University of Wisconsin- Madison  
Sociology 923: Social Stratification  
Three credits  
Mondays, 2:10 to 4:40 PM, 6310 Sewell  
Instructional mode: face to face  
Credit hours are met following the traditional Carnegie definition

Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Instructor  
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Course Description  
This course is a graduate level seminar on social stratification. This is a difficult field to bound as it incorporates several subfields, including the study of gender, race/ethnicity, sociology of education and much of social demography. There’s a lot to cover. As a graduate seminar, this class relies heavily on your participation. I will seldom lecture, and when I do my lectures will be brief and most likely methodological in nature (enough information to get you through the readings). The substantive work of this course falls to you. I expect you to complete all of the readings on time, submit summaries in a timely fashion (described below), and attend every class unless you are SERIOUSLY ill or have some other very legitimate reason for not attending (religious, family emergency, etc.). You will take turns leading our discussions.


Course format  
We will meet for 2 hours and 30 minutes each week, with a five-minute break somewhere in there. In addition to completing ALL of the readings that are required (denoted by a *), each of you will complete one or two article summaries most weeks. You will upload your summaries to box by 8:00 AM Thursday each week. This will give your classmates time to review your summaries before we meet. We will divide up readings for class a week ahead of time.

Each week, two students will co-lead our discussion. This means that each of you will co-lead our discussion three times over the course of the semester. As leaders, your job will be to send out a series of discussion questions by 5:00 PM Friday that will guide our review of key concepts and controversies in the week’s reading. Discussion questions should help us talk about the key points of the readings. They should be open-ended and thoughtful. Questions like “How did Coleman define social capital?” are neither and you should avoid them. On the other hand, questions like “How does Coleman’s notion of social capital inform or constrain our understanding of social inequalities in educational attainment?” may provoke some interesting discussion.
**Prerequisites**

Although there are no explicit requirements for this class other than graduate standing, students unfamiliar with multiple regression (e.g., SOC 361) will find some of the readings tough going. I believe you will understand the main points of such articles, but you will not be able to engage critically with such work to the level of students who have taken coursework in intermediate and advanced quantitative methods. At the end of the syllabus I include some statistical references that may be particularly useful to those of you with less familiarity with quantitative methods.

**Learning outcomes**

- Conduct Research and Analyze Data (quantitative or qualitative)
- Critically Evaluate Published Research
- Communicate Skillfully
- Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes.
- See Things from a Global Perspective.
- Achieve Mastery of the Literature in Social Stratification.

**Evaluation**

You grade for this class will be calculated as follows:

- General participation: 10%
- Leading discussion: 10%
- Article summaries: 15%
- Term paper: 65%

**Participation**

I will grade your participation as follows:

- 0 Didn’t show up
- 1 Showed up and said little or nothing
- 2 Nominal participation (a few comments)
- 3 Active participation

**Leading discussion**

The discussion portion of your grade will be based on the quality of the questions you send to the rest of us in advance of class and your ability to facilitate a productive exchange of ideas in class.

**Article summaries**

The literature in the social stratification is expansive. In order to make the task of reviewing that literature more manageable, each of you will summarize an article or two each week for the rest of the class. Your summary should be concise (no more than a page or two if possible) but thorough enough to give the reader a good sense of the article or chapter you summarized. I will grade article summaries on a 0 to 3 scale.

- 0 Summaries not received
- 1 Summaries are misleading or overly vague
- 2 Summaries cover the main points but with an inadequate level of detail
Detailed summaries of main points. Summaries include each of the following (if appropriate): hypotheses, data, methods, findings, discussion

I will deduct one point from each summary for each day late.

### Term paper

If you have data available to you, I strongly encourage you to use this course as an opportunity to produce an initial draft of a publishable article. I use the term ‘data’ inclusively to refer to quantitative data from surveys or administrative records, qualitative data from interviews or observations, archival data or any other empirical artifacts of social phenomena relevant to social stratification. My only requirement is that the paper engage in dialogue with other work in the subfield.

Alternatively, you may choose to write a review of some aspect of social stratification suitable for publication as an annual review piece in sociology (*Annual Review of Sociology*). If you choose to write such a paper I will expect your treatment of your topic to be as thorough as a review published in that venue.

Finally, you may choose instead to write a project proposal. This will take the form of the project description piece of an NSF-style research proposal. Here’s some text to guide you (from [https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg17_1/nsf17_1.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg17_1/nsf17_1.pdf)):

“The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include: objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the PI’s project; and relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, to work in progress by the PI under other support and to work in progress elsewhere.

The Project Description should outline the general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provide a clear description of experimental methods and procedures. Proposers should address what they want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified. These issues apply to both the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions.

The Project Description must contain, as a separate section within the narrative, a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities. Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes.”

A successful proposal will situate a proposed project in the extant research literature (6-10 pages), motivate the project by arguing for the need for this important work to fill a
consequential hole in our understanding of the topic (2-4 pages) and describe in detail the work to be undertaken (10-15 pages).

Whichever of these three styles of paper you choose to write, your paper should not exceed 30 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins). Shorter is better, but if you are under about 20 pages you probably haven’t said enough.

**Deadlines for the term paper are as follows:**
- March 5: brief statement of topic (1-3 paragraphs)
- March 19: Revised topic statement (if necessary) and key cites
- May 7: Paper due

**Accommodations.** Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university’s web page for details.

**Academic honesty.** As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University’s rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students.

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor or one of the TAs.
Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science JAMES M RAYMO jraymo@ssc.wisc.edu.

Institutional statement on diversity: “Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” https://diversity.wisc.edu/

Course calendar

* = required reading [except for the first 2 meetings]
GR = Grusky Reader
Our electronic course reserves page is here.

January 29: What is Social Stratification? *READ ALL

Kearney, Melissa Schettini. 2014. "Testimony before the Joint Economic Committee."


Kingsley Davis & Wilbert E. Moore. Some Principles of Stratification. (GR: 28-30)


http://ann.sagepub.com/content/657/1/27.abstract

Chetty fest in charts.
February 5: Theories of inequality * READ ALL

**Marxian**
Karl Marx (GR: 127-161)
Alienation and Social Classes (GR)
Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism (GR)
Ideology and Class (GR)

Ralf Dahrendorf: Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (GR 143)
Erik Olin Wright: A General Framework for the Analysis of Class Structure (GR 149)

**Weberian**
Max Weber (GR: 165-216)
Class, Status, Party (GR)
Status Groups and Classes (GR)
Open and Closed Relationships (GR)

Anthony Giddens: The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies (GR 183)
Frank Parkin: Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique (GR 193)
Tak Wing Chan & John H. Goldthorpe: Is There a Status Order in Contemporary British Society? (GR 202)

February 12: Class and occupation

* Emile Durkheim: The Division of Labor in Society (GR 217)
* Kim Weeden & David B. Grusky: The Three Worlds of Inequality (GR 222)

**Debates**


**Measuring occupational status**
* 24. Donald J. Treiman, Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective (GR: 233-236)


* 26. David L. Featherman & Robert M. Hauser, Prestige or Socioeconomic Scales in the Study of Occupational Achievement? (GR: 244-245)


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**February 19: Occupational mobility and status attainment**


Song, Xi and Robert D. Mare. 2015. “Prospective Versus Retrospective Approaches to the Study of Intergenerational Social Mobility.” Sociological Methods & Research 44:555-584.


55. Jan O. Jonsson, David B. Grusky, Matthew Di Carlo, & Reinhard Pollak. It’s a Decent Bet That Our Children Will Be Professors Too (GR: 480-500)


Comparative models of occupational mobility


54. Richard Breen. Social Mobility in Europe (GR: 464-479)


Classic Models of Status Attainment
* 58. Peter M. Blau & Otis Dudley Duncan, with the collaboration of Andrea Tyree. The Process of Stratification (GR: 506-516)


Social Psychological Models


Variation across groups


http://www.jstor.org/stable/2778629ha


Critiques


http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844413

**Multigenerational patterns of attainment**

http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13524-011-0014-7


http://asr.sagepub.com/content/78/4/662.abstract


**February 26: Income, wealth and skills**

The *distribution of income and wealth*


The transmission of income and wealth

* 56. Gary Solon. Intergenerational Income Mobility. (GR: 496-500)


Effects of income and wealth on life chances of children


http://www.jstor.org/stable/41955546


Cognitive and noncognitive skills


March 5: Education I

► Brief statement of topic (1-3 paragraphs) due

Trends in education

Attainment


Achievement


* 61. Sean F. Reardon. The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor (GR: 536-550)


Intergenerational transmission of educational attainment


http://sf.oxfordjournals.org/content/94/1/143.abstract


* 63. Michelle Jackson. Determined to Succeed (GR: 562-569)

http://www.soc.cornell.edu/faculty/morgan/papers/Morgan2012SMR.pdf

* 64. Sigal Alon. Towards a Theory of Inequality in Higher Education (GR: 569-577)


Theories of Educational Stratification


Human capital


March 12: Education II: Theories of educational stratification

Signaling


Credentialism


MMI


**EMI**


**RRA**


Reproduction


March 19: Labor markets

► Revised topic statement (if necessary) and key cites

Segmented labor markets

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1 I assign this so you can get a flavor of Bourdieu’s style of presentation. The most relevant stuff is summarized in DiMaggio (1979) and in Horvat (2001) so don’t work too hard untangling Bourdieu’s prose.


**Job search and employment**


**Social ties and networks**

* 74. Mark S. Granovetter. The Strength of Weak Ties (GR: 653-657)


* 76. Ronald S. Burt. Structural Holes (GR: 659-663)


* Internal labor markets and careers
  


* Deskilling or skill biased technical change?


**Measuring skill demands**


**Unions**


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**March 26: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

**April 2: Gender**


Labor force attachment


Discrimination


Sex Segregation
* 100. William T. Bielby. The Structure and Process of Sex Segregation (GR: 865-875)


* 104. Maria Charles & David B. Grusky. Essentialism and Gender Inequality (GR: 902-911)


Gender Gap in Wages
* 105. Trond Petersen & Laurie A. Morgan. The Within-Job Gender Wage Gap (GR: 912-919)

* 106. Paula England. Devaluation and the Pay of Comparable Male and Female Occupations (GR: 919-923)

107. Tony Tam. Why Do Female Occupations Pay Less? (GR: 924-928)

* 108. Francine Blau. The Sources of the Gender Pay Gap (GR: 929-941)


Gender and earnings within the family


A Stalling Out?

112. David Cotter, Joan M. Hermsen, & Reeve Vanneman. The Anti-Feminist Backlash and Recent Trends in Gender Attitudes (GR: 965-973)


* 113. Cecilia Ridgeway. The Persistence of Gender Inequality (GR: 973-980)


Labor markets and earnings


Reskin, Barbara F. and Denise D. Bielby. 2005. "A Sociological Perspective on Gender and
http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/0895330053148010


Maternity  


Socialization


**Education**


**April 9: Race/ethnicity**

*Empirical Patterns*

African Americans


Mazumder, Bhashkar and Jonathan Davis.2018. “Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Geography of Intergenerational Mobility.”


Latinos


Constructing Racial Categories

* 80. Andrew M. Penner & Aliya Saperstein. The Dynamics of Racial Fluidity and Inequality (GR: 687-695)


Classic Modes of Incorporation


New Modes of Incorporation


Discrimination


* 87. Claude Steele. Stereotype Threat and African-American Student Achievement (GR: 752-756)

Are Racial and Ethnic Distinctions Declining in Significance?


http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-3808%28199610%29104%3A5%3C869%3ATROPFI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8
* 89. William Julius Wilson (GR: 765-779)
The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions
The Declining Significance of Race: Revisited & Revised

90. Reanne Frank, Ilana Redstone Akresh, & Bo Lu. How Do Latino Immigrants Fit Into the Racial Order? (GR: 780-787)


Segregation

Neighborhoods and Segregation


April 16: Polar opposites: Affluence and poverty

Poverty


* 49. Greg J. Duncan & Katherine Magnuson. The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty (GR: 417-423)
47. Patrick Sharkey & Felix Elwert. The Legacy of Multigenerational Disadvantage (GR: 403-411)


Trends


Affluence
* 30. Gaetano Mosca. The Ruling Class (GR: 276-281)

* 31. C. Wright Mills. The Power Elite (GR: 282-292)


April 23: Demography and Stratification

Family configuration: Parents


Tach, Laura. 2015. "Social Mobility in an Era of Family Instability and Complexity." The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 657:83-96. [http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/657/1/83](http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/657/1/83)


*Family configuration: Sibship size and birth order*


**Assortative mating**


Mare, Robert D. 2016. "Educational Homogamy in Two Gilded Ages: Evidence from Intergenerational Social Mobility Data." The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 663:117-139. [http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/663/1/117](http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/663/1/117)


Health and mortality


http://hsb.sagepub.com/content/49/1/72.abstract


http://hsb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/56/3/307

http://hsb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/56/3/323


http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13524-015-0453-7

http://ann.sagepub.com/content/663/1/292.abstract


http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.2016.4226

April 30: Crime and social stratification
**Adults**


**Children**


Ewert, Stephanie, Bryan L. Sykes, and Becky Pettit. 2014. "The Degree of Disadvantage: Incarceration and Inequality in Education." The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 651:24-43. [http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/651/1/24](http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/651/1/24)


SEMESTER ENDS HERE

**May 2: Stratification and place: Neighborhoods and Urbanicity**


Back to the country


*Neighborhoods


http://asr.sagepub.com/content/76/5/713.abstract


http://www.jstor.org/stable/2657544


http://soe.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/0038040714561801v1

http://soe.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/87/2/89


Something to read before the prelim


Other cool stuff that doesn’t quite fit


http://tcp.sagepub.com/content/38/7/1001.abstract