COURSE DESCRIPTION

• “Stratification” is the common label for the sociological specialization that studies inequality: The causes, the correlates, and the consequences of inequality. Stratification research seeks to clarify both which human institutions cause the unequal distribution of valued resources and opportunities, and how these institutions cause inequality. To a degree, the field also studies the “why”—the motives and justifications behind inequality.

• Inequality in the United States is the primary focus of the course, but at some critical points we will consider how and why U.S. patterns of inequality differ to the experiences in other affluent societies.

• During this class, we will ask three main questions: How much inequality? In what areas? What causes this inequality? In answering these questions, we will review empirical patterns (“the data”) and some of the more plausible theories that try to explain these patterns.

COURSE CONTRACT (EXPECTATIONS)

This is an upper-level course with the following minimal expectations:

- Attending every class and arriving on time
- Coming to class having carefully read and written about the assigned reading.
- Participation in Team Deliberations and Presentations
- Weekly Reading Reflections
- Final Exam

If you honestly think you can meet these expectations, this is your course; if not, you should look for a different course.

Attendance and Participation (35%)

• Class attendance is essential to your successful completion of this course. Please only take this course if you are willing and able to attend class.

• Participation in class activities and group discussion is expected from all students. Please come to class ready to listen, reflect, and participate. There will be plenty of opportunities to speak in small groups and in the large group.
  - Another key component of your participation and grade is the online and in class discussion.
In participation, listening and being able to synthesize and form a thoughtful response (not just making sure you talk) is critically important. As some people say, 'throw glitter not shade.' In other words, try your best to add something to the discussion. If you criticize someone, make sure it is constructive criticism, how something might be rephrased to be clearer or to add nuance. Additionally, be sure to step up if you don’t generally speak up, and step to the side if you find yourself often participating so that you make space for others to contribute.

**Technology Policy:**
- Tablets and laptops are permitted for note-taking during lectures, but if your technology becomes disruptive to the class you will lose that privilege in order for all of us to better focus on course-related topics.

**Readings & Reflections (40%)**
Weekly readings will be available in the course content section on D2L. To maximize learning students must complete the assigned readings before class time and be ready to discuss them. Weekly writing assignments are designed to ensure this by asking you to reflect on and answer questions about the assigned readings prior to the start of class. In addition to facilitating participation, many of these assignments will directly relate to your neighborhood research project (see below).

- Each week, writing prompts will be posted to the discussion section of D2L pertaining to the following week’s readings. Reflections should be posted by no later than 8 pm each Monday (except in the first week of the term and finals week). Bring a copy of your answers to class for your reference during group discussion.
  - It is best to bring at least two readings ‘into conversation’ with one another. This can be accomplished in several ways. For example:
    - Ask how one author’s conceptual categories could be applied (or not) to another author's empirical findings. You can then reflect on how this may be applicable to the data you are collecting for your final project on Portland.
    - Relate the current week’s readings to those of the previous weeks: How do the analytical and methodological approaches differ? What is added by the approaches in the current week’s readings? What is missing/could be added to strengthen the argument? How do the current week’s readings extend our understanding of sociological stratification?
  - Please avoid summarizing the readings and please avoid simply stating if you liked/didn’t like a piece, though if you have strong feelings on a reading that is welcome so long as you connect it to your argument.

- Group discussions will be facilitated by students. Each week, I will ask for two student volunteers to lead the discussion for the following week. The volunteers will be expected to come to class with questions ready for the entire class to discuss. In introducing or prompting a discussion, volunteers will be expected to refer to specific statements that other students made in their reflections. For example, “In talking about segregation, I saw that Jean said in her reflection that legal segregation is different from informal segregation. How is it different?” And, volunteers will make every effort to be inclusive so that everyone in the class participates.

- Please read other students’ D2L discussion posts prior to class time as preparation for lecture and discussion. You are encouraged to post comments and provide feedback to other students’ posts but it is not strictly required. Any such participation in D2L discussions will be considered in the assessment of your overall class participation.

- Student led discussions will take place on **Thursdays** after the posting of reflections on Monday
night.
• Since it is vital that you complete the readings (and reflect on them) before class, no late reflection posts will be accepted. However, your two lowest scores will be dropped; it is recommended that you save these two “drops” for emergencies.
• See below for an example of a well-written reflection and guidance on how to provide feedback to others’ postings.

Final Exam (25%)
There will be a Final Exam on both the data and theories concerning stratification. It will be a take-home exam.

Required Readings, Available at the PSU bookstore:

Required:

This text is a coherent and focused study of social inequalities in the United States, which offers explanations for those inequalities grounded in a consistent theoretical model of US society.

Barbara Ehrenreich. Nickel and Dimed.
Ehrenreich moved from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, taking the cheapest lodgings available and accepting work as a waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing-home aide, and Wal-Mart salesperson. She soon discovered that even the "lowliest" occupations require exhausting mental and physical efforts. She found out one job is not enough; you need at least two if you intend to live indoors.

Sudhir Venkatesh. Gang Leader for a Day.
This is the story of the young sociologist who studied a Chicago crack-dealing gang from the inside. Sudhir Venkatesh managed to gain entrance into the gang. He learned how the crack game works and how many in the community have their fingers in the pie and need life to remain the way it is. He observed violence, corruption, near homelessness, good cops, bad cops, a lot of neglect, and politics-as-usual.

**There will also be other readings required that will be available as pdf files via D2L (http://d2l.pdx.edu).

Recommended:
This reader tours the highways and byways of recent and classical studies of inequality in its wide variety of forms.

This book provides a brief overview of contemporary inequality in the U.S. and the formation of the Occupy Movement.
You are expected to do the reading before class on the day indicated. Thus reading listed under April 6th should be done before class. Reflections are due the following Monday @8pm, the day before Tuesday’s class. Thus, reflections due April 10th at 8pm are based on the readings of April 4th and April 6th.

**Week 1: Defining Inequality**

**Tuesday, April 4:**
- Introduction and class discussion: “Thinking about inequality.”
- Visit these two websites and do the exercises on social class before class on April 6th
  - Are you in the US middle class? Try our income calculator! Pew...
    - [http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/11/are-you-in-the-american-middle-class/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/11/are-you-in-the-american-middle-class/)
  - What is your social class? Take our quiz to find out!

- Wright & Rogers: Prologue
- Read: Ehrenreich Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Serving in Florida)
- Reflections for Week 1 due Monday April 10th @ 8pm on D2L

**Thursday, April 6**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 10
- Rest of Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed

**Week 2: Considering Inequality: What does it mean?**

**Tuesday, April 11:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 10
- Rest of Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed

**Thursday, April 13:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 12
- Video: Bill Moyer's Journal - Rising Inequality in America, Parts 1 & 2, Interview with Barbara Ehrenreich.
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvcvdC2d0So&list=PLFE6277491BDC11F5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvcvdC2d0So&list=PLFE6277491BDC11F5)
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 1’s Readings
- Budgeting Exercise Assigned. See D2L

**Week 3: Capitalism & Class**

**Monday, April 17:** Budgeting Exercise, Finding Jobs Due

**Tuesday, April 18:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 3 & Ch. 4
- Jigsaw on Class. Each group chooses 3 articles on Class and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class April 20th. See D2L on how to do Jigsaw.

**Wednesday, April 19th:** Budgeting Exercise, Steps 3 and 4 due

**Thursday, April 20th:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 11
- Each group selects one of the three Class jigsaw articles approved by Dr. Stepick and reads it over the weekend.
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 2’s Readings
- Steps 5 & 6 of Budgeting Exercise
**Week 4: Race**

**Tuesday, April 25:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 14
- Venkatesh, Gang Leader for a Day, Foreward, Preface, Chapters 1-3
- In class, each group discusses and determines the main points of their selected jigsaw article on Class.
- Jigsaw on Race: Each group chooses 3 articles on Race and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class April 27.

**Thursday, April 27:**
- Venkatesh, Gang Leader for a Day, Remaining chapters
- Steele: “The Age of White Guilt” available on D2L
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 3’s Readings
- In class, groups divide up to discuss their Class jigsaw article with members of the other groups.
- Each group selects one of the three Race jigsaw articles approved by Dr. Stepick and reads it over the weekend.

**Week 5: Gender**

**Tuesday, May 2:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch 15
- Pascoe, “Dude, You’re a Fag” available on D2L
- Trautner, “Doing Gender, Doing Class” available on D2L
- In class, each group discusses and determines the main points of their selected jigsaw article on Race.
- Jigsaw on Gender: Each group chooses 3 articles and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class May 4.

**Thursday, May 4:**
- Marche, “Home Economics: The link between work-life balance and income inequality” available on D2L
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 4’s Readings
- In class, groups divide up to discuss their Race jigsaw article with members of the other groups.
- Each group selects one of the three Gender jigsaw articles approved by Dr. Stepick and reads it over the weekend.

**Week 6: Public Health and the Environment**

**Tuesday, May 9:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 8
- In class, each group discusses and determines the main points of their selected jigsaw article on Gender.
- Jigsaw on Environmental Racism. Each group chooses 3 articles and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class May 11.

**Thursday, May 11:**
- Wright & Rogers: Ch. 5
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 5’s Readings
- In class, groups divide up to discuss their Gender jigsaw article with members of the other groups.
- Each group selects one of the three Environmental Racism articles approved by Dr. Stepick and reads it over the weekend.

**Week 7: Current Policy Topics Addressing Inequality**
Tuesday, May 16:
- Grusky, “What to do about inequality” with commentaries. Boston Review Forum, 
  March 01, 2012 http://www.bostonreview.net/grusky-forum-inequality. available on D2L
  Available on D2L
- Walsh, Matt, “An Occupy Retrospective” Midway Review. 
  http://midwayreview.uchicago.edu/a/9/2/walsh/walsh.pdf
- In class, each group discusses the main points of the Environmental Racism jigsaw 
  article they read over the weekend
- Jigsaw on Education and Inequality. Each group chooses 3 articles and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class May 18.

Thursday, May 18:
- Deresiewicz, William. “Don’t send your kids to the Ivy League” New Republic, July 
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 6’s Readings
- In class, groups divide up to discuss their Environmental Racism jigsaw article with members of the other groups.
- Each group selects one of the three Education and Inequality articles approved by Dr. Stepick and reads it over the weekend.

Week 8: Class War? Conflict and Agreement over Inequality
Tuesday, May 23:
- Video: Moyers & Company: The New Robber Barons. This film is available online 
  via the PSU Library. To view it, you must be either on campus or go to 
- LePore, Jill. Richer and Poorer, Accounting for Inequality. The New Yorker, March 
  16, 2015 Issue. Available on D2L
- In class, each group discusses the main points of the Education & Inequality jigsaw 
  article they read over the weekend
- Jigsaw on “Class War?” Each group chooses 3 articles on whether the U.S. is in or 
  headed to Class War and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class May 25.

Thursday, May 25:
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 7’s Readings
- In class, groups divide up to discuss their Education & Inequality jigsaw article with 
  members of the other groups.
- Each group selects one of the three articles on Class War? approved by Dr. Stepick 
  and reads it over the weekend.

Week 9: Class War? Solutions and Their Costs
Tuesday, May 30:
- Video: Changemakers: Thomas Piketty and Naomi Klein. This film is available 
  online via the PSU Library. To view it, you must be either on campus or go to 
  Library.pdx.edu and sign-in as a student. The link is: http://fod.infobase.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=86449
- Video: TEDTalks: Ian Goldin—Navigating Our Global Future. This film is available 
  online via the PSU Library. To view it, you must be either on campus or go to 
  Library.pdx.edu and sign-in as a student. The link is: http://fod.infobase.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=48466
- In class, each group discusses the main points of the Class War? jigsaw article they read over the weekend
- Jigsaw on Policy Solutions for Inequality: Each group chooses 3 articles on Policy Solutions for Inequality and submits them to Dr. Stepick by the beginning of class June 1.

Thursday, June 1:
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 8’s Readings
- In class, groups divide up to discuss their Class War? jigsaw article with members of the other groups
- Each group selects one of the three Policy Solutions for Inequality articles approved by Dr. Stepick and reads it over the weekend.

Week 10: Conclusion
Tuesday, June 6:
- In class, each group discusses the main points of the Policy Solutions for Inequality jigsaw article they read over the weekend

Thursday, June 13:
- Student led Group Discussion on Week 9’s Videos
  - In class, groups divide up to discuss their Class War? jigsaw article with members of the other groups

Office Hours:
If you have any questions about the class, the readings, the discussions, or anything else, I will be more than happy to meet with you either during office hours (Tuesdays 1-2pm in CH 217) Dr. Stepick or at some other time. To schedule another time please email me (stepick@pdx.edu). In your subject line of the email please write SOC 423.

Email Policy:
Email stepick@pdx.edu with the subject line: SOC 423. On weekdays I will generally respond within 24 hours. Please do not email questions about an assignment the night before it is due. I will not be able to respond. Please be respectful and practice professional email etiquette in your correspondence, which includes addressing the recipient and signing your full name on each email.

Accommodations and Disability Services:
Students with disabilities should register with the PSU Disability Resources Center (503-725-4150 TTY or Relay 503-725-4178) to document their need for accommodations and obtain support services.

Academic Integrity:
Students are expected to engage in academic honesty in all forms of work for this course. Collaborating with other students is a great idea if you are exchanging rough drafts for constructive criticism, studying for an exam together, brainstorming ideas for a homework assignment, etc.; however, it is NOT okay to take ideas from other students or from their work and call them your own, or to write homework assignments or take-home exams together. It is NOT okay to take ideas from the Internet or from any source without putting them in quotations or paraphrasing them and citing them thoroughly. When in doubt, cite! If you use another person’s ideas or words in your writing, you must acknowledge the original source. The university defines plagiarism as “the taking of another’s words or ideas as if they were your own.” It is a serious offense, and can lead to suspension or expulsion from the university. Do not be afraid to use other people’s words or ideas – just provide proper citation for your sources. The simplest way to avoid plagiarism is to use common sense: use quotation marks where necessary and give credit where credit is due.
PSU has adopted a formal Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility which is administered by the PSU Office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. The Student Conduct Code (SCC), which applies to all students, prohibits all forms of academic cheating, fraud, and dishonesty. These acts include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, buying and selling of course assignments and research papers, performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons, unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information, and other practices commonly understood to academically dishonor. The code of conduct also describes standards of behavior for all student members of the campus community. Violation of the SCC may lead to disciplinary action. Students may obtain copies of the Student Conduct Code by contacting the campus judicial officer or by visiting her office in the Smith Memorial Center.

**Writing Resources:**

I highly encourage you to take advantage of the resources on campus to work on writing skills. The PSU Writing Center can be found in 188 Cramer Hall, and reached by telephone at 725-3570. Their online appointment system allows you to set, change, or cancel appointments twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Online they also have a Guided Tour to Writing Papers, Frequently Asked Writing Questions, and Instructional Videos.

**PSU Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy:**

The PSU Office of Equity and Compliance has adopted a formal Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy. Discrimination or harassment on the basis of age, disability, national origin, race, color, marital status, veteran status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information or in the use of Worker’s Compensation, Federal Family Medical Leave Act, or the Oregon Medical Leave Act is strictly prohibited by PSU policy.