



Beijing Jiaotong University

2020 Summer Session

SOC 201 Social Stratification and Inequality

Course Outline

Term: June 29-July 24, 2020

Class Hours: 18:00-19:50 (Monday through Friday)

Code: SOC 201

Instructor: Job Chen, Ph.D.

Home Institution: Clemson University

Office Hours: By Appointment

Email: zhuoc@clemson.edu

Credit: 4

Class Hours: This course will have 52 class hours, including 32 lecture hours, 8 lecturer office hours, 8-hour TA discussion sessions, 4-hour review sessions.

Course Description:

This course deals with economic and social inequality in the United States with some cross-national comparisons. We highlight how labor market changes in the latter part of the 20th century have widened income inequalities and, more importantly, produced unequal access to major resources across many sectors of the United States. We start by exploring key principles that guide American economic and social activities, such as the meritocratic system, the American Dream discourse, and the winner-take-all market paradigm. The latter part of the course focuses on the impact of inequality on Americans who are part of the non-working poor, the working poor, the near-poor, and the “expulsion class”—a total of about 45 percent of all Americans. This course goes beyond the rhetoric of “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer” to look in-depth into the causes and consequences of inequality and how generational transmission of poverty and wealth occur in our society.



Course Objectives:

1. Describe and synthesize concepts, principles, and theories used to study inequality and stratification.
2. Analyze and discuss contemporary poverty issues, trends, and information.
3. Communicate the above effectively, both orally and in writing.

Required Textbooks:

Social Inequality and Social Stratification in U.S. Society. By Christopher B. Doob. Routledge Publisher.

Grading & Evaluation:

Grades will be distributed as 90-100%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, 60-69%=D; and below 60% = F.

- In-class pop quizzes (10%) – will be multiple choice questions given regularly in the beginning of class to cover materials recently studied.
- First exam (25%) – will be 50 multiple choice questions given in the beginning of week 2 to cover all materials previously studied.
- Midterm exam (25%) – will be 50 multiple choice questions given in the beginning of week 3 to cover all materials previously studied.
- Final exam (40%) – will be 80 multiple choice questions given in the end of week 4 to cover all materials previously studied.

Course Schedule:

Week1

Session 1: The Winner-Take-All Market

Session 2: Chapter 1, The Road to Social Inequality

Session 3: Theories of Inequality and Stratification

Session 4: Chapter 2, The Origin of Wealth Accumulation

Session 5: TA Review

Week2



Session 1: First Exam and Recap

Session 2: Chapter 3, From Middle Class to Working Poor

Session 3: Chapter 4, The Rise of Impoverishment

Session 4: Chapter 5, The Persistence of Race & Inequality

Session 5: TA Review

Week3

Session 1: Midterm Exam and Recap

Session 2: Intersectionality as a Theory of Inequality

Session 3: Chapter 6, Government Provisions

Session 4: Chapter 7, From Welfare Reliant to Work Reliant

Session 5: TA Review

Week4

Session 1: Chapter 8, Cross National Comparisons of Inequality

Session 2: Chapter 9, Labor Market Segmentations

Session 3: Chapter 10, From Servitude and the Expulsion Class

Session 4: TA Review

Session 5: Final Exam