

SOCIOLOGY 435: Social Inequality (Spring 2010)

Lecture:	Tuesday & Thursday; 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Lecture location:	Parkinson 107
Professor:	Derek Christopher Martin
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Web:	www.siu.edu/~socio/Martin.htm
Office Hours:	T: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., TH: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., and by appointment

Course Content and Organization:

This course will examine the concepts of social inequality and social stratification. Is social stratification necessary and/or functional, as some social theorists argue? Or, as others contend, is it detrimental to a just and equitable society and a hindrance to future civilizations? What are the social origins of inequality? How is it perpetuated from one generation to the next? Is the gap between rich and poor getting wider or narrower? What are some of the characteristics of people at the top of the social hierarchy? What about those at the bottom? How are these characteristics related to social inequality? These are just a few of the questions we will explore throughout the semester. To aid in our examination, we will read four (4) books. Each book is an integral part of this course and will contribute in a different way to a more thorough understanding of social inequality. The course will primarily follow a lecture format, although I will also incorporate periods of discussion where appropriate.

Course Requirements:

This course meets twice each week (T & TH), seventy-five (75) minutes per class. You are expected to attend all classes, and you are expected to read all course materials. Beyond simply attending, however, you are also expected to participate in discussions. Class participation includes having read the course materials (**before class begins!**) and asking questions or making comments. When relevant, students are encouraged to enrich class discussions by bringing in current events, accounts from personal experiences, or other appropriate material from outside the class.

Examinations:

The examinations will consist primarily of short answer and essay questions, although I may include one or more multiple choice and/or true/false questions as needed. The exams will **NOT** be cumulative, although an understanding of certain key concepts will be necessary throughout the semester. Exams **MUST** be taken on the scheduled day; there will be **NO** make-up exams.

Term paper:

Students are responsible for writing a 15-18 page research paper on a specific aspect of social inequality. This will be a semester long project (concurrent with the other coursework), and students are required to meet several deadlines displaying their progress. For more information, see last page of this syllabus.

Grading Criteria:

Your final course grade will be based on the following criteria:

Examination 1	15%
Examination 2	15%
Examination 3	15%
Quizzes	15%
Term Paper	30%
Attendance/participation	10%

Students who earn 90% or more of the points will earn an “A.”

Students who earn 80% to 89% of the points will earn a “B.”

Students who earn 70% to 79% of the points will earn a “C.”

Students who earn 62% to 69% of the points will earn a “D.”

Students who fail to earn at least 62% of the points will earn an “F.”

I do not believe in giving extra credit, so do not even bother to ask.

Ethical Conduct:

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is dedicated not only to learning, research, and the advancement of knowledge, but also to the development of ethically sensitive and responsible persons. The university seeks to achieve these goals through sound educational programs and policies governing individual conduct that encourage independence and maturity. By accepting membership in this university, an individual joins a community characterized by free expression, free inquiry, honesty, respect for others, and participation in constructive change. All rights and responsibilities exercised within this academic environment shall be compatible with these principles. An act of ***academic dishonesty*** is a breach of the student conduct code. Dishonesty includes: 1. Plagiarism, representing the work of another as one's own work; 2. Preparing work for another that is to be used as that person's own work; 3. Cheating by any method or means; 4. Knowingly and willfully falsifying or manufacturing scientific or educational data and representing the same to be the result of scientific or scholarly experiment or research; 5. Knowingly furnishing false information to a university official relative to academic matters; 6. Soliciting, aiding, abetting, concealing, or attempting conduct in violation of this code. If you are in doubt or have questions regarding behavior that may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me or refer to the SIU Handbook. <http://www.siu.edu/~policies/policies/conduct.html>

Acknowledging Differences:

During the semester students will have the opportunity to share thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about their life experiences. The differences in these perspectives that each student brings to the discussion will add to the richness of this course. Students should communicate in ways that acknowledge and respect such differences. While it is natural and expected that many of us will have differing opinions during our discussions, we must always respect our fellow students and the opinions they hold. I expect and **encourage** students to be critical of each other's ideas, but it is **UNACCEPTABLE** to be dismissive of and/or combative with other students in the class.

Classroom Decorum:

I have an obligation to maintain a classroom environment that allows each student to learn to the best of his or her capabilities. While I encourage students to ask questions and make comments in class, I will not tolerate or permit behavior that is disruptive, distracting, or demeaning. Actions that violate these norms will be treated seriously— after one warning you will be asked to leave. Also, if your cell phone must be on for medical, child care, or other reasons, please set it to silent or vibrate.

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Statement:

Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations to meet the expectations of this course are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor(s) as soon as possible. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted during the first week of the semester along with a request for special accommodations. Contact the SIU Disability Support Services (DSS) to facilitate requests: Woody Hall B-150, Carbondale, IL 62901, Mail Code 4705

DSSsiu@siu.edu Ph: (618) 453-5738 Fax: (618) 453-5700 TTY: (618) 453-2293

Emergency Procedures:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the Department of Public Safety's website

<http://www.dps.siu.edu/> (disaster drop down), and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Course Materials:

[ROTHMAN] = Rothman, Robert A. 2004. *Inequality and Stratification: Race, Class, and Gender* (5th ed.). Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0131849689

[DOMHOFF] = Domhoff, G. William. 2005. *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, and Social Change* (6th ed.). McGraw Hill. ISBN: 978-0-07-811156-3
[<http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/>]

[REIMAN] = Reiman, Jeffrey. 2007. *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice* (9th ed.). Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 978-0-205-68842-5
[<http://paulsjusticepage.com/reiman.htm>]

[SHIPLER] = Shipler, David K. 2004. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. Knopf. ISBN: 0375408908

Schedule of Readings:

WEEK 1: *The Nature of Inequality and Stratification*

1/19 What is Social Inequality? Why do we study it?

1/21 “Inequality & Social Stratification”

Reading: Chapter 1, pp. 2-25 [ROTHMAN]

WEEK 2: *Stratification in Industrial Societies*

1/26 “Theoretical Approaches to Social Stratification” & “Industrial Class Systems”

Readings: Chapter 2, pp. 26-42 [ROTHMAN]

Chapter 3, pp. 44-67 [ROTHMAN]

1/28 “Institutionalizing and Legitimizing Stratification”

Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 68-96 [ROTHMAN]

WEEK 3: *Patterns of Inequality*

2/2 “The Dynamics of Economic Inequality”

Reading: Chapter 5, pp. 98-119 [ROTHMAN]

2/4 “Social Evaluations and Social Relations” & “The Shape of Political Power and Influence”

Readings: Chapter 6, pp. 120-139 [ROTHMAN]

Chapter 7, pp. 140-163 [ROTHMAN]

WEEK 4: *Experiencing Social Stratification & Inheritance and Mobility*

2/9 “Class, Race, Gender, and Life Chances” & “Class and Lifestyles”

Readings: Chapter 8, pp. 165-185 [ROTHMAN]

Chapter 9, pp. 187-205 [ROTHMAN]

2/11 “Class Consciousness” & “Patterns of Social Mobility”

Readings: Chapter 10, pp. 206-220 [ROTHMAN]

Chapter 11, pp. 222-241 [ROTHMAN]

WEEK 5: *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, & Social Change*

2/16 **EXAM 1**

2/18 “Class and Power in America”

Reading: Chapter 1, pp. 1-23 [DOMHOFF]

WEEK 6: *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, & Social Change*

2/23 “The Corporate Community and the Upper Class”

Readings: Chapter 2, pp. 24-54 [DOMHOFF]

Chapter 3, pp. 55-84 [DOMHOFF]

2/25 “The Policy Planning Network”

Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 85-118 [DOMHOFF]

WEEK 7: *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, & Social Change*

- 3/2 “The Role of Public Opinion” & “Parties and Elections”
Readings: Chapter 5, pp. 119-146 [DOMHOFF]
Chapter 6, pp. 147-172 [DOMHOFF]

- 3/4 “How the Power Elite Dominates Government”
Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 173-209 [DOMHOFF]

Term Paper Topic Approval Deadline!

3/6 – 3/14 SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!

WEEK 8: *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, & Social Change*

- 3/16 “The Big Picture” & “Potential Challenges to Class Domination”
Readings: Chapter 8, pp. 210-224 [DOMHOFF]
Chapter 9, pp. 225-235 [DOMHOFF]

3/18 **EXAM 2**

WEEK 9: *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*

- 3/23 “Criminal Justice through the Looking Glass, or Winning by Losing”
Reading: Introduction, pp. 1-10 [REIMAN]

- 3/25 “Nothing Succeeds Like Failure”
Reading: Chapter 1, pp. 11-57 [REIMAN]

WEEK 10: *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*

- 3/30 “A Crime by Any Other Name . . .”
Reading: Chapter 2, pp. 58-109 [REIMAN]

- 4/1 “. . . and the Poor Get Prison”
Reading: Chapter 3 pp. 110-171 [REIMAN]

WEEK 11: *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*

- 4/6 “To the Vanquished Belong the Spoils” & “*Criminal Justice or Criminal Justice*”
Readings: Chapter 4, pp. 172-201 [REIMAN]
Conclusion, pp. 202-219 [REIMAN]

4/8 **EXAM 3**

WEEK 12: *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*

- 4/13 “At the Edge of Poverty” & “Money and Its Opposite”
Readings: Chapter 1, pp. 3-12 [SHIPLER]
Chapter 2, pp. 13-38 [SHIPLER]

List of Intended Sources Deadline!

- 4/15 “Work Doesn’t Work”
Reading: Chapter 3, pp. 39-76 [SHIPLER]

WEEK 13: *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*

4/20 “Importing the Third World”

Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 77-96 [SHIPLER]

Video: “Waging a Living” [part I]

4/22 “Harvest of Shame” & “The Daunting Workplace”

Readings: Chapter 5, pp. 97-120 [SHIPLER]

Chapter 6, pp. 121-141 [SHIPLER]

Video: “Waging a Living” [part II]

WEEK 14: *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*

4/27 “Sins of the Fathers”

Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 142-173 [SHIPLER]

4/29 “Kinship” & “Body and Mind”

Readings: Chapter 8, pp. 174-200 [SHIPLER]

Chapter 9, pp. 201-230 [SHIPLER]

WEEK 15: *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*

5/4 “Dreams” & “Work Works”

Readings: Chapter 10, pp. 231-253 [SHIPLER]

Chapter 11, pp. 254-284 [SHIPLER]

5/6 “Skill and Will”

Reading: Chapter 12, pp. 285-300 [SHIPLER]

Term papers due!

FINAL EXAM – Monday, May 10th, 12:50 A.M. – 2:50 P.M.

Term Paper:

First and foremost, this is a research paper; after choosing a topic, you must use outside readings to develop and refine your discussion. You will select an issue of inequality, broadly defined, and then discuss its causes, its consequences, and/or its solutions. Whether you address one, two, or all three aspects depends on the level of depth to which you choose to explore. [*Inequality*: Unequal distribution in rewards, resources, and/or opportunities based on disparities in economic influence, social status, and/or power and authority.]

In analyzing the cause, you may want to consider some or all of the following: What is the history of the problem? Has this always been a problem? If not, when did the problem first arise? (Perhaps it has always been a problem, but has only recently been *recognized* as a problem.) Has the severity of the problem fluctuated over time? If so, what has caused the ups and downs? Is the source of the inequality *multi-causal* (as most are), and if so, is one cause more primary than the others? Is there a particular ideology or belief system that helps sustain the cause(s)?

In analyzing the consequences, you may want to address one or more of the following questions: Is this problem widespread, or does it affect only an isolated (economically, racially, socially, etc.) population? Is the severity of the problem universally recognized, or is its impact diluted, dispersed, and/or disguised? Is the problem getting better, worse, or remaining relatively constant? What are the potential benefits of alleviating the inequality? What are the potential dangers of allowing it to remain (fester) or to worsen?

In analyzing the solution, you may want to address one or more of the following questions: What, if any, are some of the solutions that have been tried in the past? Why did they fail, or if they succeeded, then why does the problem persist? Were some solutions more successful than others, and if so, then why? Is the solution primarily individual, societal, or governmental? Is the nature of the solution technological, philosophical, social, moral, or something else (or some combination)? Is the persistence of the problem due to a lack of knowledge, or the lack of will to implement the knowledge? How does ideology impact the lack of knowledge (or the lack of will to implement it)?

Your papers must be written in standard essay format (introduction, body, & conclusion), and you will be graded on both substance and style. They should be between fifteen (15) and eighteen (18) pages, not including a separate page for references. You must use *at least* six (6) outside sources: scientific or academic books, journals, magazines, and or online archives. You may also use non-academic sources, but a significant portion of your paper must be based on the scholarly sources. Topics **must** be approved by the instructor (me!) no later than **March 4th**; a list of intended sources **must** be submitted by **April 13th**; and the papers are due on **Thursday, May 6th, 2009**. In addition to a hard copy, papers **MUST** be submitted to Turnitin.com.