

Social Stratification
Dr. Melissa S. Fry
SOCY 5970
MWF 3:00-3:50
Location: Haley Center Rm. 2218

Office: Haley Center Rm. 7048

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:30 (or by appointment)

E-mail address: frymeli@auburn.edu

Office Phone: (334) 844-2854

COURSE DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES, AND GOALS

Sociology is the study of the social world; people, groups, organizations, institutions, political bodies, economies and power. **Stratification is the study of how all of these systems are both products and producers of inequality.** This class will introduce you to the sociology of social inequality through exposure to classical and contemporary theories of inequality (particularly inequalities structured along lines of race, class and gender), data on the extent of social inequality in the world and in the U.S., and discussions of some consequences of social inequality. The goal of this class is to provide you with analytical tools for recognizing, analyzing, and working to solve problems of social inequality in the world around you. This course will also provide you with data on the empirical realities of social inequality and its consequences in contemporary society.

Sociology provides the student with a toolkit for critical thinking and questioning the world in which s/he lives and works. Students should leave this class with an ability to *read critically, write clearly, articulate clear arguments in their speech*, and use the tools of sociology to analytically observe the social world. I want students to gain a better understanding of how their own experiences are both the products and producers of larger stratification systems. The most practical goal in this course is for students to leave this course able to read a news story, watch a movie or television program, and see the larger social, political, economic and cultural systems that produce and maintain inequality in contemporary institutions and organizations. My second practical goal is for students to be able to express themselves clearly in writing.

I see learning as an active and interactive process in which I am a facilitator and a guide and you, as students of the social world, are the primary actors. My job is to present the material in an interesting manner, to help you to bridge concepts, and to bring knowledge of the wider literature in the area to bear on our discussions. You will get the most out of this class if you keep up with the assigned readings, come to class regularly, ask questions, participate in class discussions, and have a sense of humor, an open mind, and an interest in learning from others.

COURSE FORMAT

Lecture/Discussion: Class will be devoted to lecture and discussion of the assigned reading. I come out of a small liberal arts college tradition of seminar courses. This means that my lectures tend to be interactive. If you have done the reading, you will find this to be a useful format as you are able to ask and answer questions effectively as we build the day's lecture/discussion together. I value your participation; questions and comments are always welcome and encouraged.

Discussion: I will use dyads, triads and larger discussion groups to allow for peer interaction, group analysis, and interactive discovery. Discussions will cover the readings, ask for you to bring personal experience to bear on your understanding of course material and will pull in current events pertaining to the issues covered in this course. I can spring such a discussion on you at any moment so please be prepared to engage.

Videos: We will watch several excellent videos designed to further explore or illustrate concepts covered in the readings. These videos are part of the course curriculum and their content will be covered on exams and may be drawn on in writing assignments.

Course Content: The topics covered in this course may challenge some of your taken-for-granted assumptions about women, men, sexuality, politics, values, and religion. I hope that everyone feels free to contribute their own insights to discussion of the material. Many of the topics may cover situations with which you have personal experience. Please feel free to bring your personal experience into class discussion and be open to broadening your understanding of the piece your own experience may play in larger social, political, and economic structures.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. *Read this syllabus.* A syllabus is a contract. Make sure you understand course requirements, policies, assignments and your responsibilities as a student. Requirements are not up for re-negotiation at the end of the semester. Ask questions if you are confused about anything on the syllabus.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance above and beyond what is necessary to fulfill course requirements is not mandatory. You are responsible for all material covered in classes you may have missed, including lecture notes, assignments, discussions, videos, and schedule changes. **Regular attendance is highly recommended and guaranteed to positively affect your grade.**
3. *Help:* If you have questions or need help, please come and see me or e-mail me! Do not wait until the last week of the semester if you are having trouble. There is little either of us can do at that point.
4. *Cheating:* Plagiarism and any other form of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone found to be engaging in these activities will fail the course. If you are unsure about what constitutes cheating, I'll be glad to clarify it for you. **If you plagiarize, or otherwise cheat, on any assignment, you will receive a failing grade for the course.**
5. *Library Use:* The Department of Sociology expects students in all courses to use library privileges and materials in a responsible manner. Defacing, concealing, removing sections of, or stealing books, periodicals, or videos (including items placed on reserve) indicate lack of respect for the educational process and the rights of others in the university community. **Any student found to be engaging in these behaviors as they relate to materials used for this course will fail the class.**
6. *Late Papers or Exams:* **I do not accept late exams. Papers will lose one letter grade for each day that they are late.** This policy is non-negotiable. You know what your schedule looks like; if you need to turn a paper in late then you need to accept the consequences of your tardiness. Papers are to be handed in during class, in person, on the day they are due. **Please do not turn in papers via e-mail.**
7. *Make-Ups:* No make-up exams will be given unless there is a certified emergency (e.g. death in the family, serious illness confirmed by a medical professional, etc.) or the student is participating in an off-campus, university-sponsored activity (e.g. athletics). These are the only valid excuses. If you have a conflict, you must notify me no later than the date the exam is due. If you fail to do so, you will receive no credit for the test.
8. *Grading Disputes:* At one time or another, you may disagree with how we grade your exam or assignment. Unless the disagreement is about a mistake in our adding of points, grade disagreements must be submitted to Dr. Fry in writing after a 24-hour "waiting period." The written disagreement must include three things: (1) what you want us to re-examine (e.g. question number), (2) why you think it was graded incorrectly, and (3) the reason(s) why your answer should receive more points. We require you to wait one day before contesting a grade so you have time to consult the text/notes and re-read the question and answer.

8. *Class Etiquette*: Please respect other students and the professor by arriving on time and staying until the class is over. If circumstances require you to arrive late or leave early, please inform me beforehand and enter or exit as unobtrusively as possible. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. Do not have conversations with other students during class.
9. *Course Schedule*: Although we will try to adhere to the course outline as described below, it may occasionally be necessary to deviate from this schedule. All changes will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to keep informed of any changes in the schedule.
10. *Reasonable Accommodations*: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by E-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).
11. *E-mail Communication*: I am happy to communicate with students over e-mail, but I am not on-call 24/7. I do not check my work e-mail over the weekend or on holidays. In addition, I do not monitor incoming e-mail throughout the day. I commit to respond to e-mail within 24 hours of receiving it during the week. Weekend e-mails will receive a reply no later than Tuesday morning. I prefer not to receive assignments over e-mail, except in cases where it is the only possible way to turn in writing assignments.

READING

The books listed below are required for this course and are available for purchase at the campus bookstore.

- 1) Kerbo, Harold R. 2006. *World Poverty: Global Inequality and the Modern World System*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- 2) Gilbert, Dennis. 2003. *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*. United States: Thomson Wadsworth.
- 3) Rank, Mark Robert. 2005. *One Nation Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 4) Shapiro, Thomas. 2004. *The Hidden Cost of Being African American*. New York: Oxford University Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1.) **Four Take Home Exams:** Upon the completion of each book, we will have a written take home exam. Exams will include short answer and essay questions. All exams are to be typed. You may discuss exams with classmates, but take home exams should be written independent of your classmates. Exams with the same or nearly the same answers as another's will receive zeros. **50 points each for a total of 200 points.**

2.) **Four 1 Page Writing Assignments:** The class will be divided into three writing groups. Each group will receive four writing assignments. Dividing the class allows me to put the appropriate time and energy into quality grading and it ensures that one-third of the class is well prepared for discussions each week. These assignments are to be typed on one side of one sheet of 8.5 x11 paper with a font no smaller than 11 point and margins no smaller than 1 inch. They may be single spaced and you may choose to write your name in the corner if you are really tight on space. The idea is for you to learn to express your ideas clearly and concisely. You will have the opportunity to revise papers for an improved grade. These papers are an exercise in critical thinking, organization, and concise expression. **25 points each for a total of 100 points.**

3.) **Discussion Presentation:** During the first week of class, you will have an opportunity to sign up with a partner for a presentation on one of the topics covered in the class. You and your partner will be responsible for planning a discussion/activity to help the class engage the materials for the week. You are expected to explore the topic beyond the readings for the week so that you can bring additional knowledge and information to the group discussion. Presentations should be about 15 minutes long. I will discuss these presentations in more detail during the first week of class. **25 points.**

Exams	4 x 50 points	200 points
Papers	4 x 25 points	100 points
Presentation		25 points
Research Paper		100 points
Total		425 points

Final Grade

Points	Grade
381-425	A
340-380	B
298-339	C
255-297	D
Below 255	F

If you end up on the border between two grades, improvement and participation have the capacity to bump you up.

Social Stratification Research Project

The goal of this project is for you to develop research, organization, and writing skills, and in-depth knowledge of a particular topic in social stratification. I designed progressive due dates to help you avoid the usual trap of completing the term paper in the last 72 hours before it is due. **Total Points = 100**

Library Orientation

August 25, 2006

The class will meet at RBD Library at 3:00. Attendance is required. If you are unable to attend and your absence is not excused, 5 points (that's one letter grade) will be deducted from your final paper. **Attendance is mandatory.**

Topic and Preliminary Sources

September 1, 2006

Write a one-paragraph description of the topic you intend to explore in your term paper. Provide a list of 10 possible sources (at least five of these must be academic journals). Please use the ASA reference format. **5 points.**

Annotated Bibliography

September 29, 2006

Provide a one paragraph description of the information available in each of your sources (i.e. a description of the study and summary of key findings). You may also want to include strengths and weaknesses of the source in your annotation. You must have a minimum of 10 sources. You should have more notes than this from each source—this is simply to get you reading them and to provide me with a sense of where your project is headed. **10 points.**

Rough Outline of Final Paper

October 20, 2006

Provide an outline of your term paper. Include the topics you expect to cover and the major points that will be included in each section. Think about logical ordering and being sure to cover the key issues of importance to understanding your topic. **10 points.**

Detailed Outline

November 8, 2006

Provide a detailed outline of your term paper. This outline should take the reader through the organization of each paragraph in each section of the paper. Your discussion should take some sort of logical shape and the content of the paper should become clear in this outline. **15 points.**

Rough Draft

December 1, 2006

Your study partner should have a full rough draft in his or her possession no later than December 1, 2006. I will be checking rough drafts on Monday December 4 in class prior to returning the marked copies to you for revision. You are responsible both for turning one in to your partner and for commenting on your partner's paper. **10 points.**

Final Paper

December 6, 2006

Your full and revised paper must be handed in during class on December 6. I look forward to reading papers that you are proud to submit for assessment. **50 points.**

Some common errors and problems on papers trouble me. I want to explain why some of these errors and problems are so troubling to me, why they should be troubling to you, and how you can avoid them.

Introduction

The reader deserves to know from the start what you will discuss and how your discussion will be organized. Thus, you must provide immediately a clear and explicit statement of your purpose (e.g., a thesis to be analyzed or an hypothesis to be tested) and a brief indication of the topics that you will discuss along the way. Think of the paper as a voyage; you need to specify a destination and provide a map, or your readers may not want to join you on the trip.

For Fry's one page papers the first two or three sentences should function as a brief introduction.

Transitions

Paragraphs should be connected clearly and explicitly so that your overall argument is clear. Making these connections requires explicit transitional comments that tell the reader how the new paragraph relates to the previous one(s) and thus how it advances your argument. Having an explicit conclusion at the end of one paragraph can make the transition to the next one easier.

Paragraphs

The paragraph is the basic unit of a paper. Extremely long paragraphs often include more than one main idea and confuse the reader. Extremely short paragraphs often say too little or are incomplete. A good paragraph has *unity* (consistently develops one idea), *completeness* (provides enough information), and *coherence* (links sentences into an integrated whole).

Tell the reader what each paragraph is about (usually, in a topic sentence); provide sufficient explanation of conclusions you reach for the careful reader to understand the logic and evidence of your argument; take more time (and

care) with arguments which are likely to be difficult or troubling for your readers.

Citations

Citations help the reader to know the sources of your claims, to judge their reliability and validity, and to investigate those claims further. As the author of a persuasive argument (which you hope your paper is), you have a responsibility to cite sources for all claims, whether you quote directly or not. Neglecting this duty leaves you open to charges of laziness, inadequate scholarship, or plagiarism.

Pay attention to when sources were published, locate articles from journals as well as books, and be appropriately skeptical or critical of what those sources say. Do not rely disproportionately on one or two sources. Do not refer continually to the authors of your sources in the body of your text (e.g., Tiger and Fox report..."), unless you want to focus your reader's attention on the authors, and not on what they say. Instead, cite the source at the end of the sentence (but include the citation within the sentence, before the period).

Reference form

Readers deserve to get citations offered in a standard format, one that includes all the relevant information. Your readers do not deserve idiosyncratic and inadequate formats, or incomplete listings. I prefer that you use the ASA format, but I will accept the APA style (which is quite similar) or the MLA style (which is more traditional). IN any case, cite all sources and punctuate quotations properly.

Use of "it," "this," and "there"

Never begin a sentence with a pronoun that has no clear referent. Using such a pronoun as the subject conceals the real subject of the sentence, confuses your reader and obscures your argument. You *can* find a subject hiding somewhere in that sentence, if you look long enough. Do not force your reader to waste time searching for the subject.

Passive Voice

Passive voice conceals the actor(s) responsible for an action, including the writer's responsibility for what she/he writes. Use active voice.

I

Avoid circumlocutions like "the author says" when referring to yourself. Instead, be scrupulously careful about citing others' ideas so we realize that all remaining ideas in the paper are yours. Where you want to distinguish your own ideas more forcefully, use first person singular. You are the author and responsible for what you say in the paper: Be proud of, and assertive about your ideas!

Qualifiers

Qualifiers, words like "perhaps" or "possibly" and phrases like "it seems that," weaken your prose and make you look like an intellectual coward. If you want to distance yourself from a claim, do so directly by crediting someone else with the idea (if it is theirs) and by explaining why you disagree. If qualifiers are necessary, use them, but sparingly.

Number Agreement

Ensure that people (or other fertile creatures) do not reproduce in the middle of your sentences: don't refer to "a person" at one point and "they" at another. Use the same number of people throughout an example so that your reader can more easily follow the example. A shift in number suggests to the reader a new referent for any pronouns you use, even though you may not have a new referent in mind.

Tenses

Stick with one tense. IN general, use the present tense, especially when discussing the results of research, even if the research was conducted years ago. Remember, most research takes years to get published, so even the most recent article is reporting 'old' research; but the research is presumably as valid as the day it was conducted. Since that research still "speaks to us today," you should discuss it in the present

tense. This use of the present tense is sometimes referred to as the "historical" or "anthropological" present.

If you are discussing historical change in a literature, however, and want to demonstrate that older results are no longer accepted, then you should use past tense for the older material. In any case, when you bring your reader on that trip (remember the map in the intro.), pitch your tense securely.

Rewriting

Write a draft of every paper and rewrite each with enthusiasm. Your writing is never as clear as you first suppose; your reader is never as much like you as you may believe. Let each draft sit for a time before you reread it, so you can read it with greater objectivity. Read your paper aloud, or have someone else do so, and really listen to it. Get a friend to read your paper and tell you what you said in it (not whether the paper is "good"). Then rewrite.

Further Advice on Writing

For further advice on improving your writing, get an appointment to discuss a draft of your paper with a member of the Writing Center staff at least three days before the paper is due.

For more detailed insight into good writing, look at:

Strunk, William and E.B. White. 2000 [1979]. *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Zinsser, William. 1998 [1976]. *On Writing Well, Sixth Edition*. New York: HarperPerennial.

Williams, Joseph M. 1990. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Becker, Howard s. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Please note that dates given are the dates on which we will be discussing the material.

Date	Assignment
PART I: GLOBAL INEQUALITY	
8/16/06	1 st Day of Class: Introductions and Syllabus Orientation
8/18/06	Kerbo, Chapter 1 “A World Divided: Rich Corporations and the Poor of This Earth” The Corporation
8/21/06	Kerbo, Chapter 2 “World Poverty at the Twenty-first Century: Regional Comparisons”
8/23/06	Kerbo, Chapter 3 “The Modern World System: Explanations of Globalization and Conflict” Chapter 4 “The Global Economy and World Poverty: Attempted Explanations”
8/25/06	Library Orientation: Class will meet at Draughon Library @ 3:00p.m. Attendance will be taken for this class and points will be deducted from your final research paper if you are absent from this orientation.
Writing Group 1 Paper #1 Due in Class 8/25/06	
8/28/06	Kerbo, Chapter 5 “The Roots of ‘Asian Miracles’: Ancient Traditions and Development States” Chapter 6 “Colonialism and Its Aftermath: Fractured Nations, Wars, and Recovery—For Some”
8/30/06	Kerbo, Chapter 7 “Africa and the Middle East: Fractured Nations in the Global Economy”
9/01/06	Kerbo, Chapter 8 “Latin America: Stagnation and Uneven Development”
Research Topic and 10 sources (at least 5 academic journals) DUE IN CLASS	
Writing Group 2 Paper #1 Due in Class 9/01/06	
09/04/06	Labor Day Holiday Observed—No Class
9/06/06	Kerbo, Chapter 9 “Development and Poverty in Southeast Asia: A Region of Extremes” Distribute Exam 1
09/08/06	Kerbo, Chapter 10 “Globalization and World Poverty: Limitations and Tools for Sustainable Development”
Writing Group 3 Paper #1 Due in Class 9/08/06	
PART II: THE AMERICAN CLASS STRUCTURE IN AN AGE OF GROWING INEQUALITY	
09/11/06	EXAM 1 DUE IN CLASS Theories of Class: An Introduction to Stratification in the U.S.
09/13/06	Gilbert, Chapter 1 “The Dimensions of Class” Chapter 2 “Position and Prestige”

09/15/06	Gilbert Chapter 3 “Social Class, Occupation, and Social Change”
Writing Group 1 Paper #2 Due in Class 09/15/06	
09/18/06	Gilbert, Chapter 4 “Wealth and Income” Taxation in the State of Alabama A Question of Fairness (clip)
09/20/06	Gilbert, Chapter 5 “Socialization, Association, Lifestyles and Values” Chapter 6 “Social Mobility: The Structural Context” Whither the American Dream? The Overspent American
09/22/06	Gilbert, Chapter 7 “Family, Education, and Career”
Writing Group 2 Paper #2 Due in Class 09/22/06	
09/25/06	Gilbert, Chapter 8 “Elites, the Capitalist Class, and Political Power”
09/27/06	Gilbert, Chapter 9 “Class Consciousness and Class Conflict”
09/29/06	Roger and Me
Annotated Bibliography for Final Research Paper Due in Class (minimum of 10 sources) Writing Group 3 Paper #2 Due in Class 09/29/06	
10/02/06	Gilbert, Chapter 10 “The Poor, the Underclass, and Public Policy” Chapter 11 “The American Class Structure and Growing Inequality” EXAM #2 DISTRIBUTED
10/04/06	Wrap-Up <i>The American Class Structure</i>
10/06/06	EXAM #2 DUE IN CLASS <i>Introduction to One Nation Underprivileged</i>
10/06/06	* LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH NO GRADE PENALTY*
PART III: ONE NATION, UNDERPRIVILEGED: WHY AMERICAN POVERTY AFFECTS US ALL	
10/09/06	Rank, Part I: The Nature of American Poverty Chapter 1 “Disturbing Contrasts”
10/11/06	Chapter 2 “Below the Line”
10/13/06	Chapter 3 “Poverty as a Structural Failing”
Writing Group 1 Paper #3 Due in Class 10/13/06	
10/16/06	Part II: A Cause for Concern Chapter 4: In Our Self-Interest
10/18/06	Chapter 5: True to Values Chapter 6: Essence of Citizenship
10/20/06	Chapter 7: A New Paradigm DISTRIBUTE EXAM 3
Outline of Final Research Paper Due In Class Writing Group 2 Paper #3 Due 10/20/06	
10/23/06	Chapter 8: Future Directions
10/25/06	Chapter 9: From the Ground Up
10/27/06	EXAM #3 DUE IN CLASS Closing Discussion of American Poverty & Lead in to Race and the Structure of Economic Inequality

PART 1V RACE AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN THE U.S.	
	<i>The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality</i> by Thomas Shapiro
10/30/06	Shapiro, Introduction: At the Assets Crossroads
11/01/06	Shapiro, Part I Assets Chapter 1: “The Color of the Safety Net”
11/03/06	Chapter 2: “The Cost of Being Black and the Advantage of Being White”
Writing Group 3 Paper #3 Due 11/03/06	
11/06/06	Chapter 3: “Inheritance—‘That Parent Thing’”
11/08/06	Part II Making Racial Inequality Chapter 4: “Middle Class in Black and White: How Level is the Playing Field?” Detailed Outline of Final Paper Due in Class
11/10/06	Chapter 5: “The Homeownership Crossroad” DISTRIBUTE EXAM #4
Writing Groups 1, 2 & 3 Paper #4 Due 11/10/06	
11/13/06	Part III Leveraging Assets Chapter 6: “Where People ‘Choose’ to Live” The House We Live In
11/15/06	Chapter 7: “‘Getting a Decent Middle-Class American Education’: Pursuing Advantage in Schools”
11/17/06	EXAM #4 DUE IN CLASS Conclusion: Assets for Equality
11/20/06 thru 11/24/06	Thanksgiving Break
11/27/06	Research Week: No Class
11/29/06	Research Week: No Class
12/01/06	Study Partners Exchange Rough Drafts of Final Papers
12/04/06	Return Marked Drafts of Final Papers to Study Partners
12/04/06	Discussion of Research Papers
12/06/06	FINAL PAPERS DUE Looking Toward the Future—Sustainable Economies