouts, and PowerPoints will be stored in our class **Google Drive folder: <http://bit.ly/sociology3540>**

Assignments & Grading: Your final grade will be made up of the following assignments:

In class assignments	20%
Key Concept Papers	60%
Final Paper	20%

Key Concept Papers:

During the course of the semester you will write 10 single-page papers that show your mastery of a key concept. These papers are due any time you would like to hand them in, but we will space them out during the semester:

- By 10/6: 4 papers must be completed.
- By 11/3: 3 more papers must be completed (for a total of 7).
- By 12/1: 3 more papers must be completed (for a total of 10).

Each paper must do 3 things:

1. Show you understand the concept. Define it yourself, in your own words.
2. Apply the concept to a current issue or event.
3. Cite at least 2 sources. One source must be from our class readings, and one can be any properly-cited source.

The Key Concepts are:

1. Social stratification
2. US class system
3. Meritocracy

4. Functionalism
5. Conflict Theory
6. Symbolic Interactionism
7. Racism
8. Sexism
9. Welfare
10. Segregation

Feedback and Rewrites:

- Each paper will be graded on a 5 point scale and provided with feedback.
- You are allowed to rewrite 2 papers for higher grades, but only if you meet with me to discuss the rewrite. All rewrites are due by 12/1.

Late & Missed Assignments:

- Late assignments will not be accepted.
- This is a class where we build on our work over the course the semester, so do not let yourself get behind.

Academic Honesty:

Anytime you turn in individual work I expect that what you turn in will be written solely by you and will be unique from that of your classmates. It is policy that, with documented evidence, a student who cheats on an exam or paper for the **first time** *will fail the course* and record of the occurrence will be sent to the department Chair and the relevant Dean. If a student cheats a second time, they will fail the course *and* be expelled from the sociology major and reported to the relevant Dean. Please ask if you have any questions about what is and is not acceptable. The Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: <http://www.wpunj.edu/cte/wpu-academic-integrity-policy.dot>

Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to participate in, or to complete the work in this course, please let me know within the first two weeks of class so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

If You Need Help:

Do not hesitate to contact me if you need assistance during the semester. You are responsible for heading off problems before they turn into emergencies. The sooner you get in touch with me about an issue, the sooner we can work to solve a problem together.

Helpful Resources on Campus:

Academic Success Center: Raubinger Hall, 720-3324/2563

At the Academic Success Center, students receive one-on-one tutoring assistance, developmental skills for math and reading courses, and workshops to help students develop effective study skills and utilize effective strategies. A computer lab, study groups, and exam review sessions are also available.

Writing Center: Atrium 128, 720-2633

The Writing Center provides one-on-one tutoring for any WPU student working on any kind of writing in any stage of development. We work with students on writing issues such as outlining, thesis clarification, organization, style, transitions, citing, and grammar, and we help them learn how to edit and proofread their own writing. Students can make an appointment at <https://wpunj.mywconline.com>, or stop by Atrium 128 or VR 3048.

Office of Veteran's and Military Affairs: Speert Hall 118, 720-3660

The Office provides support to veterans, active duty service members and their families by administering services that assist with the transition from military service member to college student.

Counseling, Health & Wellness Center: Overlook South, 720-2257/2360

The Center provides free primary health care, personal counseling, health education, and prevention services to students.

The Women's Center: Student Center Room 313, 720-2578

The Women's Center works to expand the understanding of gender issues, empower students to explore options in their lives, and motivate the campus community toward greater involvement in these issues as leaders, allies, and agents of change. The Center's LGBTQ Programs facilitate the social, psychological, and academic growth of LGBTQ students.

Basic Needs: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Student Development for support. (Dr. Sherman can be reached at shermang@wpunj.edu or 973.720.2750) Please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources I can.