

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)  
524 West 59<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10019**

**Semester**                    **FALL 2019**  
**SOC 232-99 Social Stratification** – 3credits  
**(17522)**  
**Professor**                    **Esther Verhalle**

**Course Description:**

Course Prerequisites: SOC 101, ENG 101

(From the course bulletin)

This course reveals that there are social classes in America as well as individuals and groups; how all societies have classes within them; how different interests cause conflicts between the classes; how members of various classes have different attitudes and lifestyles; how class differences influence personality, sexual behavior, job preferences, health, criminal activity and treatment by the justice system; and what patterns and trends exist for individual and group mobility up and down the social ladder.

This sociology course examines how poverty and wealth, race and ethnicity, gender, and age affect social inequality and stratification. The course introduces students to important concepts and theories that sociologists use to explain inequality. With the help of sociological texts and current news articles, students will learn about the core concepts in the field and how to apply this knowledge to the current debate over social inequality and to their own lives.

**Required Texts:**

**All required readings, such as newspaper or magazine articles, scholarly texts or other materials will be made available through Blackboard.**

Additional optional readings will also be posted on Blackboard.

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Identify and describe fundamental sociological concepts, theories, and arguments concerning social stratification and social inequality;

**Assessment** - Quizzes, Discussion

- Identify and analyze issues of social inequality in society and your own lives by applying relevant concepts, theories and arguments;

**Assessment** – Discussion, Journals

- Examine and appraise the impact of social inequality on yourself and others;

**Assessment** – Essays, Discussion, Journals

- Interpret scholarly research as it applies to the study of social inequality;

**Assessment** – Essays

- Construct logical (written) arguments, informed by sociological concepts and practices, using academic scholarship, and express it to others;

**Assessment** – Discussions, Essays

## NEW

- Collaborate with your peers and help create an online environment of successful learning

**Assessment** – Discussions, Smaller group work, Overall participation

## Organization of the Course

The course is divided into four main sections and a concluding week:

- I. Social Stratification – general (Modules 1-7);
- II. Race and Ethnic Inequality (Modules 8-10);
- III. Gender Inequality (Modules 11-12);
- IV. Aging and Inequality (Modules 13-14);
- V. Conclusion – Social Inequality (Module 15).

You can find all the Weekly Modules in the index panel on Blackboard. In every module you can see what topic we will be studying, what text you need to read, what video or audio material you need to watch or listen to, and what kind of assignments, that are related to the material, will be due and when. All materials will be made available on Blackboard.

There are five different types of assessments.

In the Discussions you have critical conversations with each other about the material.

The online Quizzes are designed to test your knowledge and understanding of the core concepts.

In the Journals you reflect on issues of social inequality.

In the Essays you will write in longer form about issues of social inequality.

Your Participation is assessed based on your online activity throughout the duration of the course.

## Course Schedule Fall 2019 Semester

### Module 6

#### Learning objectives

After finishing this module, you should be able to:

- Identify and summarize different theories of stratification (Marx's, Weber's, and Davis & Moore's)
- Compare and contrast different explanations for the causes of poverty
- Identify and articulate an opinion about portrayals of social class in American mass media.

#### Reading assignment

Mantsios, G (2010). Media Magic. Making Class Invisible

#### Assessments

- **Discussion Board 6** – Due October 13, end of the day  
(Class discussion on this week's reading)
- **Small group discussion** – Due October 13, end of the day  
Find your group and collaborate in smaller groups in preparation of Journal 2 (next week) - **Formative assessment**
- **Journal 2** – Due October 20, end of the day  
Answer 2 of the 3 questions that you discussed in your small group and reflect on your collaboration. **Summative Assessment**

## **Module 7**

After finishing this module, you should be able to:

- Identify, summarize and appraise different theories of stratification (Marx's, Weber's, and Davis & Moore's)
- Compare and contrast, and reflect on different explanations for the causes of poverty
- Define and interpret Spencer's concept of survival of the fittest.

### **Viewing assignment:**

Gibney, A (2012). Park Avenue. Money, Power, and The American Dream.

### **Assessments**

- **Discussion Board 7** – Due October 20, end of the day  
Class discussion on this week's documentary in combination with the example story within Reading 1 (Survival of the Fittest)
- **Ongoing Small group discussion** – this was due last week but keep/start using these online discussions with your peers. Find your group and collaborate in preparation of Journal 2 - **Formative assessment**
- **Journal 2** – Due October 20, end of the day  
Answer 2 of the 3 questions that you discussed in your small group and reflect on your collaboration.  
**Summative Assessment**
- **Webinar** – October 15 @10AM participate live or listen to the recording – prep for Quiz 2
- **Quiz 2** – Due October 20, end of the day

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION – FORMATIVE ASSIGNMENT

For Journal 2 you get the opportunity to first discuss the Journal's questions in small groups of five members BEFORE you write your answers to TWO questions for Journal 2.

First, everyone must find her/his group. This will be your group for the whole semester. Every member will be assigned as group leader ONCE during the semester.

Second, follow the instructions that you will find in your group description. You can use the email function and the discussion function within your group to communicate with each other and discuss the answers to the questions.

This week's assigned leaders of the group need to create a new discussion forum. You can create two different forums for the two different questions, or you can discuss both questions in one and the same forum.

You can rely on all the readings that we worked with so far this semester, but especially the readings of Module 1 and Module 3 will be helpful.

Once you have discussed two questions with your group members (every member should at least contribute **twice** to the discussions), you go to the folder "Journal" and follow the instructions there.

**Your group discussions are due at the end of this week, Sunday, October 13, end of the day. The deadline for Journal 2 is October 20, end of the day (to give you ample time to discuss with your group members) - Please disregard the earlier deadline in the syllabus.**

Below is the info that students find within their group:

**Group A:**

This week's group leader: ...

Other Group members: ...

It is the responsibility of the group leader to open a discussion thread and reach out to the other group members by sending a group email. Remember to subscribe to your discussion forum!

Make sure to discuss the following points:

**\*Participate to choose collaboratively which 2 of the 3 questions your group will answer.**

**\*Every group member needs to contribute to the formulation of ingredients of both answers your group chose in a substantive way.**

**\*For each of the questions, every member needs to refer to a section of one of our course readings and demonstrate how those sections help answering the two respective questions.**

Each member should contribute **at least twice** to the discussion.

After you have discussed the two answers, go back to Journal 2, read the instructions and submit your Journal.

The three questions are (Choose **TWO** out of three):

**1. Compare and contrast Marx's theory of stratification with that of Weber. Which theory do you think best explains stratification in the United States?**

**2. Explain the criticisms of Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore's theory and why it does NOT offer a comprehensive explanation of social class in American society. Support your assertion with concrete examples.**

**3. Compare and contrast the "blame the individual" explanation of poverty with the "blame society" explanation. Which explanation seems to best explain the prevalence of poverty among the working poor in the United States. Explain why.**

Your participation in the small group discussion is assessed based on the following criteria. See also syllabus page 7:

You can earn a total of 100 points for participation. Ten percent of your total points in this rubric go toward your final course grade.

<b>Participation in all online activity</b>	<b>Points</b>
Excellent; contributes always, timely, in-depth; organized, correct use of language / writing	87.1-100
Good; contributes regularly, on time, not always in-depth;	80-87



mostly correct use of language / writing	
Adequate; contributes most of the time, not always on time, not always in-depth; sloppy writing (many typos and incorrect language, sentence structures)	63-79.9
Poor; contributes sporadically, late, superficial, poor use of language / writing	Below 63

## JOURNAL – SUMMATIVE ASSIGNMENT

### Journal 2

After you have discussed two of the questions with your group members (see under Groups above), go to the Folder Journals in the panel on the left, read the instructions for Journal 2, and start working on your journal.

**The deadline for Journal 2 is October 20, end of the day (to give you ample time to discuss with your group members before writing your Journal entry) - Please disregard the earlier deadline for Journal 2 in the syllabus.**

**NOTE: Your group discussions are due at the end of this week, Sunday, October 13, end of the day.**

**After you have discussed TWO of the three questions in your small groups, everyone prepares her/his own journal.**

#### **1) Description (5 points).**

**Describe what you have learned from the group discussion. A new perspective, a new argument? Was the discussion useful in order to be able to answer two of the questions? Explain.**

#### **2) Application of Concept (15 points).**

**Answer the first question your group chose in at least one paragraph.**

#### **3) Application of Concepts (15 points)**

**Answer the second question your group chose in at least one paragraph.**

**The minimum length of a journal is 350 words, or roughly one full page (23 lines, double line spacing, font 12). The maximum length of a journal is 700 words, or roughly two full pages.**

***[Once you've created a Journal Entry, you can either work in the text editor or, upload a document that you've been working on offline. Remember that you can save the entry as a draft, but that your instructor can only see your work once you've submitted it.]***

**The deadline for Journal 2 is Sunday, October 13, end of the day.**