

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Discipline: Sociology

Fall 2008

SOC 200T-2: Comparative Social Stratification

Lower Division

Faculty Name: Christine Wernet

Suggested Pre-requisites:

Successful completion of an introductory course and at least one upper division course in Sociology or permission of instructor is required.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines social stratification with a global perspective and is designed to help students begin to understand “Who gets what, and why?” The course begins by surveying the history of global inequality using the theoretical perspectives of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and World Systems Theory, as well as others. The social class structure will be examined, locating the power and wealth of the upper class and illuminating the despair and poverty of the poor as we look at the lifestyles of different social classes. Additionally, gender and racial inequalities will be studied in a comparative perspective. We will explore how the world became stratified, and what global stratification looks like today. As we visit each port we will discuss the country’s basic social demographics and history, focusing on issues of stratification in nations that range from still-developing Brazil, South Africa, and India to already-industrialized Japan. We will focus on global inequality, and why some of the world’s nations remain poor while others have been able to develop.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course goals for the student are:

1. To use sociology to better understand social stratification in the countries that we visit,
2. To provide an introduction to the theories of social stratification,
3. To critically analyze how social stratification impacts social life,
4. To show how life chances and social mobility are affected by race, class, and gender, and
5. To apply social stratification in a comparative and global perspective.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Topic _____ Assigned Reading _____

I. An Introduction to Social Stratification (Bahamas to Namibia- 6 periods)

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| A. Perspectives & Concepts in Social Stratification | Chapter 1 |
| B. Dimensions of Inequalities | Chapter 2 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in Brazil | Population Reference Bureau (PRB) |
| C. Social Stratification in Human Societies: The History of Inequality | Chapter 3 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in Namibia | Population Reference Bureau |
- Exam #1** Chapters 1, 2, 3 and PRB Readings (on A6)

II. Theories and Global Stratification (Namibia to Vietnam- 9 periods)

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| A. Social Stratification Theory: Early Statements | Chapter 4 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in South Africa | Population Reference Bureau |
| B. Modern Theories of Social Stratification | Chapter 5 |
| C. World Stratification System (With a focus on India) | Chapter 14 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in India | Population Reference Bureau |
| D. The Poor of this Earth | Chapter 17 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in Malaysia | Population Reference Bureau |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in Vietnam | Population Reference Bureau |

Exam #2 Chapters 4, 5, 14, 17, and PRB Readings (on A15)

III. Perspectives and Concepts in the Study of Social Stratification (Vietnam to The United States- 9 periods)

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| A. Social Stratification in Japan | Chapter 15 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification In China | Population Reference Bureau |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification In Japan | Population Reference Bureau |
| B. The Upper Class Dominance in the World | Chapter 6 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in United States | Population Reference Bureau |
| D. Poverty and the Political Economy of Welfare: | Chapter 9 |
| E. Gender Stratification and Inequality: The Persistence of Ascription | Chapter 10 |
| F. Inequalities of Race and Ethnicity: The Persistence of Ascription | Chapter 11 |
| Discuss statistics on social stratification in Costa Rica | Population Reference Bureau |

Exam #3 Chapters 6, 9, 10, 11, 15 and PRB Readings

FIELD COMPONENT

Students are required to complete three practica, either Faculty Directed Practica (FDP) or independent practica. At least two of these should be faculty-directed field trips lead by me (see list below). You are required to participate in at least one of the FDPs under my direction in Salvador, Walvis Bay, Cape Town, or Chennai, since they are central to the material covered in this class. For the remaining practica you can complete an independent practicum that is part of a regularly offered SAS trip, or one that stands alone. If an independent practicum is selected, then the student must meet with the instructor **prior** to arriving in port to discuss his or her approach and objectives. All students are required to keep a journal of their field observations and write a four page paper about each field experience.

Journals should be a record of the students' notes from the field experience. Specific instructions regarding approach and field notes will be given prior to arriving in port. Students are encouraged to engage locals in conversation about topics related to our course. I realize that language barriers may make this difficult or impossible. However, if discussion is not possible, make detailed observations regarding sociological topics covered in class. For example, sociological concepts such as family structure, social class, culture, minority groups, poverty, religion, education system, gender, etc... can be the topic of your papers. As you partake in the FDP or Independent practica think about how one or all of the sociological theories that we have discussed in class can be applied.

The paper should include a summary of the student's field notes, analysis of several sociological concepts, and conclusions about the role of the sociological concepts in the port-of-call, with an emphasis on social stratification and inequality. For example if you visit the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre you can discuss what you learned about apartheid, human rights and or sustainable development. These concepts will be discussed in class and at the center. If you choose to visit Cachoeira your paper can included topics such as landless peasants or colonization or rural life in Brazil. Again, these are concepts that will be discussed in class and on the FDP. Basically, your papers should reflect your experiences in-port and as you write these papers you should draw on your sociological imagination and report how the individuals that you meet or observe are shaped by larger social forces (such as the economy, inequality, social stratification, apartheid, religion, education systems, etcetera).

SUGGESTED PRACTICA:

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| BRAZIL: | Cachoeira (FDP); Afro-Brazilian Museum and Candomble House |
| NAMIBIA: | Meet a Peace Corps Volunteer (FDP); Ovahimba Tribe and Skeleton Coast Park |
| SOUTH AFRICA: | Desmond Tutu Peace Centre (FDP); Amy Biehl Foundation Trust |
| INDIA: | Socioeconomic Problems in Chennai (FDP) |
| MALAYSIA: | Service Visit: St. Joseph Orphanage (FDP) |
| VIET NAM: | Ben Thanh Market; Cu Chi Tunnels |
| CHINA: | Family Planning Neighborhood Committee (FDP) |
| JAPAN: | Hiroshima |
| HAWAII: | Bishop Museum; Polynesian Cultural Center |
| COSTA RICA: | Coffee: Costa Rica's Treasure |

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Exams (3@ 17% each) are worth 50% of your final grade

The exams will consist of various methods of evaluation including: short answer, multiple choice and essay questions. The evaluation of the exams will be based on your ability to meet the course objectives and apply what you have learned in class to your in-port experiences. Each exam must be completed within the class period. The exam questions are derived from material presented in class and in the text.

Papers/Presentations are worth 20% of your final grade

Each student will prepare a paper and presentation on stratification in one of our ports-of-call. The presentations will be presented in-class before we visit each port. These presentations will utilize data from the Population Reference Bureau, our textbook, and other sources. The student is to compare and contrast the port-of-call to the United States. The paper should include statistics regarding topics such as poverty levels, education levels, employment rates, the break down of social classes in the two countries, etc. . . . The papers should be 7-10 pages long.

Field Papers are worth 20% of your final grade

In-Class Global Reflections are worth 10% of your final grade

At the beginning of most class periods, a reflection question will be asked by the instructor to encourage class discussion based on your sociological knowledge and your experiences in-port.

Grading for the course:

- A 90% to 100%
- B 80% to 89%
- C 70% to 79%
- D 60% to 69%
- F 59% or lower

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Kerbo, Harold R.
TITLE: Social Stratification and Inequality: Class Conflict in Historical, Comparative, and Global Perspective
PUBLISHER: McGraw Hill
ISBN #: 0-07-299769-9
DATE/EDITION: 2006/ 6th Edition
COST: \$63.75

