

# SOCIAL STRATIFICATION & INEQUALITY

*"The division of society into distinct social classes is one of the most striking manifestations of the modern world . . . it has often been the source of other kinds of inequality, and . . . the economic dominance of a particular class has very often been the basis for its political rule."*

*T. B. Bottomore, 1966*

## Staff

Professor: John Pease

Apprentice: Heather Marsh

## I'd Rather Be Studying

We hope this is an intellectually interesting and useful course for you. Set high standards, for all of us. Take your studies, seriously. Study, all the time. Learn all you can and if there is anything we can do to help you learn more, let us know.

## Invitation to Study

If the course described here does not permit you an adequate opportunity to develop and express your intellectual abilities, you may arrange to have other scholarly work (additional reading, writing, researching) included in your graded program for this course. If you are interested in this option, develop a specific and formal agreement with us before the beginning of the second week of classes.

## *Of Course*

*Social Stratification and Inequality*

*Sociology 441 (section 0101)*

*9:30-10:45 Tuesdays and Thursdays; Fall 2009*

*Room 2309 Art-Sociology Building*

*University of Maryland, College Park*

## *Course Objectives*

- 1. To help you clarify and expand your questions about social stratification, social class, and social inequality;*
- 2. to help you develop your own theory of class stratification;*
- 3. to help you apply some of the concepts and knowledge of social stratification, social class, and social inequality to your own life experiences;*
- 4. to help you better understand changes in social stratification, social class, and social inequality;*
- 5. to encourage you to consider ways in which class inequality might be reduced; and*
- 6. to encourage you to read critically, to think analytically, and to write clearly.*

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### ***I'd Rather Be Studying***

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*John Pease (pease@umd.edu) Fall 2009*

*Stratification.syllabus.F09*

## Primary Course Questions

1. How do the concepts, knowledge, and theories of social stratification and inequality illuminate your own experience? How is social stratification part of your own life experience?
2. What is your theory of social stratification and inequality? How do you describe and explain social stratification and inequality? What is the source and distribution of class, power, economic resources, prestige, social mobility, and poverty?
3. How and why have social stratification and inequality in America changed during the past century, during the past generation, and what is the significance of these changes? Is America a middle class middle mass society?
4. What is poverty? What is it like to live poorly? What determines the rate of poverty? What determines who is poor? How can, how should, poverty be reduced?

## Common Reading

This course features three books, four articles, census data regarding income, poverty, unemployment and a slew of handouts. The books are available at the University Book Center. The articles are available online. The handouts will be distributed in class.

The books are:

Elliot Liebow, Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women. New York: Penguin

Books, 1993. Any edition of the book is acceptable; any book with one of the following ISBNs is acceptable:

014024137X, 9780140241372, 0029190959, 9780029190951

Beth Shulman. The Betrayal of Work: How Low-wage Jobs Fail 30 Million Americans. New

York: The New Press, 2005. Any edition of this book is acceptable; any book with one of the following ISBNs is acceptable:

1565847334, 9781565847330, 9781595580009

John Steinbeck. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Viking Press, 1939.

Any edition of this

book is acceptable; this book has been reprinted many times and has many different ISBNs.

The articles are:

DeNeen L. Brown, "Poor? Pay Up." *The Washington Post* (May 18, 2009).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2009/05/18/ST2009051801162.html>

Chandler Davidson, "The Culture of Shiftlessness."

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~kpearson/syllabi/culture.html>

C. Wright Mills, "The Structure of Power in American Society." *The British Journal of*

*Sociology*, 9 (March, 1958) 29-41.

John Pease and Lee Martin. "Want Ads and Jobs for the Poor: A Glaring Mismatch." *Sociological Forum*, 12 (December, 1997), 545-564.

To access the Mills and Pease-Martin articles:

- 1 Go to [www.lib.umd.edu](http://www.lib.umd.edu)
- 2 Click "research port"
- 3 In "by database" type jstor and click "find database"
- 4 Click "jstor"
- 5 Click "Browse" and select "by title"
- 6 Scroll down to the journal and click it
- 7 Scroll down to the appropriate year and issue and click it
- 8 Scroll down and click the article
- 9 Zing! There it is!

www

[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

[www.TheyRule.net](http://www.TheyRule.net)

The handouts are:

Various issues of *The Soche Buff's Gazette*

### Documentary Films

- "Big One" (9)
- "Blue-collar in a White-collar World" (10)
- "Career Colleges" (14)
- "Class Dismissed: Class Clowns" (17)
- "Down and Out in America" (13)
- "Feminism 1976" (9)
- "The First Measured Century" (5+22)
- "Greenbelt" (10)
- "Income Inequality: Johnston Interview" (14)
- "Income Inequality: Shulman Interview" (14)
- "Poverty and Pickle Pickers" (5)
- "Running with the Bulls" (58)
- "Social Class in America" (10)
- "A Tour through the Landscape of Class" (8)
- "Under the Influence" (14)
- "Waging a Living" (23)
- "Wall Street" (5)
- "Who Owns Our Government?" (45)

### Audio Tapes

- Billie Holiday, "God Bless the Child"
- Garrison Keillor, "Money"
- Jennifer Holliday, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"
- Ronald Reagan, "Poverty"
- Wisconsin W-2 Program
- Woody Guthrie, "Tom Joad"

### Slides

- Photographs of the Great Depression  
by Margaret Bourke-White, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange

### Class Attendance and Participation

*This course requires that you attend and participate in class meetings. We have designed the course so that there is substance to each of our class meetings. Class*

meetings provide important information, documentary film material, opportunity for discussion, and may include a small assignment. Your questions and comments improve the value of the course. We take attendance at every class meeting because it helps us determine your command of course material (there is much that you learn in your courses that is not measured on even the most carefully crafted graded assignments), helps us learn your name, indicates how well we are doing, reminds you of your academic responsibility, and provides useful information for letters of recommendation. Moreover, research studies indicate that class attendance is a better predictor of grades than the number of hours you study outside of class and even better than your high school grade point average and your SAT score. If you do not know University policy regarding class attendance, please learn it before the beginning of our second class meeting. The complete policy is available online at [www.inform.umd.edu/ugradcat/](http://www.inform.umd.edu/ugradcat/) If you have a university-excused absence please be sure to inform us promptly.

### *Religious Observance*

If you will need to be absent from class to participate in a religious observance, please provide us with a written note of the dates before the end of the second week of classes. We will make certain that you are not disadvantaged because of your absence. University policy regarding religious observance is available online at [www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/iii\\_510a.pdf](http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/iii_510a.pdf)

### *Electronic Mail*

The common email for this course is [stratification@umd.edu](mailto:stratification@umd.edu) Messages sent to this address go to everyone in the class.

## *Academic Honor Code*

*Please affirm your commitment to the honor pledge ("I pledge that on my honor I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment") on all your graded assignments. If you don't know the University Honor Code, please learn it before our second class meeting. The Honor Code is available online at [www.inform.umd.edu/ugradcat/](http://www.inform.umd.edu/ugradcat/).*

## Graded Assignments

This course features three exams, a family class history report, and some small assignments. The dates of the exams are listed below in the Course Calendar. All your work is graded for timeliness, accuracy, completeness, written expression, originality and, most of all, how well it demonstrates a profound understanding of the material.

If you don't know University policy regarding late work and the very few circumstances in which professors are obliged to provide make-up exams, please learn this policy before the beginning of our second class meeting. The policy is available online at [www.inform.umd.edu/ugradcat/](http://www.inform.umd.edu/ugradcat/)

In calculating your final grade in the course, the combination of your class attendance, participation, and small assignments counts 15 percent, your family class history report counts 10 percent, and each of your exams count 25 percent. The grading schedule for this course is:

A = 4.0	A- = 3.7	A+ = 4.3
B = 3.0	B- = 2.7	B+ = 3.3
C = 2.0	C- = 1.7	C+ = 2.3
D = 1.0	D- = 0.7	D+ = 1.3

## Learning Assistance Center

If you are having academic difficulty in this course or in any course make use of the services of the Learning Assistance Center. The Center provides help with listening and note-taking, textbook reading, exam preparation, exam skills, writing skills, and much more. More information is available on its website [www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS)

## Know No

1. Please turn off your electronic equipment (blackberry, blackjacket, cell phone, iPhone, laptop, mp3 player, PDA, sidekick, etc.) before you enter the classroom and leave it off until you exit the classroom.
2. Please leave the fifth row of seats empty.
3. If you arrive late to class please enter through the door at the rear of the room.
4. This course does not provide extra-credit assignments.

## *Recommended Field Trip: Historic Greenbelt*

Tours begin at the Greenbelt Museum, 15 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, MD. The Museum is open for tours Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Admission is \$2.00. [www.greenbeltmuseum.org](http://www.greenbeltmuseum.org) Recommended reading: William H. Form. "Status Stratification in a Planned Community." *American Sociological Review*, X (October, 1945), 605-613). This article is available via jstor.

### Disability Support Services

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Support Services please provide us with the accommodation request form today or at our next class meeting. The rules for eligibility and the types of accommodations you may request are available online at [www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving\\_serv.html](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving_serv.html)

### Here We Are

John Pease Electronic mail: [pease@umd.edu](mailto:pease@umd.edu)  
 Voice mail: 301-405-6436  
 Office: 4139 Art-Sociology Building  
 Office hours: 3:00-4:00 Tuesdays and Thursdays  
 Website: <http://bsos.umd.edu/socy/people/faculty/jpease.html>

Heather Marsh Electronic mail: [hmarsh@socy.umd.edu](mailto:hmarsh@socy.umd.edu)  
 Office: 4108 Art-Sociology Building  
 Office hours: By appointment via email  
 Website: [http://bsos.umd.edu/socy/Grad/grad\\_students.htm](http://bsos.umd.edu/socy/Grad/grad_students.htm)

## Help Me

I am interested in learning what you think I should do to become a better teacher and to help you become a better student. Whenever you have a question, complaint, concern, problem or whatnot about this course, please let me know; bring it up during class or email me or leave me a note. One way or another, keep me posted.

## CourseEvalUM

Sometime during the last two weeks of the semester, please go to [www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu) and enter your evaluation of this course. Students who complete evaluations for all of their courses in the previous semester can access the posted results via Testudo's CourseEvalUM reporting link for any course on campus that has at least a 70 percent response rate.

## Course Calendar

1. September 1 Tuesday  
 Introductions and Overview of the Course  
 Lecture: A Comment on the Study of Stratification  
 Handouts: Syllabus  
                   Suggested Study Questions for the Readings & Two Films  
                   I'd Rather Be Studying: The True Story of Sara Bellum  
 Audio: Holiday, "God Bless the Child"
  
2. September 3 Thursday  
 Question: How is social stratification part of your own life experience?  
 Lecture: Social Stratification in Everyday Life  
 Reading: Steinbeck chapters 1-5

Handout: *Social Hierarchy*

3. *September 8 Tuesday*

Lecture: *Overview of The Grapes of Wrath*

Reading: *Steinbeck chapters 6-11*

Handouts: *The Grapes of Wrath*  
*The True Story of Testudo*

Film: *"Greenbelt"*

Audio: *Guthrie, "Tom Joad"*  
*Holliday, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"*

Slides: *Photographs of the Great Depression*

Field Trip: *Tour Historic Greenbelt*

4. *September 10 Thursday*

Question: *Who gets what and why?*

Lecture: *Key Concepts and Perennial Questions*

Reading: *Steinbeck chapters 12-18*

Handout: *Concepts and Questions*

5. *September 15 Tuesday*

Question: *What is social equality?*

Lecture: *The Meaning of Social Equality*

Reading: *Steinbeck chapters 19-24*

Handout: *Social Equality*

6. *September 17 Thursday*  
Question: *What is the relevance of ideology for understanding social stratification?*  
Lecture: *Ideology and Stratification*  
Reading: *Steinbeck chapters 25-30*  
Handout: *Ideology*  
Film: *"Feminism 1976"*
  
7. *September 22 Tuesday*  
Question: *What is Marx's explanation of class inequality?*  
Lecture: *Marx's Theory of Class*  
Handout: *Marx' Theory of Class Stratification*
  
8. *September 24 Thursday*  
Question: *What is Steinbeck's explanation of class inequality?*  
Lecture: *Class Inequality and The Grapes of Wrath*  
Handout: *I'd Rather Be Studying: Education is a Noble and Risky Ambition*
  
9. *September 29 Tuesday*  
Question: *How much social mobility is there and what causes it?*  
Lecture: *The Pattern and Causes of Social Mobility*  
Handout: *Social Mobility*  
Film: *"A Tour Through the Landscape of Class"*  
Workshop: *Family Class History Assignment*
  
10. *October 1 Thursday*  
Testudo: *The First Exam*
  
11. *October 6 Tuesday*  
Question: *Is America a middle class society?*  
Lecture: *The Working Class Majority*  
Handout: *Class Is*

Film: "Social Class in America"

12. October 8 Thursday

Question: Is America a middle mass society?

Lecture: The Myth of the Middle Class Middle Mass Thesis

Handout: The Class Divide

Films: "Blue Collar in a White Collar World"

"Class Dismissed: Class Clowns"

13. October 13 Tuesday

Question: How and why did economic equality increase after the Great Depression?

Lecture: A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

Handout: The Great Recovery

Film: "The First Measured Century"

14. October 15 Thursday

Question: How and why has class inequality increased?

Lecture: Technology, Politics, and Cupidity

Handout: The Great U-turn

Films: "Big One"

"Wall Street"

15. October 20 Tuesday

Question: How and why is class inequality increasing?

Film: "Running with the Bulls"

Testudo: Family Class History Report Due

16. *October 22 Thursday*  
 Question: *What is the source and distribution of political power?*  
 Lecture: *Who Decides? Who Governs? Who Rules?*  
 Reading: *Mills article*  
*www.TheyRule.net*  
 Handout: *Power*
17. *October 27 Tuesday*  
 Question: *How and why does the rate of political participation vary by class?*  
 Lecture: *Class and Politics*  
 Handout: *Politics*  
 Film: *“Under the Influence”*
18. *October 29 Thursday*  
 Film: *“Who Owns Our Government?”*  
 Handouts: *The Savings and Loan Crisis*  
*I'd Rather Be Studying: The True Story of Leah K.*
19. *November 3 Tuesday*  
 Testudo: *The Second Exam*
20. *November 5 Thursday*  
 Question: *What is the distribution of wealth and income?*  
 Lecture: *Wealth and Income*  
 Reading: *www.census.gov/income and wealth*  
 Handout: *Money, Money, Money*  
 Film: *“Income Inequality: Johnston Interview”*  
 Audio: *Keillor “Money”*
21. *November 10 Tuesday*  
 Question: *How much should jobs pay?*

Lecture: *The Distribution of Wages*  
Handout: *Wages*  
Film: "Waging a Living"

22. *November 12 Thursday*

Discussion: *Shulman, The Betrayal of Work*  
Reading: *Shulman book*  
Film: "Income Inequality: Shulman Interview"

23. *November 17 Tuesday*

Question: *What does the unemployment rate tell us?*  
Lecture: *Work Is Fundamental*  
Reading: *Liebow chapter 2*  
*Pease and Martin article*  
*www.bls.gov*  
Handout: *Unemployment*

24. *November 19 Thursday*

Question: *What is poverty?*  
Lecture: *The Measurement and Demography of Poverty*  
Reading: *Brown article*  
*www.census.gov/poverty*  
Handout: *What Is Poverty?*  
Audio: *Reagan, "Poverty"*  
*Wisconsin W-2 Program*

25. November 24 Tuesday

Discussion: Liebow, *Tell Them Who I Am*

Reading: Liebow book

Film: "Down and Out in America"

November 26 Thursday

No class; Thanksgiving Holiday

26. December 1 Tuesday

Question: What determines the rate of poverty?

Lecture: Subculture vs. Political Economy

Reading: Davidson article

Handout: Why Poverty?

27. December 3 Thursday

Discussion: What should be done to reduce poverty in America?

Film: "Career Colleges"

28. December 8 Tuesday

Question: How to lower the rate of poverty?

Lecture: Ways to Reduce Poverty

Handout: Poverty Solutions

Film: "Poverty and Pickle Pickers"

Play: "The Jobless Poor"

29. December 10 Thursday

Course review and revelry

Handouts: *Secession of the Successful?* by Robert B. Reich

*I'd Rather Be Studying: Get Hip on Studying*

30. December 15 Tuesday 8:00 a.m.

Testudo: The Final Exam

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*The Itch of Ignorance is*

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*a Gift*

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