COURSE: SOCILOGY 311: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIOLOGY

(3 Hours Credit) Summer 2008
Instructor: Matthew J. O’Neil
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Office Hours: Email for an appointment time or see me before/after class

Mon/Friday-10:30-11:45 AM
BUSA D203
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Text:
Structure of Social Stratification in the United States (5th Ed).
Leonard Beeghley, 2007

Course Descriptions:
In this course we will examine social and economic inequality in American society. The primary focus is on stratification by race, class, and gender in the United States, but we will use material from other societies to provide a comparative and historical perspective. This course will be organized around two central questions. First, how fairly are social and economic resources allocated in the United States? Answering this question requires an awareness of the level and character of inequality in the United States, an appreciation of different explanations for the origins and persistence of inequality, and the ability to compare inequality in the United States to inequality in other cultures and societies. However, personal judgments about “how fair” things are rely ultimately on individuals’ political and ethical principles. Second, what can be done to remedy perceived unfairness? Answering this question requires the ability to think critically about public policy issues as they pertain to social and economic inequality.

Course Requirements
• Quizzes (50% of course grade): There will be in-class examinations every Friday, 5 quizzes. Each will consist of short and medium length essay questions, and will cover readings, lectures, and discussions (in other words, everything) from the preceding week. For more detail, see below. Each examination will be worth 30 points, or 15% of your course grade. I will not give make-up examinations, except in the case of serious and documented medical emergencies.

• Discussion Papers (25% of course grade): Short papers are due 1 week after films are shown in class. Papers should be 1 or 2 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point type, one inch margins) and should summarize all of the main points of all of the film as the guide sheet provides. I will not accept late papers.

• Final Exam (25% of course grade): The final exam will be a cumulative assessment of the student’s understanding of the overall course material.

Grading: Grades will be determined on the basis of points accumulated through various assignments. There will be 4 quizzes. There will be a group paper and presentation requirement. There will also be 4, two page reflection papers due after a film is shown in class.

Grading Scale and Percentages:
A = 95-100   A- = 90-95
B+ = 85-90   B = 80-85
C+ = 75-80   C = 70-75
D = 60-69   F = below 60

Quiz Grades= 40%
Group Project/Paper = 20%
Reflection Papers = 20%
Final Exam= 20%
Absence Policy: Regular and punctual attendance for all scheduled classes and activities is expected of all students and is regarded as integral to course credit. When extended absences are caused by illness or extraordinary conditions, the student has recourse through the official withdrawal procedure; otherwise, the grade reported will be F. More than 3 missed classes will result in reduction of 1 letter grade. More than 3 late arrivals, early departures will also result in the reduction of your grade by 1 letter (ie: earned A= B etc). Please just attend class regularly.

KOKUA Material
Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services.

Plagiarism Material

The following definition of plagiarism comes from the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code:

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.

University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992), p. 6

It is ultimately each student's responsibility to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it. Ignorance of the rules, saying "I forgot about that" or "I made a mistake" are not considered valid excuses when it comes to plagiarism.
Notice regarding syllabus on Web

Students: Please be advised that this syllabus is provided for informational purposes only. YOU SHOULD NOT PURCHASE ANY BOOKS OR MATERIALS ON THE BASIS OF THIS SYLLABUS AS IT MAY CHANGE PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS. Please wait until the first day of instruction at which time you will be given the final version of the syllabus.
Course Outline:

May 27th - Introductions
1. What is Social Inequality & Stratification?
2. Scope of the class
3. Syllabus Review

May 28th Sociology & Stratification
1. Karl Marx/ Max Weber
2. Modernity, the American Dream and Anomie
3. Power and Stratification

May 29th Race/Ethnicity & Stratification
1. Poverty, Occupation and Income
2. Discrimination by Organizations
3. Racial and Ethnic Stratification

May 30th
1. QUIZ 1

June 2nd – Gender and Stratification
1. Consequences of Gender Stratification
2. Salience of traditional Gender norms
3. In-class Discussion

June 3rd Occupation Prestige & Social Class
1. The Meaning of Occupational Prestige
2. Patterns of Class Identification
3. Race/Ethnic Gender Differences in Class Identification

June 4th - Social Mobility in the United States
1. Social Structure and Mobility
2. Status Attainment
3. The Smiths/The Joneses

June 5th -
FILM: Roger and Me

June 6th -
1. QUIZ 2

June 9th – Political Power
1. Social Structure & Voting
2. The Role of the Lobbyist
3. Social Class and Partisanship

June 10th - The Rich
1. The Basis of Great Wealth
2. Trends in Income Inequality
3. Social Class, Life Chances & Lifestyle

June 11th – The Middle Class
1. Social Class and Job Prerequisites
2. Middle Class “Entitlements”
3. Power and Income Inequality

June 12th – FILM: The American Ruling Class
REFLECTION PAPER 1 DUE

June 13th – QUIZ 3
June 16th - Student Discussion/ Group Formation/Topic Selection/
   1. Discussion on handout and roots of class and inequality

June 17th - The Working Class
   1. Social Class and Job Security
   2. Economic Deprivation
   3. On the Working Class

June 18th - The Poor
   1. Are the Poor really “Poor?”
   2. The Individual and Poverty
   3. The “Vicious Circle” of Poverty

June 19th – Global Stratification
   1. Poverty Around the World
   2. John Perkins

June 20th - QUIZ 4

June 23rd - Reflections in the Study of Socialization
   1. Educational Sociology
   2. Issues in American Education

June 24th - FILM: A CLASS DIVIDED

June 25th - TBD

June 26th - Student Discussion/ Group Formation/Topic Selection/

June 27th Quiz 5

June 30th - Group Presentation

July 1st - Group Presentation
   3. July 2nd Final Exam Review

July 3rd - FINAL EXAM

The fundamental role of the public intellectual - distinct from, yet building on, the indispensable work of academics, experts, analysts, and pundits - is to create and sustain high-quality public discourse addressing urgent public problems which enlightens and energizes fellow citizens, prompting them to take public action.”

-- Cornel West
Group Project Overview

Groups of 4 or 5 students will be responsible for presenting compelling case studies to situate one chapter of the textbook in the real world. The politics of your presentation is totally up to the group and irrelevant to your grade. Be creative and teach the class something we don’t know. Use social theory perspectives as appropriate and please center your paper and presentation on sociological relevant items. Your group grade for the project will be based on fulfilling the following criteria:

1. A 40 minute group presentation using PowerPoint
2. A 10-15 page paper with each group member writing 2 pages of the group paper.
3. One group meeting outside of class to coordinate the paper and presentation