

Social Stratification

Instructor: Daniel Ramirez
Email: danielramirezsmith@gmail.com
Location: 18.1.A04

Wednesdays 10:00 am-1:00 pm
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description:

Each human culture develops a system of social stratification based on a combination of ascribed and acquired qualities, with race, gender, and social class being the most apparent examples. These and other qualities influence an individual's standing within the social stratification system, which reflects the advantages and limits associated with obtaining desired but scarce resources. The extent to which a person's position in the stratification system affects their life chances, such as income, education, family life, and health, is determined by several factors, including the system of social inequality and, most importantly, the concentration of privileges in combination with an open or closed stratification system.

The social stratification system varies throughout time and between countries. We will examine the origins, development, reproduction, and implications of social stratification and inequality in this course. The course will rely on several sociological theories and empirical investigations to provide light on the current state of America's social stratification structure and recent trends.

Objectives:

This course consists of a combination of lectures, discussions, and activities in and out of the classroom. Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to answer the following questions:

- What is social stratification? How can we conceptualize social stratification?
- What are characteristics used to "stratify" a society?
- What constitutes an elite and social class? What theories of elites and social class do we have? And has class disappeared?
- How has inequality and poverty changed in the world? What are the consequences of inequality at both a societal level and at an individual level?

Required text:

We will be using multiple articles that should be accessible through UC3M's library. However, a good amount of readings stem from David Grusky's reader:

Grusky, David. *Social Stratification, Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, Second Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429306419>.

You can find it in the UC3M library in physical format. However, I highly recommend you purchase a copy for yourself, as this book will accompany you for the rest of your career. You can purchase an

electronic copy online for around \$15-\$20. If you have trouble accessing the required reading, please contact me.

Class dynamic

The course combines lectures followed by class discussion with student-run presentations. Both discussions and presentations will be based on the readings listed for each session. We will read approximately 3-4 articles for each class. The discussions led by students will pertain to the optional readings listed for each session.

Evaluation:

Students' grades will depend on:

- Active participation in class (10%)
- Discussion leader (30%)
- A term paper (40%)
- Class presentation of term paper (20%)

Leading discussion:

Each student will participate as a discussion leader of a designated topic (or specific article). Depending on the size of the class, it is possible discussion can be lead in groups. In any case, students will be responsible to prepare a brief introduction about the readings, send questions in advance to incite discussion, and lead actual discussion (with my assistance).

Term paper:

The main objective of the paper is to begin a research project within the area of Social Stratification. The term paper should reflect your original work on a topic of your choice from within the range of subjects covered in this course. The typical length of a term paper is around 15 pages. There are two possible formats for the term paper:

1. An original research paper on a topic of interest. Research papers can be empirical or theoretical (or preferably both).
2. A detailed proposal for a research project, including an extensive and critical review of the existing literature on the topic. Part of the grade will be reflected in e will have meetings throughout the course

To prepare for this term paper, I will hold individual meetings with each student to help and guide them towards a successful paper.

Class presentation of term paper:

Before the paper is finished, the students will have a chance to present it in front of the rest of the class for feedback. This presentation will be graded based on a marking grid that accounts for the quality of the presentation, relevance and design quality of the proposal or paper, and response to feedback given by students and the professor. The presentation guidelines will be given in the first day of class.

Topics and assigned readings:

The course is designed to provide an advanced level of understanding of social stratification and its various dimensions. The course is comprised of 4 core modules each focusing on a key dimension of stratification. The first is focused on foundational and traditional approaches of stratification. This entails the study of social classes, socioeconomic status, macro trends in inequality, intra- and inter-generational mobility, and seminal status attainment models. The second module focuses on health stratification. We will touch upon topics such stratification and morbidity, mortality, and sociogenomics. The third module focuses on race, ethnicity, and migration by looking into key status attainment models, discrimination, as well as space stratification and segregation. Finally, the last module focuses on gender stratification.

Module 1: Social class, macro-trends in inequality, and status attainment models.

Feb 2nd : Forms and sources of stratification.

Class introduction and syllabus overview.

Grusky, David. *Social Stratification, Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, Second Edition*. London New York, 2019. (pages 55-87)

- Davis & Moore
- Tumin
- Fischer et al.
- Lenski

Feb 9th: The structure of contemporary stratification.

Grusky, David. *Social Stratification, Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, Second Edition*. London New York, 2019. Part III

Foundational readings:

- Marx (pages 87-105)
- Weber (pages 132-152)
- Sørensen (pages 287-303)

Macro-trends in global income inequality

- Wallerstein (pages 129-132)

Discussion on key differences between Marxist and Weberian perspectives on stratification.
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Optional readings we will discuss in class:

Firebaugh, Glenn. *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality. The New Geography of Global Income Inequality*. Harvard University Press, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674036895>. (Chapters 1-2 & 5-9)

Piketty, Thomas, Emmanuel Saez, Facundo Alvaredo, and Anthony B Atkinson. “The Top 1 Percent in International and Historical Perspective.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27, no. 3 (August 2013): 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.27.3.3>.

Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Feb 16th : Status attainment models, and intra-/inter- generational mobility.

Grusky, David. *Social Stratification, Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, Second Edition*. London New York, 2019. Part IV

- Blau & Duncan (pages 390 – 403)
- Sewell, Haller & Portes (page 410 – 421)

Torche, Florencia. “Analyses of Intergenerational Mobility: An Interdisciplinary Review.” Edited by David B. Grusky, Timothy M. Smeeding, and C. Matthew Snipp. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 657, no. 1 (January 2015): 37–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214547476>.

Jerrim, John, and Lindsey Macmillan. “Income Inequality, Intergenerational Mobility, and the Great Gatsby Curve: Is Education the Key?” *Social Forces* 94, no. 2 (December 1, 2015): 505–33. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sov075>.

Discussion about the Great Gatsby Curve.

Optional readings we will discuss in class:

Conley, Dalton, and Neil G. Bennett. “Is Biology Destiny? Birth Weight and Life Chances.” *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 3 (2000): 458–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657467>.

Mare, Robert D. “Multigenerational Aspects of Social Stratification: Issues for Further Research.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 35 (March 2014): 121–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2014.01.004>.

Hout, Michael, and Thomas A. DiPrete. “What We Have Learned: RC28’s Contributions to Knowledge about Social Stratification.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 24, no. 1 (st 2006): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2005.10.001>.

Feb 23rd : Stratification from a life-course perspective

Heckman, James J. "Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children." *LIFE CYCLES* 312 (2006): 3.

Crystal, Stephen, Dennis G. Shea, and Adriana M. Reyes. "Cumulative Advantage, Cumulative Disadvantage, and Evolving Patterns of Late-Life Inequality." *The Gerontologist*, March 30, 2016, gnw056. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnw056>.

Sampson, R. J., and J. H. Laub. "Socioeconomic Achievement in the Life Course of Disadvantaged Men: Military Service as a Turning Point, Circa 1940-1965." *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 3 (June 1996): 347-67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096353>.

*Discussion about cohorts and cumulative (dis)advantage. *

Optional readings we will discuss in class:

Ryder, Norman B. "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change." *American Sociological Review* 30, no. 6 (December 1, 1965): 843-61. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2090964>.

Elder, Glen H. "The Life Course as Developmental Theory." *Child Development* 69, no. 1 (1998): 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1132065>.

Module 2: Health stratification

March 2nd : Macro-trends in inequality and life-expectancy.

Robert Fogel, 2004. *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America, and the Third World*, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5.

McKeown, Thomas. *The Role of Medicine: Dream, Mirage, or Nemesis?* Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1980. Chapters 1 and 2.

Finch, Brian Karl. "Early Origins of the Gradient: The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Infant Mortality in the United States." *Demography* 40, no. 4 (November 1, 2003): 675-99. doi:10.1353/dem.2003.0033.

*Discussion on what we know about global income inequality and how would it relate to LE. *

Optional readings we will discuss in class:

Omran, A.R. 1971. "The Epidemiologic Transition: A Theory of the Epidemiology of Population Change" *Millbank Quarterly* 49:509-38.

Cutler, D., A. Deaton, et al. 2006. "The determinants of mortality." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*: 97-120.

Firebaugh, Glenn, Francesco Acciai, Aggie J. Noah, Christopher Prather, and Claudia Nau. "Why Lifespans Are More Variable Among Blacks Than Among Whites in the United States." *Demography* 51, no. 6 (December 1, 2014): 2025–45. doi:10.1007/s13524-014-0345-2.

March 9th : Life course, socioeconomic inequality, and health disparities (micro-level)

Lutfey, Karen, and Jeremy Freese. "Toward Some Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality: Socioeconomic Status and Health in the Routine Clinic Visit for Diabetes." *American Journal of Sociology* 110, no. 5 (March 1, 2005): 1326–72. doi:10.1086/428914.

Hayward, Mark D., and Bridget K. Gorman. "The Long Arm of Childhood: The Influence of Early-Life Social Conditions on Men's Mortality." *Demography* 41, no. 1 (February 2004): 87–107.

Haas, Steven A., M. Maria Glymour, and Lisa F. Berkman. "Childhood Health and Labor Market Inequality over the Life Course." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52, no. 3 (2011): 298–313. <http://www.jstor.org.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/stable/23033281>.

Palloni, Alberto, Carolina Milesi, Robert G. White, and Alyn Turner. "Early Childhood Health, Reproduction of Economic Inequalities and the Persistence of Health and Mortality Differentials." *Social Science & Medicine*, Part Special Issue: Early life effects on socioeconomic performance and mortality in later life: A full life course approach using contemporary and historical sources, 68, no. 9 (May 1, 2009): 1574–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.02.009>.

*Discussion on the opioid epidemic. *

Optional readings we will discuss in class:

McEwen, Craig A., and Bruce S. McEwen. "Social Structure, Adversity, Toxic Stress, and Intergenerational Poverty: An Early Childhood Model." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43, no. 1 (July 31, 2017): 445–72. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053252>.

Haas, Steven A. "Health Selection and the Process of Social Stratification: The Effect of Childhood Health on Socioeconomic Attainment." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 339–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002214650604700403>.

March 16th : Critical period exposures, socioeconomic implications and health disparities.

Almond, Douglas, and Janet Currie. "Killing Me Softly: The Fetal Origins Hypothesis." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (August 1, 2011): 153–72. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.25.3.153>.

Conley, Dalton, and Neil G. Bennett. "Is Biology Destiny? Birth Weight and Life Chances." *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 3 (2000): 458–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657467>.

Palloni, Alberto, Mary McEniry, Yiyue Huangfu, and Hiram Beltran-Sanchez. "Impacts of the 1918 Flu on Survivors' Nutritional Status: A Double Quasi-Natural Experiment." *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 10 (October 20, 2020): e0232805. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232805>.

*Discussion on genetics, epigenetics, and microbiome. *

Kuh, Diana, and Yoav Ben Shlomo. *A Life Course Approach to Chronic Disease Epidemiology*. OUP Oxford, 2004. (Chapters 1-4)

Kuzawa, Christopher W., and Elizabeth A. Quinn. “Developmental Origins of Adult Function and Health: Evolutionary Hypotheses.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38, no. 1 (October 2009): 131–47. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-091908-164350>.

Berthelon, Matias, Diana Kruger, and Rafael Sanchez. “Maternal Stress during Pregnancy and Early Childhood Development.” *Economics & Human Biology* 43 (December 1, 2021): 101047. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ehb.2021.101047>.

Gluckman, P. D. “Living with the Past: Evolution, Development, and Patterns of Disease.” *Science* 305, no. 5691 (September 17, 2004): 1733–36. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1095292>.

Module 3: Race and ethnicity stratification

March 23rd : Ethno-racial inequality and immigration.

Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. “The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 (1993): 74–96.

Alba, Richard. “Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 20–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000280003>.

Foner, Nancy, and Richard Alba. “Immigrant Religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?” *The International Migration Review* 42, no. 2 (2008): 360–92.

Pager, Devah. “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 5 (March 1, 2003): 937–75. <https://doi.org/10.1086/374403>.

*Discussion the role of race and ethnicity in status attainment in Europe today. *

McDermott, Monica. 2006. *Working-Class White: The Making and Unmaking of Race Relations*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Pp. 38-58, “Experiences of White Racial Identity”)

Legewie, Joscha. "Terrorist Events and Attitudes toward Immigrants: A Natural Experiment." *American Journal of Sociology* 118, no. 5 (March 1, 2013): 1199–1245.

<https://doi.org/10.1086/669605>

Stevens, Gillian. "Age at Immigration and Second Language Proficiency among Foreign-Born Adults." *Language in Society* 28, no. 04 (October 1999).

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404599004030>.

March 30th : Education & racial and ethnic inequality / Spatial segregation.

Glick, J.E. and White, M.J. 2003. Academic trajectories of immigrant youths: Analysis within and across cohorts. *Demography*, 40(4), pp.759-783.

Kogan, Irena. "Labor Markets and Economic Incorporation among Recent Immigrants in Europe." *Social Forces* 85, no. 2 (2006): 697–721.

Gaddis, S. Michael, and Raj Ghoshal. "Arab American Housing Discrimination, Ethnic Competition, and the Contact Hypothesis." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 660, no. 1 (July 1, 2015): 282–99.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716215580095>.

Iceland, John, and Rima Wilkes. "Does Socioeconomic Status Matter? Race, Class, and Residential Segregation." *Social Problems* 53, no. 2 (February 1, 2006): 248–73.

<https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2006.53.2.248>.

*Discussion of health attainment amongst racial and ethnic minorities. *
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Haas, Steven, and Leah Rohlfen. "Life Course Determinants of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Functional Health Trajectories." *Social Science & Medicine* 70, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 240–50.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.10.003>.

Treas, Judith, and Zoya Gubernskaya. "Chapter 7 - Immigration, Aging, and the Life Course." In *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences (Eighth Edition)*, edited by Linda K. George and Kenneth F. Ferraro, 143–61. San Diego: Academic Press, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-417235-7.00007-X>.

Module 4: Gender stratification

April 6th : Gendered stratification structures .

Grusky, David. *Social Stratification, Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, Second Edition*. London New York, 2019. Part VI – Gender stratification

Goldin, Claudia D. "The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women's Employment." *The American Economic Review* 81, no. 4 (1991): 741–56.

Goldin, Claudia, and Cecilia Rouse. "Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of 'Blind' Auditions on Female Musicians." *The American Economic Review* 90, no. 4 (2000): 715–41.

*Discussion of gender health gradients. *

Case, Anne and Christina Paxson. 2005. "Sex Differences in Morbidity and Mortality." *Demography*. 42: 189-214.

April 20th : Guest lecture from Korean Development Institute.

Readings to be determined.

April 27th : Research presentations.

GRADING SCHEME:

- QUIZZES AND IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS10%
- 3 SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS.....30% (10% each)
- PRESENTATION.....20%
- FINAL RESEARCH PAPER40% FINAL

Grade Distribution:

A = 93-100; A- = 90-92;

B+ = 86-89; B = 83-85; B- = 80-82

C+ = 75-79; c=70-74;

D = 60-69; F = 59 or below

Late Policy

All assignments are due prior to the start of class, turned in on Canvas. For each day (weekends included) the assignment/paper is late, a full letter grade for the assignment will be taken off the final score. Papers turned in after the class period begins count as one day late. Each new day starts at 2:20pm Eastern Time. Thus, the highest grade you can get for turning an assignment in before 2:20pm a day after the due date is a B. Below are the class assignments and their due dates.