

## Sociology 360: Introduction to Social Stratification, Summer 2001

Days: Tuesday – Friday  
Times: 9:00am – 11:30am  
Room: 082A Mary Gates Hall

Instructor: Rob Warren (jrwarren@u.washington.edu)  
Office: 206P Savery Hall  
Office Hours: By appointment or after class

### Course Description

“Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.” -- Barry Switzer

In this course we will examine social and economic inequality in American society. The primary focus is on stratification by race, class, and gender in the United States, but we will use material from other societies to provide a comparative and historical perspective.

This course will be organized around two central questions. First, how fairly are social and economic resources allocated in the United States? Answering this question requires an awareness of the level and character of inequality in the United States, an appreciation of different explanations for the origins and persistence of inequality, and the ability to compare inequality in the United States to inequality in other cultures and societies. However, personal judgments about “how fair” things are rely ultimately on individuals’ political and ethical principles. Second, what can be done to remedy perceived unfairness? Answering this question requires the ability to think critically about public policy issues as they pertain to social and economic inequality.

### Course Requirements

- Examinations (120 points = 60% of course grade): There will be in-class examinations every Friday. Each will consist of short and medium length essay questions, and will cover readings, lectures, and discussions (in other words, everything) from the preceding week. For more detail, see below. Each examination will be worth 30 points, or 15% of your course grade. *I will not give make-up examinations, except in the case of serious and documented medical emergencies.*
- Discussion Papers (60 points = 30% of course grade): Very short papers are due every Thursday at the beginning of class. Papers should be 1 or 2 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point type, one-inch margins) and should summarize all of the main points of all of the readings assigned in the preceding week. **All pages beyond the second page will be ignored.** For more detail, see below. Each is worth 15 points or 7.5% of your course grade. *I will not accept late papers.*
- Class Participation (20 points = 10% of course grade): Each Thursday we will use about half of the class period to discuss the week’s readings. This discussion will be lead by class members. Beyond this, my lectures tend to be very interactive, relying on questions and comments from class members. Likewise, class discussions depend heavily on the active participation of everyone in the classroom. Consequently, participation in class will count for 20 points or 10% of the course grade.

## Course Grades

The maximum number of points you can earn from all assignments is 200 (120 from examinations, 60 from discussion papers, and 20 from class participation). Your course grade will equal your total points divided by 50. Standard rounding applies. For example, if your assignment scores are as follows:

Examinations:	23 + 30 + 24 + 22	=	99
Discussion Papers:	15 + 12 + 9 + 12	=	48
Participation:	20	=	20

then your total number of points would equal 167. Your course grade would then equal 167/50 or 3.34; I would round to 3.3.

## Required Texts

Please purchase (or borrow) the following:

- *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) by David B. Grusky, 2000. Westview Press. ISBN: 0-8133-6654-2. (Referred to as GRUSKY below).

## Week 1

*Read:*

- Martina Morris and Bruce Western. "Inequality in Earnings: Trends and Implications." Pp. 875-880 in GRUSKY.
- Michael Marmot et al. "Social Inequalities in Health: Next Questions and Converging Evidence." (I will distribute copies of this in class.)
- Melvin Kohn. "Job Complexity and Adult Personality." Pp. 532-541 in GRUSKY.
- Ralph Turner. "Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System." Pp. 319-324 in GRUSKY.
- Leonard Beeghly. "The United States in Global Context." (I will distribute copies of this in class.)

*This Week in Class:*

- Tuesday, 8/28: I will provide an introduction to the course and to social stratification. We will review patterns of and trends in social stratification in the United States.
- Wednesday, 8/29: We will consider differences across socioeconomic groups in outcomes like health and political participation. We will also talk about social mobility within and across generations.
- Thursday, 8/30: We will talk about the ways in which systems of social stratification have emerged over time. Then we will compare patterns of social stratification across industrialized countries, paying special attention to variations across comparable countries in public policy regarding poverty and inequality. **Discussion Paper Due** (covering all 5 of the readings)
- Friday, 8/31: **Examination Today** (covering all 5 of the readings and material covered in class on 8/28, 8/29, and 8/30).

## Week 2

### Read:

- Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore. “The Functions of Stratification.” Pp. 55-63 in GRUSKY.
- Melvin M. Tumin. “Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis.” Pp. 65-73 in GRUSKY.
- Fischer et al. “Inequality by Design.” Pp. 73-76 in GRUSKY
- Karl Marx. “Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism.” Pp. 91-101 in GRUSKY.
- Karl Marx. “Ideology and Class.” Pp. 101-102 in GRUSKY.
- Karl Marx. “Value and Surplus Value.” Pp. 103-105 in GRUSKY.
- Max Weber. “Class, Status, Party.” Pp. 132-142 in GRUSKY.

### This Week in Class:

- Tuesday, 9/4: We will talk about functionalist theories of social stratification.
- Wednesday, 9/5: We will talk about conflict and neo-Weberian theories of social stratification; we will discuss the concept of “social class” both conceptually and practically.
- Thursday, 9/6: We will perform a simulation called, “Inequality in Society” (which was created by Daniel V. A. Olson of Indiana University – South Bend). **Discussion Paper Due** (covering all 7 of the readings).
- Friday, 9/7: **Examination Today** (covering all 7 of the readings and material covered in class on 9/4, 9/5, and 9/6).

## Week 3

### Read:

- Christopher Jencks and others. “Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America.” Pp. 403-409 in GRUSKY.
- Jay MacLeod. “Ain’t No Makin’ It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood.” Pp. 421-434 in GRUSKY.
- Mark Granovetter. “The Strength of Weak Ties.” Pp. 447-451 in GRUSKY
- Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray. “Cognitive Classes and Social Behavior.” Pp. 115-142 and Pp. 191-202 from *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. (I will distribute copies of this in class.)
- Claude Fischer et al. “Who Wins? Who Loses?” Pp. 70-101 from *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. (I will distribute copies of this in class.)

### This Week in Class:

- Tuesday, 9/11: We will focus on the causes and consequences of occupational stratification, and we will discuss the role of labor markets and other institutions in shaping occupational and earnings inequalities.
- Wednesday, 9/12: We will discuss the causes and consequences of educational stratification, and we will discuss the role of schools and other institutions in shaping educational outcomes.
- Thursday, 9/13: We will talk generally about the role of mental ability in the process of stratification, and we will review the debate surrounding *The Bell Curve*. **Discussion Paper Due** (covering all 5 of the readings).
- Friday, 9/14: **Examination Today** (covering all 5 of the readings and material covered in class on 9/11, 9/12, and 9/13).

## Week 4

### *Read:*

- Jerry Jacobs. “Revolving Doors: Sex Segregation and Women’s Careers.” Pp. 714-719 in GRUSKY.
- Trond Petersen and Laurie Morgan. “The Within-Job Gender Wage Gap.” Pp. 734-742 in GRUSKY.
- William J. Wilson. “The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions.” Pp. 611-623 in GRUSKY.
- Charles Hirschman and C. Matthew Snipp. “The State of the American Dream: Race and Ethnic Socioeconomic Inequalities in the United States.” Pp. 623-636 in GRUSKY.
- Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro. “Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality.” Pp. 636-642 in GRUSKY.
- Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton. “American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.” Pp. 660-670 in GRUSKY.
- Claude Fischer et al. “How Unequal? America’s Invisible Policy Choices.” Pp. 129-157 from *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. (I will distribute copies of this in class.)

### *This Week in Class:*

- Tuesday, 9/18: After reviewing trends in women’s educational and labor force characteristics, we will focus on differences between men and women in education, occupation, and earnings, and explanations for these differences. Then we will consider a variety of ways in which marriage and family configurations matter for men’s and women’s labor market and other outcomes.
- Wednesday, 9/19: We will focus on differences between race/ethnic groups in education, occupation, and earnings, and we will consider explanations for these differences.
- Thursday, 9/20: After a review of the history of stratification-relevant public policy in the United States we will consider the relationship between public policy and inequality. **Discussion Paper Due** (covering all 7 of the readings).
- Friday, 9/21: **Examination Today** (covering all 7 of the readings and material covered in class on 9/18, 9/19, and 9/20).