

**SOC 4383: Social Stratification**  
**Oklahoma State University**  
**Spring 2016**

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 – 11:45 AM  
Life Science West, Room 201

**Professor:** Heather McLaughlin  
**Office Hours:** T/Th 2:00 – 4:00 PM  
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**Teaching Assistant:** Kathleen Reddick  
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This course is an introduction to the sociological study of inequality in the United States. While some inequality is the result of individual differences in ability and effort, much of it is related to societal structures. Social stratification refers to the institutionalized hierarchies in power, wealth, and status between categories of persons. This course examines the social, institutional, and cultural patterns that underlie race, class, and gender inequalities in American society. After taking this course, you will have a better understanding of important sociological concepts such as power, elitism, poverty, social mobility, status attainment, and socialization.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

There are two required books for this course, available for purchase at the campus bookstore. All weekly readings should be completed before class on Tuesday.

- Gilbert, Dennis. 2014. *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2011. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

**CLASSROOM AND TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

The class will be a stimulating and enjoyable experience for all of us if everyone comes prepared and ready to discuss and share ideas, opinions, and analyses of the readings, videos, and lectures. While I will provide background information for each topic, I believe that we can also learn from each other. My philosophy of teaching and learning is an interactive, participatory one, and we will regularly discuss readings as a class and in small groups. I expect your complete effort, participation, engagement, and regular attendance. You can expect the same from me.

Further, the classroom environment should be free of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. Some of the material covered in class may be sensitive for some students, and as such we should all work together to create a safe place for all students. We must all respect each others' privacy, and personal information shared during class discussion should be treated as confidential. Diverse opinions can enrich discussions, and a norm of mutual respect for others' viewpoints is expected during all class sessions.

## **COURSE WEBSITE**

It is important that you familiarize yourself with the course website (<https://oc.okstate.edu>). There you will find the syllabus, assignment descriptions and grading rubrics, grades, weekly required and supplemental readings, and PDF copies of lecture slides. I recommend that you check the website regularly for announcements and other supplemental information. Please see me if you have any questions or have difficulty accessing D2L.

## **GRADING**

I will use the following scale in assigning your final course grades:

<b>A</b> Excellent	<b>D</b> Below Average
<b>B</b> Good	<b>F</b> Failure
<b>C</b> Average	

Your final grade will be based on the following components, described more fully below. Note that there are zero exams. Instead, this course will require a substantial amount of writing so please plan accordingly. Additional details will be distributed in class and posted on D2L.

- Class Attendance and Participation 15%
- Homework Assignments 15%
- In-Class Debates (3) 20%
- Minimum Wage Assignment 20%
- Final Paper & Presentation 30%

**1) Class Attendance and Participation (15%)** – This portion of your grade is based on your attendance, class preparedness, participation in discussions and class exercises, and completion of in-class assignments and activities. To do well in this aspect of the course, you are expected to contribute regularly to class discussion and group work. In other words, you must do more than simply show up to class. You are allowed two unexcused absences before your attendance grade is negatively impacted.

**2) Homework Assignments (15%)** – You will be given three homework assignments which require you to demonstrate your understanding of required readings and delve deeper into a particular topic. The structure of these assignments will vary, but you will be required to write a *maximum* of 2 double-spaced pages for each. Due dates are listed on the course schedule below.

**3) In-Class Debates (20%)** – There will be three scheduled debates throughout the semester. For one of these debates, you will work in groups of 3-4 students to “take a stand” on an issue discussed in class and support your position with evidence. Together, each team will write a 2-3 page essay containing the major arguments that you will make during your debate. During the two debates that you are acting as an observer only, you will type up a brief argument for one side (no more than 1 page), along with a question to pose for the opposing side.

**4) Minimum Wage Assignment (20%)** – The purpose of this assignment is to critically reflect on what it is like for working poor families to “make ends meet.” Imagining that you are a single parent, you will complete a monthly budget for living in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and then use

course material to write an analysis of your experience. Your paper should be approximately 4 pages long and is due at the start of class on **Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>**.

**5) Final Paper & Presentation (30%)** – Lastly, you will complete a research project on a topic of your choosing that relates to social stratification. The project will involve three components:

- a short (1 page) statement that describes your topic, specific research questions, and at least five peer-reviewed publications you will use as sources (due by the end of **Week 5**)
- a brief (10-12 minute) presentation summarizing your findings (**Weeks 15–16**)
- a final paper (8-10 pages) that reviews relevant literature (**Due Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>**)

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**1) Classroom Etiquette:** As mentioned above, the classroom environment should be free of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. Students who continue to disrupt class or initiate distractions that detract from the learning process after being asked to stop will be asked to leave. Examples include talking during lecture, text messaging, surfing the web, arriving late, leaving early, and anything else that might bother you or someone around you. Please keep cell phones and other devices used for personal purposes off during class time. You may use laptops to take notes during lecture, but I reserve the right to revoke your use if you are using your computer for purposes unrelated to the class. You may not record the instructor, your classmates, or any other speakers without their explicit permission.

**2) Absences:** To do well in the course, you must attend class. However, if you do miss class, I will assume you have a good reason. You do not need to provide me with an explanation, but written documentation is required to formally excuse any absence. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain the material you missed. You should review the lecture handout and any other supplemental content posted on the course website, obtain notes from a classmate, and then speak with us during office hours or by appointment if you have additional questions. **You may miss two class periods without penalty. Additional unexcused absences will negatively impact your attendance and participation grade.**

**3) Late Assignments:** Your grade for written assignments will decrease by 5% for each class period that it is late. Your final paper, which is due at the beginning of finals week, will be penalized 5% for each day that it is late. You must provide valid written documentation to excuse late assignments and avoid this late penalty.

**4) Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty is any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Examples include cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing, and intentionally tampering with grades. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and you may receive a failing grade on an assignment or for the course, receive a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (F!), or be suspended from the University if you violate this policy. For more information about academic dishonesty, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs: 101 Whitehurst, (405) 744-5627, (<http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu>).

**5) Disabilities:** If you have a condition that affects your ability to participate fully in class or meet course requirements, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can arrange appropriate accommodations. You are also encouraged to contact Student Disability Services: 315 Student Union, (405) 744-5470, (<http://sds.okstate.edu>).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic of Discussion</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
1	1/12, 1/14	what is social stratification?	Gilbert – Ch. 1	---
2	1/19, 1/21	American social class structure	Gilbert – Ch. 2	---
3	1/26, 1/28	changing social class structure	Gilbert – Ch. 3	Homework #1
4	2/2, 2/4	film screening & discussion: <i>People Like Us: Social Class in America</i>	----	---
5	2/9, 2/11	class, lifestyles, & values	Gilbert – Ch. 5	Topic Statement
6	2/16, 2/18	how much inequality is there?	Gilbert – Ch. 4 Norton & Ariely 2011 <sup>1</sup>	Homework #2
7	2/23, 2/25	what counts as middle class?	----	Debate #1
8	3/1, 3/3	the working poor	Ehrenreich – Introduction, Ch. 1–2	---
9	3/8, 3/10	surviving on minimum wage	Ehrenreich, Ch. 3	Homework #3
10	3/14 – 3/18	<i>SPRING BREAK!</i>		
11	3/22, 3/24	social mobility	Gilbert – Ch. 6	Debate #2
12	3/29, 3/31	intersecting identities	----	Minimum Wage Paper
13	4/5, 4/7	neighborhood stratification	Logan & Stults 2011 <sup>2</sup>	---
14	4/12, 4/14	educational stratification	Gilbert – Ch. 7 Ramey 2015 <sup>3</sup>	Debate #3
15-16	4/19 – 4/28	Student Presentations	----	Presentation

*Note: Your final paper is due to the Dropbox folder on D2L by 11:59 PM on Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> Norton, Michael I. and Dan Ariely. 2011. “Building a Better America—One Wealth Quintile at a Time.” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6: 9-12.

<sup>2</sup> Logan, John R. and Brian J. Stults. 2011. *The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census*. Census Brief Prepared for Project US2010.

<sup>3</sup> Ramey, David M. 2015. “The Social Structure of Criminalized and Medicalized School Discipline.” *Sociology of Education* 88(3): 181-201.



# OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT Spring 2016

<http://academicaffairs.okstate.edu/>

**YOUR SUCCESS AS A STUDENT IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.  
THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED BY STUDENTS.**

## IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to add a class (without instructor permission)	1/19/2016
Last day to drop a course with no grade and 100% refund	1/19/2016
Last day to add a class (requires instructor & advisor permission)	1/22/2016
Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University with an automatic "W" and receive a partial refund (requires advisor signature)	1/22/2016
Last day to post 6 week grades	2/23/2016
Last day to file diploma application (for name to appear in Fall Commencement program)	4/1/2016
Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the University with an automatic "W"	4/8/2016
Last day to withdraw from all OSU classes with an assigned grade of "W" or "F"	4/22/2016
Pre-Finals week	4/25-4/29/2016
Final examinations	5/2-5/6/2016

*Note: Outreach, Internet, and short courses have unique drop/add and refund deadlines; lookup the specific deadlines for these courses on the Short, Internet and Outreach Class Schedules page of the Registrar's website <http://registrar.okstate.edu/SIO-Schedule>.*

## Spring Semester Holidays

University Holiday	1/18/2016
Students' Spring Break	3/14-3/18/2016

## DROPPING A COURSE AND WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNIVERSITY

students often confuse these terms.

**Dropping a Course** (or courses) may occur during the first twelve weeks of the semester. This means, however, that you are still enrolled in at least one other OSU course. Exceptions to the deadlines above may only be considered by petition due to documented extraordinary circumstances and committee approval. The Retroactive Drop/Withdraw Petition and the Petition for a Refund of Tuition and Fees forms are available on the Registrar's website <http://registrar.okstate.edu/Forms>.

**Withdrawing** from the university means dropping *all* courses and you *are no longer enrolled for the current semester*. This may occur until the Friday before pre-finals week. The withdrawal process is initiated with your academic advisor. For additional information and dates, go to: [HTTP://ACADEMICAFFAIRS.OKSTATE.EDU/CONTENT/ADDING-DROPPING-AND-WITHDRAWING-COURSES](http://academicaffairs.okstate.edu/content/adding-dropping-and-withdrawing-courses)

## ALERTS AND RESCHEDULING

If the OSU campus officially closes due to inclement weather or other emergencies, alerts are provided to local news media and posted on the OSU website. Missed exams, classes, or assignments may be rescheduled at times outside the normal meeting schedule. If valid, documented circumstances prohibit students from attending the rescheduled classes, instructors should provide reasonable alternative means for makeup.

## SEEK ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

The OSU faculty and staff want you to be successful in your educational pursuits. If you have questions or concerns, seek help EARLY. We are here to assist you.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627

<http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu>

OSU is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and altering academic records) will result in an official academic sanction. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript, and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge.



## COPYRIGHT & FAIR USE POLICY OF COURSE MATERIALS

Course materials may not be published, leased, sold to others, or used for any purpose other than appropriate OSU-related individual or group study without the written permission of the faculty member in charge of the course and other copyright holders. This paragraph grants you a limited license giving you access to materials for this course, including PowerPoint slides, audio/video recordings, written, or other materials, for appropriate OSU-related educational use only. Lectures should not be recorded without permission from the faculty member and must not be further disseminated or shared.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is a critical component of learning; therefore, you are expected to attend and participate fully in all scheduled class meetings. Many instructors consider attendance so essential that your grade may be affected by your absence. *SOME DEPARTMENTS AND PROFESSORS HAVE MANDATORY ATTENDANCE POLICIES*. If no written attendance policy is provided before the last day to add a class without instructor permission, no penalty may be assessed for class absences although you may not be permitted to make up certain in-class activities. If you are required to participate in official university-sponsored activities or military training, you should receive an excused absence unless the written course attendance policy indicates otherwise. If you will be absent from class for sponsored activities, you must provide prior notification of the planned absence to the instructor. You may be required to submit assignments or take examinations before the planned absence.

## PRE-FINALS WEEK POLICY

Final examinations are scheduled at the end of each semester and are preceded by pre-finals week, which begins seven days prior to the first day of finals. During pre-finals week, all normal class activities will continue; however, no assignment, test, or examination accounting for more than 5% of the course grade may be given; and no activity or field trip may be scheduled that conflicts with another class. This excludes makeup and laboratory examinations, out-of-class assignments (or projects) made prior to pre-finals week and independent study courses. No student or campus organization may hold meetings, banquets, receptions, or may sponsor or participate in any activity, program, or related function that requires student participation. For additional information, contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 405-744-5627, 101 Whitehurst.

## **FINAL EXAM OVERLOAD POLICY**

In the event you have three or more final exams scheduled for a single day, you are entitled to arrange with the instructor of the highest numbered course (4 digit course number) or two highest, if you have four finals on one day, to re-schedule that examination(s) at a time and place of mutual convenience during final exam week. If the final exam overload includes a common final exam, the common final exam is excluded from rescheduling unless multiple common exams are scheduled at the same time. You should submit this request in writing, with a copy of your class schedule, at least two weeks prior to the beginning of final exam week. The instructor has one week prior to the beginning of final exam week to arrange a mutually convenient time and place for administration of the final exam. After one week, if an agreement cannot be reached, take the request to the department head.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Student Email** - OSU uses your OKSTATE.EDU email address as a primary form of communication. Students are expected to check their OSU email on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of their official university business. If you do not use the OSU email system you must redirect your okstate.edu email using the Orange-Key System ([www.okey.okstate.edu](http://www.okey.okstate.edu)). Failure to maintain an accurate email address may result in missed or lost university communications. For email assistance contact the IT Helpdesk at 405-744-HELP (4357).

**Computer Labs** - A complete description of computer labs and hours of operations are available at their website: <https://it.sharepoint.okstate.edu/TechnologySupport/DeskSide/default.aspx>. Lab information is also available by calling the Information Technology Help Desk, 405-744-HELP (4357).

## **EDMON LOW LIBRARY HOURS**

405-744-9775 or 405-744-9741

[www.library.okstate.edu](http://www.library.okstate.edu)

Text 405-592-4128

Monday-Thursday

7:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m.

Friday

7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Saturday

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m.

\*For holiday and intersession hours, check

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/services/hours.htm>

\*Contact the following for information on hours of operation:

Architecture Library	405-744-6047
Curriculum Materials Library	405-744-6310
Veterinary Medicine Library	405-744-6655

## **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

By enrolling at Oklahoma State University, you accept responsibility for complying with all University policies and contracts, and for local, state and federal laws on- or off-campus that relate to the University's mission. **The Student Rights and Responsibilities Governing Student Behavior** document explains the standards of behavior expected of you, processes in place for enforcing the rules, and the University's response to violations <http://studentconduct.okstate.edu/>

In general, the University expects you to respect the rights of others and authorities, represent yourself truthfully and accurately at all times, respect private and public property, and take responsibility for your own actions and the actions of your guests. Call 405-744-5470 for more information.

## **WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

**Instructor** - If you have questions regarding your class, talk to your instructor. Faculty members usually include their office hours and/or phone number in the class syllabus. If you cannot locate this information, set a time to meet with your instructor by speaking with him/her prior to or immediately following your class session or check with the departmental office on when the instructor may be available.

**Academic Advisor** - All students will benefit by conferring with an

advisor on a regular basis. If you do not know your advisor, or are unhappy with your advisor, talk to the Student Academic Services Director for your college.

**Academic911.okstate.edu** - Your online resource for academic and personal success, sponsored by Student Affairs.

## **Mathematics Learning Success Center**

5th Floor, Edmon Low Library/405-744-5818 <http://www.math.okstate.edu>

Tutors are available to answer questions for classes ranging from Beginning Algebra through Calculus II. Tutoring for Differential Equations and Linear Algebra is offered at specific times.

## **Writing Center**

440 Student Union/405-744-6671 <http://osuwritingcenter.okstate.edu>

The Writing Center helps writers throughout the composing process; you should plan to visit early and often throughout the semester, not just the day before an assignment is due. Tutors will work with you to improve your brainstorming, organizational, and composing techniques.

## **Learning & Student Success Opportunity (LASSO) Tutoring Center**

021 Classroom Building/405-744-3309 <https://lasso.okstate.edu/>

LASSO offers free individual tutoring for a variety of courses.

## **University Counseling Services**

320 Student Union/405-744-5472 or 405-744-7007 <http://ucs.okstate.edu/>

Professional counselors offer confidential personal and/or career counseling.

## **Office of Student Disability Services (SDS)**

315 Student Union/405-744-7116

<http://sds.okstate.edu/>

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, each student with a disability is responsible for notifying the University of his/her disability and requesting accommodations. If you think you have a qualified disability and need special accommodations, you should notify the instructor and request verification of eligibility for accommodations from the Office of SDS. Please advise the instructor of your disability as soon as possible, and contact Student Disability Services, to ensure timely implementation of appropriate accommodations. Faculty has an obligation to respond when they receive official notice of a disability but are under no obligation to provide retroactive accommodations. To receive services, you must submit appropriate documentation and complete an intake process to verify the existence of a qualified disability and identify reasonable accommodations.

## **Office of Equal Opportunity**

408 Whitehurst/405-744-9153

OSU is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. OSU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities. Examples of sexual misconduct and/or sex discrimination include: sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and intimate partner violence, stalking, or gender-based discrimination. OSU encourages any student who thinks that he or she may have been a victim of sexual misconduct or sexual discrimination to immediately report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator (405-744-9153) or Deputy Title IX Coordinator (405-744-5470). Students may also report incidents of sexual misconduct or sex discrimination to a faculty or staff member, who is then required by federal law (Title IX) to notify the Title IX or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If a reporting student would like to keep the details confidential, the student may speak with staff in the Student Counseling Center (405-744-5472) or the University's Victim Advocate (Suzanne Burks: 405-744-5458). For more information regarding Title IX violations, go to: <https://1is2many.okstate.edu/>.