

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
(www.soci.ucalgary.ca)**

SOCIOLOGY 365 (Social Stratification)

Course Outline, Winter 2013

Safewalk/Campus Security: 220-5333, ANYTIME

This course makes use of Blackboard to communicate information to students. To access Blackboard, go to: blackboard.ucalgary.ca OR my.ucalgary.ca

Instructor: Tom Langford langford@ucalgary.ca Office: SS 924 Phone: 220-5043

Office Hours between January 11 and April 15:

Mondays, 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. (cancelled on February 18),
Fridays, 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. (cancelled on February 22 and March 29),
or by appointment.

Email guidelines: Please use email to inform me of something important (e.g., you are sick and will be missing the mid-term test), to ask a question that I can answer with a simple Yes or No (e.g., Are functionalist explanations of inequality covered on the mid-term test?) or to book an appointment outside of scheduled drop-in office hours. For more complicated questions and discussions, please speak to me in person.

Classroom Decorum: We should all conduct ourselves in ways that are respectful of everyone else in our learning environment. How this general principle applies to coming to class late, using electronic devices during lectures, chit chatting with the person next to you, attempting to multitask during lectures, etc., will be discussed at our first class and whenever needed throughout the term. As the lecturer, I will let you know (often right on the spot) if something you are doing disrupts my concentration. In addition, since you should be paying attention to lecture material at all times, I will not hesitate to ask you a question coming out of the flow of the lecture, whether you seem to be paying attention or not! Always be prepared to participate since you never know when I will call upon you.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In *Power and Inequality*, Gregg Olsen defines social stratification as “the hierarchical arrangement or ordering of groups or strata in society” (p. 14). One approach to

conceptualizing and studying social stratification is to take a valued resource (e.g., income, wealth or health), rank order a population in terms of that resource and then use a conventional method for dividing the rank ordering into hierarchical strata. This approach results in the study of social strata such as income deciles or quintiles. A second approach to conceptualizing and studying social stratification begins by identifying relationally connected social groups of interest (e.g., economic classes, genders, generations or racialized groups) and then studies whether there are patterned inequalities among these social groups that are sustained over time. In line with this second approach, social stratification refers to a situation of patterned inequalities among particular social groups that are sustained over time – it leads to the study of gender stratification, ethnic stratification, class stratification, etc. In Sociology 365 we will move back and forth between these two conceptual approaches in order to gain the widest possible understanding of the different ways that contemporary societies are stratified. We will also study and critically evaluate some of the prominent theoretical explanations for the existence of social stratification.

REQUIRED BOOKS (available in the bookstore)

(1) Olsen, Gregg M. 2011. *Power & Inequality: A Comparative Introduction*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

(2) Wilkinson, Richard and Kate Pickett. 2010. *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, with a new postscript. London: Penguin.

OTHER READINGS & ASSIGNMENT OF READINGS

A number of other readings will be assigned throughout the term. Each of the additional readings is available in digital form. Please check the “Assigned Readings” section on Blackboard throughout the term to keep on top of what you should be reading at each point in Soci 365. I expect you to read the assigned material very carefully and be prepared to discuss each reading during our lecture periods.

STUDENT EVALUATION

(1) Mid-Term Test, Monday 25 February at 3:00 p.m.

(A) Format: A mix of short answer, short essay, true/false and multiple-choice questions.

(B) Content: All course material covered between Jan. 11 and February 25

(C) Value: 20% or 30%, whichever is most favourable to you.

(2) Short Essay, due Monday 1 April at 10:00 a.m. in the Blackboard Digital Drop Box

(A) Topic: You must write on one of the essay topics provided by the instructor and you must answer all parts of the assigned essay topic. If you do not follow this instruction you will be assigned a mark of zero for the essay. A list of essay topics will be available by February 8.

(B) References: Your key references for the essay must be academic books and/or academic journal articles.

(C) Style: You must follow the ASA (American Sociological Association) style of referencing sources. This means that page numbers should be included in the in-text citations.

(D) Length: Between 1250 and 1500 words, excluding references. You must indicate the word count for your essay at the top of the first page. Essays that exceed the word count will be penalized 10 per cent of the assigned grade for every 100 words, or part thereof, over 1500 words.

(E) Submission: Please submit an electronic version of your essay in the Digital Drop Box available on Blackboard no later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday 1 April.

(F) Value: 25% or 35%, whichever is most favourable to you.

(3) Participation in Classroom Discussions on Assigned Readings

(A) Format: On a few occasions during the term we will use part of a class to hold small-group discussions on issues raised by the assigned readings for that class. No advance notice of any of these classroom discussions will be given.

(B) Value: 15% (with your participation in each classroom discussion weighted equally)

(4) Take-Home Final Exam

- (A) Format: Essay questions
- (B) Content: All course material, with an emphasis on material covered since 25 Feb.
- (C) When handed Out: At the end of our final class, Monday 15 April.
- (D) When Due: Please submit your answers in the Digital Drop Box no later than 10 a.m. on Monday 22 April.
- (E) Is this an Individual or a Group Exercise? It most definitely is an INDIVIDUAL exercise. Do not discuss or show your answers to any other students in the class.
- (F) Value: 20% or 30% or 40%, whichever is most favourable to you.

Note: There is no registrar-scheduled examination for this course.

IMPORTANT NOTES

(1) Late Penalty. Except in the cases of documented illness, or extenuating circumstances brought to the instructor's attention before the due date of the short essay or take-home final examination, a penalty of 10% of the assigned mark per day will be assessed any late work.

(2) A student who has a legitimate reason for being unable to write the mid-term test must discuss an alternative course of action with the instructor. At his discretion, the instructor will transfer the percentage weight to another component of the course, or set a make-up test. Make-up tests must be written as soon as possible at a scheduled Department of Sociology make-up test session. This term make-up tests must be written on Tuesday evenings starting at 5 p.m.

(3) *Deferred Term Work Form*:

Deferral of term work, including the take-home final examination, past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out. It's available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 102) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

(4) The quality of a student's writing is a factor in the evaluation of a student's work in this course.

(5) "Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge" (*Calendar 2012-13*, p. 48). Please review the University of Calgary's policies for

dealing with student misconduct, particularly plagiarism and cheating (see pp. 48-51 of the *Calendar*).

(6) Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades.

1. Students are requested to use the Digital Drop Box to submit the essay and take-home final examination. If a paper copy is submitted, the student should personally deliver it to the instructor. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Essays submitted through the digital drop box will be returned with comments by email. Paper copies of essays will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.). Students who want any of their work returned by mail must supply a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the instructor. Otherwise unclaimed essays will be available for pick-up only by making an appointment to see the instructor.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.

(7) Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects-- including

any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

(8) Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

(9) The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

(10) **Emergency evacuations.** In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of the lecture classroom (SS 113), please proceed to the assembly point in the Professional Faculties Food Court. The back-up assembly point is the Education Block Food Court.

LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENT

At the end of the course numerical marks are totalled and a final letter grade is assigned on the following basis:

Percentage Range	Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Letter Grade
49 or less	F	85-89	A-
50-53	D	90-94	A
54-58	D+	95 or higher	A+
59-62	C-		
63-66	C		
67-71	C+		
72-75	B-		
76-79	B		
80-84	B+		