



SOC 350 Social Stratification and Inequalities in Modern World

Instructor: Olena Muradyan, PhD

Course Description

This course is designed to theoretically and empirically explore the theme of social stratification, changes in social structure and inequalities in contemporary societies. It will cover the current state of the field of social stratification with reference to academic and policy debates, theories, methods, key research findings, and comparative analyses. We will explore such subjects as class, ethnicity, gender, power, elites, poverty, social mobility and status attainment, cultural capital and education, lifestyles, social networks. In stable societies, changes in the economic and social sphere are evaluated in nature; however, these changes are typically accompanied by initial chaos in societies undergoing major systemic transformation, such as Post-Soviet countries. These societies provide excellent opportunities to study social stratification system under social changes. This course will familiarize students with the main theories of social stratification, including class analysis and social mobility, social inequality and social change. We will explore these subjects within comparative, historical, and current events frameworks. Case studies will include transforming societies of Eastern and Central Europe. Historical background of socialism will be studied to put the current changes in these societies in perspective. This course aims to understand the nature of social stratification in both modern and modernizing societies.

Course Evaluation

Test I	20
Test II	20
Class participation	15
Periodic brief summary and analysis papers	10
Term paper	35
Total	100

A+ = 99-100 B+ = 87-89 C+ = 77-79
A = 90-98 B = 83-86 C = 73-76
A- = 90-92 B- = 80-82 C- = 70-72
F = 0-63

Test I and II: written responses to a set of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The questions will cover the main issues discussed in readings and during class.

Summary and Analysis Papers consist of one page responses to the issues raised in readings and in class.

Term paper on social stratification issues and research: specifics of term paper will be discussed in class.

Class participation. Students are expected to discuss all of the assigned readings on the due date and to participate in in-class projects.



Course Outline

Theme 1: Social inequalities as the main characteristics of societies. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Inequalities: the history of development.• Social research of social inequalities: main definitions and theories
Theme 2: Inequality systems and types of social stratification in modern societies. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social inequalities in a Soviet type industrial society• Problem of social inequalities in post-Soviet Ukraine• Transformations of social inequalities in industrialized societies with market economies
Theme 3: Means for creating and reviving of social inequalities and stratification. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic inequality: wealth status and income• Political inequalities: citizenship, power, influence and control
Theme 4: Main “achievement” factors of social inequalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural heritage and education as factors of inequality.• Methods of consumption and lifestyles as factors of inequality.• Social capital and social networks.
Theme 5: Inscriptive factors of social inequalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social construction of gender inequalities.• Ethnic and racial inequalities.• Regional inequalities. Citizenship as a factor of social inequality.
Theme 6: Social mobility: creation and transformation of inequalities and stratification.
Theme 7: Social “inclusion” and social “exclusion”: reinterpretation of the problem of social inequality in contemporary sociological research.

Information in this course syllabus may subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor or EESA.