

Sociology 4071-001

Social Stratification

Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Mike Haffey
Office hrs. Mon. & Wed. 2-3pm

Department of Sociology
288 Ketchum Hall

mhaffey@colorado.edu
office phone 303.492.8838

The differences between individuals and groups within society has long been at the center of sociological investigation. Sociologists refer to social inequality that is built into the structure of society as stratification – the structured ranking of entire groups of people that perpetuates unequal economic rewards and power in a society. The categories most often at the center of the hierarchical ranking of people in a society are those of social class, race / ethnicity and gender. Class, race, gender are social structures, constructed through social interaction and manifested in the institutions of society, interpersonal interactions and in the minds and identities of those living in stratified societies.

How a society is stratified via these intersectionalities matters in shaping the social location of different groups in contemporary society. It matters by influencing the process of social mobility and by configuring the opportunity structures experienced by different groups in society. It matters in structuring the familial, educative, occupational and political experience. It matters for our health, exposure to risk and longevity. Finally, the intersection of race, class, and gender matters because it determines and legitimates patterns of income and wealth distribution, political power, cultural capital, and the distribution of life chances.

Our objective this semester is to explore: the modern American class system and the divisions within, current data on inequality in the US, the role of public policy in creating and perpetuating social inequality, the ideological justifications for inequality and the subtle and often unseen ways in which inequality is structured into daily life.

The two required books that I have chosen for this course were written and designed to facilitate your understanding of the many dimensions of social stratification. These are both excellent sociology books! Please make a commitment to read the assigned material before class.

The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality by D. Gilbert
The Meritocracy Myth (3rd edition) by S. McNamee and R. Miller

The authors have worked hard to make a number of complex ideas as understandable as possible. You must do a little work as well. You will be expected to have read and assimilated the required readings for each class meeting. The reading assignments should be done before the topic is discussed in class

Grading: I expect lively and thoughtful participation by all members of this class. I expect you to read the appropriate material for each class meeting and come ready to talk, share, apply, refine, and/or challenge the topic at hand. I favor frequent and informed participation. I strongly encourage you to make every effort to become a “regular member” of this class. ***Please bring your book(s) to each class meeting.*** In determining final grades I do use the “+, -” system.” If you are going to miss an exam, it is vital that you notify me prior to that exam

Your final grade for this course will be based on the following criteria

* **Class Engagement (20%):** Your regular attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities is an essential component of this class. You are expected to engage in civil discourse on issues and readings relevant to each session, as well as help co-facilitate our class discussion. We all have a responsibility to make a small seminar-style class such as this work well. Beyond two absences, your grade for engagement will be reduced by one-half letter grade for each subsequent absence, except in the case of high-holiday observance, family emergency or medical emergency.

Four Exams (15% each / 60% total): 50-minute, multi-format; covering all lecture and reading materials. Exam dates: 9/16; 10/14, 11/11 and a final exam date TBD

Research project (20%) Topics and criteria to be discussed in-class. These projects will be due on 12/9 and presented in-class on 12/9 and 12/11.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Aug. 26 – course introduction

Aug. 28 – Sept. 13 chapters 1-4 in The American Class Structure...

Sept. 16 - Exam 1

Sept. 18 –Oct. 11 chapters 5-8 in The American Class Structure

Oct 14 - Exam 2

Oct 16 – Nov.8 The Myth of Meritocracy

Nov. 11 - Exam 3

Nov. 13n –Dec. 6 chapters 9-11 in The American Class Structure

Final Exam 4 – Date TBD

Technology in the classroom: I want all of my students to be fully engaged in every minute of every lecture and recitation. As such students should turn off cell phones and other electronic devices at the start of class. Laptops and tablets are not allowed during lecture and recitation unless you have a written accommodation from disability services

Technology in the classroom: I want all of my students to be fully engaged in every minute of every lecture and recitation. As such students should turn off cell phones and other electronic devices at the start of class. Laptops and tablets are not allowed during lecture and recitation unless you have a written accommodation from disability services

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students) (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, *please speak with me to arrange alternative date and time*. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual

harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#)