

SOC395H1: FOUNDATIONS OF CLASS ANALYSIS

University of Toronto

Term: Fall 2014 – Lecture Date/Time: Tuesday, 1-3pm – Location: **XXXXXX**

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The term "social class" is perhaps the most disputed and confused concept in the social sciences. This course will explore a variety of different approaches to class analysis, including those that define social classes in terms of income, wealth, authority, occupation, and patterns of cultural consumption. It will also examine class differences in lifestyle, political attitudes and behavior, health and personal well-being, and material welfare. Special attention will be given to the ongoing debate over the contemporary relevance of class divisions, to the processes that reproduce class divisions across time and generations, and to the relationship between class, race, and gender inequalities. This course will cover basic concepts and facts, classical and contemporary theories of social class, and empirical studies of class inequality.

PREREQUISITES: The prerequisite to take this course is completion of a 200 or higher SOC course. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time discovered.

COURSE EVALUATION

Group Presentation

Each week starting September 23rd, a different group of 2-5 students will deliver a presentation to the class on one of the assigned readings for that week. The presentation should be about 20 minutes long and accompanied by slides or some other form of visual media. This assignment will count for 20 percent of your final grade. When creating these presentations, consider the following questions. What is the key argument or finding of the article? What data or evidence did the author use to support this argument or generate the finding? Is the author's evidence compelling, or are there reasons to be skeptical? How might the study be improved to make a more convincing case? How does the article relate to others you have read for the course? How does it relate to events in your own life or to current events in the news? Presentations will be delivered during the second hour of the course (right after the break) and followed by about 30 minutes of group

discussion. Presentations will be evaluated for the extent to which they demonstrate knowledge of the assigned article, the structure of their arguments about the merits and limitations of the article, their creativity in linking the article to other course readings or current events, and the quality, clarity, and grammar of the slides and delivery. Student groups are encouraged to draft their presentations ahead of time, get the instructor's feedback on these presentations during office hours, and practice the delivery as a group at least once before class.

In-class Midterm Test: October 21th

The midterm test will be held in class on October 21st. It will cover all readings and lectures from September 8th to October 14th and will count for 40 percent of your final grade. You will have 110 minutes to complete the test, which will consist of multiple choice and short-answer essay questions.

Term Paper: Due in class on December 2nd

Students will write a final paper for this course. The paper is due in class on December 2nd and counts for 40 percent of your final grade. Paper grades will be deducted 5 marks (i.e., 5/40 of the total paper grade) per week that they are late. Electronic copies of the paper will not be accepted—students must hand in a hard copy. The paper should be at least 8 pages but no longer than 10 pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12-point font. This assignment will invite you to be creative in applying ideas from the course to weigh in on the debate about class dissolution in modern society. Students will be asked to draw on assigned readings, lecture notes, and outside sources to make an argument about (1) whether class divisions have changed over time, (2) whether class remains an important component of individual identities, (3) the likely causes of continuity or change in class divisions and identification, and (4) how these patterns square with the theories of class covered in lectures and assigned readings. Papers will be evaluated for the structure of their arguments, the extent to which they demonstrate knowledge of theory and empirical evidence covered in class, and grammar. Before writing your first draft, it will help to take some time to develop and organize your thoughts on this issue. After writing your first draft, be sure to revise, edit, and proofread your text. Your paper should make a clear argument, and it should support this argument with appropriate citations and evidence. Your paper needs to provide a thesis statement, explain why the reader should be persuaded by your thesis, and do so by engaging and citing relevant course material or outside sources.

Grades

Grades for this course will be assigned as follows: group presentation (20 percent), midterm test (40 percent), and term paper (40 percent).

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are basic requirements for effective learning. You are expected to attend every class.

Communication

The best way to ask questions about course material or assignments is in person during your TA's or instructor's office hours. The following are guidelines for email communication with your TA and the course instructor: please make sure that you have a legitimate need before you write and that you cannot resolve your question during office hours; email messages should state the course number and the purpose of the email clearly in the subject line.

Make-up Tests

Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero, unless within one week of the missed test, students who wish to write the make-up test provide a written request for special consideration which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar. The request should be accompanied by contact information (the student's telephone number and email address) so the date, time and place of the make-up test can be communicated to the student. A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test. Instead, the grade assigned for the missed test will be the same as the grade the student earns for the other test in this course.

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered. In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor's note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or to your TA during their office hours. If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar. The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted to the instructor or your TA during class or office hours.

Accessibility

If students require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Cheating, misrepresentation, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

COURSE READINGS

This is an intermediate-level undergraduate course. Students are expected to enter the class with some background in sociology or social stratification. Students are expected to carefully prepare for class by completing the assigned readings, by devoting some time to reflecting on the material, and by coming to class ready to discuss them. Class sessions are designed to build upon students' own efforts.

This course uses the textbook, Wright, Erik O. (Ed.). 2005. *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (henceforth "Wright"). It can be purchased at the University of Toronto Bookstore. Additional readings not included in the textbook are hyperlinked below or will be posted on blackboard several weeks before class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 9: Introduction

Assignments:

Wright. Read Pp. 1-3, 180-192

September 16: Descriptive Approaches to Class Analysis

Assignments:

Davison, Janet. 2014. "Middle-class Canadians: Just how Stretched are You?" CBC News Online. [Link to HTML article](#).

Grabb, Edward and Neil Guppy (Eds.). 2009. *Social Inequality in Canada: Patterns, Problems, and Policies (5th Edition)*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall. Read Pp. 82-91 (on income inequality), 93-105 (on wealth inequality), and 106-115 (on poverty).

Gilens, M. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Read Pp. 1-12, 70-97.

September 23: Marxist Approaches to Class Analysis

Assignments:

Marx, Karl. 1978. "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in *The Marx-Engels Reader* edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. Read Pp. 469-500.

Marx, Karl. 1978. "Wage Labour and Capital" in *The Marx-Engels Reader* edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. Read Pp. 203-217.

Wright. Read Pp. 4-30.

Piketty, T. 2014. *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Read Pp. 1-27 (introduction), 52-55 (on the first fundamental law of capitalism), 166-170 (on the second fundamental law of capitalism), 212-222 (on marginal productivity), and 227-230 (on Marx and capitalism's internal contradictions).

September 30: Weberian Approaches to Class Analysis

Assignments:

Weber, Max. 2008. "Class, Status, Party," "Status Groups and Classes," and "Open and Close Relationships" in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* edited by D.B. Grusky. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Read Pp. 114-132.

Wright. Read Pp. 31-50.

Erikson, Robert and John H. Goldthorpe. 2008. "Trends in Class Mobility: The Post-war European Experience," in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* edited by D.B. Grusky. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Read Pp. 437-465.

October 7: Durkheimian Approaches to Class Analysis

Assignments:

Durkheim, Emile. 1997. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press. Read Pp. 31-44, 53-83.

Grusky, D. B. and J. B. Sorensen. 2008. "Are There Big Social Classes?" in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* edited by D.B. Grusky. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Read Pp. 165-175 (on occupations as micro-classes).

Weeden, Kim A. and David B. Grusky. 2005. "The Case for a New Class Map." *American Journal of Sociology* 111:141-212. Read Pp. 141-192. [Link to PDF](#).

October 14: Class, Culture, and Consumption

Assignments:

Bourdieu, P. 2008. "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste." in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* edited by D. B. Grusky. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Read Pp. 870-890 (on cultural capital and its link to human capital and physical capital).

Wright. Read Pp. 82-118.

Chan, Tak Wing and John. H. Goldthorpe. 2007. "Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption." *European Sociological Review* 23:1-19. Read Pp. 1-19. [Link to PDF](#).

October 21: *IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM*

October 28: Rent-based Approaches to Class Analysis

Assignments:

Wright. Read Pp. 119-151.

Wright, Erik O. 2000. "Class, Exploitation, and Economic Rents: Reflections on Sorensen's 'Sounder Basis.'" *American Journal of Sociology* 105:1559-1571. Read Pp. 1559-1571. [Link to PDF](#).

Morgan, Stephen L. and Youngjoo Cha. 2007. "Rent and the Evolution of Inequality in Late Industrial United States." *American Behavioral Scientist* 50:677-701. Read Pp. 677-701. [Link to PDF](#).

November 4: Class Dissolution and Post-class Theory

Assignments:

Wright. Read Pp. 152-179.

Wright, Erik O. 1996. "The Continuing Relevance of Class Analysis." *Theory and Society* 25:693-716. Read Pp. 693-716. [Link to PDF](#).

Kingston, Paul. *The Classless Society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Read Pp. 101-118 (on the politics of class).

November 11: Class and Gender

Assignments:

Wright, Erik O. 1997. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Read Pp. 239-248 (introduction), 283-303 (on the household division of labor), 318-360 (on the gender gap in workplace authority).

Goldthorpe, John. 1983. "Women and Class Analysis: In defense of the Conventional View." *Sociology* 17:465-488. Read Pp. 465-488. [Link to PDF](#).

November 18: NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)

November 25: Class and Race

Assignments:

Bonacich, Edna. 1980. "Class Approaches to Ethnicity and Race." *Critical Sociology* 10:9-24. Read Pp. 9-24. [Link to PDF](#).

Reich, Michael. 1973. "Who benefits from racism? The Distribution among Whites of Gains and Losses from Racial Inequality." *The Journal of Human Resources* 13:524-544. Read Pp. 524-544. [Link to PDF](#).

Conley, Dalton. 2000. "Getting into the Black: Race, Wealth, and Public Policy." *Political Science Quarterly* 114:595-612. Read Pp. 595-612. [Link to PDF](#).

December 2: Class in Public Discourse (screening of "People Like Us")

Assignments:

TERM PAPER DUE IN CLASS