

Social Stratification & Inequality (SOC 231)

All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.

George Orwell, Animal Farm (1945)

What is this course about?

All societies are hierarchically ordered and are structured in various ways. The ranking of people into layers or strata is known as social stratification. Each layer has different access to resources and rewards, opportunities and abilities which results in social divisions and inequality. This course provides a global outlook and stresses the interconnectedness of the world. Local issues are also highlighted and South African examples are drawn on to demonstrate the ideas expressed and concepts used.

The course starts off by introducing students to the four principle types of stratification systems, viz., slavery, caste systems, estates and social class. We examine the various stratification systems, their characteristics, the ideologies that support them and the extent of social mobility possible within each system. Thereafter, we discuss the concept social class at length. In particular, the ways in which class influences an individual's social status, determines their social mobility and shapes their life chances and lifestyles is highlighted. In addition to social class, social categories such as race, gender, sexuality, age and ability are also explored. We then move to examine the manifestations of social stratification, inequality and discrimination.

Lecturer contact details:

Trevor McArthur (BSW, MPhil, PhD candidate)

Office: Room 2.1.08.

Tel: 021 959 3346

Email: tmcarthur@uwc.ac.za

Consultation times:

Tuesdays: 11h00 – 15h00

Thursdays: 13h00 – 15h00

Coursework Requirements and Weighting:

You have to attend TWO (2) lectures and ONE (1) tutorial per week. Lectures and tutorials are supplemented with class discussions, debates, the screening of DVDs and other audio-visual material. The learning of academic study skills forms part of this module and will be incorporated into lectures and tutorials wherever possible. The coursework for this module involves three pieces of writing made up of a class test (25%), poster (25%) and tutorial assignments (10%). Please note that collectively coursework marks add up to 60%. The coursework constitutes a major component of your year mark and you should thus work hard at submitting the best work you are capable of.

Lecture Periods & Venues:

Students are required to attend TWO (2) lectures per week.

1. Tuesday, 2nd (09h40-10h40) in S1
2. Thursday 4th (12h00 – 13h00) in S1

Tutorials: Monday 13th March 2017 – Friday 26th May 2017

Students are required to attend ONE (1) tutorial per week. There are no tutorials scheduled for weeks 1 & 2. Tutorials will commence on Monday 13th March 2017 and end on Friday 26th May 2017. Students are required to sign up for tutorials via i-Kamva – tutorial groups are capped and groups will automatically close when capacity has been reached. Group membership works on a first come first served basis. A tutorial register is kept, which you should sign as confirmation/proof of your attendance. You will have various discussions and debates during these tutorials – you will be given a participation mark.

Class test: Tuesday 25th April 2017, during lecture (9h40 – 10h40).

The class test will focus on the various theoretical debates regarding social stratification and inequality. More information about the class test will be provided during lectures and tutorials.

Sick tests will only be granted to students who can provide a valid medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner. Furthermore, the lecturer should be contacted within 24 from when the test was written.

Poster assignment: due Monday 15th May 2017 @ 12pm

You are required to create a poster on the topic "Mapping inequality and social stratification in Cape Town". Drawing on theories discussing social stratification and by reflecting on the material realities you are required to critically "map" (or illustrate) and discuss manifestations of inequality and social stratification in the City of Cape Town. Posters are to be submitted as a group of 5 people, clearly indicating full details of each member. Further information will be provided during lectures and tutorials.

Readings:

Links to the prescribed articles can be found online on i-Kamva. Students are encouraged to keep up to date with current trends and developments within sociology by browsing the latest issues of disciplinary journals in the Periodicals Reading Room (UWC Library, Level 5). Students are encouraged to share useful or interesting insights in class or during tutorials. Both the course outline and the tutorial outline are available on i-Kamva.

Finally

Please check the second year notice board on a regular basis for short articles and announcements relating to the course and your marks.