

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2018

Sociology 98M: Junior Tutorial

Social Class in the United States: Identity, Culture, and Consciousness

Thursdays 11:00–1:00
601 William James Hall

Instructor: Rachel Meyer

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Office: 616 William James Hall

Office Hours: 2:30-3:30 Thursday and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Class, one of the most basic analytical concepts in sociology, structures our social world in fundamental ways. Nevertheless, the extent to which social class is salient to people, and the specific content of class-based identities, varies widely. In this course we will explore the particular contours of class identity and class culture in the United States. Reviewing a variety of empirical and theoretical perspectives, we will pursue the following questions, among others: How can we best conceptualize class identity in the U.S.? And how does class intersect with other aspects of American culture? Are working-class or elite identities racialized? How are boundaries drawn between classes, and among people of the same social class? What might undermine—or bolster—class consciousness in the U.S. context? And how is social class reproduced? The course is rooted in key studies of the American working class, while comparing those to scholarship on professionals and the upper-middle class. Throughout the course we will be attentive to the variety of research agendas on the topic and the various kinds of data that are brought to bear on these questions. After reviewing the relevant literature students will then design and execute their own original research projects that seek to elucidate some aspect of class identity or class culture in the U.S. Students will have the opportunity to engage in each step of the research process, from question formulation and data collection to analysis and write-up. Along the way we will have workshops on the process of conducting primary research, and on each student's project. The methodological focus will be on interviews and ethnographic data, with an attention to how archival evidence and surveys might also shed light on the subject.

REQUIREMENTS

The format of the course is a seminar discussion. Students are expected to do each week's readings in advance of class, to attend each class, and to actively participate in class discussion and in workshops. Your attendance and participation are crucial to the quality of your experience, as well as your success with the research project and in the course.

There are four major components to the course, all of which are required:

- 1) Participation and Attendance
- 2) Research Proposal (7-8 pages) – DUE SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25TH AT 5:00 PM
- 3) Paper Presentation – APRIL 12TH & 19TH
- 4) Final Research Paper (20-25 pages) – DUE WEDNESDAY MAY 2ND AT 5:00 PM

There may be additional exercises or assignments throughout the course, which will be included in your participation grade.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

- Participation and Attendance: 20%
- Research Proposal: 25%
- Paper Presentation: 10%
- Final Research Paper: 45%

Unless instructed otherwise, please submit all written work—as MS Word attachments—via email to: meyer2@fas.harvard.edu. (Please also make sure that the first word of the file name is your last name, and that the pages are numbered.)

Participation: Please come prepared to discuss the readings, assignments, projects, and questions you have about course material. The quality of your contribution and the level of your engagement with course material is crucial to the evaluation of your participation. It is expected that all students will both contribute directly to the conversation and also be able to listen closely and respect the perspectives of their peers. Your participation grade includes participation in class workshops.

Attendance: It is expected that students attend each class session. The course is an intensive seminar that meets only once per week, and your attendance bears directly on your success in the course. Absences will be excused for medical reasons or for religious observance. In these cases you must email the instructor in advance unless there is a medical emergency, in which case you should contact the instructor within 24 hours.

Grading System and Standards: The course will follow the grading system for Harvard College. The complete Harvard College grading system can be found online in the *Handbook for Students* and on the course website, but please make sure to review the following, which will be adhered to:

A, A– Earned by work whose excellent quality indicates a full mastery of the subject and, in the case of the grade of A, is of extraordinary distinction.

B+, B, B– Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities.

C+, C, C– Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.

D+, D, D– Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.

E Earned by work which is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.

If you have any problems—understanding the material, completing assignments, attendance, etc.—contact the instructor as soon as possible. If I know about problems ahead of time we will be better able to solve them.

The Sociology Department's Departmental Writing Fellow is available to meet with students to discuss their papers. Please also remember that the Harvard College Writing Center is available to assist with any stage of the writing process. Information about both can be found online.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Policy for Papers: One partial grade will be deducted from papers that are turned in late (for example, an A- paper would be given a B+). Another partial grade will be taken off for each additional day that the paper is late. Extensions can be given in the case of medical emergency or religious observance. **All requests for extensions must be made in advance of the relevant deadline (if at all possible).**

Electronic Devices: Students are not permitted to use electronic devices—including laptops, tablets, or cell phones—during class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND COLLABORATION

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

READINGS

All readings are required, and it is expected that each week's readings will be completed before Thursday's class. The readings are a crucial part of the course, and they are essential to your learning and success in the class. All readings will be available on the course web site. Additional readings may be assigned as needed.

SCHEDULE

We will begin the course with readings that address central concepts and debates on social class in the United States. We will then move on to discussions of research design during which time students will prepare a research proposal. We will workshop students' projects along the way, and discuss specific issues encountered in data collection and analysis. At the end of the course students will give a final presentation of their research. The schedule outlined below may be adjusted to meet emerging student needs or to address issues that are specific to the selected projects. **All assigned reading is required.**

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 25): INTRODUCTION: CLASS REPRODUCTION

Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (introduction, chapters 1-2)

WEEK 2 (FEBRUARY 1): IDENTITY AND THE WORKING-CLASS SELF

- Vanneman, Reeve and Lynn Weber Cannon. 1987. *The American Perception of Class*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (chapter 3 and pp. 101-109)
- Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb. 1973. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973. (pp. 76-105)
- Lamont, Michele. 2000. *The Dignity of Working Men*. New York: Russell Sage. (chapter 3)

WEEK 3 (FEBRUARY 8): IDEOLOGY – WORKERS VS. PROFESSIONALS

- Silva, Jennifer M. 2013. *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (pp. 81-98)
- Derber, Charles. 1983. "Managing Professionals: Ideological Proletarianization and Post-Industrial Labor." *Theory and Society* 12(3). (pp. 312-325)
- Kunda, Gideon. 2006. *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (pp. 1-14)

WEEK 4 (FEBRUARY 15): SOCIAL BOUNDARIES

TWO RESEARCH QUESTIONS DUE: WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14TH AT 11:00 AM

RESEARCH QUESTIONS WORKSHOP: IN CLASS ON FEBRUARY 15TH

- Lamont, Michele. 2000. *The Dignity of Working Men*. New York: Russell Sage. (chapter 2)
- Hartigan, John, Jr. 1999. *Racial Situations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp. 83-107)
- Lamont, Michele. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (pp. 88-100)

WEEK 5 (FEBRUARY 22): RESEARCH DESIGN AND PREPARING FOR RESEARCH

RESEARCH PROPOSAL CONFERENCES THIS WEEK

****FEBRUARY 22ND IN CLASS: LIBRARY RESEARCH WORKSHOP – MEET IN LAMONT LIBRARY, ROOM B-30****

Glaberman, Martin. 1980. *Wartime Strikes: The Struggle Against the No-Strike Pledge In the UAW During World War II*. Detroit: Bewick Editions. (pp. 121-127)
Marshall, Gordon. 1983. "Some Remarks on the Study of Working-Class Consciousness." *Politics & Society* 12(3):263-301 (conclusion, pp. 287-293)

WEEK 6 (MARCH 1): RESEARCH PROPOSAL WORKSHOP

RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH AT 5:00 PM

RESEARCH PROPOSAL WORKSHOP: IN CLASS ON MARCH 1ST

Come to class prepared to discuss all student proposals, and bring any concerns or questions that you have about your own project.

WEEK 7 (MARCH 8): DATA COLLECTION

DATA COLLECTION CONFERENCES THIS WEEK

REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS: IN CLASS ON MARCH 8TH

Young, Alford A., Jr. 2004. *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (chapter 4)

Lamont, Michele. 2000. *The Dignity of Working Men*. New York: Russell Sage. (pp. 254-257)

Lamont, Michele. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (pp. 19-22)

Silva, Jennifer M. 2013. *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Appendix: Research Methods, pp. 159-163)

Weiss Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press. (pp. 45-119 and 141-143)

SPRING BREAK (MARCH 15)

WEEK 8 (MARCH 22): DATA COLLECTION WORKSHOP

DATA COLLECTION WORKSHOP: IN CLASS ON MARCH 22ND

Gans, Herbert J. 1982. *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*. New York: Free Press. (appendix and pp.414-417)

Lareau, Annette. 1996. "Common Problems in Field Work: A Personal Essay." In *Journeys through Ethnography: Realistic Accounts of Fieldwork*, edited by Annette Lareau and Jeffrey Shultz. Boulder: Westview Press. (pp. 195-219)

WEEK 9 (MARCH 29): NO CLASS ON MARCH 29TH

OFFICE HOURS: PROJECT UPDATES, 9:00 – 11:00 AM

WEEK 10 (APRIL 5): DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHOP: IN CLASS ON APRIL 5TH

Young, Alford A., Jr. 2004. *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp.139-142)

Portelli, Alessandro. 1991. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Albany: SUNY Press. (chapter 1 and pp.48-55)

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 241-243)

Weiss Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press. (chapter 6)

WEEK 11 (APRIL 12): STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS I

WEEK 12 (APRIL 19): STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS II

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 2ND AT 5:00 PM