

Social Stratification I

MASTER IN SOCIAL SCIENCE, UC3M – IC3JM (2024-2025)

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Teaching hours: Wednesdays 10:00-13:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the distribution of socially relevant resources by contemporary and historical societies, exploring the resultant inequalities within and across generations. It investigates how these disparities evolve over time and vary among different social groups. Providing students with a theoretical framework of key debates, alongside empirical evidence, the course integrates interdisciplinary perspectives—where applicable—from fields such as archaeology, economics, epidemiology, demography, genomics, and psychology. Comparative analyses will include examples from both advanced democracies and, in particular contexts, low- to middle-income nations.

COURSE ORGANIZATIONS

Session structure: Classes are organized in two blocks.

- The first consists of a lecture given by the professor, with discussion of the issues presented in the lecture.
- The second will consist of student-run presentations.

Student presentations: Presentations should reflect on the structure of the literature, establish basic facts, produce new ideas, and pose questions for discussion with their peers about alternative explanations of empirical regularities relevant to the subject. Presenters can dig into their topics beyond the limits of this syllabus, both empirically and theoretically. The presenters will also be responsible for organizing an active discussion with their peers. Hints to endure an active debate is to address your colleagues along these lines:

- Present challenging questions to common sense or widespread expectations
- Discuss methodological criticisms to the standard practice in the studied agenda
- Propose new avenues for future research
- Present contradicting evidence
- Elucidate causal mechanisms, etc.

The first week will be dedicated to assigning topics to students. In case multiple students opt to present on the same topic, we will take into account substantive aspects to reach a final decision. Ideally, presentations should be individual.

Response papers: Students not presenting in the session are required to submit concise response papers, reflecting on the assigned readings or central ideas they would ideally want to discuss in the session (which can also originate in other materials is a clear connection to the issues at stake is granted). Response papers should be *succinct*, ideally *one page*, but no longer than two pages. They must address the following:

- Questions that remain unanswered after the reading.

- Direct challenges to the arguments presented within the readings.
- Critical analysis, either substantive or methodological, pertaining to the material.
- Papers must be emailed to the instructor at [hector.cebolla@gmail.com] by 14:00 on Tuesdays preceding the class sessions.

Please, do not summarize the readings. To ensure the authenticity and originality of class discussions and presentations, students are discouraged from using AI to formulate their arguments or points of debate. While AI can be a useful tool for certain tasks, the primary aim of this course is to develop independent critical thinking and personal insight. Therefore, students should rely on their own analyses and interpretations when preparing for presentations and writing response papers.

Research paper: Each student must make a research proposal to develop his or her final paper. The topics on which these papers will be developed may be directly related to those selected in the syllabus or, at least, indirectly related as long as they are relevant to the study of social stratification. The structure of these papers should follow the logic of an empirical research article: research question, literature review, discussion of the substantive contribution that the paper will make to the literature, and empirical exploitation plan. Students can choose to complete the structure with empirical analysis. While this is not compulsory, it will be considered positively. The length of research papers should be around 15 pages. Papers should be individual.

In the final sessions, students will have a chance to present their research question and relevance in front of the rest of the class for feedback.

Course evaluation: 30% of the final grade will be based on students' active participation in all sessions and their response papers. Another 30% will be allocated to the individual presentation and the structure and dynamism of the discussion proposed in class. The remaining 40% will be determined by the research paper.

SESSIONS AND TOPICS

1. The history of social stratification: inequality in ancient and past societies

The session begins by exploring how social inequality is far from a modern phenomenon, drawing. This sets a stage for understanding the *longue durée* of social stratification, suggesting that certain patterns of inequality have deep historical roots.

Core readings

- Clark, G. (2012). What is the true rate of social mobility in Sweden? A surname analysis, 1700-2012. *Manuscript, Univ. California, Davis*.
- Goni, Marc. "Assortative Matching at the Top of the Distribution: Evidence from the World's Most Exclusive Marriage Market." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 14.3 (2022): 445-87

Complementary readings

- Mittnik, Alissa, Ken Massy, Corina Knipper, Fabian Wittenborn, Ronny Friedrich, Saskia Pfrengle, Marta Burri et al. "Kinship-based social inequality in Bronze Age Europe." *Science* 366, no. 6466 (2019): 731-734.
- Alfani, Guido. "Wealth and income inequality in the long run of history." *Handbook of cliometrics*. Springer, Cham, 2019. 1173-1201.
- Kohler, T. A., Smith, M. E., Bogaard, A., Feinman, G. M., Peterson, C. E., Betzenhauser, A., ... & Bowles, S. (2017). Greater post-Neolithic wealth disparities in Eurasia than in North America and Mesoamerica. *Nature*, 551(7682), 619-622.

- Barone, Guglielmo, and Sauro Mocetti. "Intergenerational mobility in the very long run: Florence 1427–2011." *The Review of Economic Studies* 88.4 (2021): 1863-1891.
- Scheidel, W. (2017). *The great leveler*. Princeton University Press.
- Lalueza-Fox, Carles. *Inequality: A Genetic History*. MIT Press, 2022.

2. Contemporary class analysis

This session on Contemporary Class Analysis, dives into the complex idea of class within sociological frameworks. The first paper proposed for discussion deals with the content and consequences of social class as an individual identification. The second is Golthorpe's (NeoWeberian) work on employment contract differentiation further enriches our understanding of class distinctions in societal roles and economic outcomes. The third paper opens up the discussion for setting skills as the crucial asset conducting to social class ascription.

Core readings:

- Fernández-Albertos, José, and Alexander Kuo. "Income perception, information, and progressive taxation: Evidence from a survey experiment." *Political Science Research and Methods* 6.1 (2018): 83-110.
- *Golthorpe, Jonh H 2007 "Social class and the differentiation of employment contracts" PP 101-124 In J-H. Golthorpe, *On Sociology*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Tåhlin, M. (2007). Class clues. *European Sociological Review*, 23(5), 557-572.

Complementary readings

- *Grusky, David. *Social stratification, class, race, and gender in sociological perspective*. Routledge, 2008. Sorensen: 219-235
- Grusky, David. *Social stratification, class, race, and gender in sociological perspective*. Routledge, 2008. Marx: 74-89; Weber 114-132
- Wright, Erik Olin (2000). *Class counts student edition*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 "Class analysis" 1-41.
- Zajko, Mike. "Artificial intelligence, algorithms, and social inequality: Sociological contributions to contemporary debates." *Sociology Compass* 16.3 (2022): e12962.

3. A general framework for studying social Mobility

In our third session we shall unravel the complexities of the OED (Occupation, Education, Destination) model, with a particular focus on the 'OD' relationship—how occupation and destination interact in the social mobility framework. The subsequent sessions will delve into 'ED' and 'OE' respectively.

Core readings

- Alesina, A. F., Seror, M., Yang, D. Y., You, Y., & Zeng, W. (2020). *Persistence through revolutions*. National Bureau of Economic Research. China:
- Breen, Richard. "Education and intergenerational social mobility in the US and four European countries." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 35.3 (2019): 445-466.
- Gil-Hernández, Carlos J., Fabrizio Bernardi, and Ruud Luijkx. "Intergenerational Social Mobility in Twentieth-Century Spain." *Education and Intergenerational Social Mobility in Europe and the United States* (2020): 224-270.

Complementary readings

- Bukodi, E., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (2018). Social inequality and social mobility: is there an inverse relation? *SocArXiv*, doi, 10.
- Hertel, F. R., & Groh-Samberg, O. (2019). The relation between inequality and intergenerational class mobility in 39 countries. *American Sociological Review*, 84(6), 1099-1133.
- Breen, R., ed. 2004. Social Mobility in Europe. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 The comparative Study of Social Mobility and 2. Statistical Methods of Mobility Research p. 1-35.
- Erikson, R., Goldthorpe, J. H., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (1992). *The constant flux: A study of class mobility in industrial societies*. Oxford University Press. Conclusions (Chapter 11)
- Mitnik, P. A., Cumberworth, E., & Grusky, D. B. (2016). Social mobility in a high-inequality regime. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 663(1), 140-184.

4. Inequality in educational results – early life & household resources

This session aims to foster a critical understanding of how early life conditions and the resources available within a child's household can pre-determine educational achievements, setting the stage for discussions on policy interventions and educational reforms.

Core readings

- Torche, F. (2018). Prenatal exposure to an acute stressor and children's cognitive outcomes. *Demography*, 55(5), 1611-1639.
- Passaretta, G., Skopek, J., & van Huizen, T. (2022). Is social inequality in school-age achievement generated before or during schooling? A European perspective. *European Sociological Review*, 38(6), 849-865.
- Cebolla-Boado, H., Radl, J., & Salazar, L. (2017). Preschool education as the great equalizer? A cross-country study into the sources of inequality in reading competence. *Acta Sociologica*, 60(1), 41-60.

Complementary readings

- Hackman, D. A., & Farah, M. J. (2009). Socioeconomic status and the developing brain. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 13(2), 65-73.
- Reardon, S. F. (2011). The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations. *Whither opportunity*, 1(1), 91-116.

5. Inequality of educational opportunity - educational institutions

In the fifth session of our exploration into educational inequality, we shift our focus to the structural role of educational institutions and the concept of inequality of educational opportunity. We will dissect the relationship between educational pathways and social mobility

Core readings

- *Grätz, Michael. "Does Schooling Affect Socioeconomic Inequalities in Educational Attainment? Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Germany." *Sociological Science* 10 (2023): 880-902.

- *Bernardi, F., & Cebolla Boado, H. (2014). Previous school results and social background: Compensation and imperfect information in educational transitions. *European Sociological Review*, 30(2), 207-217.
- Manzano, D., Cordero-Coma, J., & Valdés, M. T. (2024). Intensity of educational expansion: a key factor in explaining educational inequality across regions and cohorts in Spain. *European Sociological Review*, jcae013.
- Cebolla Boado and Manzano on Preschool and educational attainment (OSF, 2024)

Complementary Reading:

- Lucas, S. R. (2001). Effectively maintained inequality: Education transitions, track mobility, and social background effects. *American journal of sociology*, 106(6), 1642-1690.
- Raftery, A. E., & Hout, M. (1993). Maximally maintained inequality: Expansion, reform, and opportunity in Irish education, 1921-75. *Sociology of education*, 41-62.
- Breen, R., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (1997). Explaining educational differentials: Towards a formal rational action theory. *Rationality and society*, 9(3), 275-305.
- Blossfeld, P. N., Blossfeld, G. J., & Blossfeld, H. P. (2015). Educational expansion and inequalities in educational opportunity: Long-term changes for East and West Germany. *European Sociological Review*, 31(2), 144-160.
- Barone, C., & Ruggera, L. (2018). Educational equalization stalled? Trends in inequality of educational opportunity between 1930 and 1980 across 26 European nations. *European Societies*, 20(1), 1-25.

6. Family, parenting and cultural capital

This session delves into the interplay between family dynamics, parenting styles, and the accumulation and transmission of cultural capital. This session focuses on pivotal works that explore the variance in childrearing practices across social classes and their subsequent impact on children's cognitive development and educational outcomes.

Core readings

- Baumrind, Diana. "Current patterns of parental authority." *Developmental psychology* 4.1p2 (1971)
- Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in black families and white families. *American sociological review*, 747-776.
- Meteyer, Karen B., and Maureen Perry-Jenkins. "Dyadic parenting and children's externalizing symptoms." *Family Relations* 58.3 (2009): 289-302.
- Sullivan, A., Ketende, S., & Joshi, H. (2013). Social class and inequalities in early cognitive scores. *Sociology*, 47(6), 1187-1206.
- Jæger, M. M., & Karlson, K. (2018). Cultural capital and educational inequality: A counterfactual analysis. *Sociological Science*, 5, 775-795.

Complementary readings

- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The forms of capital (1986)". *Cultural theory: An anthology* 1 (2011): 81-93.
- Davies, S., & Rizk, J. (2018). The three generations of cultural capital research: A narrative review. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(3), 331-365.
- Kuppens, S., & Ceulemans, E. (2019). Parenting styles: A closer look at a well-known concept. *Journal of child and family studies*, 28(1), 168-181.
- Doepke, M., & Zilibotti, F. (2019). *Love, money, and parenting: How economics explains the way we raise our kids*. Princeton University Press.

7. The social stratification of fertility and demographic outcomes

This session examines the stratification of one of the most important outcomes in family formation: reproduction. To this end, we will study the different fertility rates of university-educated women versus non-university-educated women, as well as the impact of being childless on life satisfaction.

Core readings

- Farré, Lúdia, and Libertad González. "Does paternity leave reduce fertility?" *Journal of Public Economics* 172 (2019): 52-66.
- Impicciatore, R., & Tomatis, F. (2020). The nexus between education and fertility in six European countries. *Genus*, 76(1), 35.
- Keizer, R., Dykstra, P. A., & Poortman, A. R. (2010). Life outcomes of childless men and fathers. *European sociological review*, 26(1), 1-15.
- Ali, F. R. M., & Gurmu, S. (2018). The impact of female education on fertility: A natural experiment from Egypt. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 16, 681-712.

Complementary readings

- Azzollini, Leo, Richard Breen, and Brian Nolan. "Demographic behaviour and earnings inequality across OECD countries." *The Journal of Economic Inequality* (2023): 1-21.
- Hamermesh, Daniel S., and Anwen Zhang. *The Economic Impact of Heritable Physical Traits: Hot Parents, Rich Kid?*. No. w32086. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2024.
- Esteve, Albert, and Elizabeth Florez-Paredes. "The stability paradox: Why expansion of women's education has not delayed early union formation or childbearing in Latin America." *Studies in Family Planning* 49.2 (2018): 127-142.

8. Poverty

The session delves into the intricate interplay between poverty and cognition, examining how these dynamics influence individuals and society at large. We will turn our focus to a curated collection of seminal papers that shed light on poverty not merely as an economic deficiency but as a determinant shaping thought processes and decision-making.

Core readings

- Shah, Anuj K., Sendhil Mullainathan, and Eldar Shafir. "Some consequences of having too little." *Science* 338.6107 (2012): 682-685.
- Mani, A., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., & Zhao, J. (2013). Poverty impedes cognitive function. *science*, 341(6149), 976-980.
- Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*. Crown.

Complementary readings

- Desmond, M., & Western, B. (2018). Poverty in America: New directions and debates. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 44(1), 305-18.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, Abhijit V. Banerjee, and Esther Duflo. *Poor economics: A radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty*. Public Affairs, 2011.
- Troller-Renfree, Sonya V., et al. "The impact of a poverty reduction intervention on infant brain activity." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119.5 (2022): e2115649119.

- Calnitsky, D. (2018). Structural and individualistic theories of poverty. *Sociology Compass*, 12(12), e12640.
- Brady, D. (2019). Theories of the Causes of Poverty. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45, 155-175.
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9. Migration

The session covers an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted phenomena of migration, where we will dissect the layers of migrant selectivity, integration policies, and the consequences of discrimination on economic and social outcomes.

Core readings

- Cebolla-Boado, H., & Soysal, Y. N. (2018). Educational optimism in China: migrant selectivity or migration experience? *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(13), 2107-2126.
- Di Stasio, V., Lancee, B., Veit, S., & Yemane, R. (2021). Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(6), 1305-1326.
- * Platt, L., Polavieja, J., & Radl, J. (2022). Which integration policies work? The heterogeneous impact of national institutions on immigrants' labor market attainment in Europe. *International Migration Review*, 56(2), 344-375.

Complementary readings

- Guiso, L., Sapienza, P., & Zingales, L. (2006). Does culture affect economic outcomes? *Journal of Economic perspectives*, 20(2), 23-48.
- Foner, N., & Alba, R. (2008). Immigrant religion in the US and Western Europe: Bridge or barrier to inclusion? *International migration review*, 42(2), 360-392.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Stuart N. Soroka, Shanto Iyengar, Toril Aalberg, Raymond Duch, Marta Fraile, Kyu S. Hahn et al. "Economic and cultural drivers of immigrant support worldwide." *British Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 4 (2019): 1201-1226.
- Feliciano, C. (2020). Immigrant selectivity effects on health, labor market, and educational outcomes. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46, 315-334.
- Polavieja, J. G., Fernández-Reino, M., & Ramos, M. (2018). Are migrants selected on motivational orientations? Selectivity patterns amongst international migrants in Europe. *European Sociological Review*, 34(5), 570-588.
- Ichou, M., & Wallace, M. (2019). The healthy immigrant effect. *Demographic Research*, 40, 61-94.

10. Gender

The session delves into the persistent and multifaceted issue of gender biases and inequality. Through a critical examination of seminal core readings, we will confront the enduring legacy of gender bias in Europe, and the results of cross-national field experiments providing quantifiable measures of discrimination in the labor market.

Core readings

- Damann Siow (2023) "Persistence of gender biases in Europe" PNAS 120 (12) e2213266120
- Goldin, Claudia (2014) "A grand gender convergence: its last chapter" *American Economic Review* 104(4):1091-1119.

- Birkelund, G. E., Lancee, B., Larsen, E. N., Polavieja, J. G., Radl, J., & Yemane, R. (2022). Gender Discrimination in Hiring: Evidence from a Cross-National Harmonized Field Experiment. *European Sociological Review*, 38(3), 337-354. Mide experimentalmente la discriminacion en mercado

Complementary readings

- - Kleven, H., Landais, C., & Sogaard, J. E. (2021). Does biology drive child penalties? evidence from biological and adoptive families. *American Economic Review: Insights*, 3(2), 183-98. Mercado laboral: no es la maternidad
- Rosenbaum, P. (2019). The Family Earnings Gap Revisited: A Household or a Labor Market Problem?. *Available at SSRN*
- Blake, K. R., Bastian, B., Denson, T. F., Grosjean, P., & Brooks, R. C. (2018). Income inequality not gender inequality positively covaries with female sexualization on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(35), 8722-8727.
- Alesina, A., Giuliano, P., & Nunn, N. (2013). On the origins of gender roles: Women and the plough. *The quarterly journal of economics*, 128(2), 469-530.
- Platt, L., & Polavieja, J. (2016). Saying and doing gender: Intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards the sexual division of labour. *European Sociological Review*, 32(6), 820-834.
- Buchmann, C., & DiPrete, T. A. (2006). The growing female advantage in college completion: The role of family background and academic achievement. *American sociological review*, 71(4), 515-541.
- Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2017). Gender segregation across fields of study in post-secondary education: Trends and social differentials. *European Sociological Review*, 33(3), 449-464.

11. (Epi)genetic determinants of educational attainment

This session discusses the complex interplay between genetics and social results, a frontier in sociogenomic research. Limits to this emerging line of sociological thinking are also presented.

Core readings

- Border, R., Athanasiadis, G., Buil, A., Schork, A. J., Cai, N., Young, A. I., ... & Zaitlen, N. A. (2022). Cross-trait assortative mating is widespread and inflates genetic correlation estimates. *Science*, 378(6621), 754-761.
- Houmark, M. A., Ronda, V., & Rosholm, M. (2024). The nurture of nature and the nature of nurture: How genes and investments interact in the formation of skills. *American Economic Review*, 114(2), 385-425.
- Evans, L., Engelman, M., Mikulas, A., & Malecki, K. (2021). How are social determinants of health integrated into epigenetic research? A systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine*, 273, 113738.

Complementary readings

- Conley D. 2016. Socio-genomic research using genome-wide molecular data. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 42:275–99
- Engzell P, Troup FC. 2019. Heritability of education rises with intergenerational mobility. *PNAS* 116(51):25386–88
- Kong A, Thorleifsson G, Frigge ML, Vilhjalmsdottir B, Young AI, et al. 2018. The nature of nurture: effects of parental genotypes. *Science* 359:424–28

- Benyamin B, de Leeuw CA, Sullivan PF, van Bochoven A, et al. 2015. Meta-analysis of the heritability of human traits based on fifty years of twin studies. *Nat. Genet.* 47(7):702–9

12. Wrap up and pending issues.

- Lupu, Noam, and Alejandro Tirado Castro. "Unequal policy responsiveness in Spain." *Socio-Economic Review* (2022): mwac040.