

Wealth and Poverty in America (Social Stratification)

Soc 431.01 -- Spring 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays

4-5:50 p.m. in Appleby Center 286

ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Professor: Dr. Dan Morrison Office: Appleby Center 233 Email: dan.morrison@pepperdine.edu Phone: 310-506-4923 (office) Phone: 615-268-7991 (personal—please, no calls after 9 p.m.) Web: courses.pepperdine.edu	Twitter: @danmorrison (You may tweet questions during office hours or at any time. Remember, tweets are public.) Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 1-2:30 pm Wednesdays 3-4 pm and by appointment; book via https://drdanmorrison.youcanbook.me/ see email policy
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Course Description

This course invites you to consider how valuable resources, such as income, wealth, education, health, and well-being are unequally distributed in the United States. We focus on sociological theories of inequality as well as the empirical shape these inequalities take. We will practice thinking, talking, and acting like sociologists in this class.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss, compare, and contrast theories of inequality and stratification.
- Explain the social forces driving dynamics in income and wealth inequality in the U.S. from 1900 to present.
- Create and distribute life history narratives from clients at the Malibu Labor Exchange.
- Apply sociological concepts and perspectives to these life history narratives. You will demonstrate your ability to use the analytic skills you have gained in this class.

Program Learning Outcomes Addressed by this Course

This course contributes to the sociology program. Specifically, at the conclusion of this course, students will have *developed* the ability to:

- Describe and use the major macro- and micro-level theoretical paradigms in sociology.
- Demonstrate the use of the sociological imagination, “the ability to recognize the relationship between large-scale social forces and the actions of individuals.”
- Explain how societies work with regards to social structural and cultural forces.

By taking this course, you will engage in activities that closely match the program learning outcomes listed above. For example, in this course, I require that you produce written work that synthesizes course content and skillfully deploy inequality thought and practice.

Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe. -- Frederick Douglass

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

This course contributes to Pepperdine's Institutional Educational Objectives. Specifically, at the conclusion of this course, students will have advanced in their ability to:

- Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.
- Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.
- Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity.

Email

You should only use email as a tool to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if office hours conflict with your schedule. Otherwise, office hours are open to meetings on a first-come, first-served basis. You may skip email altogether and make a booking for up to two 20-minute sessions here: <https://drdanmorrison.youcanbook.me/>. Add a one or two-sentence description of the reason for the meeting.

If you want to email me, use the subject line "Meeting request." Your message should include at least two times when you would like to meet and a brief (one-two sentence) description of the reason for the meeting. Emails sent for any other reason will not be considered or acknowledged. I strongly encourage you to ask questions about the syllabus and assignments during class time. For more in-depth discussions (such as guidance on assignments) please plan to meet in person or call my office. Our conversations should take place in person or over the phone rather than via email, thus allowing us to get to know each other better and fostering a more collegial learning atmosphere.

Use of any device with an on/off switch is prohibited in class. I may mark students who use such devices absent, even if you are physically present in the classroom.

Learning Materials/Readings

Web:

<http://toomuchonline.org/>; subscribe to the monthly email newsletter.

<http://wealthinequality.org/>; review and be prepared to discuss.

www.inequality.com (Stanford U.); review and be prepared to discuss.

Books:

Grusky, David B. and Szonja Szelényi. 2011. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

ISBN: 978-0-8133-4484-3

Listed as "Grusky" on the course schedule below.

Gilbert, Dennis. 2015. *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*. 9th edition. Los Angeles: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4522-0341-6
Listed as "Gilbert" on the course schedule below.

Other readings TBA throughout the term.

Assignments and Assessing your Learning

You will have many opportunities to demonstrate that you are meeting the learning outcomes I have selected for this course. It is not enough to simply read and recall the definition of concepts and theories in this course. In order to adopt a sociological frame of mind, you must reflect upon and live with the material we read and discuss in class. Adopting a sociological mindset or outlook can be liberating, frightening, and even dangerous to past perspectives. This is to be expected. Prepare yourself.

1. Reading: No assignment is as important for your progress in this class, and therefore I expect for you to keep up and be an active critical reader. For each class I will ask you to read approximately thirty to fifty pages from a variety of sources, and I will expect you to complete them before class on the day they are assigned. The specific reading assignments and their due dates are listed below in the Course Schedule. To ensure you learn the most from the readings, take notes that help clarify a sense of the author's arguments and their relationships to that of other readings or class discussions. Take special notes on concepts that are difficult to understand, ideas that are particularly persuasive, or critiques you may have, since all will aid you in class discussions and assignments. I have added a short reading rubric that should help you to identify the most important points and provide a space for note taking. You could use one of these for each reading to organize your thoughts. You could then print that out and bring it to class with you. Factored in to your participation/attendance grade.

2. Meet with Dr. Morrison: I am requiring each student meet with me during the first three weeks of the semester. **Sign up for a time at <https://drdanmorrison.youcanbook.me/> within the first 4 days of class.** Sign up early. The meeting is worth at least 1% of your course grade, and calculated with your participation grades.

3. Daily Papers: For each class period, you will write a one-page, single-spaced paper that succinctly summarizes the argument, including the thesis and supporting evidence, of at least one article and/or reading selection for that class day. On the second page, you will compose at least three questions about the reading. One question should be about future research -- such as, "Could we extend Author's argument in X direction by studying Y phenomenon in Z location?" The other two can be conceptual (such as, "I was confused when the author wrote 'quote.' What did she mean?"), or methodological (such as, "I don't understand why this author chose to interview/survey/ethnograph X population. Could someone help me understand?"). Due 24 hours before the start of class via Assignments in Courses.Pepperdine.edu. 30% of your final grade. *See the Daily Paper Guidelines at the end of this syllabus.*

4. Leading in-class discussion. Each student will be responsible for leading at least one hour of discussion. This means developing good, discussion-provoking questions about the

readings of the day; monitoring classroom discussion; ensuring classroom order and decorum; and offering opening and closing comments regarding the topic(s) of the day. You may want to look at this guide: <http://bit.ly/13obH8u>. 10% of your final grade.

5. Course Project: Your major assessment for the term will be to interview clients of the Malibu Community Labor Exchange (MCLE), located just “down the hill” from our campus. I have arranged for staff from the Pepperdine Volunteer Center and students from two Hispanic Studies/Spanish Language courses to assist us with this project. This project must be conducted with the highest levels of research ethics, including protecting the confidentiality of MCLE clients. We will use pseudonyms in any research reports and media projects that come from our work. All consent forms will be stored in a secured office.

For this project, you will apply sociological theories and concepts to the personal narratives that you and your colleagues collect. You will interview and record these interviews, and then analyze them, looking for connections to the material we have studied for this class. You will present your findings and analysis during our final exam time. Your paper should be between 2,250 and 2,750 words, not including references. The research project paper is worth 40% of your final grade, the presentation, 10%. Due April 15 before class via Courses.

6. Participation, Attendance, In-Class Assignments: Class participation is absolutely essential if you are to achieve the kind of deep and sustained learning that is the goal of this course. Reading, hearing, and speaking are equally important factors in learning sociology. The course will be more productive and enjoyable if students attend class, ask questions, and contribute their own sociological insights during discussion. For these reasons, I explicitly take participation into consideration when I calculate final grades. No late in-class assignments are accepted. Students who miss more than two classes will lose two points off their final grade per class. 10% of final grade.

The Grading Philosophy

The instructor’s grade scale goes like this: A = Extremely good; A- = Very, very good; B+ = Very good; B = Pretty good; B- = OK; C+ = Mildly subpar; C = Seriously subpar; D = Downright bad; F = Obvious. (Credit: David Foster Wallace).

Specifically, the grading scale will be:

100-93% = A	82-80% = B-	69-66% = D+
92-90% = A-	79-76% = C+	65-63% = D
89-86% = B+	75-73% = C	62-60% = D-
85-83% = B	72-70% = C-	59—% = F

Be mindful that no late work will be accepted.

I will calculate your final grade based on your performance on the assignments and exercises explained within this syllabus. Participation will also count, as it is a prerequisite for deep understanding.

Final grades are final. Unless there has been a miscalculation, I will not change your grade once it is posted. If you are concerned about your grade at any point in the semester, I urge you to meet with me so that we can address the problem before the end of the semester.

Every semester, I receive inquiries that include, but are not limited to requests for changes to course requirements, allowing late assignments, extra credit, or make-up work. These requests are burdensome and time consuming. I may lower your final grade by up to a letter grade (e.g. from a B to a C) should you send me such a request.

Relationship to the Pepperdine and Seaver Missions

This course promotes the mission of both Pepperdine University and Seaver College by developing students in the understanding of social scientific perspectives on human social life. The course goals, assessments and activities develop students' leadership potential and service-orientation through an understanding of how human beings are formed within community, the source and value of diversity, and the nature of social inequality. This course also engages students' emotional and social development by encouraging empathetic understanding of the lives of others.

Disability Services: Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Tyler Campus Center 264, x6500) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.pepperdine.edu/disabilityservices/> for additional information.

Course Evaluations: The evaluation period opens on 18 April and continues for 9 days. Evaluations are online. I take these evaluations seriously and will do my best to improve my teaching and your learning on the basis of a mid-semester evaluation.

Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is the expression of intellectual virtue in human beings as a result of their creation in God's image. It represents the convergence of the best of the human spirit and God's spirit, which requires personal, private and community virtue. As a Christian institution, Pepperdine University affirms that integrity begins in our very created being and is lived out in our academic work.

In order for the code to be effective, the community must maintain its health and vitality. This requires a genuine sense of maturity, responsibility, and sensitivity on the part of every member. In particular, each member of the Seaver College community is expected to pursue his or her academic work with honesty and integrity.

Academic integrity is a core value for this university, and for our classroom. Any and all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, or deception, will earn the student a zero on the assignment, and possibly removal from the course and referral to the Academic Ethics Committee. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty,

please ask. I will provide you with guidelines on correct citations. It's really upsetting and depressing for everyone involved when this kind of dishonesty occurs; it's especially embarrassing for the student, and it results in a very bad grade. Plagiarism is stealing, so cite, do not steal.

This Course is Intellectual Property: Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor, are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person. **Electronic devices (for example: laptops, tablets, cell phones, PDAs, calculators, recording devices) are not to be used in class without prior permission of the instructor.**

Final Exam: We will meet during our Final Exam time (Thursday 30 April 10:30 am - 1 pm) for student presentations of your work.

Withdrawing from the Course/Credit/No Credit: The last day to withdraw with a "W" on your transcript is 16 March. The last day to withdraw with a grade of Withdraw-Pass (WP) or Withdraw-Fail (WF) is by 5 p.m. on 17 April.

Course Schedule

Week 1. 12 and 14 January

Introduction to the course

Introduction to the study of wealth and poverty: Its history, major research traditions, contemporary concerns.

Your first DP due on Tuesday by 4 p.m. (submit on Courses). You may select from any one of the readings for Monday or Wednesday.

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Introduction
2. Gilbert, Chapter 1: Social Class in America

Read for Wednesday:

3. Wysong, Chapter 1: Class in America: The Way We Were located on Courses in the Resources folder titled "Readings".

Week 2. 21 January

No Class Monday 19 January due to MLK Holiday

Complete introduction to the study of wealth and poverty

Examine the structure of social inequality

Introduce the Course Project

Staff from the Pepperdine Volunteer Center

1. Grusky, Chapters 5 and 6:
 - Karl Marx: Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism
 - Erik Olin Wright: Class Counts
2. Gilbert, Chapter 2: Position and Prestige
3. Wysong, Chapter 2: The New American Class Structure
4. Symposium on Piketty's *Capital*. Readings folder on Courses.

Week 3. 26 and 28 January.

Start research plans

Status and Income

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 7-9
 - Max Weber: Class, Status, Party
 - Chan and Goldthorpe: Is There a Status Order in Contemporary British Society?
 - Saez: Striking it Richer

Read for Wednesday:

Grusky, Chapter 10

Grusky and Weeden: Is Market Failure Behind the Takeoff in Inequality?

Week 4. 2 and 4 February.

Complete Research Plans; Begin Fieldwork

Elites

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 11-14
 - Mills: "The Power Elite"
 - Domhoff: Who Rules America?
 - Gouldner: The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class
 - Brooks: Bobos in Paradise

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert, Chapter 3: Social Class, Occupation, and Social Change

Week 5. 9 and 11 February.

Research Check-in

Poverty & the Underclass

Wealth and Income

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 16, 18, 19, 33
 - Newman and Chen: The Missing Class
 - Wilson: Jobless Poverty
 - Massey and Denton: American Apartheid
 - Oliver and Shapiro: Black Wealth/White Wealth

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert Chapter 4: Wealth and Income

Week 6. 16 and 18 February.

Research Check-in
Poverty & Social Policy

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 21-23
Hays: Flat Broke with Children
Western: Incarceration, Unemployment, and Inequality
DeLuca and Rosenbaum: Escaping Poverty

Wednesday: **Research Day on-site 8-9:50 a.m. Malibu Community Labor Exchange**

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert: Chapter 10: The Poor, the underclass, and Public Policy

Week 7. 23 and 25 February

Research Check-in
The Continuing Significance of Race for Inequality in the U.S.

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 26, 28, 29
Portes and Zhou: The New Second Generation
Bertrand and Mullainathan: Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?
Pager: Marked

Wednesday:

Research Day on-site 8-9:50 a.m. Malibu Community Labor Exchange

Read for Wednesday:

2. Grusky, Chapters 30, 31
Feagin: The Continuing Significance of Race
Steele: Stereotype Threat and African-American Student Achievement

NO CLASS SPRING BREAK MARCH 2-6

Week 8. 9 and 11 March.

Research Check-in
Gender and Inequality: Labor Force Participation & Discrimination
Socialization, Lifestyles and Values

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 38-43
Belkin: The Opt-Out Revolution
Stone: Getting to Equal
Jacobs and Gerson: The Time Divide
Goldin and Rouse: Orchestrating Impartiality
Correll, Benard, and In Paik: Getting a Job
Reskin: Rethinking Employment Discrimination and its Remedies

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert, Chapter 5: Socialization, Association, Lifestyles, and Values

Week 9. 16 and 18 March

Research Check-in

Workshop in Narrative Analysis

Sex Segregation

The Gender Wage Gap

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 44-46

Charles and Grusky: Egalitarianism and Gender Inequality

Jacobs: Detours on the Road to Equality

Petersen and Morgan: The Within-Job Gender Wage Gap

Read for Wednesday:

2. Grusky, Chapter 47

England: Devaluation and the Pay of Comparable Male and Female Occupations

Research check-in

Week 10. 23 and 25 March.

Analysis Workshop

Causes of Inequality

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 50-55

Wednesday: **Research Day on-site 8-9:50 a.m. Malibu Community Labor Exchange**

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert, Chapter 6: Social Mobility: The Societal Context

Week 11. 30 March and 1 April

Research Check-in

Mobility

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky Chapters 56-60

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert Chapter 7: Family, Education, and Career

Week 12. 6 and 8 April.

Research Check-In

The Consequences of Inequality

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 65-68

Read for Wednesday:

2. Grusky, Chapters 70, 71

Week 13. 13 and 16 April.

Research Check-In
What Can Be Done?
Class Conflict

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 72-76

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert, Chapter 9

Week 14. 20 and 22 April.

Research Check-In
What Can Be Done?

Read for Monday:

1. Grusky, Chapters 77-79

Read for Wednesday:

2. Gilbert, Chapter 11: The American Class Structure and Growing Inequality?

3. Wysong, Chapter 14: Class in the Twenty-First Century

Finals Week

Final Exam: Thursday April 30, 10:30 am - 1 pm Student Presentations.

Please remember to complete Course Evaluations

Daily Paper Guidelines

The goal of this assignment is to clarify your understanding of the assigned material, and to ensure that you stay on top of the readings for the course. If we are successful, the Daily Paper (DP, for short) will help you organize your thoughts on what you are reading, provide a quick review of the course concepts and empirics for your course project, and help you develop your skills in good sociological thinking and critical analysis.

Your DP should be structured in this way:

1. State the main claim (also known as the “thesis”) of the reading.
2. Describe how the author(s) support their thesis. What data do they have, or what reasons are provided for why the author(s) believe their claim?
3. Describe how the author(s) analyze this data or provide empirical or theoretical support for their claim.
4. State why the study/article/chapter is important. What does it help us understand or what new information does it provide?
5. Tell me whether or not you are convinced that the author(s) have proven, established, or otherwise effectively supported their thesis. Provide reasons for your stance

You should be able to accomplish the above on one single-spaced page with one-inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman or 11 point Arial font. DP entries that go more than 1.25 single-spaced pages may lose points.

On the second page, compose at least three questions for in-class discussion. These must be of high quality, as they constitute the basis for our actual work in the classroom. One question should be about future research -- such as, “Could we extend Author’s argument in X direction by studying Y phenomenon in Z location?” The other two could be conceptual (such as, “I was confused when the author wrote ‘quote.’ What did she mean?”), or methodological (such as, “I don’t understand why this author chose to interview/survey/ethnograph X population. Could someone help me understand?”). If your questions do not meet these guidelines, you may lose points. Seriously, the questions should be thoughtful and designed to spur discussion. They should be sociological and analytical, that is, not about how you feel about the author or the people who constitute the subject of the reading.

Due 24 hours before the start of class via Assignments in Courses.Pepperdine.edu. 30% of your final grade.

N.B. The instructor’s grade scale is numerical and goes like this: 13 = A+ = Mind-blowingly good; 12 = A = Extremely good; 11 = A- = Very, very good; 10 = B+ = Very good; 9 = B = Pretty good; 8 = B- = OK; 7 = C+ = Mildly subpar; 6 = C = Seriously subpar; 4, 3, 2 = D = Downright bad; 0 = F = Obvious. (Credit: David Foster Wallace).

