



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL SEMESTER 2011

SO 2600 (A2) – Inequality and Social Stratification 3 (3-0-0) UT 45 hours

INSTRUCTOR: René R. Gadacz, Ph.D **PHONE:** 780.539.2831
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OFFICE HOURS: Daily; by appointment; drop-ins welcome

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE(S): SO1000 or equivalent

REQUIRED TEXT(S)/RESOURCE MATERIALS: R. Wilkinson and K. Pickett, 2010, The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone. Penguin: London. J. Layton, 2008, Homelessness: How to End the National Crisis. Penguin Canada: Toronto. M. Schwalbe, 2008, Rigging the Game: How Inequality is Reproduced in Everyday Life. Oxford University Press: New York.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the study of structured social inequalities and poverty, major theoretical approaches, and findings from key empirical studies, with emphasis on Canada.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 (3-0-0) UT 45 hours

DELIVERY MODE(S): lectures, class discussion, group work, class presentations, written tests, written projects

OBJECTIVES: To analyze various dimensions of inequality (micro; macro; interational) from a sociological perspective. To acquire the tools to do this, which includes learning the methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of inequality. To

understand the consequences of inequality at both micro, macro, and international levels, and how structural relationships generate and maintain social inequality.

TRANSFERABILITY: **Grade** of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Transfers to: U of A, UC, AU, UL, AF, CU, CUC, KUC.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Please refer to the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at – www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A ⁺	4.0	95 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 94	
A ⁻	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B ⁺	3.3	76 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 75	GOOD
B ⁻	2.7	70 – 72	
C ⁺	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C ⁻	1.7	60 – 62	
D ⁺	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

EVALUATIONS:

Semester Exam (50 points)..... November 21, 23

Semester Work:

Daily Current Events Presentations (2 x 10 points)..... **starts** Sept. 14

‘Hands-On’ Assignments (2 x 20 points = 40 points)..... TBD

Proposal and Annotated Biblio (30 points)..... October 3

Book Chapter Presentation (40 points)..... **starts** Oct. 31

Book Analysis and Critique (30 points)..... November 2

Book Adaptation (30 points)..... December 5

Guest Speaker Feedback Summary (2 x 10 points)..... TBD

[Total course points are 260; your total points will be converted to a percent (%) grade to determine your letter grade. For example, $210/260 = 81/100 = 81\% = A-$]

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

The ***Semester Exam (50 points)*** may consist of definitions of key terms/concepts, and critical thinking questions -- based on all lecture and book materials covered to the dates of the exam. **Note that this is the only exam in the course, and will be written over two (2) days.** Details on the ***Semester Work (210 points)*** will be discussed in the first 2 days of classes and will also be posted on Moodle. The 'TBD' (to-be-determined) assignment dates will be announced with plenty of lead time. *Here's a preliminary overview of the semester's work:*

(1) You will present news articles relating to the course on a daily basis. These news articles can be obtained from www.sympatico.ca and news feeds such as CBC and CTV. Articles can be on local stories, national, or international. Over-all emphasis on Canada is preferred. For these presentations, you can work individually or with a partner.

(2) 'Hands-On' assignments may require you to visit a homeless shelter, food bank, speak with agency representatives, explore the college in a wheelchair, etc. TBD! These will be written up in report form. You can work individually or with a partner on these assignments.

(3) You will prepare a short proposal based on the particular chapter you have selected from **The Spirit Level** book, accompanied by an annotated bibliography of related articles and books (see **4**, the next item). You can work individually or with a partner on this assignment.

(4) You will be scheduled to present, in depth, a chapter of your choice from the book **The Spirit Level**. This will include a presentation of the arguments, statistics, applications to Canada, implications, criticisms, etc. of the subject matter of that particular chapter. A written outline of your presentation that goes beyond the

proposal you wrote before will be submitted. You can work individually or with a partner on this assignment.

(5) The book critique you will write will be Jack Layton's book on homelessness. We will discuss in class what a book critique entails. You can work individually or with a partner on this assignment.

(6) The book adaptation you will write will be on Michael Schwalbe's book on inequality in everyday life. Extending his thesis and argument, you will relate this book to your own life circumstances; you may write this adaptation like a story (see Schwalbe's Chapters 3, 5, and 7). You can work individually or with a partner on this assignment.

(7) Finally, you will provide a summary and some feedback on any guest speakers that have been invited to class. There may be two guest presentations this term. The point value of this component of your work will be adjusted according to whether these events take place! For example, if there are no guest speakers, the total points earned for this course would be 240 instead of 260.

PLEASE NOTE:

☀ **A missed exam unfortunately cannot be accommodated - *unless* the situation is an unexpected personal or family emergency. No make-up exams unless it's an emergency.**

Plagiarism detection software may be used in this course, and students may be required, individually or collectively, to submit key assignments/components in electronic form.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all your work is at a level appropriate to your year in college/university studies. Always spell- and grammar-check your work; always keep a hard copy or HD copy of your work as back-up. There is writing help on campus, and if in doubt you are always welcome to ask me, your instructor, for clarification. Poor spelling, grammar and organization always interfere with the clear

communication of ideas and you could lose marks if your over-all communication is ineffective.

Attendance at lectures is strongly encouraged; the same applies to your participation in class discussions. ***Be an active participant in your education!***

Late assignments (or any applicable assignment/course components) will result in an automatic loss of 5 marks (of the value of the work) PER DAY, up to and including the day of a late submission, unless immediate or prior arrangements, based on exceptional circumstances, have been made. Documented personal or family emergencies, of course, will be accommodated.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Please Note: Because there is no ‘main textbook’ as such, lectures will not follow a chapter sequence in the usual sense. As such, much material will be presented in class which may either not appear in the books selected for this course, book material may be ‘recast’ in a different conceptual form, or select book material may be presented in different but related contexts (e.g. a concept such as poverty may appear in several chapters at the same time, across the three books) – thus, you will be assigned applicable select chapters and chapter sections from the 3 books on a weekly basis, plus other material that your instructor may hand out. This is also why it’s important to attend class on a regular basis. Updates, announcements, and instructions will always be ‘backed up’ on Moodle in the event you missed something in class.

Week of (Fall 2011):

September 12, 14 – Introduction; course requirements; essential terminology; creating a framework for analyzing and studying inequality. Read: the Introduction in Rigging the Game (pgs. 1-24); the Preface, Note on Graphs, and Chapter 1 in The Spirit Level (pgs. ix-14); and, the Foreword and Introduction in Homelessness (pgs. ix-xxxiv). **[current events presentations begin the 14th]**

September 19, 21 – Inequality as an outcome of a process; theoretical perspectives in sociology and how they apply; the four views of human differences as the bases of social differentiation

September 26, 28 – valuation and ranking; perceptual biases and perception theories; invalidation ideologies; labeling theory

October 3, 5 – theories of prejudice; discrimination in theory and practice; social and cultural dynamics conducive to creating minority categories **[Proposal and Annotated Biblio due on the 3rd]**

October **10**, 12 – forms of discrimination; the exercise of power and techniques of domination; minority and majority distinctions; multiple minority statuses and intersection theory **[no classes on October 10th – Thanksgiving]**

October 17, 19 – the creation of and the necessary conditions leading to structural inequality; the emergence of social stratification; patterns and systems of social (and other) stratification

October 24, 26 – the major diversities in Canada; consequences of social stratification; theories of race; classic and contemporary philosophical and political ideologies (Marx, Durkheim, and current thinkers); conceptions and models of class and class structure; class and non-class views of inequality

October 31, November 2 – political paradigms (liberal; conservative; socialist); social policy responses; policy options; dysfunctional societies **[Book Chapter presentations begin on the 31st and Book Critique of Homelessness due Nov 2nd]**

November 7, 9 – responses to inequality; agency at the micro level; theories of agency; social action; agency vs. structure; resistance vs. cooptation; concepts of inclusion, such as citizenship

November 14, 16 – bottom-up responses (protest and social movements, revolt and revolution, terrorism); top-down responses (law, legislation, police action, state repression, constitutional change, regime change)

November 21, 23 – **Semester exam, both days**

November 28, 30 – towards greater equality: rewriting the rules; creating different paths to equality; alternative approaches; the human and social costs of inequality

December 5, 7 – finish up presentations; summary and conclusions [**Book adaption of Rigging the Game due on the 5th**]

[Classes end December 9 2011]

Six Ways To Make This Course More Valuable:

- 1. Participate, to engage your learning**
- 2. Question, to enhance your learning**
- 3. Read, to expand your learning**
- 4. Reflect, to measure your learning**
- 5. Apply, to transfer your learning**
- 6. Innovate, to adapt your learning**