DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Sociology 361-203 (3 credits)

Social Inequalities
2019
Term 2
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 to 14:00
Location: Buchanan A202

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Email: ehad007@mail.ubc.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays 11:00 -12:00, or by appointment
Office: AnSo 3116

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Email:
Office
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Course Description
In this course we identify some of the main avenues of social inequality today by way of an engagement with traditional as well as contemporary sociological research on class, race, gender, and the intersections between these. We begin by acquiring a grounding in various aspects of stratification before engaging with intersectional approaches that explore their complex associations. We conclude the course by investigating how these various systems of stratification work in the current era of “neoliberalism”. Through the readings and active engagement in lectures, we will develop an understanding of the various aspects of inequality and delve into how these are manifest in the Canadian context.

Objectives
1. Develop an understanding of social stratification along the lines of class, race and gender.
2. On the basis of the above, consider and critique various competing explanations on social stratification.
3. Explore key concepts through which sociologists use to investigate inequality.
4. Increase familiarity with key debates in sociology in relation to inequality.

Pre-requisites
Sociology 100

Required Texts

Various journal articles and text chapters are assigned each week. For full details see the section on “Schedule of Readings”. All readings will be posted on the course’s Canvas Site.
Course Format
The class meets twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30pm to 2:00pm. Each course will involve lectures as well as discussions of the week’s readings. It is expected that students will be well-prepared to discuss the readings assigned each class.

Grading
- Participation 5 pts
- Quizzes 10 pts
- Discussion Reports X 3 15 pts
- Group Project 20 pts
- Midterm Exam 25 pts
- Final Exam 25 pts

Total 100 pts

UBC courses are graded on a percentage basis. Corresponding letter grades are assigned automatically by the Registrar’s Office.

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Attendance and Participation
Regular attendance during lectures is expected. Poor attendance will affect your participation grade. It is expected that there will be a high level of active participation in class discussions. I recognize that not all are comfortable with public speaking. However, it is a crucial skill that is needed within an outside academia. All students are expected to take part in small group discussions. Given that we will address sensitive controversial topics of race, class, gender and the intersections between these, in this course, a bearing of mutual respect is assumed.

Quizzes
(Throughout)

The quizzes will evaluate your engagement with and understanding of the course materials. Quizzes will mostly cover the readings for the day but may also cover lecture material from recent classes.

Discussion Reports
(Throughout)

After the first two weeks, students will meet in discussion groups, typically at the beginning of class to reviews the reading (approximately 20 minutes). One or more students within each group will be assigned to lead the discussion for each day. The discussion leader(s) will prepare a succinct description of the reading, offer a brief analysis (including strengths and weakness of the argument), and prepare 2-4 questions to lead discussion, with the aim of improving understanding of the reading (1-2 pages). The
discussion leader will provide copies for each group member to read at the beginning of the class. After everyone’s had a chance to read them, the discussion leader will first ask if anyone has questions about what they’ve written. Then they will proceed to pose their own questions, and generally engage in guiding the discussion so that it covers the reading. A copy of description/analysis & questions will be provided to me at the end of the class.

Group Project
(Week 13-14)
Along with a group of other students, you will investigate an aspect of inequality in Canada or abroad. Students will be assigned to a group based on shared topics of interest. You may choose one of three basic projects: a statistical profile of an aspect of inequality in Canada (and/or cross-nationally); an analysis of representations of class, race/ethnicity, gender, or neoliberalism, in relation to a particular news event, television show, or movie; an analysis of a policy or regulation which speaks to any of the issues raised throughout the course. In each case, you will be required to draw upon weekly readings and lectures to guide your investigation. Your group will have in-class time to figure out what you want to investigate and how you will go about doing it. Three classes will be allocated in order for the group to meet and discuss their projects. Through a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation, your group will share your results with the class. A 5-6 page essay which elaborates on the issue addressed in the presentation must be submitted to me prior to the presentation. The group assignment must show some connection to the course material but may be written on a wide variety of topics connected to social inequality. Please type your double-spaced assignment using Times Roman 12-point font. All sources should be cited in a bibliography at the end of the paper, using the format in a sociological journal like American Sociological Review. They should be stapled in the upper left-hand corner, and submitted without a plastic cover. All group members will receive the same grade.

Midterm Exam
(Week 7)
The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and an essay question. It will cover parts I through III and you will be required to answer material discussed in lectures, readings, and any films shown.

Final Exam
(TBA)
The final exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and an essay question. It will cover parts IV through VI and you will be required to answer material discussed in lectures, readings, and any films shown.

Late Policy
Late assignments will result in a 10% penalty for each day late (a weekend counts as one day). Assignments handed in after 3:00 pm on the due date are deemed to be one day late. Hard copies of the assignments should be submitted to the course instructor or T.A. or at the SOCI main office (not to someone else, not by email, etc.). A make-up exam will be scheduled only if Arts Advising formally indicates that this is appropriate.
Schedule of Readings

Part 1: Introduction—What is inequality?

Week 1 (Jan 3): Course introduction
Introduction to the course

Week 2 (Jan 8, 10) Sociological approaches to inequality
- Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch 4
- Therborn, G. 2013. The Killing Fields of Inequality Cambridge: Polity Press (Ch. 4)

Recommended:

Part II: Class and Status

Week 3 (Jan 15, 17): Class and status
- Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, “General Introduction” (pp. xi- xix); Ch.3

* Groups assigned

Recommended:

Week 4 (Jan 22, 24): The “cultural turn” in class analysis

Recommended:
Week 5 (Jan 29, 31): Death of class or class endurance?

- Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch.7

Recommended:


Part III: Race and Ethnicity

Week 6 (Feb 5, 7): Race as a “phantom concept”. Ethnic disparities in Canada

- Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch.10

Recommended:

- Osborne, Peter and Stella Sandford, 2002. Philosophies of Race and Ethnicity, London: Continuum (Ch. 1)

Week 7 (Feb 12, 14): Midterm Review, Midterm Exam

Week 8: Midterm break

Part IV: Gender and Sexuality

Week 9 (Feb 26, 28): Gender as difference, division and doing
(Grupo meeting 1, February 26)

- Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch.14 (pp. 194-202)

Week 10 (March 5,7): Undoing gender?


Week 11 (March 12, 14): Gender and the workplace
(Grupo meeting 2, March 14)
• Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch.15

Recommended:

• http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/wage-gap-oxfam-1.3478938

Part V: Intersections between Class, Race, and Gender

Week 12 (March 19, 21): Intersectionality
(Group meeting 3, March 21)
• Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch.14 (pp. 203-204)

Recommended:

• Bonita Lawrence, “Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview”, Hypatia, Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring 2003: 3-31
• Schissel, Bernard and Wotherspoon, Terry “The Legacy of Residential Schools” in Zawiliski ed. Inequality in Canada: A Reader on the Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class.

Part VI: Neoliberalism and inequality

Week 13 (March 26, 28): Neoliberalism and stratification in Canada—A race to the bottom?
(Group presentations)
• Grabb, Reitz and Hwang, Ch.24

Recommended:


Week 14 (April 2, 4): Group Presentations contd and course wrap up