Sociology 280G
Social Stratification and Class Analysis
Spring 2015 – Thursdays, 2pm-4pm, 402 Barrows

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This course serves as an introduction to the field of social stratification and class analysis (strat for short). Strat is a field that weds an intense interest in theoretical claims to a commitment to the empirical adjudication of theoretical debates. To evaluate theories empirically has called analysts to employ tools systematically; many times, theoretical debates about the world find articulation in the language of methodology. Yet, if one can attend to the technical issues without becoming lost in the wizardry, one can find at the center a substantive debate with potentially large implications for our understanding of inequality and power in society.

And what could be more important for our time? Why is it that some people are paid a great deal, while others scrape by on very little? What are the structural forces that allocate persons to these different positions in society? How much does one's parents' status determine one's own future? How are persons sorted into mating partnerships? How long do the effects of previous generations last? Can states or trans-state entities do anything to alter the pattern of inequality or reduce its impact? I could go on listing questions, which is to say that, unfortunately, we will not be able to read the literature on every single question of interest to strat researchers. But, as even this smattering of questions suggests, the issues that occupy strat researchers concern the development of public policy; the functioning of economies and distribution of goods; the acquisition and wielding of political power; the stock of philosophical, religious, and ideological commitments; in short, the entire edifice of society and any effort to forge a better world for future generations. Hence, the stakes in play for strat research are vast, daunting--and humbling.

Among the many benefits students who complete this course will obtain, one is that they will be well-prepared to take orals in social stratification and class analysis. Students interested in taking orals in this area are encouraged to speak with me about the process of securing passage of the orals exam.

Attendance
Attendance at every class is expected. Please do not make travel plans that interfere with class activities.

Reading Materials
Most of the reading is available via JSTOR or Google Scholar. Articles on JSTOR are noted in the syllabus with a bold JSTOR after the citation; those available via Google Scholar have a bold Google Scholar after the citation. A few articles are available at one or more other sites if
accessed from a machine on the UC-Berkeley network; in such cases either a correct web-site for the journal will appear in bold after the citation, or the word OskiCat will appear in bold after the citation, signifying that you need to call up the journal on OskiCat, find the issue and then obtain the paper. Other article-length material can be found in a Reader you may purchase at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft; such work is labelled READER below.

Only one book is assigned for this course, but it has not been ordered because often graduate students already have the book or order it online. Thus, once enrollment settles down I will see how many students, if any, would like me to have University Press Books order the following book:


Assignments and Grading
There are two types of writing assignments: 1) weekly syntheses and, 2) a final paper.

Weekly Syntheses
Each week students are to write a 1,000-word (max) synthesis of the assigned readings of the week. The pdf file should be e-mailed to socpost@gmail.com by 11:59pm the Wednesday before class. Place the label “Soc280G” in the subject field.

Final Paper
There are two options for the final paper. Students may write an empirical research paper that engages the stratification literature and a question or questions of interest to the field of social stratification. Or students may write a research proposal that engages the stratification literature and a question or questions of interest to the field of social stratification. Students interested in writing an empirical research paper can look to any of the many papers on the syllabus for clues as to how to structure such a paper. Students interested in writing a research proposal (and students who are searching for research questions as well) are encouraged to go to http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new_publication_3/%7B7a9cb4f4-815f-de11-bd80-01cc477ec70%7D.pdf from which they may download "The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions." This resource describes general issues that will be helpful to anyone drafting a proposal. Of course, students are expected to discuss their final projects at an early stage with other members of the class. Two documents–an approximately 150-word abstract that states the research question as a question, and an annotated outline of the paper–are due in class on April 2.

Although the final paper is given the greatest weight, the final course grade is also based on attendance, class participation, weekly submitted short comments, and the abstract/annotated outline. Every member of the class is expected to speak in class every class, without prompting from others. Late work will not be accepted. No Incompletes will be given in this course.
Week 1, Jan 22 -- Introduction

Week 2, Jan 29 – Foundational Issues in Social Stratification Research


Week 3, Feb 5 -- Status and/or Class: Selected Theoretical and Measurement Issues


Week 4, Feb 12 – Attainment Processes and Social-Psychological Models

by Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, with the collaboration of Andrea Tyree. New York, NY: The Free Press. READER


Week 5, Feb 19 – Social Mobility


Week 6, Feb 26 -- Human Capital, Cultural Capital, and Social Capital


**Week 7, Mar 5 – Assortative Processes**  


**Week 8, Mar 12 – Sex, Gender, and Social Stratification**


**Week 9, Mar 19 – Stratification/Inequality Regimes**


**Week 10, Apr 2 – Discrimination as a Stratification Process – SYNOPSIS DUE**


**Week 11, Apr 9 – Firms, Ties, and Stratification**


**Week 12, Apr 16 – Race, Ethnicity, and Social Stratification**


[http://irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc203.pdf](http://irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc203.pdf)
[http://ideas.repec.org/p/att/wimass/199929.html](http://ideas.repec.org/p/att/wimass/199929.html)


Week 13, Apr 23 – Wealth and Inequality


Week 14, Apr 30 -- Structures of Education and Inequality Regimes


**Week 15, May 7 -- Provisional Reflections on Multiple Dimensions of Stratification and Inequality**

**Final Papers due by 12noon on Sunday, May 17**