

# *Moravian College*

## **SOC 258 – Structured Inequality**

**PPHAC 103 on T & Th from 2:20 – 3:30 PM**

**Dr. Joel Nathan Rosen, Assistant Professor in Sociology**

**PPHAC 317**

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**Office Hours: T/W 3:30-4:30pm; Th 4-6pm**

**\*\*Check Black Board (Bb) Site Daily\*\***

### **Course Descriptions:**

Social stratification is a term sociologists use to refer to a relatively fixed, hierarchical arrangement in society by which groups have different access to resources, power, and social status. It is a system of structured social inequality, a cultural universal, and affects all aspects of peoples' lives.

This course presents an overview of social stratification using various perspectives. The course examines the variables that are used to stratify people in various societies around the world, and the consequences of stratification in these societies.

Although societies vary in the degree to which stratification exists, all societies have stratification systems. Also some societies stratify people only on a few dimensions such as gender and age, keeping the stratification system relatively simple. Most contemporary societies, however, are more complex with many factors interacting to create a complex social strata. In such societies, social stratification may be strongly influenced by class, occupation, income, education, race and ethnicity, religion, gender, and age.

### **Course Objectives:**

This course aims at providing students with an understanding of the universality of stratification and the differences in the way people are stratified in different countries. The specific objectives of this course are as follows:

- to identify important variables on which stratification is based
- to examine the theories relative to stratification
- to compare stratification systems in various nations
  - to examine the consequences of stratification

### Required Text:

- Stephen Steinberg's *The Ethnic Myth* (available in the campus bookstore)
- Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (you are on your own!)
- There will be scores of supplemental reading offered throughout the semester

### Recommended Text:

*Class Matters* by various correspondents of *The New York Times* (in bookstore)

### Course Requirements:

Students will be required to take a midterm exam, review the novel *Looking Backward*, negotiate an 8-10 page term-type paper/project that includes an annotated bibliography, take a final exam, which will be cumulative, and perform other tasks, including unannounced quizzes, etc., as befitting this type of course.

The breakdown of grades is as follows:

Misc. Work, Reviews, Quizzes, Participation etc.	20%
Midterm Exam Grades	20%
Review of <i>Looking Backward</i>	20%
Annotated Bibliography/Paper/Project (20/80 split)	20%
Final Exam Grade	20%

The grade scale is as follows:

- 93-100 = A / 90-92 = A-
- 87-89 = B+ / 83-86 = B / 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+ / 73-76 = C / 70-72 = C-
- 67-69 = D+ / 63-66 = D / 60-62 = D- / 59-0 = F

**Please Note:** For most written work, I will be using a letter grade system in which the above letters will correspond to numbers ranging from 13 (A+) through 1 (F but different from a zero). Your final tally for these works will be drawn from the high end of each letter grade, i.e. a C+ will be marked as 79 pts, etc. I will be happy to explain this more completely upon request. Also, all outside work must be typed using a 12-sized font in black with default margins and in hard copy (in-class work is to be done in blue or black ink only). The term paper will not be returned, but you will receive a fully detailed rubric as explanation for your final grade.

### Classroom Decorum and Expectations:

- **Attendance** – Class attendance is mandatory and vitally important to your success. Failure to attend on a regular basis not only puts your grade in jeopardy but will also be met with significant grade reductions.

**\*\*Remember – there are no excused absences. If you have a legitimate emergency, it is your responsibility to bring it to the attention of your instructor at the earliest possible opportunity convenience. Communication (and hard work) are ultimately the keys to success at this level (forgive the fortune cookie tone!).**

- **Tardiness** – Tardiness to class is not only detrimental to the learning process but quite disruptive and unfair to those who make it to class on time regularly. Recurring tardiness shows a lack of respect for the classroom, the instructor, and one's fellow students and will not be tolerated. Please arrive to class in a timely fashion
- **Deadlines** – Assignment deadlines are exactly that. Students are expected to comply with deadlines in accordance with all rules, guidelines, and expectations of each assignment proffered. Failure to do so will result in a tendering of no-grade for work not done to expectation or submitted on time. The policy for late papers is as follows:
  - On minor assignments, you will be allowed to turn in one late assignment as long as it is within twenty-four hours for a ten point deduction. After your one exception, you will no longer enjoy this luxury.
  - On major assignments, there will be no grace period. Failure to contact the instructor prior to a deadline (or missed exam) will result in a zero.
- **Participation** – Classroom discussions are a big part of the learning process and will be factored into your final grade. In the best tradition of many West African communities, your participation is not requested—it is required. Failure to contribute regularly is both in bad taste and could conceivably be detrimental to your ability to learn effectively.
- **Disruptions** – Disruptive behavior, including talking, unengaged behavior, i.e. reading a book, magazine, or newspaper, sleeping, chronic tardiness alongside loud entrances, and any other unfortunate breach will not, and should not, be tolerated. Learning is an active process, and failure to actively engage not only threatens the individual's ability to learn but also affects those around him or her.
- **Academic Honesty** – You are all responsible for knowing and adhering to the code of academic honesty as established here at Moravian College. For those of you unfamiliar with this code, it can be found in its entirety on pages 52 through 57 on your student handbook. And to add further emphasis on this point, any paper turned in without proper citations will be subject to charges of academic dishonesty and any and all applicable penalties.

It is your responsibility to see to it that these expectations and guidelines are met satisfactorily and consistently. I take the classroom quite seriously, and I expect all of you to do the same.

**A Note on Writing in This Course:**

In the interest of full disclosure, you should be aware that this instructor is extraordinarily devoted to the development of proper written expression in his students. Therefore, in terms of all written assignments, I will weigh what you say against the backdrop of how you say it in my evaluation of your work. It is, thus, up to each of you to explore the most expedient means to improve your writing through attention to editing and, if necessary, trips to the college writing center as a means of fully realizing your scholarly potential.

## **TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE (STC)**

**Unit I – Framing the Discussion** (Readings primarily from excerpts of *Class Matters*, handouts, and *Looking Backward*)

- Understanding Social Stratification
- Theories of Stratification
- The Functions of Stratification
- Stratification through the Ages
- Intra- and Inter- National Stratification
- Class and Consumerism
- The Politics of Stratification
- Common Sense Ideas and the Realities of Interests and Agendas

### **Midterm**

#### **Annotated Bibliographies Due**

**Unit II – How We Live, Work, and Think in a Stratified Order** (Readings include Steinberg and various handouts)

- Inequality in Society – US and Elsewhere
- Stratification by Race and Ethnicity
- Prejudice and Discrimination
- Racial and Ethnic Groups in the United States
- Minority and Majority Groups
- Stratification by Religion
- Stratification by Age
- Stratification by Gender
- Consequences of Stratification

### **Papers Due**

### **Final Exam**