

Soc 143 (4 Units)
T/ Th 2:15 PM – 3:45 PM
Location: Building 200, Room 13

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Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Location: Building 120, Room 210A

Sociology of the Middle Class

Course covers economic, social, & political causes and consequence of class in America. Topics include: class culture, education, recent social protests, including Occupy and Tea Party, and the 2012 presidential election. Emphasizes ways that social class shapes the background and experiences of current Stanford students and what their future will hold. Class will feature several guest speakers.

Required Readings: Class Matters – New York Times (2005). Other readings as assigned. Readings may be found on the course website. In the course schedule they are listed the day they are due.

Requirements

<i>1st Op-Ed Assignment</i> (500-1,000 words)		
Draft 1	Oct 21	5 pts
Draft 2	Oct 28	5 pts
Draft 3	Nov 4	5 pts
<i>2nd Op-Ed Assignment</i> (500-1,000 words)		
Draft 1	Nov 11	5 pts
Draft 2	Nov 18	5 pts
Draft 3	Dec 2	5 pts
<i>Take Home Final</i>	Dec 9	20 pts
<i>Attendance and Participation</i> (Up to 2 Make-Ups)	-----	25 pts
<i>Group Topic Discussion</i>	-----	25 pts

My Co-Worker

Mitaka Ki (Mita for short), is a certified and licensed medical alert dog. She is trained to detect and alert to subtle changes in blood chemistry. She accompanies me everywhere, but when we are out she is frequently working, so please do not be offended if she doesn't visit you. If you would like to have Mita kept away from you, please let me know. Also, we all get distracted once in a while. Mita is just a dog, I hope you will forgive her if she periodically gets distracted or forgets what she is doing.

Class Lectures

Show up, be on time, participate.

Attendance Make-Up Points: Make-up readings will be posted at the end of class. If you miss a session you may make up the points by doing the readings and writing a 2-3 page summary.

Topic Discussions

More important than learning the material in this course, you will see how the material translates into a sociological understanding the world. Students will be divided into one of two groups for the purpose of discussion. Each group will have specific readings. Your topic group will be responsible for educating your peers on the readings and how your readings relate to class material. You can do this however you want: lecture, group discussion, etc. You may take turns or do it all together, but you will be graded as a group either way. Each group will get 20-25 minutes each. Half of your grade will be based on your group members' evaluation of your participation and performance.

Op-Ed Writing Assignments

Each student will write two Opinion-Editorial pieces of 500-1000 words. Each should state an opinion and support that opinion using well-reasoned logic and material presented in the class. Specifically:

- State a current issue;
- Provide your opinion on the issue;
- Support your argument using well-reasoned outside facts ;
- Use concrete examples; and,
- The conclusion should demonstrate your grasp of materials presented in class.

In addition, your piece should be well-written, concise, interesting, and grammatically sound.

Some notes on writing a good op-ed: The issue you write on should be timely and thought-provoking. I also look for ingenuity, strength of argument, freshness of opinion, clear writing, and newsworthiness. Personal experiences and first-person narrative can be great, particularly when offered in service of a larger idea. So is humor, when it is funny and topical. Eschew . . . um, I mean . . . stay away from Olympian language and bureaucratic jargon (infrastructure, inputs, outlays). Write the article in a way you would like to read it. Make one argument (and only one) thoroughly, point by point; the more detail the better. If you try to do too much, you can wind up with an article that, in striving to say everything, ends up saying nothing. Do not be afraid to stick your neck out. Remember it is difficult but possible to express complex ideas in clear, concise prose (I will never provide page minimums). Above all, put yourself in your readers' shoes. Learn from comments and feedback, but you do not have to accept all of them.

Take-Home Final

Each student will pick two out of three questions and write 500-1000 words in response to each. Learn from your op-eds. Be well-reasoned, concrete, and concise.

Policies

Academic Freedom: This class will deal with subjects that are difficult, complex, and controversial. My goal as the instructor will be to introduce you to a diverse variety of theories and opinions about these topics. None of the topics we discuss have easy answers, if they did then they would not be controversial, nor a matter for public debate. You may have an opinion that differs from that of the material discussed, your fellow classmates, and even me. This is completely fine. Students are free to express their opinion, or not, depending entirely on their comfort level. Similarly, I expect students to respect the opinion and voice of others. At no time will your grade be based on your personal views. All views are welcome in my classroom, though we will be applying critical thinking to a diverse group of opinions and beliefs.

Accommodation: Students with disabilities or other concerns should contact me.

Plagiarism: Stanford code of academic conduct applies.

Late Policy: Because we frequently discuss assignments in class timeliness is important. Students will lose ten (10) percent of possible points for each 24 hour period the assignment is late.

Topics & Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignment
9/23	A (Very) Brief History of Social Class Readings: Group A – Bangladesh Clothing Industry Group B – Raising the Minimum Wage Both Groups – Parable of Shmoo	
9/25	Marxism and Communism Readings: Group A – Bangladesh Clothing Industry Group B – Raising the Minimum Wage Both Groups – Parable of Shmoo	
9/30	A (Slightly) Brief History of the American Middle Class Readings: Fiscal Crisis Symptom of Detroit’s Woes “Two American Families” by PBS Optional: Daily Show Interviews Alan Greenspan	Take the Survey
10/2	A (Slightly) Brief History of the American Middle Class Both Groups – Go See “Inequality for All”	
10/7	Weber and Social Status Readings: Is There a Status Order in Brittan (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2004)(selections) Exploration in Weber’s Class (Wright 2002) (selections)	
10/9	Topic Discussion Readings: Group A – The New Closed Shop Group B – Learning to Be Poor	
10/14	Three Worlds of Social Class Readings: Three Worlds of Inequality (Weeden & Grusky, 2012) (selections)	
10/16	Logic and Reasoning Readings: Op-Ed Examples	
10/21	Guest Speaker: Michelle Jackson – Education and Social Mobility Readings: Group A –Class Matters: The College Dropout Boom Group B – Class Matters: No Degree No Way Back to the Middle	1 st Op-Ed Draft 1 Due
10/23	Topic Discussion Readings: Group A –Class Matters: The College Dropout Boom Group B – Class Matters: No Degree No Way Back to the Middle	
10/28	Politics and Social Class Readings: End of Class Politics (pg 1-14)	1 st Op-Ed Draft 2 Due

10/30	Topic Discussion Readings: Group A –Political Polarization and Media Habits Group B – What’s the Matter with What’s the Matter with Kansas	
11/4	Culture and Lifestyle Readings: Foundations of Durkheim Class Analysis (Grusky 2012) (selections)	1 st Op-Ed Draft 3 Due
11/6	Topic Discussion Readings: Group A –Class Matters: When the Joneses Wear Jeans Group B – Class Matters: On a Christian Mission to the Top	
11/11	Social Psychology and Class Readings: Psychology and Social Class (Argyle, 1994) (Ch. 4 & 5)	2 nd Op-Ed Draft 1 Due
11/13	Topic Discussion Readings: Group A – Class Matters: Encounters with Class Group B – Class Matters: A Marriage of Unequals	
11/18	Poverty & Affluence Readings: Nickel and Dimed (Ehrenreich) (selections); Managing Elites (selections)	2 nd Op-Ed Draft 2 Due
11/20	Topic Discussion Readings: Group A – Falling from Grace (Newman) (selections) Group B – Class Matters: Old Nantucket Warily Meets the New	
11/25	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</i>	
11/27		
12/2	Guest Speaker: Chuck Jagoda – Mobility Mr. Jagoda is an unhouseed resident of San Jose and a advocate for homeless and housing policy. Readings: None	2 nd Op-Ed Draft 3 Due
12/4	Guest Speaker: Richard Fetter – Mobility Mr. Fetter is CEO of a fortune 500 health company. Readings: None	
12/9	<i>No Class – Finals Week</i>	
		Take Home Final Due