

Course Outline

SOCIAL CLASS AND MOBILITY

Soci 3354

Kennesaw State University
Spring 2014

Melvyn L. Fein, PH.D., CCS
Room 4054, Social Science Building
770 423-6599
mfein@kennesaw.edu
professionalized.blogspot.com

Course Description: This course is an introduction to social stratification and primarily to social class. The focus will be on the causes and consequences of social hierarchy in the United States. We will review the social class structure in this country, how it is measured, and what impact it has on the individual. Special emphasis will be placed on the nature of poverty and the mechanisms of social mobility. Both structural/functional and conflict theory will be applied to analyze social class and the student will learn to evaluate social class arrangements for him/herself. Finally, there will be a consideration of relevant social policy, including welfare and educational policies.

Required Texts:

Fein, Melvyn L. 2012. Human Hierarchies: A General Theory. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Kerbo, H. R. 2008. Social Stratification and Inequality: Class Conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective (Fourth Edition) New York:

Howell, J. T. 1973. Hard Living on Clay Street: Portraits of Blue Collar Families New York: Anchor Books.

Recommended Text:

Gilbert, D, and Kahl, J. 1993. The American Class Structure: A New Synthesis (Fourth Edition) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Course Outline:

Week I. 1/8 Introduction: An overview of social stratification. The nature of hierarchy and social class. Is the U.S. an egalitarian society?

Readings: Kerbo chaps. 1 & 3.

Week II. 1/13 – 1/15 Measuring social class. The nature of socio-economic status (SES) and of social prestige. The difference between wealth and income. The development of the U.S. stratification system.

Readings: Kerbo chaps. 3 & 2.; Fein chaps 1, 2.

Week III. 1/22 Theories of social classes. The classical theorists: Marx, Weber, and Durkheim.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 4; Fein, chaps. 3,4.

Week IV. 1/27 – 1/29 Contemporary theorists: modern functional and conflict theories. Theories of class socialization, especially those of Kohn.

Readings: Kerbo chapst. 5, 9; Fein, chaps, 5, 6.

Week V. 2/3 - 2/5 The higher social classes. Inherited wealth and its consequences. Their sources of power and its cultural manifestations.

Readings: Kerbo chaps. 6.

Week VI. 2/10 - 2/12 The corporate classes. How powerful are they? Who are they?

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 7.

First Exam 2/10

Week VII. 2/17 - 2/19 The middle and working classes. Their position in society and sources of power. Upper middle class culture.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 8; chaps. 7, 8.

Week VIII. 2/24 – 2/26 The middle classes continued. The roles of power and education.

Readings: Kerbo chapt 8.

Week IX. 3/3 - 3/5 The working class. Their relation to the middle class.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 8.

Week X. 3/10 - 3/12 The poor and under classes. The causes of poverty, with emphasis on the culture of poverty. Who is responsible for poverty?

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 9; Fein, chapt. 9.

Second Exam 3/10

Week XI. 3/17 – 3/19 Poverty continued. The consequences of being poor; the injuries lower status inflicts on families and individuals.

Readings: Howell

Paper Outline Due 3/19

Week XII. 3/24 – 3/26 Other forms of social stratification. The effects of gender, ethnicity, and race. How they are related to class differences.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 10.

Week XIII. 4/7 - 4/9 Social mobility. The degree to which change is possible and the mechanisms through which it is accomplished.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 11; Fein chapt. 10

Week XIV. 4/14 – 4/16 Social mobility continued.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 11.

Week XV. 4/21 - 4/23 Social policy. Is reform possible? The socialist alternative. Welfare, educational, and tax policies. Civil rights and democracy.

Readings: Kerbo chapt. 9, 12, 13

Paper Due 4/23

Week XVI. 4/28 – 4/30 Course conclusion. Wrapping up issues.

Final Exam 5/7 10:30 AM

Research Paper

Students will research and write a 10-12 page paper (10-12 point font Times Roman) either about the causes, effects, and cures of poverty or about the nature of social mobility. The topic chosen can be contemporary or historic, but your work should be deep rather than broad. The paper must go beyond the issues discussed in class to elucidate the nature of poverty and/or social policies regarding poverty or deal with the mechanisms or scope of social mobility. Make sure your paper is clearly written and well documented. The point of view you choose is up to you, but you must provide evidence to support any position you take. And please number pages.

A paper outline will be due three weeks before the paper itself. This should include anticipated references.

Please note: The paper should be double spaced, with margins of no more than 1.25 inches. The Reference page does not count as a page, nor does the title page. (Nor do pictures). Please number pages.

The Class Grade will depend equally on three (3) examinations, and the research paper. (Value 25% each). Class attendance and participation will be monitored and also contribute to the final grade. Attendance is further encouraged because the examinations will include materials covered only in class.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone in this class who has a special need which may be the result of a disability. I am reasonably sure we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary, be it seating, testing, or other accommodation. Please see me after class, as soon as possible, if you have such a need.

Academic Integrity: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the undergraduate and graduate Catalogs. Section II of this Code addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.