

**Social Stratification
Spring 2020
University of Montana**

Course Number: 31452 – SOCI 325
Day: Tuesdays and Thursdays
Time: 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM
Class Location: JRH 204

Teaching Team Contact Information

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Course Overview

Course Description

Social stratification is the study of social divisions based on class, power, status, rank, and a host of other factors. Sociologists, economists, journalists, policy-makers, and social activists have long been concerned with inequalities that exist in society, how they are generated, and their consequences for individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

Stratification is a broad topic that encompasses complex theories, various methodologies, and a number of academic disciplines. It is also a dynamic area of sociological research, since inequality changes over time in response to changes in the economy, politics, social policies, and attitudes.

This course employs a combination of conceptual readings, empirical works, lectures, class discussions, and small group exercises to examine the phenomenon of inequality in the U.S. Some lectures and class discussions will explore how theories of stratification relate to current events and contemporary debates about inequality in the U.S.

Course Objectives

First, students will explore several influential perspectives on stratification from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. After learning the logic of each of these perspectives, they will assess how proponents of each perspective would make sense of contemporary inequalities. Then they will examine common measures of inequality, including poverty and homelessness, income and income inequality, and wealth and wealth inequality.

Next, students will explore the causes and consequences of stratification. They will learn about the mechanisms that produce and sustain inequality, such as labor market discrimination, social networks, redlining, and labor market transformations. They will also examine the social, financial, political, and emotional consequences of inequality.

Finally, students will consider several strategies for reducing or eradicating certain types of inequality, such as racial and gender income and wealth disparities, and the cumulative disadvantages created by systemic inequality. Students will debate the merits of each strategy using information gleaned from required readings.

This Course Counts

Toward the concentration in Inequality and Social Justice in the Sociology department. If you would like to know more about this option, visit the Sociology department website: <http://hs.umt.edu/sociology/undergraduate/default.php>.

Toward the major and minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. If you would like to know more about the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program, you can drop by the program office (LA 138A-B) or visit their website: <http://hs.umt.edu/wgss/>.

Toward the major and minor in African-American Studies. If you would like to know more about the African-American Studies program, you can visit their website: <http://hs.umt.edu/aas/>.

Expectations of Students

Be an Active Learner

This is a challenging course. In order to pass it, you will need to adopt an active approach to learning. During class you will listen, take notes, ask questions, and participate in discussions and exercises. You will also refrain from texting, emailing, surfing the web, and using social media during class; they disrupt your classmates, and are disrespectful to your instructor. If you are unable to attend a class, you will obtain lecture notes from another student. Members of the teaching team will not provide lecture notes or PowerPoint slides to students, regardless of the reason for their absence.

Prepare for Class Diligently

You will prepare carefully for each class session by reading the required reading carefully and taking detailed notes on each one. You can take notes by hand and/or use the annotation tools for PDFs available in Adobe Acrobat and other PDF reader programs. You will bring an electronic or hard copy of all readings with you to class so that you can refer to them during lectures, discussions, and exercises.

Participate Respectfully

This class covers topics that are controversial and uncomfortable. All students need to participate respectfully, in order to help maintain a respectful, open and inquisitive classroom environment. You will:

- Explain your views using reasoned arguments, and provide evidence for all assertions
- Use personal anecdotes sparingly. When sharing a personal anecdote, always connect it back to the course material
- Respect others' views and listen to them. You do not have to agree with your classmates, but try your best to give them your full attention and consideration when they are talking during class sessions

Communication

You should maintain a university email account and check it regularly for class announcements. You are responsible for all information contained in class announcements that I send via email. Feel free to contact me via email (or in my office hours) with questions or concerns about the course and/or your performance in the course.

When emailing me, always:

- Use your UM email account
 - University policy prohibits faculty and staff both from responding to emails sent from students' personal, non-UM email accounts and from sharing grade information via email
- Include "SOCI 325" or "Social Stratification" in the subject line of your email
- Sign your full name (first and last)

Academic Honesty

You must practice academic honesty in this course. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/default.php>).

Secure Permission Before Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas in this class, you must secure advance written permission from me before recording lectures, discussions, or review sessions. Students with permission to record may only use recordings for educational purposes; they may not modify, publish, copy, or distribute the recordings, even to other students in the class. Students whose accommodations from Disability Services for Students include recording class meetings must present their accommodation letter to me before recording any class sessions.

Expectations of the Professor

Communication

I will communicate regularly with students in the class using their UM email accounts. These emails will contain important information about the class schedule, class content, exams, and assignments. I will do my best to respond to student emails within 48 hours during the week. For the most part, I do not respond to work emails on the weekends. When I answer a question during class that a student emailed me, I consider the question answered.

Accessibility

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think that you may have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact them in Lommasson Center 154 or (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Affirming Names and Pronouns

The teaching team for this course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. We will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and gender pronoun that you prefer. If you go by a different name than the name on the class roster, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make appropriate changes to my records. For information about name changes at the University of Montana, please go here: <https://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/name-change/default.php>.

UM's Cultural Leave Policy

The teaching team for this course supports UM's new cultural and ceremonial leave policy that allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes. According to this policy, to receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious, or ceremonial event, the student or their advisor must submit a formal written request to the instructor. The request

must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony, and a brief statement about the importance of the student's attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor; students may appeal the instructor's decision to the Department Chair, Dean, or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students who take excused leaves are responsible for completion or make-up of assignments, at the instructor's discretion. Students can find more information about the University of Montana's cultural leave policy [here: https://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/](https://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/).

Other information

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing, and believes that this could affect their performance in this course, is urged to contact any or all of the following campuses resources:

- Food Pantry Program
 - UM offers a food pantry that students can access for emergency food. The pantry is open on Tuesdays from 12 to 5 and on Fridays from 10-5. The pantry is located in UC 119 (in the former ASUM Childcare offices). Pantry staff operate several satellite food cupboards on campus (including one at Missoula College). For more information about this program, email umpantry@mso.umt.edu, visit the pantry's [website](http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/food-pantry/default.php) (<http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/food-pantry/default.php>) or contact the pantry on social media (@pantryUm on twitter, @UMPantry on Facebook, um_pantry on Instagram).
- ASUM Renter Center
 - The Renter Center can connect students who are at risk of homelessness or food insecurity with resources. You can find the Renter Center [here: http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/renter-center/default.php](http://www.umt.edu/asum/agencies/renter-center/default.php) and [here: https://medium.com/griz-renter-blog](https://medium.com/griz-renter-blog).
 - Students can schedule an appointment with Renter Center staff to discuss their situation and receive information, support, and referrals.
- TRiO Student Support Services
 - TRiO serves UM students who are low-income, first-generation college students, and/or have documented disabilities. TRiO services include a textbook loan program, scholarships and financial aid help, academic advising, coaching, and tutoring. Students can check their eligibility for TRiO services online [here: http://www.umt.edu/trioss/apply.php#Eligibility](http://www.umt.edu/trioss/apply.php#Eligibility).
- If you are comfortable, please come see members of the teaching team. We will do our best to help connect you with additional resources.

How This Class Is Designed To Engage a Community of Diverse Learners

Students in my classes have diverse worldviews and experiences, disparate learning styles, varied levels of academic preparation, and dissimilar backgrounds in Sociology. I view this diversity positively, believing that it makes teaching and learning more interesting, dynamic, and relevant than it would be if all my classes were comprised of homogenous learners.

Over the years I have developed techniques to engage the diverse learners in my classrooms. I provide structured, linear class sessions. I encourage students to participate actively and frequently in class discussions. I encourage students to interrogate the course material closely when it does not make intuitive sense to them. I create a somewhat casual learning environment to spark students' interest, using jokes, short stories, and pop culture references to animate the course material. Despite the casual learning environment, this is not an easy course. The required readings are dense and theoretical, and the exams are quite challenging. This is by design; it ensures that students develop a deep, accurate understanding of the course material and retain that information for years to come.

My exams and assignments focus exclusively on the course material. Students do not earn points on exams or thematic essays for describing their worldviews, experiences, personal opinions, or information that they gleaned in other Sociology courses. I view this as a matter of fairness. While diversity of worldview, experience, opinion, and prior exposure to Sociology enrich the teaching and learning experience, they cannot and should not be assigned value by the instructor or the teaching team.

Course Requirements

Exams

There are three exams in this course. All exams will have the same format; they will contain a combination of identifications and short answers. Exam 1 will cover all material from January 14th through February 11th, exam 2 will cover all material from February 18th through March 10th, and exam 3 will cover all material from March 24th through April 30th. Students will generate all information on their exams; there will be no multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank or true/false questions.

Students are not permitted to use cell phones, tablets, smart watches, or other electronic devices during exams. Any student found violating this rule will receive a zero on the exam and will be referred to the Director of Community Standards for additional disciplinary sanction by the University.

To help prepare for exams, students will have access to study guides, in-person review sessions, and online Moodle forums. Students are encouraged to post questions about the course material in the Moodle forums, and to answer other students' questions when appropriate. The teaching team will moderate the forums in the week leading up to each exam. We will not

respond to every student post in the forums, but will offer corrections and additions as necessary.

I will not offer make-up exams in the case of vacation travel, scheduling preferences, inadequate preparation, or routine illnesses such as colds or migraines. I will offer make-up exams to students who a) have experienced a death in their immediate family, are managing a family emergency such as a seriously ill child, have an illness requiring hospitalization, or are taking an authorized cultural/ceremonial leave (see pages 4 and 5 for more details), and b) can provide legitimate documentation of their situation. Under no circumstances will I accept a generic note from the Curry Health Center as evidence of a serious illness. If you receive permission from me to take a make-up exam, you will be required to take the exam at [Testing Services](http://www.umt.edu/testing/) on campus (<http://www.umt.edu/testing/>) for a nominal fee. Make-up exams will contain different content, and may follow a different format, than the in-class exams.

Essays

There are two formal writing assignments in this course, both of which will be completed outside of class time. For both essays, students will learn about an initiative designed to address inequality, and will evaluate the initiative using information gleaned from required readings. The assignment for essay 1 will be available on Moodle after class on Thursday February 20th and will be due on Moodle at 12:30 PM on Friday February 28th. The assignment for essay 2 will be available on Moodle after class on Thursday April 2nd and will be due on Moodle at 12:30 PM on Friday April 10th.

These assignments are not optional. Failure to submit both essays will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Course Grade

Students' final grades will be based on five components. The weight of each component is:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	15%
Exam 3	25%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%

Extra Credit

Students can earn an additional 5% of their final grade in extra credit by participating verbally in class discussions.

- Students who ask insightful questions about the course material and/or make thoughtful contributions to the class discussions will be eligible to earn these points.
- Members of the teaching team will track verbal participation throughout the semester. Any extra credit points that students earn will be posted to the Moodle gradebook during finals week.
- Students will not earn extra credit points:

- For asking questions that indicate that they are not paying attention
- For repeating points that their fellow students have already made
- If they attend class infrequently or erratically
- If they routinely arrive late to class or leave class early

Tokens

Deadlines are necessary for academic courses. They enable instructors to predict their grading workload during the semester, and make it possible for students to plan ahead for periods of intensive studying. They create an even playing field by ensuring that all students have the same amount of time to complete assignments. Firm deadlines are particularly essential for courses that have in-class exams. Without firm exam times, instructors would have to schedule (and proctor) dozens of make-up exams throughout the semester, which is not sustainable.

As we all know, though, real life sometimes interferes with academics. When this happens it becomes challenging, and in some cases impossible, for students to meet academic deadlines. Students in this situation often experience tremendous anxiety, and many throw themselves on the mercy of the instructor, hoping that the instructor will be understanding and/or willing to offer flexibility about deadlines.

The course uses tokens to provide students with some flexibility around exams and essays. Every student in this course will start the semester with ten tokens. During the semester, students can exchange their tokens for the following:

- Make-up an exam with a valid excuse (described on page 7) (7 tokens)
- 48-hour extension on an essay (5 tokens)
- 24-hour extension on an essay (3 tokens)
- Opportunity to revise and re-submit one essay after it has been graded (5 tokens)

If you need to use your tokens for a make-up exam, you must contact the instructor via email as soon as you can, to explain your situation and request a make-up exam. Ideally, this will happen before the exam takes place, but I recognize that this is not always possible in extreme situations. If you need to use your tokens to extend an essay deadline, you must contact the instructor via email at least two hours before the original deadline. Revised essays will be due on Moodle at 12:30 PM on Friday May 1st.

Course Materials

Required Course Readings

There is no required book for this course. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that textbook costs have risen between 1,041% over the past three decades (read more [here](#)). As a result, many students cannot afford to purchase the textbooks for their classes. This is especially true for low-income students. According to a national study conducted by U.S. PIRG, 65% of students surveyed did not purchase textbooks, and 82% agreed that access to free,

online course materials would help them do “significantly better” in their courses (read more [here](#)). In recent years, many educational institutions have started Open Educational Resource (OER) initiatives to confront this problem. You can read more about the University of Montana’s OER initiative [here](https://www.lib.umt.edu/oer/default.php): <https://www.lib.umt.edu/oer/default.php>.

In light of this information, I’ve decided not to use a textbook for this class. Instead I’ve assigned 1 or 2 required articles for each class session. A link to every required article is available on the course Moodle page. Most links take students to a database on the Mansfield Library’s website where they can download PDFs of the articles for free.

Important Dates

Thursday February 13	Exam 1
Friday February 28	Essay 1 due on Moodle at 12:30 PM
Thursday March 12	Exam 2
Friday April 10	Essay 2 due on Moodle at 12:30 PM
Friday May 1	(Optional) Revised essay and short revision memo due on Moodle at 12:30 PM
Monday May 4	Exam 3

Course Schedule**Unit 1: Understanding and Measuring Stratification****Tuesday January 14****Course Overview, What is Stratification?****Read:** This syllabus

Thursday January 16

What is Stratification?

Read: Davis, Kingsley, and Wilbert E. Moore. 1945. "Some Principles of Stratification." *American Sociological Review* 10(2): 242-249.

Tumin, Melvin M. 1953. "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." *American Sociological Review* 18(4): 387-394.

Tuesday January 21

Power and Status

Read: Mills, C. Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. Oxford University Press: New York: 269-297.

Thursday January 23

Power and Status

Read: Domhoff, G. William. 1967. *Who Rules America?* Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ. 12-37.

Tuesday January 28

Measuring Poverty, Homelessness

Read: Smeeding, Timothy M. 2005. "Public Policy, Economic Inequality, and Poverty: The United States in Comparative Perspective." *Social Science Quarterly* 86(5): 955-983.

Thursday January 30

Measuring Poverty, Homelessness

Read: Fitchen, Janet M. 1992. "On the Edge of Homelessness: Rural Poverty and Housing Insecurity." *Rural Sociology* 57(2): 173-193.

Tuesday February 4

Measuring Income, Income Inequality

Read: Saez, Emmanuel. 2019. "Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States (updated with 2017 final estimates)." *Berkeley: University of California, Department of Economics*. 1-10.

Thursday February 6

Measuring Income, Income Inequality

Read: Thiede, Brian, Hyojung Kim, and Matthew Valasik. 2018. "The Spatial Concentration of America's Rural Poor Population: A Postrecession Update." *Rural Sociology* 83(1): 109-144.

Tuesday February 11

Measuring Wealth, Wealth Inequality

Read: Oliver, Melvin L., and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1990. "Wealth of a Nation: A Reassessment of Asset Inequality in America Shows At Least One Third of Households Are Asset-poor." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 49(2): 129-151.

Thursday February 13

Exam 1

Unit 2: Causes and Consequences of Stratification

Tuesday February 18

The Gender Pay Gap

Read: Blau, Francine D., and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2007. "The Gender Pay Gap: Have Women Gone as Far as They Can?" *Academy of Management Perspectives* 21(1): 7-23.

Thursday February 20

The Gender Pay Gap

Read: Roche, Kristen. 2017. "Millennials and the Gender Wage Gap in the US: A Cross-Cohort Comparison of Young Workers Born in the 1960s and the 1980s." *Atlantic Economic Journal* 45(3): 333-350.

Tuesday February 25

Class and Labor Markets

Read: Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.

Thursday February 27

Class and Labor Markets

Read: Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77(6): 999-1022.

Friday February 28

Essay 1 due on Moodle at 12:30 PM

Tuesday March 3

Race and Labor Markets

Read: Wilson, William Julius. 1978. "The Declining Significance of Race." *Society* 15(2): 56-62.

Thursday March 5

Race and Labor Markets

Read: Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5): 937-975.

Tuesday March 10

Residential Segregation

Read: Massey, Douglas S. 1990. "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass." *American Journal of Sociology* 96(2): 329-357.

Byerly, Jack. 2019. "The Residential Segregation of the American Indian and Alaska Native population in US Metropolitan and Micropolitan areas, 2010." *Demographic Research* 40: 963-974.

Thursday March 12

Exam 2

Tuesday March 17

No Class

Spring Break

Thursday March 20

No Class

Spring Break

Tuesday March 24

Causes of, and Adaptions to, Poverty

Read: Wilson, William. 1996-1997. "When Work Disappears." *Political Science Quarterly* 111(4): 567-595.

Thursday March 26

Causes of, and Adaptions to, Poverty

Read: Sherman, Jennifer. 2006. "Coping with Rural Poverty: Economic Survival and Moral Capital in Rural America." *Social Forces* 85(2): 891-913.

Tuesday March 31

Immigration and Assimilation

Read: Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 1993. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530: 74-96.

Thursday Apr 2

Immigration and Assimilation

Read: Garcia, Angela S., and Leah Schmalzbauer. 2017. "Placing Assimilation Theory: Mexican Immigrants in Urban and Rural America." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 672: 64-82.

Tuesday April 7

Causes of, and Adaptions to, Discrimination

Read: Feagin, Joe R. 1991. "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiblack Discrimination in Public Places." *American Sociological Review* 56(1): 101-116.

Thursday April 9

Causes of, and Adaptions to, Discrimination

Read: Zainiddinov, Hakim. 2016. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Perceptions of Discrimination among Muslim Americans." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39(15): 2701-2721.

Friday April 10

Essay 2 due on Moodle at 12:30 PM

Tuesday April 14

Stereotype Threat

Read: Steele, Claude M., and Joshua Aronson. 1995. "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69(5): 797-811.

Thursday April 16

Stereotype Threat

Read: Nguyen, Emerald T., and Jo Mhairi Hale. 2017. ""You Just Don't Understand Me!" Determinants of Second Generation Asian and Latino Youth Self-Esteem." *International Migration* 55(5): 44-61.

Unit 3: Solutions for Social Stratification

Tuesday April 21

Solutions for the Racial Income Gap

Read: Rosenfeld, Jake, and Meredith Kleykamp. 2012. "Organized Labor and Racial Wage Inequality in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(5): 1460-1502.

Thursday April 23

Solutions for the Gender Pay Gap

Read: Goldin, Claudia, and Cecilia Rouse. 2000. "Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of "Blind" Auditions on Female Musicians." *American Economic Review* 90(4): 715-741.

Tuesday April 28

Solutions for Residential Segregation

Read: Deluca, Stefanie, and James E. Rosenbaum. 2008. "Escaping Poverty: Can Housing Vouchers Help?" *Pathways: A Magazine on Poverty, Inequality and Social Policy* Winter: 29-32.

Graves, Erin. 2019. "Moving to Improve?: A Qualitative Meta-analysis of Neighborhood Violence and Residential Decision-making among Housing Voucher Holders." *Journal of Planning Literature* 34(1): 19-37.

Thursday April 30

**Solutions for Stereotype Threat
Course Wrap-up, Course Evaluations**

Read: Redding, Christopher. 2019. "A Teacher Like Me: A Review of the Effect of Student–Teacher Racial/Ethnic Matching on Teacher Perceptions of Students and Student Academic and Behavioral Outcomes." *Review of Educational Research* 89(4): 499-535.

Monday May 4

Exam 3

8:00 to 10:00 AM