



#### Class/Status/Power

Professor: Dr. Deric Shannon

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Office hours: M,W 3-4:15pm, Seney Hall 110

#### Course Overview:

The title “Class, Status, and Power” comes from the notion that societies are stratified into groups based on economic, honorific, and political assets. With an emphasis on the United States and comparable rich capitalist democracies, this course explores sociological explanations of how and why these and other patterns of social inequality occur and some of the consequences they produce. You will read, discuss, and write about a variety topics, including but not limited to inequalities of wealth, income, status and opportunities to attain theses; poverty, elites and power; economic inequality involving race and gender.

#### Required Books:

Marger, Martin N. 2014. *Social Inequality: Patterns and Processes*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

#### Suggested Books:

Shannon, Deric (ed.). 2014. *The End of the World as We Know It? Crisis, Resistance, and the Age of Austerity*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.

#### Guidelines:

1. We will be discussing sensitive topics this semester and critiquing institutions and ways of life that all of us are very familiar with and some of us have a vested interest in. Please be sensitive to differences of opinion.

2. Along with number 1, remember that you can have any opinion you want on these subjects and should never hesitate to express it. This is regardless of what you think my own positions are and those of your classmates. Open dialogue is an important feature of any democracy, and we will have open dialogue in my classroom.
3. That said, there is no reason to state things in an offensive way. Be respectful.
4. Our class schedule is **SUBJECT TO CONSTANT CHANGE**. It is of the utmost importance that you come to class. If you often skip classes, this one is not for you. (Note also the attendance policy).
5. We may watch films in this class with disturbing content and images. Feel free to leave anytime if you must.
6. Try to have a good time and think critically.

**Honor Code:**

All aspects of the course are governed by the Oxford College Honor Code as is articulated on the relevant pages of the Oxford College Catalog.

**Attendance Policy:**

Everyone can miss class two times throughout the semester. Students will be penalized by 2 percentage points toward their grade for every missed class after that.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities. Students who need documentation or other disability-related services are advised to visit the Student Health/Counseling Center: <http://oxford.emory.edu/academics/catalog/educational-resources/disability-services/>.

**Theory/Practice/Service/Learning (TPSL)**

This class is one of Oxford College's TPSL classes. Each student will complete 18 hours of service, set up with Crystal McLaughlin. Students are expected to be good ambassadors and reflect well on the College in their placements. Further, **THIS IS NOT CHARITY**. Rather, these are opportunities to provide services in contexts where students see firsthand the effects of social stratification and various forms of inequality. Students will, then, be asked to reflect on their experiences in their placements through reflective writing and class discussions, connecting their experiences with class discussions and reading material.

**Grades:**

Grades for this course will be based on three reflection papers, one political economy paper, participation, quizzes, and a book report as outlined below:

Political Economy Papers: 20%

Three Reflections: 30%

Participation: 5%

Book Report: 5%

Quizzes: 40%

**Reflection Papers:**

Students are required to hand in **three** 2-4 Pp. reflection papers throughout the course. These reflection papers **MUST** connect student service learning placements with class materials in some way—beyond that, students must be attentive to writing appropriately in a social scientific context. At least two **must** be turned in by Oct. 23 and all are due by Nov. 25. No, you may not email them to me.

**Political Economy Paper:**

These are 12-14 Pp. papers. These papers will be a political economic analysis of the student's favorite thing to buy (as discussed in class). Papers *must* include at least five references, two of which should be scholarly and *peer-reviewed*. Specific guidelines for the paper will be handed out and discussed in class. These papers are due Dec. 9. No you may not email them to me.

**Four Cumulative Quizzes:**

In lieu of a midterm or final exam, students will take four quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will focus on material covered within the weeks leading up to that quiz, which means that there will be cumulative questions from throughout the course covered in them.

**Book Report:**

Every student will be given an opportunity to read a book related to course material recommended by Dr. Shannon. Students will read the book, then communicate what they learned to the class however they wish.

**Participation:**

Students will be graded on participation based on meaningful contributions to class discussions.

**Class Schedule:**

Week 1 (Aug 28): Class introductions

Week 2 (Sept 2 and 4): TPSL Placements and introductory theories

Week 3 (Sept 9 and 11): Chapter 1—The Study of Social Inequality

Week 4 (Sept 16 and 18): Chapter 2—Theories of Class and Social Inequality

Week 5 (Sept 23 and 25): Chapter 3—The American Class System

Week 6 (Sept 30 and Oct 2): Chapter 4—The Upper Class and the Power Elite (Quiz 1 on Oct 2)

Week 7 (Oct 7 and 9): Chapter 5—The Middle Classes

Week 8 (Oct 16): No readings due

Week 9 (Oct 21 and 23): Chapter 6—Poverty and the Poor (At least two reflections due by Oct 23)

Week 10 (Oct 28 and 30): Chapter 7—Stratification Systems and Social Mobility (Quiz 2 on Oct 30)

Week 11 (Nov 4 and 6): Handout – Examining the Economic Crisis

Week 12 (Nov 11 and 13): Chapter 8—Ideology and the Legitimation of Inequality

Week 13 (Nov 18 and 20): Chapter 9—Public Policy and the Class System (Quiz 3 on Nov 20)

Week 14 (Nov 25): Chapter 10—Racial/Ethnic Stratification (All three reflections due)

Week 15 (Dec 2 and 4): Chapter 11 and 12—Gender Inequality/Political inequality

Week 16 (Dec 9): Wrap up and final quiz (Political economy papers due)