SOCIOLOGY 239A/B

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, MOBILITY, AND INEQUALITY

Winter and Spring 2016 Syllabus
(11/05/15 Version)

TIME AND PLACE: Winter: Tuesday 1:00-3:50, MS 7608; Spring: TBA;

CLASS WEBSITE: https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/16W-SOCIOL239A-1

PREREQUISITE: Soc. 210A and 210B or the equivalent;

INSTRUCTORS:
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OFFICE HOURS: By appointment.

SUBJECT MATTER: This two-quarter course is an introduction to the modern research literature on social stratification, social mobility, and inequality in the U.S. and abroad, as represented in journal articles and research monographs. The course is a reading course, not a research seminar. It focuses on concepts, data, methods, and facts about: occupational and class structure; the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status; the effects of family, school, and labor market on socioeconomic achievement, careers, and inequality; earnings, income, and wealth distribution; poverty; social mobility; socioeconomic factors and marriage; gender and ethnic stratification; and health disparities.

READINGS: Class readings will be provided via the web. No reader is available for purchase. Readings will be available from various electronic sources, listed below, including the course web page.

ASSIGNMENTS AND FORMAT: During the last half hour of each week’s class one of the instructors will provide an overview of the topic and readings for the following week’s class. Each week several leading articles or chapters dealing with a particular topic are read and discussed in class. Participation in the class discussion is an integral part of the work of the course. Students should come prepared to analyze the week’s readings with respect to both substance and method and must participate actively in the discussion, prepared to raise at least one question each session.

Assigned readings fall into two groups: (1) “core” readings, which are to be read by all students, and (2) “précis” readings, each of which is to be read by one student who will prepare and distribute a précis of the reading prior to each week’s class. The exact rate of assignments will depend upon the course enrollment.
A précis is a summary that contains the essential details about theory, method, and findings. It is not a critique. For an approximately 20 page article, a 2-3 page, single-spaced summary usually suffices. Précis should be posted to the weekly discussion forum on the class website by 9:00 a.m. of the day prior to each class meeting – that is, by 9:00 a.m. Monday morning. All members of the class are responsible for reading each précis and being prepared to raise and answer questions about each précis as well as the core readings.

Each week a team of 2 to 4 students will serve as discussion leaders. The responsibilities of the team include: (1) to prepare a brief oral introduction of the readings for the purposes of initiating the class discussion; (2) to prepare a set of questions that will guide class discussion; and (3) to write the précis the following week. Discussion questions should be posted to the weekly discussion forum on the class website by 9:00 a.m. of the day of each class meeting – that is, by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday morning. For the most part it is not the responsibility of the team to lecture to the class. Rather, the team's responsibility is to keep the discussion going and to make sure that the key aspects of the readings are covered. Conversely, students who are not discussion leaders in a given week have the same responsibility as the leaders to read and be prepared to discuss the week's readings.

Students who successfully complete the course will be well prepared to take the Social Stratification field exam and are encouraged to do so immediately following the course. There will be a midterm exam (at the end of the first quarter) and a final exam (at the end of the second quarter), both in the format of the Field Exam (open-book, take-home exams to be completed over several days).

Students are also encouraged to attend the weekly seminar (and pro-seminar) sponsored by the California Center for Population Research (CCPR). This colloquium features speakers from a wide range of perspectives often relevant to work in social stratification. There is a link to the seminar schedule on the main class website.

**GRADING:** The final course grade will be based on performance on the following:
- Take-home midterm exam 1/3
- Take-home final exam 1/3
- Précis and class participation 1/3

**THE GRADE "INCOMPLETE" WILL NOT BE GIVEN.**

**BACKGROUND READING:** Most readings assume some background in social stratification. Students who have not had an undergraduate course in the field should read a basic textbook at the beginning of the Winter quarter. An example of this is:


A good collection of primary readings on stratification is:

One problem with this collection is that many articles are excerpted. Students should seek out and read the complete articles on topics of interest.

**STATISTICS REFERENCES**: Some of the readings include applications of structural equation models, categorical data analysis, econometric methods, and stochastic processes. Students are expected to understand the applications well enough to assess their contributions to the study of social stratification. Where necessary, we will devote class time to methodological issues. Students, however, should also do whatever independent work is necessary for them to grasp these issues.

Some useful references are:


SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Readings are available at:

Class website (W): https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/16W-SOCIOL239A-1
(Click on each week for relevant readings)

Google Scholar <http://scholar.google.com/> or Web of Science
<http://www2.library.ucla.edu/search/1528.cfm> (if not marked with a (W))

Abbreviations are used for journals that frequently include items on stratification or mobility:

ASR  American Sociological Review  
AJS  American Journal of Sociology  
ARS  Annual Review of Sociology  
AER  American Economic Review  
ESR  European Sociological Review  
RSSM  Research in Social Stratification and Mobility  
SF  Social Forces  
SSR  Social Science Research  
SE  Sociology of Education  
DEM  Demography
WINTER 2016

WEEK 1

1/5 - Introduction and Course Overview

WEEK 2

1/12 - Dimensions of Stratification (Brand)

Everybody reads


Précis [There are no précis in this section. Instead, we list three articles that you ought to have encountered in previous courses. If not, read them this week as background.]


WEEK 3

1/19 - Occupations, Classes, Prestige, and Socioeconomic Status (Brand)

Everybody reads


Précis


WEEK 4

1/26 - Status Attainment I: Occupational Achievement (Brand)

Everybody Reads


**Précis**


**WEEK 5**

2/2 - Status Attainment II: Elaborations and Extensions (Brand)

*Everybody Reads*


**Précis**


**WEEK 6**
2/9 - Education I: Educational Attainment (Brand)

_everybody reads_


_précis_


WEEK 7

2/16 - Education II: Social Processes Influencing Educational Attainment (Brand)

_everybody reads_


**Précis**


**WEEK 8**

**2/23 - Education III: Educational Selection and Returns to Education (Brand)**

*Everybody Reads*


**Précis**

WEEK 9

3/1 - Intragenerational Mobility (Brand)

Everybody Reads


Précis


WEEK 10

3/8 - Firms, Markets, and Status Attainment (Brand)

Everybody Reads


[Read on week 8, review for this week]


Précis


MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE 4:30 P.M., Tuesday, 3/15

3/15, 3/22 - Recess
WEEK 11

3/29 - Intergenerational Mobility I (Cheng)

Everybody reads


Précis: None this week.

WEEK 12

4/5 - Intergenerational Mobility II (Cheng)

Everybody Reads


Long, Jason, and Joseph P. Ferrie. 2013. “Intergenerational Occupational Mobility in Britain and the U.S. Since 1850.” AER 103: 1109-37


**Précis**


**WEEK 13**

**4/12 - Earnings, Income, and Wealth I (Cheng)**

**Everybody Reads**


**Précis**


**WEEK 14**
4/19 - Earnings, Income, and Wealth II - Poverty (Cheng)

*Everybody Reads*


*Précis*


**WEEK 15**

4/26 - Marriage, Family, and Stratification I (Cheng)

*Everybody Reads*


Précis


**WEEK 16**

5/3 - Marriage, Family, and Stratification II (Cheng)

*Everybody reads*


Précis

Phillips, Meredith. 1999. “Sibship Size and Academic Achievement: What Do We Know and What Do We Still Need to Know?” *ASR* 64:188-192.

**WEEK 17**

5/10 - Race and Ethnicity, Gender, and Discrimination (Cheng)

*Everybody Reads*


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**Précis**


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**WEEK 18**

**5/17 – Spatial Aspects of Stratification (Cheng)**

**Everybody Reads**


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**Précis**


**WEEK 19**

**5/24 – Social Inequality and Health (Cheng)**

*Everybody Reads*


*Précis*


**WEEK 20**

**5/31 - International Comparisons of and Trends in Stratification and Mobility (Cheng)**
Everybody Reads


Précis


**FINAL EXAMINATION DUE 4:30 P.M., Tuesday, 6/7.**