

40959 – Mobility, Social Stratification and Inequality

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Course outline:

This course presents social stratification as the organization and reproduction of inequality. We will move from general debates on inequality to three major domains through which social and economic inequalities are generated and reproduced: education, gender, and ethnicity.

The course is discussion-driven. Readings are divided into two categories: overview (O) papers and discussion papers (D). The (O) readings provide a conceptual framework of the class topic; their main takeaways will be presented and discussed in class. The (D) readings focus on a more specific topic or application. They will take up most of the class time and serve as the basis for discussion of research design, measurement, strengths and weaknesses. If time constraints prevent you from completing all readings, prioritize the (D) papers.

Class 1 – 20/04/2026

Topic: Introduction to Social Stratification and Inequality.

(O) McCall, L., & Percheski, C. (2010). Income inequality: New trends and research directions. *Annual review of sociology*, 36(1), 329-347.

(O) Milanovic, B. (2013). Global income inequality in numbers: In history and now. *Global policy*, 4(2), 198-208.

(D) Blumenstock, J., Cadamuro, G., & On, R. (2015). Predicting poverty and wealth from mobile phone metadata. *Science*, 350(6264), 1073-1076.

Additional readings (not required):

Ridgeway, C. L. (2014). Why status matters for inequality. *American sociological review*, 79(1), 1-16.

DiPrete, T. A., & Eirich, G. M. (2006). Cumulative advantage as a mechanism for inequality: A review of theoretical and empirical developments. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 32(1), 271-297.

Janietz, C., Bol, T., & Lancee, B. (2024). Temporary employment and wage inequality over the life course. *European Sociological Review*, 40(5), 853-871.

Class 2 – 22/04/2026

Topic: Education, social mobility and inequality

(O) Hout, M. (2012). Social and economic returns to college education in the United States. *Annual review of sociology*, 38(1), 379-400. (selected sections: Introduction; Education and economic outcomes for individuals)

(D) Pensiero, N., & Barone, C. (2024). Parental schooling, educational attainment, skills, and earnings: A trend analysis across fifteen countries. *Social Forces*, 102(4), 1288-1309.

Additional readings (not required)

Raudenbush, S. W., & Eschmann, R. D. (2015). Does schooling increase or reduce social inequality? *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41(1), 443-470. (par. 1 and 2 only)

Jackson, M. (2013). Introduction: how is inequality of educational opportunity generated? The case for primary and secondary effects. *Determined to succeed*, 1-33.

Breen, R., Luijkx, R., Müller, W., & Pollak, R. (2018). Nonpersistent Inequality in Educational Attainment. In *Inequality in the 21st Century* (pp. 190-199). Routledge. [Link](#)

Class 3 – 27/04/2026

Topic: Gender, income and wage inequality

(O) Charles, M. (2011). A world of difference: international trends in women's economic status. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37(1), 355-371.

(D) Owen, A. L., & Wei, A. (2021). Sexism, household decisions, and the gender wage gap. *Labour Economics*, 72, 102062.

Alternative (D) reading (optional): Birkelund, G. E., Lancee, B., Larsen, E. N., Polavieja, J. G., Radl, J., & Yemane, R. (2022). Gender discrimination in hiring: Evidence from a cross-national harmonized field experiment. *European Sociological Review*, 38(3), 337-354.

Additional readings (not required)

Van Bavel, J., Schwartz, C. R., & Esteve, A. (2018). The reversal of the gender gap in education and its consequences for family life. *Annual review of sociology*, 44(1), 341-360.

England, P. (2010). The gender revolution: Uneven and stalled. *Gender & society*, 24(2), 149-166.

Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2016). The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations. *Journal of Economic Literature* 55(3), 789-865.

Class 4 – 29/04/2026

Topic: Ethnicity, discrimination and inequality

(O) Pager, D., & Shepherd, H. (2008). The sociology of discrimination: Racial discrimination in employment, housing, credit, and consumer markets. *Annual review of sociology*, 34(1), 181-209.

(D) Dahl, M., & Krog, N. (2018). Experimental evidence of discrimination in the labour market: intersections between ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status. *European Sociological Review*, 34(4), 402-417.

Additional readings (not required)

Reskin, B. (2012). The race discrimination system. *Annual review of sociology*, 38(1), 17-35.

Zhang, N., Gereke, J., & Baldassarri, D. (2022). Everyday discrimination in public spaces: a field experiment in the Milan Metro. *European Sociological Review*, 38(5), 679-693.

Chae, D. H., Clouston, S., Martz, C. D., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Cooper, H. L., Turpin, R., ... & Kramer, M. R. (2018). Area racism and birth outcomes among Blacks in the United States. *Social science & medicine*, 199, 49-55.