

Course Title	:	Economic Change and Social Stratification
Course Code	:	SOC318
Recommended Study Year	:	2 and 3
No. of Credits/ Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture-Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	:	Three hours per week
Category in Major Prog	:	Elective
Discipline	:	Sociology
Prerequisite(s)	:	(a) SOC101 Introduction to Sociology, or (b) Grade D or above in AL Sociology, or (c) CUS106 The Making of Modern Culture
Co-requisite(s)	:	None
Exclusion(s)	:	None
Exemption Requirements(s):	:	None

Brief Course Description

What is the role of the economy in social change? Why are some people - and some nations - richer and more powerful than others? What role does macroeconomic policy, social structure and power play in an economy's success or lack of it? How does the stratification affect every aspect of life? To what extent are economic, cultural and political ideas and institutions becoming globalized? These are the key questions that this course will address. It does so by examining a range of theories of economic change and social stratification and by providing actual case studies of modern economies, Western and Asian.

Aims

The fundamental aims of this course are: to get students thinking sociologically about "economic" affairs; to introduce students to a series of pertinent theories and debates about the modern market and globalization; to show the structured nature of social inequality.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course,

1. students will know how to find reference materials from the library and internet by themselves for the relevant areas in social stratification;
2. students should be better informed about the impact of socio-economic phenomena on social change;
3. students should understand the key elements and effects of social stratification;
4. students should be conversant about and able to appraise rationally modern debates about globalization;
5. students will be able to think in a more conceptual and critical manner about social issues;
6. students will be able to develop an understanding of the global stratification system and the connections between the place of nation states within that system, and national stratification systems; and
7. students will think with systematic logic, thoughtfulness, and an open mind when evaluating the phenomena in social stratification and social inequality.

Indicative Content

1. Introduction: Sociology and stratification
2. Theoretical perspectives on stratification:
 - Karl Marx
 - Max Weber
 - Kingsley Davis & Wilbert Moore
 - Ralf Dahrendorf
 - Gerhard Lenski
3. Social Class and Stratification
 - Occupational Prestige and Class Identification
 - Mobility and Status
4. The Rich
 - The characteristics of the rich
 - Cross-national variations in wealth inequality
 - Power and wealth inequality
 - Social Class, life chances, and lifestyle
5. The Middle Class
 - Social class and job prerequisites
 - Social class, income inequality, and income transfers
 - Social Class, life chances, and lifestyle
6. The Working Class
 - Social class and occupation
 - Social class and job security
 - The consequences of unemployment
 - Social class, life chance, and lifestyle
 - On the working class
7. The Poor
 - Dimensions of poverty
 - Public assistance and poverty
 - The individual and poverty
 - Social structure and poverty
8. The World Stratification System
9. World Stratification and Globalization: Explanations of poverty and inequality around the world
10. Social Stratification in the United States and Hong Kong
11. Conclusion

Teaching Method

Lectures are supported by tutorials. Students are required to carry a presentation on a particular issue in social stratification, or comment on journal articles in particular issue. The use of Hong Kong cases to elaborate will be encouraged. The final product of the presentation will be submitted as a form of group term paper to the instructor concerned at the last lecture of this course.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

1. One group term paper (30%), one group oral presentation in tutorials (20%), performance in tutorials (5%) peer assessment of performance in tutorials (5%), one final examination (40%).

2. Students' comprehension and synthesis of theoretical and practical knowledge in social stratification and social inequality can be assessed in presentation, performance in discussion during tutorials, group term paper and final examination.
3. Students' critical thinking can be assessed by commenting on journal articles in particular issues and answering examination questions in the final examination.
4. How students integrate theoretical concepts with empirical evidence can be assessed from their presentation and term paper.
5. After students have learned the relevant knowledge from the lectures, tutorial presentations and discussions, they can compare the similarities and differences of this course with the other courses. They should know the main arguments of different perspectives and new concepts in social stratification and social inequality, relate the knowledge learned from this course with the previous courses, think whether the knowledge that they have learned from this course support or challenge their values, beliefs and knowledge. How they have learned and performed can be assessed through tutorial presentation and discussion, group term paper and final examination.

Good Practices

1. Students have a choice of choosing the topic for the group presentation, subject to the approval by the instructor concerned. They can choose selected issues for analysis, or review journal articles in social stratification and social inequality to prepare their presentations. If students choose selected issues, they are requested to meet the instructor for a discussion and hand in an outline before their tutorial presentations. If students choose to review journal articles, they need to discuss the area of review with the instructor in advance, and contrast and compare the main theories, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and try to compare the theoretical knowledge with the realities in the practical situation.
2. Each member of the tutorial group will be responsible for the peer-assessment of performance of all other group members. Their assessments are based on presenters' effort, contributions, and congeniality. The average of these evaluations will be converted to a 5% point of the final grade.
3. Students are encouraged to provide feedback on teaching and learning to the instructor to improve the quality of the teaching and learning.

Required/ Essential Readings

Beeghly, Leonard *The Structure of Social Stratification in the United States*, Fifth Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2008.

Kerbo, Harold R., *Social Stratification and Inequality*, Sixth Edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.

Recommended/ Supplementary Readings

Becker, Jasper, *Hungry Ghosts: China's Secret Famine*, (New York: Free Press, 1997).

Brown, Lester R., *Who Will Feed China*, New York: Norton, 1995.

Castells, Manuel, *End of Millennium Volume III: The Information Age*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

Dower, John W., *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, New York: Norton, 1999.

Fukuyama, Francis, *Trust. The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press, 1996.

Giddens, Anthony, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Goody, Jack, *The East in the West*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Grabb, Edward G., "Theories of Social Inequality", *Classical and Contemporary Perspectives*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Harrison, Lawrence and Huntington, Samuel, *Culture Matters*, New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Held, David et al (eds.), *The Global Transformations Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

Kemenade, William van, *China, Hong Kong, Taiwan Inc.: The Dynamics of a New Empire*, New York: Vintage, 1998.

Landes, David S., *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, New York: Norton, 1999.

Lewis, Bernard, *The Crisis of Islam*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003.

Lomborg, Bjorn (ed.), *Global Crises, Global Solutions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Muller, Jerry Z., *The Mind and the Market*, New York: Knopf, 2002.

Stephane Courtois et al (eds), *The Black Book of Communism*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.