

Gender, Race, and Class in Contemporary Societies

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I. Course Overview & Objectives

How do people's lives differ by their social positions based on gender, race, and class? Where do social inequality and privileges come from? To answer these questions, sociologists have long studied social stratification – the structure of social positions, the process by which people are allocated to those positions, the basis on which people are stratified, and the rewards associated with positions – which vary across time and place. Focusing on research in social stratification, this course is intended to examine how *gender*, *race*, and *class* work as organizing principles of contemporary society, and how they influence our understanding of the social world. Eventually, we will look at how these different categorizations intersect in each of our lives, which reproduces and intensifies social conflicts and inequality.

This course has three primary objectives. First, we will explore theoretical and methodological tools in sociology, to advance our understanding of social stratification based on gender, race, and class. Second, we will investigate how the three factors shape social interaction in our everyday lives and investigate how social institutions such as education, family, media, and work engage in such processes. Finally, by understanding the processes that perpetuate social inequality across different contemporary societies, we will discuss ways to intervene in such unequal processes.

II. Course Format & Evaluation

This course consists of lectures (50%) and in-class discussions and activities (50%). The evaluation criteria are as follows.

- a. In-Class Activities and Discussion (40%): In every class, students will engage a variety of in-class activities, including but not limited to watching movies or documentary films, engaging in group discussions and experiments, and playing games. Students are encouraged to actively participate in these activities, and then discuss their thoughts and opinions with the class. All necessary materials for activities will be provided in class.

- b. Response Papers (30%): For readings, two chapters of the main textbook are assigned each week. Students are required to submit *two* response papers (1-2 pages each, double-spaced), which include the main argument of the chapters, critical questions, and/or discussion of personal experiences. Students will have opportunities to present one of the two papers, share related experiences, and discuss different social/cultural contexts.
- c. Exams (30%): Students will take *two* in-class exams that cover lectures, discussions, and activities. Each exam may include True or False, multiple-choice, and/or short essay questions.

III. Course Policies

- a. *Engagement*: Students are expected to attend all classes and discuss any attendance-related issues with the instructor.
- b. *Communication*: Students are always welcome to ask questions and consult any issues with the instructor. There are diverse channels for communication such as emails and individual meetings. Also, students must respect everyone in this class, at any kind of discussion and class activities.
- c. *Submission*: Students can submit assignments to Cyber Campus. Keep in mind the due date of the assignment. Deadline is the key to the completion of work. In-class assignments (group and/or individual activities) must be submitted at the end of each class.
- d. *Academic Integrity*: Neither plagiarism nor cheating of any kind will be tolerated in this course. Students are responsible for doing all written work independently.

IV. Course Schedule & Readings (* This schedule is subject to change)

- a. Readings and Materials

Course readings will be available in Loyola library at Sogang University. Students are expected to read the chapters of the following main textbook:

Schwalbe, M. (2014). *Rigging the game: How inequality is reproduced in everyday life* (2nd Edition). Chapters 1-6. Oxford University Press, USA.

- b. Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Class 1: Introduction to the Course & Social Stratification

- Overview the course requirements and schedule
- Understand characteristics of social stratification and their relation to inequality

Class 2: Classical Sociological Theories & Sociological Imagination

- Review three theoretical perspectives in sociology
- Discuss what sociological perspectives contribute to answering social inquiries and better understanding our social world

Class 3: Principles of Sociological Research Methods

- Investigate principles of quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Learn how we better examine social stratification using methodological tools

Week 2: Class, Race, & Gender (I)**Class 4: Class from a Sociological Perspective**

- Examine how sociologists define and measure social class
- Review examples and results of empirical studies

Class 5: Class Inequality and Education

- Study how social class plays a key role in shaping the educational achievement
- Learn sociological concepts and theories that explain such processes

Class 6: How Class Works in Contemporary Societies

- Watch a documentary film, *Inequality for All* (1 hour)
- Uncover how capitalism in our society treats people differently

Class 7: Midterm ExamWeek 3: Class, Race, & Gender (II)**Class 8: Race & Ethnicity from a Sociological Perspective**

- Examine how sociologists define and measure race and ethnicity
- Discuss how people experience racial and ethnic boundaries in everyday lives

Class 9: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Criminal Justice Systems

- Investigate examples of biased policing and unfair judicial precedents and the impact of racial and ethnic disparities in criminal justice systems
- Explore variations across time and places using relevant statistics

Class 10: Racial Bias in Artificial Intelligence

- Watch a documentary film, *Coded Bias* (1.5 hours)
- Review how technology can be racist (and sexist) and explore potential solutions for eliminating such biases and prejudices

Class 11: Gender and Socialization

- Examine how sociologists define and measure gendered categories
- Discuss the gendered process of socialization from our own life experiences

Week 4: Intersectionality**Class 12: Gender Inequality at Workplace**

- Learn gendered processes of hiring, training, evaluation, and compensation at work
- Explore gender inequality across jobs and occupations along with potential solutions

Class 13: How Gender Works in Contemporary Societies

- Watch a movie, *Kim Ji-Young Born 1982* (2 hours)
- Study how gender-role identities work across the life course

Class 14: Intersectionality & Review

- Comprehend intersectionality as an analytic framework
- Learn gender and racial bias in medicine as an example
- Discuss what we can learn from the rules of the game
- Review the implication of social stratification and inequality

Class 15: Final Exam**V. Special Accommodations & Aid for the Challenged Students**

Students may experience difficulties requiring special care for education and may request academic accommodations for disabilities. All necessary help and resources will be made for these students. Contact the course instructor.