

**Sociology 4071-001**

**Social Stratification**

**Spring 2017**

**Instructor: Dr. Mike Haffey**  
**Office hrs. T&R 11am –1pm**

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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 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 analyze inequality within the United States in the context of global stratification and a rapidly changing world economy. Using a sociological perspective, we will describe and analyze: the roots of inequality, the trends and patterns and dimensions of social inequality, and the social / public policy challenges posed by inequality. Throughout our many topical discussions we will continue to highlight and become more aware of the subtle and often unseen ways in which inequality is structured into daily life.

The one required text that I have chosen for this course was written and designed to facilitate your understanding of the many dimensions of social stratification. ***Social Inequality: In A Global Age (5<sup>th</sup> edition) by Scott Sernau.*** The author has 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 before each class meeting. ***Please bring your book to each class meeting.***

**Grading:** 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 grade for this course will be based on the following criteria:

**Class engagement (10%):** 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 (10% each / 40% total):** Each of the 60 minute, multi-format exams are designed to assess your familiarity with the basic sociological concepts, trends and patterns, and conflicting explanations regarding each topic / chapter. Familiarity with our textbook is key. Exam dates: 2/14, 3/14, 4/18, 5/10.

**Four “Making Connections” Reports (10% each / 40% total):** The “Making Connections” section at the end of each our chapters provides important links to reliable sources of further information through a variety of medias. Each student is required to pursue three such “connections” via periodic “reports.” These reports will encourage you to explore various topics discussed in the chapters in more detail, applying concepts to your own experiences, backgrounds and communities. Each of these three “reports” are to be typed, single-spaced, and two-pages in length. I will also ask that each of these reports be elaborated upon briefly in class. The due dates for these reports / presentations are: 2/16, 3/16, 4/20.

**One “Making a Difference” Project: (10%)** Community Engagement Project. Throughout the semester, we will be introduced to the many ways each of us can engage the topic of social inequality – and make a difference - in our community, no matter how small. Each of you will be tasked with moving beyond analysis to action and choosing a way to engage a topic important to you. As you will see, a range of possible actions are suggested throughout our readings. Originally conceived of and appropriate actions will also be considered. Project proposals and report criteria will be discussed further in class. This project needs to be completed by 5/10/17.

**Students with Disabilities:** *Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide me notification from Disability Services and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard Hall, 322.)*

**Classroom Behavior Policy:** *Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationality.*

**Student Honor Code:** *All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and nonacademic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).*

**Policy on Discrimination and Harassment:** *The University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.*

**Religious Observances:** *Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please inform me as to any classes you expect to miss due to religious observance so that we can make necessary accommodations.*

1/24 Course / Topic Introduction

1/26 The Gordian Knot of Race, Class, and Gender (ch. 1)

1/31 & 2/2 The Great Debate (ch. 2)

2/7 & 2/9 The Global Divide: Inequality Across Societies (ch. 3)

**2/14- Exam 1**

*2/16 Making Connections Report #1 Due / Presentations*

2/21 & 2/23 Class Privilege (ch. 4)

2/28 & 3/2 Racial and Ethnic Inequality (ch. 5)

3/7 & 3/9 Gender and Sexual Inequality (ch. 6)

**3/14 Exam 2**

*3/16 Making Connections Report #2 Due / Presentations*

3/21 & 3/23 Status Prestige (ch. 7)

4/4 & 4/6 Power and Politics (ch. 8)

4/11 & 4/13 Moving Up: Education and Mobility (ch. 9)

**4/18 Exam 3**

*4/20 Making Connections Report #3 Due / Presentations*

4/25 & 4/27 Abandoned Spaces, Forgotten Places: Poverty and Place (ch. 10)

\*5/2 Reversing the Race to the Bottom: Poverty and Policy (ch. 11)

\*5/4 Challenging the System: Social Movements in a Global Age (ch. 12)

**5/10 (Wednesday @ 7:30pm) Final Exam 4 / Making a Difference Project Due**