



Sample Course Syllabus

Sociology 426/526 Social Inequality
Dr. Mark Edwards
Summer 2004 (June 29 through August 22)

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Required texts:

- * Beeghley, Leonard. 2000. The Structure of Social Stratification in the United States. 3rd ed. Allyn and Bacon, publishers. ISBN: 0-205-27835-3
 - * Course handouts or downloadable files (details to be announced).
 - * Graduate students will complete an additional text and writing assignment. See special graduate student memo available on "Blackboard".
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Goals for this course:

To acquaint students with the existence, extent and dimensions of social inequality in America.
 To identify and begin to answer some of the critical questions which have been addressed by sociologists studying inequality.
 To teach students to bring to bear theory and data to support sociological arguments about inequality.

Grading and assignments:

Students will complete one midterm, one final, a short research paper/essay, and several small writing assignments. The following list does not show all writing assignments, but highlights the timing of the midterm, final, and research paper. See class website for details. The class officially ends on Friday evening, August 29. Students should seek to keep up with the rest of the class during the 8 week period. Accommodation may be made for some delays.

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|---|------------------------|---------------|
| Midterm 1 | (24 hour, 'take-home') | |
| Final Exam | (24 hour, 'take-home') | |
| Final Essay | 7-10 pages | |
| Writing Assignments/ Class Participation | | Due each week |

Each item will be graded on a 4.0 scale (A to F), and each item is weighted as follows:

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|---------|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Midterm | 20% | Research Paper/Essay | 20% |
| Final | 20% | Weekly writing assignments (combined) | 40% |

Grading (continued)

Late assignments will decline by one letter grade for each day late.

Late exams will decline by two grades for each day late.

Course Description and Components:

As a student in Sociology 426/526 you will be learning about social inequality through several resources available to you online.

1. The central experiential part of the course is your completion of the activities in Weber Towers, the metaphorical apartment building representing American society. Each week you will enter the towers and then move through the building, working as a member of the maintenance crew. Doc, the janitorial supervisor (your professor in disguise!), will accompany you on these work excursions, providing some simple interpretive comments about what you are seeing. The text of these comments will be available by clicking on the master key icon on the left of the screen. Sometimes Doc will tell you new things; other times he will just raise questions that you will want to try to answer later as you read the text book or as you correspond with other students and the professor.
2. Meanwhile, as you move through the towers, you will also be gathering qualitative information about several of the inhabitants of Weber Towers. In their apartments you will be able to click on three other items - the TV, the book, and the not-so-random object (something new that will appear there each week). Over the term you will discover a story unfolding about the people in this building.
3. In addition to the Towers excursions, you will be reading the textbook and trying to draw connections between it and the material in the Towers. There is an on-line commentary about the book, designed to give you advice and questions for reflection as you read it.
4. Each week you will produce some kind of item to demonstrate that you are engaging with the material. Sometimes you will be asked to write a few pages of response to the course material, other times you will be asked to complete a tutorial, and/or you will be asked to communicate with classmates through the on-line discussion page. These assignments will strengthen your comprehension of the material, will provide me (Dr. Edwards) a basis for evaluating and grading your progress, and will help create an interactive learning environment between you and the other students.

Communication:

You can communicate with me by e-mail, using the address given above. Or, you may phone me at 541-737-5379. While I will check my email and the website very often, I will only be at this phone number sporadically. You may leave a message and I can return your call.

You will be able to communicate with other students via the class forum.

This course is offered through [Oregon State University Extended Campus](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu). For more information, contact:
 Web: ecampus.oregonstate.edu Email: ecampus@oregonstate.edu Tel: 800-667-1465

Other Important Details:

1. This class satisfies the Difference, Power and Discrimination curriculum requirement for Oregon State University.
2. Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations that I should know about should inform me during the first week of the course. Students seeking accommodations should be registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.
3. Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism or collaboration on exams, will be considered a serious offense and will be reported to the proper academic authorities.

Help for Weber Towers Activities

1. The tours through Weber Towers are not meant to be one-time trips. You can tour through as often as you like. And do not worry. You cannot break it. Early in the term you will only have access to the first couple tours. Along the way I will open up more tours as you go, but I do not want you to race ahead until you have really pondered each section well.
2. The graphics may download slowly at first but once the backgrounds have downloaded, you should be able to move fairly quickly through the Towers. You might want to have your textbook with you and do some reading while waiting when downloading is slow.
3. On your first tour through the towers you should recognize that the lit up elevator button is the one that you should push (click on) to take you to the next apartment. You are taken from apartment to apartment, not unlike being taken from scene to scene on a Disneyland ride. You can go back and forth between consecutive apartments using the 'back button' on your browser. but you cannot go anywhere you like whenever you like – just like real life.
4. In each apartment, I suggest that you first click on the 'hot' objects (the ones that show a 'glove' or some other kind of cursor when you point at them.) Think about how they are the same or different from what you saw in other apartments and see if you can begin piecing together the story that begins to unfold about how these families are connected to each other.
5. After looking at the three 'hot' objects, click the key on the left for the "mini-lecture" from Doc. This is usually where I will tell you some things about what is going on in the apartment or about how to link the ideas from the apartment to the ideas in the book. Sometimes you will learn even more about the people in these apartments by clicking on this key.
6. The clipboard on the left side of the window is a place for you to leave comments for other students and for the instructor. If an idea strikes you, then this is the place where you can state it. Or you can write down a question. Others can then respond as they come through the apartments. There may be ways that the portrayal of these families challenge, upset, or inspire you. The class forum or the clipboards in the apartments are the places for you to comment on the portrayal of these families. It is likely that your comments will inspire new changes in Weber Towers for future groups of students who take the class.
7. You are welcome to exit Weber Towers at any time using the green exit sign.