

40959 – **Mobility, Social Stratification and Inequality**
First Year PhD Course

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Course Outline:

March 27:

Session 1: The Contours of Research in Social Mobility and Stratification

March 28:

Session 2: Poverty in High-Income Countries

Session 3: Policy Strategies for Reducing Poverty

April 3:

Session 4: Intergenerational Mobility

April 4:

Session 5: Families and the Reproduction of Inequality

Session 6: Networks and Intergenerational Mobility

April 26:

Sessions 7 & 8: One-on-one discussions of research agendas

May 2:

Session 9: Global Inequality

Session 10: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

May 3:

Sessions 11 & 12: Automation, Technological Change, and Inequality

Expectations: This will be a discussion-heavy course. Readings are separated into two categories: overview papers and discussion papers. These are distinguished with the **(O)** and **(D)** labels, respectively, in front of each reading listed below. The **(O)** readings are meant to provide overview of the week's topic; the main takeaways of each of these readings will be discussed together in class. The **(D)** readings (discussion papers) are individual papers focusing on the week's topic; students are expected to have read these papers thoroughly, to have formed thoughts about the studies' strengths and weaknesses, and to critically engage with the studies' core arguments. Discussion of these papers will consume the majority of our class time. During weeks in which time constraints prevent you from reading each of the papers listed, you should prioritize the **(D)** readings.

Assessment Methods:

Written Project – 30% of Grade

Class Participation – 70% of Grade

Class Project: The project will require students to assess the writing strategy of one of the following five studies:

1. Brady, D., Baker, R. S., & Finnigan, R. (2013). When Unionization Disappears: State-Level Unionization and Working Poverty in the United States. *American Sociological Review*, 78(5), 872–896. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122413501859>
2. Pfeffer, F. T., & Waitkus, N. (2021). The Wealth Inequality of Nations. *American Sociological Review*, 86(4), 567–602. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224211027800>
3. Berger, Thor, and Per Engzell. 2022. “Industrial automation and intergenerational income mobility in the United States.” *Social Science Research*. [Link](#).
4. Parolin, Zachary and Janet Gornick. “Pathways toward Inclusive Income Growth: A Comparative Decomposition of National Growth Profiles.” *American Sociological Review*. December 2021. doi:10.1177/00031224211054808. [Link](#).
5. Bukodi, Erzsébet and John H. Goldthorpe. (2013). “Decomposing ‘Social Origins’: The Effects of Parents’ Class, Status, and Education on the Educational Attainment of Their Children.” *European Sociological Review*, Volume 29, Issue 5, Pages 1024–1039, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcs079>.

The purpose of the written project is to assess the writing strategy that the authors employed to convey their research question, methods, and findings. Specifically, you should answer the following five prompts:

1. **Abstract:** How did the authors structure their abstract? Does it seem typical to you, or are there any elements that strike you as atypical? Would you have written this abstract any differently? Do you feel like you have a strong understanding of the paper already?
2. **Introduction:** What do the authors achieve with the first paragraph(s)? What logic do you see in the sequence of their paragraphs throughout the Introduction? What approach to the authors take with previewing their findings?
3. **Background:** How would you describe the order in which the Background section flows? What strategies do the authors adopt in positioning their study with respect to the broader literature? Is there a particular framing device that you can identify?
4. **Data and Methods:** What are your reflections on the ways in which the authors present their data and methods?
5. **Findings:** What are your reflections on the ways in which the authors present their findings? How do the authors contextualize the magnitude of their findings? Do the authors start with descriptive findings, or move straight into estimation results?
6. **Discussion and Conclusion:** How do the authors connect back to themes they raised in the front-half of the paper? How do they frame the meaning of their findings with respect to the existing literature? What other elements do they incorporate into their conclusion?

The written document should be between 4 to 10 pages of double-spaced text (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, standard margin, with a focus on quality over quantity).

Session 1: The Contours of Research in Social Mobility and Stratification

Required:

(O) McCall, Leslie and Christine Percheski. 2010. "Income Inequality: New Trends and Research Directions" *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:329–47.

Optional:

Grusky, D. and Ku, M. (2008). "Gloom, Doom, and Inequality." Pp. 2-28 in *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*, 3rd edition, edited by David B. Grusky, Manwai C. Ku and Szonja Szelényi. Boulder: Westview Press. [Link](#).

Esping-Andersen, G. 2007. Sociological Explanations of Changing Income Distributions. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 50(5), 639–658.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764206295011>

Parolin, Zachary and Janet Gornick. "Pathways toward Inclusive Income Growth: A Comparative Decomposition of National Growth Profiles." *American Sociological Review*. December 2021. doi:10.1177/00031224211054808. [Link](#).

Keeley, B. (2015). "Why is income inequality rising?" in *Income Inequality: The Gap between Rich and Poor*, OECD Insights, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264246010-en>. [Link](#).

Weeden, K. A. and Grusky, D. B. (2012) "The Case for a New Class Map". *American Journal of Sociology*, 111(1), 141- 212.

Misc. Topics:

- Course outline.
- Discussion of final projects.

Session 2: Poverty in High-Income Countries

Required:

(O) Brady, D. 2019. "Theories on the Causes of Poverty." *Annual Review of Sociology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022550>

(D) Brady, D., Finnigan, R., & Hübgen, S. (2017). Rethinking the Risks of Poverty: A Framework for Analyzing Prevalances and Penalties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 123 (3), 740-786.

Optional:

Townsend, Peter. (1979). "Poverty in the United Kingdom." Chapter 1: Concepts of Poverty and Deprivation. [Link](#).

Daly, M. and Bennett, F. "Poverty through a Gender Lens: Evidence and Policy Review on Gender and Poverty." Section 5: Gender Inequalities and Poverty Risks. Pg. 34-50. [Link](#).

Brady, David, R Baker and R Finnigan. 2013. "When Unionization Disappears: State-Level Unionization and Working Poverty in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 78(5):872-96. doi: 10.1177/0003122413501859.

Gornick and Jantti, "Poverty": <https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways-SOTU-2016-Poverty-2.pdf>

Atkinson, Anthony. 2018. Measuring Poverty around the World. [Link](#).

Saraceno, Benassi, Morlicchio. 2020. Poverty in Italy: Features and Drivers in a European Perspective. [Link](#).

Misc. Topics:

- Writing academic papers, Pt. 1.

Session 3: Policy Strategies for Reducing Poverty

Required:

(D) Bastian, Jacob and Michelmore, Katherine (2018). “The Long-Term Impact of the Earned Income Tax Credit on Children’s Education and Employment Outcomes.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 2018 36:4, 1127-1163

Optional:

Chapter 5, “Ten Policy and Program Approaches to Reducing Child Poverty” of National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019). “A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty.” Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25246/chapter/7#133>.

Nolan, B. and Whelan, C. (2011). *Poverty and Deprivation in Europe*. Oxford University Press. <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/poverty-and-deprivation-in-europe-9780199588435?cc=us&lang=en&>

Hoynes, Hilary, Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, and Douglas Almond. 2016. "Long-Run Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net." *American Economic Review*, 106 (4): 903-34.

Burns, K. and Fox, L. (2022). “The Impact of the 2021 Expanded Child Tax Credit on Child Poverty.” <https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2022/demo/SEHSD-wp2022-24.html>

Darvas, Z. (2017). “Why is it so hard to reach the EU’s ‘poverty’ target?” <https://www.bruegel.org/policy-brief/why-it-so-hard-reach-eus-poverty-target>

Misc. Topics:

- Writing academic papers, Pt. 2.

Session 4: Intergenerational Mobility

Required:

(O) Torche, F. (2014). Analyses of Intergenerational Mobility: An Interdisciplinary Review. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 657(1), 37-62. doi:10.1177/0002716214547476

Optional:

Corak, M. 2013. "Income Inequality, Equality of Opportunity, and Intergenerational Mobility." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27 (3): 79-102. [Link](#).

Sharkey, Patrick. 2008. "The Intergenerational Transmission of Context." *American Journal of Sociology* 113(4):931-69. doi: 10.1086/522804.

Torche, Florencia. 2011. "Is a College Degree Still the Great Equalizer? Intergenerational Mobility across Levels of Schooling in the United States" *American Journal of Sociology* 117(3): 763-807. [Link](#).

Raj Chetty in 14 charts: Big findings on opportunity and mobility we should all know. [Link](#).

OECD – "A broken social elevator? How to promote social mobility." [Link](#).

Jonsson, Grusky, Di Carlo, and Pollak. (2009). It's a Decent Bet That Our Children Will be Professors Too. [Link](#).

Misc. Topics:

- Writing academic papers, Pt. 3.

Session 5: Families and the Reproduction of Inequality

Topics: childhood inequalities, family structure, within-family disparities, inherited disadvantage

Required:

- (O) McLanahan, Sara, and Christine Percheski. (2008). "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34(1):257–76.
- (D) Cross, Christina. (2020). Racial/Ethnic Differences in the Association Between Family Structure and Children's Education. *J. Marriage Fam*, 82: 691-712.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12625>

Optional:

- Esping-Andersen, G. (2020). Ch.3, Inequalities and Children's Life Chances. Chapter 3 of *Families in the 21st Century*. [Link](#).
- Duncan, G., Magnuson, K., Kalil, A., & Ziol-Guest, K. (2012). The Importance of Early Childhood Poverty. *Social Indicators Research*, 108(1), 87-98.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23261304>
- Sevilla-Sanz, Almudena. 2010. "Household Division of Labor and Cross-Country Differences in Household Formation Rates." *Journal of Population Economics* 23(1):225-49. doi: 10.1007/s00148-009-0254-7.

Misc. Topics:

- Writing academic papers, Pt. 4.

Session 6: Networks and Intergenerational Mobility

Required:

(D) Chetty, R., Jackson, M.O., Kuchler, T. et al. (2022). “Social capital I: measurement and associations with economic mobility.” *Nature* 608, 108–121.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04996-4>

(D) Chetty, R., Jackson, M.O., Kuchler, T. et al. (2022). “Social capital II: determinants of economic connectedness.” *Nature* 608, 122–134. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04997-3>

Optional:

Podolny, J. M., & Baron, J. N. (1997). Resources and Relationships: Social Networks and Mobility in the Workplace. *American Sociological Review*, 62(5), 673–693.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2657354>

Misc. Topics:

- Research grants.

Session 9: Global Poverty & Inequality

(O) Milanovic, B. (2012). Global Income Inequality by the Numbers: in History and Now. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper.

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/959251468176687085/pdf/wps6259.pdf>

(D) Ravallion, M. (2012). Fighting Poverty One Experiment at a Time: A Review of Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo's "Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty". *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(1), 103-114.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23269972>.

Optional:

Matthews, Dylan (2019). "Bill Gates tweeted out a chart and sparked a huge debate about global poverty". <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/2/12/18215534/bill-gates-global-poverty-chart>

Deaton, Angus. (2020). "Randomization in the Tropics Revisited: a Theme and Eleven Variations." NBER. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w27600>

Zuman, G. (2019). Global Wealth Inequality. *Annual Review of Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics080218-025852>

Milanović, B. 2019. *Capitalism, Alone: The Future of the System That Rules the World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Chapters 2-3]

Erin Lockwood (2020) The international political economy of global inequality, *Review of International Political Economy*, DOI: [10.1080/09692290.2020.1775106](https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1775106)

Misc. Topics:

- Public sources of useful data.

Session 10: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

Required:

(D) Alesina, A., A. Miano, and S. Stantcheva. 2018. "Immigration and redistribution." National Bureau of Economic Research. No. w24733.
<https://www.nber.org/papers/w24733>

Optional:

Faist, T. (2016). Cross-Border Migration and Social Inequalities. *Annual Review of Sociology* 42, 323-346, doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-081715-074302.

Parolin, Zachary. 2019. "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Black-White Child Poverty Gap." *Socio-Economic Review* Online First.
<https://academic.oup.com/ser/article-abstract/doi/10.1093/ser/mwz025/5489411>

Van Der Waal, J., De Koster, W., Van Oorschot, W. (2013). Three Worlds of Welfare Chauvinism? How Welfare Regimes Affect Support for Distributing Welfare to Immigrants in Europe. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and*

Misc. Topics:

- Publications and the academic publication process.

Sessions 11 & 12: Automation, Technological Change, and Inequality

Topics: technological change, globalization, consequences for labour market change

Required:

- (D) O'Brien, Rourke, Atheendar Venkataramani, and Elizabeth Bair. 2022. "Death by Robots? Automation and Working-age Mortality in the United States." *Demography*. <https://read.dukeupress.edu/demography/article/59/2/607/294500/Death-by-Robots-Automation-and-Working-Age>
- (D) Berger, Thor, and Per Engzell. 2022. "Industrial automation and intergenerational income mobility in the United States." *Social Science Research*. [Link](#).
- (D) Parolin, Zachary. 2020. "Automation, Occupational Earnings Trends, and the Moderating Role of Organized Labor." *Social Forces*. doi: 10.1093/sf/soaa032.

Optional:

- Goos, Maarten, Alan Manning and Anna Salomons. 2014. "Explaining Job Polarization: Routine-Biased Technological Change and Offshoring." *American Economic Review* 104(8):2509-26.
- Brady, David, Jason Beckfield and Wei Zhao. 2007. "The Consequences of Economic Globalization for Affluent Democracies." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33(1):313-34. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131636.
- Mishel, Lawrence and Josh Bivens. 2017. "The zombie robot argument lurches on: There is no evidence that automation leads to joblessness or inequality." Economic Policy Institute. [Link](#).

Misc. Topics:

- Academic conferences: where and why?
- After the PhD – what's next?