

SOCI 3324.02/03 Social Inequality – ACE/W-  
course Fall 2017

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Office Hours: Mon & Wed: 9:30--11:00 am; 12-1:00 pm  
All other times: By Appointment Only

Required Text: (1) *Social Inequality and Social Stratification in US Society*. 2013. Christopher Doob.

This course introduces you to the sociological study of social inequalities based upon class, race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, etc. As the title of the book suggests, we will focus primarily upon inequality within the United States.

This is an ACE course which means that you will be involved in Community Engagement as part of the academic requirements for this class.

This is a “W” course which means that at least 50 percent of your course grade will be derived from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives.

Social inequality is a major feature of our daily experience. Social inequality refers to the lack of social equality where individuals do not have equal social status. Social stratification refers to the hierarchical arrangement of social classes, castes and strata within a society. Social stratification in many Western societies like the United States is comprised of three main layers – upper class, middle class and lower class. We can discern differences in social prestige, income, power, opportunities, etc. that accompany these various layer.

## Learning Objectives

In this course on social inequality, we will:

1. Develop a descriptive and analytical understanding of social stratification.
2. Explore central concepts through which sociologists investigate inequality.
3. Become familiar with key debates that animate contemporary research on inequality.
4. Consider and critique competing explanations for social stratification.

## Learning Outcomes

- Summarize and evaluate sociological theories of the causes of social inequality
- Examine the basic sociological concepts and perspectives on social inequality and stratification
- Summarize and evaluate sociological theories of the causes of social inequality
- Identify social processes that distribute & redistribute money, honor and power in society
- Identify the mechanisms by which social inequality is maintained in society including specific barriers to social mobility

## Academic Community Engagement

This is an Academic Community Engagement course in which you will not only learn knowledge and skills but also actively use them as you collaborate with an organization to explore the variety of ways in which social status impacts life chances.

Through this experience, it is hoped that you will see yourself as a positive force in this world to make a difference

## Grade Components

In service of our objectives for the course, you will complete:

### (1) Chapter Quizzes (100 points)

-- Engage the reading. A key part of this course is regular and thoughtful consideration of the texts. It is essential that you complete the assigned reading;

To assess your engagement of the reading, you will take a weekly quiz related to the chapter under review. Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple-choice questions. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

All quizzes are administered in Blackboard.

### (2) Short papers 2 @ 50 points each (100 points)

You will write 4 short journal responses to questions derived from content contained in the first 4 chapters of your textbook. Journal prompts will include both concepts introduced in these first 4 chapters and/or applications of these concepts to real-world scenarios. These posts will introduce you to and reinforce your knowledge of the academic vocabulary of inequality/stratification that will make the discussion more productive.

### (3) Community service at a non-profit agency (200 points)

(1)-- Engage in community service.

The connection between education and income, education and opportunity, education and race/ethnic inequality has been well established empirically. Unfortunately, as US society has grown more unequal, investments in education have similarly been negatively impacted. According to Greenstone et al. (2013):

Investments in education and skills, which are factors that increasingly determine outcomes in the job market, are becoming more stratified by family income. As income inequality has increased, wealthier parents are able to invest more in their children's education and enrichment, increasing the already sizable difference in investment from those at the other end of the earnings distribution. This disparity has real and measurable consequences for the current generation of American children. Although cognitive tests of ability show little difference between children of high- and low-income parents in the first years of their lives, large and persistent differences start emerging before kindergarten. Among older children, evidence suggests that the gap between high- and low-income primary and secondary-school students has increased by almost 40 percent over the past thirty years (<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/06/13-facts-higher-education>).

As a part of this course, you will assist in an organization in their operation. Organizations other than those listed are *subject to my approval*. Your service commitment must be arranged no later than the end of the 2nd week of the semester (September 7<sup>th</sup>).

You will submit this plan to me in writing (see 1 below).

Your service commitment is at 1.5 hours per week in an organization in your community (21 volunteer hours for the semester). Service points (100) are earned by:

1. By **September 6**, providing appropriate documentation detailing your service commitment with an appropriate organization (25 points). In this document include:
  - Name of the community organization
  - **Supervisor name and contact information** (email address and phone number)
  - Anticipated service schedule

Your service and hours will be verified by me several times over the semester;

2. **October 18** – Midterm Service report -- written confirmation of your to-date service. You should have at least 10 hours completed by this time (25 points). Supervisor signature required verifying hours completed to-date.
3. **November 29<sup>th</sup>** -- providing *written* verification from an organizational supervisor upon completion of your service engagement (the sign in log will suffice) – points will be deducted proportionately for service hours totaling less than 21 (100 points)

19-21 service hours = 90-95-100 points

17-18 service hours = 85-89 points

15-16 service hours = 75-79 points

13-14 service hours = 60-65 points

11-12 service hours = 50-55 points

9-10 service hours = 40-45 points

<= 8 service hours = 0 points

4. Making a group presentation to the class on your service experience (50 points). Required in this presentation (among others) is some background and purpose of organization in which you served; the type of service in which you engaged; the extent of the need being served. The last few weeks of class will be dedicated to 10-15-minute presentations on your service experiences and how it relates to the content of this course. We will discuss the guidelines for these presentations in class.

#### (4) Applied Sociology Paper (100 points)

The papers will be focused on linking the readings to your experiences in community organizations. The paper will be developed over the entire semester.

Papers must be a minimum of 6-7 pages of text, double-spaced, 12 point font (not in bold type) 1 inch margins, include a reference page, no title page, with heading (name and class, single spaced) only on first page, citations within text.

Your paper will be related to the area of inequality that best corresponds to your service activity. The paper will use a minimum of four academic articles and your service experience as the primary content.

The paper will consist of 4 parts:

1. Introducing the purpose and topic of your paper;
2. Literature review
3. Your service
4. Drawing a conclusion about the topic that was researched which can also include your personal reaction. You will write this paper over the entire semester. This means you may have to read a chapter that pertains to your interest/topic in advance. I strongly encourage all of you to use the SHSU Writing Center for help editing your paper -- <http://www.shsu.edu/centers/academic-success-center/writing/>. You need to schedule an appointment with the center in advance because they fill up quickly.

Key deadlines for the paper include:

Sept. 13, 2017 – description of your service organization (20 points).

Oct. 1, 2016 – summary of academic articles (20 points).

Oct. 31, 2016 – first draft due (20 points).

Nov. 10, 2016 – my feedback to you is due.

Dec 3, 2016 – final papers due (40 points).

### (5) Attendance/Discussion/In-Class Participation (100 points)

-- Attend class and contribute to the discussion. An attendance binder will be circulated each class meeting. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance binder. Further, periodically I will ask you to write about an issue related to inequality and/or your perceptions about inequality. These short written assignments will count towards your attendance/discussion/participation grade.

Your final course grade will be assigned according to the following point distribution:

540-600 = A

480-539 = B

420-479 = C

360-419 = D

<=418 = F

### Student Decorum and Expectations

Students are expected to maintain decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor; to regularly attend the class; to arrive on time and stay for the entire class; to come to class prepared; and, to display an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the educational opportunity you are privileged to be receiving. Cell phones and computers are to be unobtrusive.

#### E-mail Policies

E-mail Etiquette: I expect you to address us –myself and my TA – with professional language. This means no abbreviations, no slang and no misspellings. Please use a salutation such as “Dear Dr. Douglas” along with a polite closing. Inappropriate emails will be ignored by the instructor and/or forwarded on to appropriate administrative personnel.

I will respond to emails within 24 hours. Similarly, you are expected to respond within 24 hours.

I do NOT accept homework/assignments via email. All assignments should be uploaded and submitted in Blackboard.

**Academic Dishonesty:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive an F for that assignment with more severe sanctions as appropriate. <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. *Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic performance should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in the SHSU Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786) to request accommodations.*

**Religious Holidays:** The Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. Religious Holy Day means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible regarding any missed classes or exams due to Religious Holy Days. <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf>.

**University Code of Conduct:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students shall arrive to class on time and be respectful to their other students. If a student needs to arrive to class late or leave class early the student will make the professor aware of these needs prior to class time. All cell phones and beepers must be turned off and stowed away while in the classroom. If a cell phone is out during an exam, the student will receive an F for that exam. Students who disrupt the class will be contacted by the professor to adjust their behaviors. In extreme cases students who cannot comply with these requirements can be removed and resigned from the class. <https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html>.

**Evaluation:** Students will have the opportunity to evaluate the professor during the semester.

## Course Schedule (See Blackboard for more details)

Chapter 1	Aug. 24-Sep. 7
*Chapter 2	Sept. 8-18
Chapter 3	Sept. 19-Oct. 2
*Chapter 4	Oct. 3-Oct. 16
Chapter 5	Oct. 17-23
*Chapter 6	Oct. 24-30
Chapter 7	Oct. 31-Nov. 6
Chapter 8	Nov. 7-13
Chapter 9	Nov. 14-20
*Chapter 10	Nov. 21-27

Presentations Nov. 28-30

All work due by Wednesday Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> by 2:00 pm.