

## **Sociology 518. Social Inequality: Contemporary Theories, Debates, and Models**

Seminar: Tuesdays, 10:10-12:35, Uris Hall 360

Instructors:

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This course reviews classical and contemporary approaches to understanding the differential distribution of valued goods and the social processes by which such inequality comes to be seen as legitimate, natural, or desirable. Although egalitarian values are a fundamental feature of postmodernity, these values exist in tension not only with massive departures from perfect equality but also with historic and unprecedented increases, at least in some domains, in the extent of these departures. Moreover, the processes that generate and maintain inequality appear to be changing, as are the consequences of inequality for lifestyles, consumption practices, and life chances. The foregoing changes invite fresh study of the structure of social inequality and how it varies by time and place. We will be discussing questions and issues of the following kind:

- (a) What are the major forms of stratification in human history? Is inequality an inevitable feature of human life?
- (b) How many social classes are there? What are the principal “fault lines” or social cleavages that define the class structure? Are these cleavages strengthening or weakening with the transition to advanced industrialism?
- (c) How frequently do individuals cross occupational or class boundaries? Are educational degrees, social contacts, or “individual luck” increasingly important forces in matching individuals to jobs and class positions?
- (d) How are the lifestyles, attitudes, and personalities of individuals shaped by their class locations? Are there identifiable “class cultures” in past and present societies?
- (e) What types of social processes and state policies serve to maintain or alter racial, ethnic, and sex discrimination in labor markets? Have these forms of discrimination weakened or strengthened with the transition to advanced industrialism?
- (f) Will stratification systems take on new and distinctive forms in the future? Are the stratification systems of modern societies gradually shedding their distinctive features and converging towards some generic post-industrial or postmodern regime?

The twofold objective of this course is to review contemporary theorizing and research on these issues and to identify areas in which new theories, hypotheses, and research agendas might be fruitfully developed. In our class meetings, we will therefore lead off by reviewing the existing literature in the field, but then turn to discussions of how that literature might be advanced

through new research projects.

Exams: Each of the four main units of the course will conclude with a take-home and open-book exam. The completed exams (approx. 4 double-spaced pages) will be due on Friday (no later than 5pm) following the last Tuesday of each unit. (However, because the fourth unit of the course concludes immediately before Thanksgiving break, the fourth exam will not be due until the following Tuesday.) A comprehensive exam (approx. 12 double-spaced pages), which satisfies the sociology department's requirements for an A-exam in social stratification, will be distributed on the last day of the course (Tuesday, December 3), and will be due on Monday, December 16 (no later than 5pm).

Grades: The course grades will be based on three components: (a) exams for each unit (15% each), (b) the end-of-term exam (30%), and (c) active participation in seminar discussion and debate (10%).

Public Lectures: The Center for the Study of Inequality will be hosting lectures throughout the semester that may be of interest to seminar participants. The dates and locations of these lectures will be announced in class and on the Center's website ([www.inequality.com](http://www.inequality.com)).

The course readings will be drawn from five sources:

1. Grusky, David B. 2001. *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (2nd edition). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
2. Wilson, William Julius. 1980. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and the Declining Significance of Race. Second Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
4. Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1997. *Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. New York: Routledge.
5. A supplementary course reader.

The first four books are available at the Cornell Campus Store and all other usual outlets. The course reader is available for purchase at KC Copy Center (118 Dryden Road in collegetown).

**Week 1: Introductory Comments**

Tuesday, September 3, 2002 – Grusky and Morgan

**PART I – Foundations of Inequality, Class Analysis, and Social Mobility**

**Week 2: Forms and Sources of Stratification**

Tuesday, September 10, 2002 – Grusky

David B. Grusky, “The Past, Present, and Future of Social Inequality” (NOTE: It will suffice to skim this article to gain some sense of the field.)

Gøsta Esping-Andersen, “Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies”

Kingsley Davis & Wilbert E. Moore, “Some Principles of Stratification”

Melvin M. Tumin, “Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis”

Claude S. Fischer, Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, & Kim Voss, “Inequality by Design”

Gerhard Lenski, “New Light on Old Issues: The Relevance of ‘Really Existing Socialist Societies’ for Stratification Theory”

**Week 3: Social Class**

Tuesday, September 17, 2002 – Grusky

Karl Marx, “Alienation and Social Classes,” “Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism,” “Ideology and Class,” “Value and Surplus Value”

Ralf Dahrendorf, “Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society”

Erik Olin Wright, “Varieties of Marxist Conceptions of Class Structure,” “A General Framework for the Analysis of Class Structure”

Jan Pakulski & Malcolm Waters, “The Death of Class”

Max Weber, “Class, Status, Party,” “Status Groups and Classes,” “Open and Closed Relationships”

Anthony Giddens, “The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies”

Frank Parkin, “Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique”

David B. Grusky & Jesper B. Sørensen, “Are There Big Social Classes?”

Gaetano Mosca, “The Ruling Class”

C. Wright Mills, “The Power Elite”

Anthony Giddens, “Elites and Power”

Peter M. Blau & Otis Dudley Duncan (with the collaboration of Andrea Tyree), “Measuring the Status of Occupations”

Donald J. Treiman, “Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective”

John H. Goldthorpe & Keith Hope, “Occupational Grading and Occupational Prestige”

David L. Featherman & Robert M. Hauser, “Prestige or Socioeconomic Scales in the Study of Occupational Achievement?”

Robert W. Hodge, “The Measurement of Occupational Status”

Robert M. Hauser & John Robert Warren, "Socioeconomic Indexes for Occupations: A Review, Update, and Critique"  
Aage B. Sørensen, "The Basic Concepts of Stratification Research: Class, Status, and Power"

Additional readings:

Max Weber, "The Rationalization of Education and Training"  
Emile Durkheim, "The Division of Labor in Society"  
Immanuel Wallerstein, "Class Conflict in the Capitalist World Economy"  
Edward A. Shils, *The Political Class in the Age of Mass Society: Collectivistic Liberalism and Social Democracy*  
Michael Useem, "The Inner Circle"  
Gil Eyal, Iván Szelényi, & Eleanor Townsley, "Post-Communist Managerialism"  
W. Lloyd Warner, with Marchia Meeker & Kenneth Eells, "Social Class in America"  
Edward Shils, "Deference"

#### **Week 4: Social Mobility**

Tuesday, September 24, 2002 – Grusky

Exam #1 Distributed: Due 5pm, Friday, September 27

Ralph H. Turner, "Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System"  
David L. Featherman & Robert M. Hauser, "A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility"  
David B. Grusky & Robert M. Hauser, "Comparative Social Mobility Revisited: Models of Convergence and Divergence in 16 Countries"  
Robert Erikson & John H. Goldthorpe, "Trends in Class Mobility: The Post-War European Experience"  
Peter Gottschalk, "Inequality, Income Growth, and Mobility: The Basic Facts"  
Peter Gottschalk, Sara McLanahan, & Gary D. Sandefur, "The Dynamics and Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty and Welfare Participation"  
Richard Breen & John H. Goldthorpe, "Explaining Educational Differentials: Towards a Formal Rational Action Theory"  
Robert D. Mare, "Observations on the Study of Social Mobility and Inequality"

Additional readings:

Pitirim A. Sorokin, "Social and Cultural Mobility"  
Seymour Martin Lipset, Reinhard Bendix, & Hans L. Zetterberg, "Social Mobility in Industrial Society"  
John Allen Logan, "Rational Choice and the TSL Model of Occupational Opportunity"

## **PART II – Education, Changes in Labor Market Inequality, and Meritocracy**

### **Week 5: Sociological Models of Educational Attainment**

Tuesday, October 1, 2002 – Morgan

- Parsons, Talcott. 1959. "The School Class as a Social System." *Harvard Educational Review* 29:297-313. (In course reader)
- Kahl, Joseph. 1953. "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys." *Harvard Educational Review* 23:186-203. (In course reader)
- Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan (with the collaboration of Andrea Tyree), "The Process of Stratification"
- William H. Sewell, Archibald O. Haller, and Alejandro Portes, "The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process"
- Collins, Randall. 1971. "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification." *American Sociological Review* 36:1002-19. (In course reader)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1973. "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction." Pp. 71-112 in Richard Brown, ed., *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education*. London: Tavistock Publications. (In course reader)
- Kerckhoff, Alan C. 1976. "The Status Attainment Process: Socialization or Allocation?" *Social Forces* 55:368-81. (In course reader)
- Richard Breen and John H. Goldthorpe, "Explaining Educational Differentials: Towards a Formal Rational Action Theory" (reread)

#### Additional reading:

- Sewell, William H., Archibald O. Haller, and George W. Ohlendorf. 1970. "The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process: Replication and Revision." *American Sociological Review* 35:1014-27.
- Hauser, Robert M., Shu-Ling Tsai, and William H. Sewell. 1983. "A Model of Stratification with Response Error in Social and Psychological Variables." *Sociology of Education* 56: 20-46.
- Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 1976. *Schooling in Capitalist America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labour: How Working Class kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Boudon, Raymond. 1974. *Education, Opportunity, and Social Inequality: Changing Prospects in Western Society*. New York: Wiley.
- Gambetta, Diego. 1987. *Were They Pushed or Did They Jump?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Week 6 : Human Capital Theory and Elementary Labor Economics**

Tuesday, October 8, 2002 – Morgan

- Smith, Adam. 1776. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. (Chapter X, Of Wages and Profit in the different Employments of Labour and Stock). (In course reader)
- Theodore W. Schultz. 1961. "Investment in Human Capital." *American Economic Review* 51:1-17. (In course reader)
- Thurow, Lester C. 1972. "Education and Economic Equality." *The Public Interest* 28:66-81. (In course reader)
- Polacheck, Solomon. W. and W. Stanley. Siebert. 1993. *The Economics of Earnings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 1 through 4, pages 1-95) (In course reader) (NOTE: Seminar participants without any background in economics may find Chapters 2, 8, 9 of the Ehrenberg and Smith textbook, which is listed below in the additional readings and which is on reserve in many Cornell libraries, to be a useful preliminary treatment of the same basic topics.)

Additional reading:

- Ehrenberg, Ronald G. and Robert S. Smith. 2000. *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy. Seventh Edition*. Reading: Addison Wesley.
- Becker, Gary. 1964. *Human Capital*. National Bureau of Economic Research, Columbia University Press.
- Mincer, Jacob. 1994. "Human Capital: A Review." Pp. 109-141 in Clark Kerr and Paul D. Staudohar, eds., *Labor Economics and Industrial Relations: Markets and Institutions*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Psacharopoulos, George. 1994. "Returns to Investment in Education: A Global Update." *World Development* 22:1325-43.

**Fall Break**

No class on Tuesday, October 15

**Week 7: Changes in Inequality (and the Rise of a Meritocracy?)**

Tuesday, October 22, 2002 – Morgan

Exam #2 Distributed: Due 5pm, Friday, October 25

- Martina Morris and Bruce Western, "Inequality in Earnings: Trends and Implications"
- Katz, Lawrence F. and David H. Autor. 1999. "Changes in the Wage Structure and Earnings Inequality." Pp. 1463-1555 in Orley C. Ashenfelter and David Card, eds., *Handbook of Labor Economics, Volume 3*. Amsterdam: Elsevier. (In course reader)
- Bernstein, Jared and Lawrence Mishel. 2001. "Seven Reasons for Skepticism about the Technology Story of U.S. Wage Inequality." Pp. 409-27 in Ivar Berg and Arne L.

- Kalleberg, eds., *Sourcebook of Labor Markets: Evolving Structures and Processes*. New York: Kluwer/Plenum. (In course reader)
- Herrnstein, Richard J. and Charles Murray. 1994. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: Free Press. (Chapter 21, The Way We are Headed; Chapter 22, A Place for Everyone) (In course reader)
- Goldthorpe, John H. 1996. "Problems of Meritocracy." In Erikson and Jonnson, *Can Education be Equalized? The Swedish Case in Comparative Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press. (In course reader)

Additional reading:

- Levy, Frank. 1998. *The New Dollars and Dreams*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Young, Michael D. 1958. *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870-2033: An Essay on Education and Equality*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Smelser, Neil J. and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.). 1966. *Social Structure and Mobility in Economic Development*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Fraser, Steven (ed.) 1995. *The Bell Curve Wars: Race, Intelligence, and the Future of America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Devlin, Bernie, Stephen E. Fienburg, Daniel Phillip Resnick, and Kathryn Roeder. (eds.). 1997. *Intelligence, Genes, and Success: Scientists Respond to The Bell Curve*. New York: Springer.
- Lemann, Nicholas. 1999. *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*. Farrar, Straus & Grioux.

### **PART III – Gender Inequality**

#### **Week 8: Occupational Sex Segregation**

Tuesday, October 29, 2002 – Grusky

- David B. Grusky & Maria Charles, "Is There a Worldwide Sex Segregation Regime?"
- William T. Bielby, "The Structure and Process of Sex Segregation"
- Jerry A. Jacobs, "Revolving Doors: Sex Segregation and Women's Careers"
- Barbara F. Reskin, "Labor Markets as Queues: A Structural Approach to Changing Occupational Sex Composition"

Additional reading:

- Shulamith Firestone, "The Dialectic of Sex"
- Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union"
- Szonja Szelényi, "The "Woman Problem" in Stratification Theory and Research"

**Week 9: The Gender Gap in Wages**

Tuesday, November 5, 2002 – Grusky

Exam #3 Distributed: Due 5pm, Friday, November 8

Trond Petersen & Laurie A. Morgan, “The Within-Job Gender Wage Gap”

Margaret Mooney Marini & Pi-Ling Fan, “The Gender Gap in Earnings at Career Entry”

Barbara Stanek Kilbourne, Paula England, George Farkas, Kurt Beron, & Dorothea Weir

“Returns to Skill, Compensating Differentials, and Gender Bias: Effects of Occupational Characteristics on the Wages of White Women and Men”

Tony Tam, “Why Do Female Occupations Pay Less?”

Stanley Lieberson, “Understanding Ascriptive Stratification: Some Issues and Principles”

**PART IV – Racial Inequality**

**Week 10: Classic Perspectives on Racial Inequality**

Tuesday, November 12, 2002 – Morgan

Coleman, James S. 1971. *Resources for Social Change: Race in the United States*. New York: Wiley. (Parts I-III, pages 1-88) (In course reader)

Stanley Lieberson, “A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants Since 1880”

Edna Bonacich, “A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market”

Wilson, William Julius. 1980. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional reading:

Duncan, Otis Dudley. 1969. “Inheritance of Poverty or Inheritance of Race?” Pp. 85-110 in Daniel P. Moynihan, ed., *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*. New York: Basic Books. (In course reader)

Portes, Alejandro and Kenneth L. Wilson. 1976. “Black-White Differences in Educational Attainment.” *American Sociological Review* 41:414-31.

Kerckhoff, Alan C. and Richard T. Campbell. 1977. “Black-White Differences in the Educational Attainment Process.” *Sociology of Education* 50:15-27.

Fordham, Signithia and John U. Ogbu. 1986. “Black Students' School Success: Coping with the Burden of 'Acting White'.” *The Urban Review* 18:176-206.

Michael J. Piore, “The Dual Labor Market: Theory and Implications”

Aage B. Sørensen and Arne L. Kalleberg, “An Outline of a Theory of the Matching of Persons to Jobs”



**Week 11: Racial Inequality from the 1970s to the 1990s**

Tuesday, November 19, 2002 – Morgan

Charles Hirschman and Matthew Snipp, “The State of the American Dream: Race and Ethnic Socioeconomic Inequality in the United States, 1970-90”

Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 1 and 2, pages 3-62) (In course reader)

Mare, Robert D. and Christopher Winship. 1991. “Socioeconomic Change and the Decline of Marriage for Blacks and Whites.” Pp. 175-202 in Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson, eds., *The Urban Underclass*. Washington: Brookings. (In course reader)

Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Additional reading:

Murray, Charles A. 1984. *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980*. New York: Basic Books.

Jencks, Christopher and Paul E. Peterson. (Eds.) 1991. *The Urban Underclass*. Washington: Brookings.

Jargowsky, Paul. 1997. *Poverty and Place*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Orfield, Gary and Susan E. Eaton. 1996. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*. New York: The New Press.

Armor, David J. 1995. *Forced Justice: School Desegregation and the Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Week 12: New Perspectives on Race and Inequality**

Tuesday, November 26, 2002 – Morgan

Exam #4 Distributed: Due 5pm, Tuesday, December 3

Alejandro Portes and Robert D. Manning, “The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples”

Roger Waldinger, “Still the Promised City? African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York”

Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, “The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants”

Mary C. Waters, “Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities”

Herbert J. Gans, “The Possibility of a New Racial Hierarchy in the Twenty-first-century United States”

William Julius Wilson, “Jobless Poverty: A New Form of Social Dislocation”

Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. 1997. *Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. New York: Routledge.

Freeman, Richard B. and William M. Rodgers III. 2000. "Area Economic Conditions and the Labor-Market Outcomes of Young Men in the 1990s Expansion." Pp. 50-87 in Robert Cherry and William M. Rodgers III, eds, *Prosperity for All? The Economic Boom and African Americans*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (In course reader)

Additional readings:

Duneier, Mitchell. 1992. *Slim's Table: Race, Respectability, and Masculinity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Knopf.

Jencks, Christopher and Meredith Phillips. (Eds.) 1998. *The Black-White Test Score Gap*. Washington: Brookings.

## **PART V – The Future of Stratification**

### **Week 13: The Future of Stratification**

Tuesday, December 3, 2002 – Grusky

Final Exam Distributed: Due 5pm, Monday, December 16

Clark Kerr, John T. Dunlop, Frederick H. Harbison, & Charles A. Myers, "Industrialism and Industrial Man"

Daniel Bell, "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society"

Alvin W. Gouldner, "The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class"

Gøsta Esping-Andersen, "Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies" (reread)

Victor Nee, "Postsocialist Stratification"

Gil Eyal, Iván Szélenyi, & Eleanor Townsley, "Making Capitalism without Capitalists"

Stuart Hall, "The Meaning of New Times"

Jan Pakulski & Malcolm Waters, "The Death of Class" (reread)

Martina Morris & Bruce Western, "Inequality in Earnings: Trends and Implications" (reread)

John W. Meyer, "The Evolution of Modern Stratification Systems"

Sørensen, Aage B. 2000. "Toward a Sounder Basis for Class Analysis." *American Journal of Sociology* 105:1523-58. (In course reader)