

**SOCIOLOGY 4111  
SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

**Fall 2005  
Tuesday, Thursday 11:00-12:20  
Fretwell 122**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:00 and by appointment  
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**Course Goals**

This course is designed to offer you a deeper empirical and theoretical understanding of social inequality in the United States. The first part of the course will demonstrate how sociologists have theorized the causes and consequences of inequality. We will then focus on the US class structure. This broad theme is designed to increase student awareness of the drastically different standards of living in the United States. Finally, we will examine specific topics associated with inequality. After taking this course, you should have the ability to assess the class position of individuals and groups in the United States. Additionally, this course will encourage critical thinking. I hope that you will be able to intelligently and convincingly assess and critique systems of social inequality in the United States and abroad.

**Texts**

Harold R. Kerbo. 2005. *Social Stratification and Inequality*, Sixth Edition. McGraw Hill.

**Additional Suggested Readings include:**

David B. Grusky. 1994. *Social Stratification in Sociological Perspective*. CO: Westview Press.

Sheldon H. Danziger and Robert H. Haveman. 2001. *Understanding Poverty* NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

**Grading**

Peer Evaluation (2 @ 5%)	10 percent
Application Assignments (3 @ 5%)	15 percent
Short answers (140 questions) / Grad student summaries	25 percent
Essays (2 @ 10 %)	20 percent
Group Presentations	15 percent
Final essay exam	15 percent

I utilize a variety of assignments to encourage discussion, understanding and critical thought. The short answer assignments will ensure that you comprehend the readings. The short answer assignments include multiple choice and true/false questions that many instructors might include in midterm or final exams. I don't require a traditional midterm or final because I don't think it is necessary for you to memorize these details. However, to ensure that you comprehend the reading, I will ask you to complete these assignments each class period. You may use your book and class notes. You may not consult with other students. A time limit will be given for each assignment equivalent to the number of questions (45 seconds per question). The number of questions will vary each day. You will receive a total of 140 questions during the semester. These 140 questions will account for 25 percent of your final grade. **Do not distribute these assignments to others outside of the class.**

Application assignments are given to help you apply the readings and think about inequality.

*I expect you to complete required readings before class.* This will permit all students to participate fully in the discussion. It will also ensure informed conversations in your groups. 10 percent of your final grade is determined by your peers from your groups.

The essay assignments are designed for you to apply and critique the readings. These essays are used in place of traditional exams to test your understanding of the literature. I will offer ample opportunity for you to discuss the essay assignments in class. Your essays will be much stronger and will receive higher grades if you help each other think through your ideas. You may include ideas from your discussion in your essays, but you must write them in your own words. Your essays should be grounded in the readings and class notes. Late assignments will be penalized. Essays will be graded and returned within a week.

### **Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be penalized 5 percentage points each day they are late. This policy is necessary because I ask you to complete assignments by certain dates to help you prepare for other assignments. Due dates are posted in each lesson.

### **Grading Scale**

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69
- F Below 60

### **Attendance**

You are expected to attend all classes. Class discussions will provide the substance of the short essay assignments. Hence, attending class will reduce the time devoted to the course outside of class.

**Lesson 1    What is Inequality?**

Tues 8/23    **Introduction**

**In class:**

Review Syllabus

Thurs 8/25    **What is Inequality?**

**Readings:**

Kerbo Ch. 1 (pp. 1-17)

Distribute Application Assignment 1

Tues 8/30    **History of Inequality**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, Ch. 3, pp. 48-78

Optional reading: Grusky in *Social Stratification*  
*Application Assignment 1 Due*

Thurs 9/1    **Dimensions of Inequality**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, Ch. 2, pp. 18-47

Distribute Application Assignment2

Tues 9/6    *Application Assignment 2 Due*

**Lesson 2    Stratification Theories**

Thurs 9/8    **Conflict Theory**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, Ch. 4, pp. 79-95

Kerbo, Ch. 5, pp. 125-135

Optional reading: Marx (65-81)

Tues 9/13    **Functionalist Theory**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, Ch. 4, pp. 103-110

Kerbo, Ch. 5, pp. 112-125

Optional reading: David and Moore (39-46) in *Social Stratification*

Thurs 9/15 **Multidimensional Views of Stratification**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, Ch. 4 pp. 95-103

Kerbo, Ch. 5, pp. 135-142

Optional reading: Weber (113-126), and Sorensen, (229-244) in *Social Stratification*

Distribute Short Essay Assignment 1

Tues 9/20 *Short Essay Assignment Due*

**Lesson 3 Classes in the United States**

Thurs 9/22 **The Upper Class**

**Readings:**

Kerbo Ch. 6, pp. 143-173

Tues 9/27 **The Corporate Class**

**Reading:**

Kerbo Ch. 7, pp. 174-203

Optional reading: Mosca, C. Wright Mills, and Michael Useem (155-183) in *Social Stratification*

Thurs 9/29 **The Middle and Working Classes**

**Reading:**

Kerbo Ch. 8, pp. 204-236

Optional reading: Blau and Duncan (204-208) in *Social Stratification*

Tues 10/4 **Poverty**

**Reading:**

Defining Absolute poverty

Kerbo Ch. 9, pp. 237-273

Optional reading: Burtless and Smeeding in *Understanding Poverty*

Cancian and Reed in *Understanding Poverty*

**Lesson 4 Individual Determinants of Inequality**

Tues 10/6 **Reading:**

Kerbo, ch. 12 pp. 367-410

Distribute application assignment3 to be completed during fall break

**Tues 10/11 Fall Break (don't forget to complete your assignment)**

Thurs 10/13 **Individual Determinants of Inequality (cont...)**

*Application Assignment 3 due*

Optional reading: Blau and Duncan (317-329) in *Social Stratification*

Tues 10/18 **Individual Determinants of Inequality (cont...)**

**Reading:**

Money Income in the United States

Optional reading: Jencks et al. (329-335) in *Social Stratification*

**Lesson 5 Structural Determinants of Stratification**

Thurs 10/20 **Economic and Social Structures**

**Reading:**

Blau 1974

Review Kerbo, chapter 3

Optional reading: Piore (359-362), and Granovetter (370-383) in Grusky

Tues 10/25 **State Structure**

**Reading:**

Kerbo, ch. 9, pp. 273-287

TBA

Optional: Smeeding, Rainwater and Burtless in *Understanding Poverty*

Thurs 10/27 **Global Structure**

**Reading:**

Kerbo, ch. 14, pp. 441-468

Optional reading: Wallerstein (110-113) in *Social Stratification*

Distribute Essay Assignment 2

Tues 11/1 *Essay Assignment 2 due*

**Lesson 6 Gender and Race Inequality**

Thurs 11/3 **Gender Inequality**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, ch. 10, pp. 288-324

Optional: Polachek (583), England (590), and Bielby (606-632) in Grusky

Tues 11/8 **Race Inequality**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, ch. 11, pp. 325-366

Optional reading: Wilson (520-530), Lieberson (543-554), and Wilson (560-567) in *Social Stratification*

**Lesson 7 Legitimation**

Thurs 11/10 **Legitimation**

**Readings:**

Kerbo, chapter 13, pp. 411-440

Welfare Reform Summary

(<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opa/facts/tanf.htm>)

Optional reading: Moynihan (555-559) in *Social Stratification*

Tues 11/15 **Group Work on International Inequality**

**Meet in Library, room TBA**

Thurs 11/17 **Group Work on International Inequality**

**Meet in Library, room TBA**

Tues 11/22 **Group Work on International Inequality**

**Meet in Library, room TBA**

Thurs 11/24 **Thanksgiving Break**

Tues 11/29 **Group Presentations**

**Meet in classroom**

Thurs 12/1 **Group Presentations**

Tues 12/6 **Group Presentations**

**Distribute Final Exam**

12/9-12/16 **Final Exam Essay Due at Scheduled Exam Time**