SOC 340: Social Inequality
Monday and Wednesday 9:40 am – 11:10 am
Levan Center Rm 501- CN 36068

Instructor: Jerome Hendricks
Office hours: M/W 11:10 am -12:10 pm
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Course Description: We find ourselves at an interesting crossroads as members of local, national and global communities. On one hand, more people understand the pervasiveness and affect of social inequality than perhaps ever before. On the other hand, many feel increasingly unable to pinpoint its origins and change its trajectory. This course explores how categories of difference with regard to race/ethnicity, social class, sex/gender, and sexuality are constructed and transformed into systems of inequality. We will investigate what creates these categories and how they are constructed, and consider some explanations as to why these categories endure. We will also consider how various social institutions (the family, education, the economy, the state, the media and so on) maintain systems of stratification based on constructions of difference. The role of ideology in maintaining inequality by endorsing the interests of the dominant group is also discussed. Though these are issues of global concern, because of time considerations we will unpack these issues primarily from a US perspective.

Course Aims and Outcomes: Our text approaches issues of difference and inequality from a social constructionist perspective and it is my hope to develop a sound understanding of this perspective in all of you this semester. We will therefore begin by developing a critical understanding of our own standpoint in light of the norms, values, beliefs and behaviors we have been exposed to. As the course progresses, we will critically analyze various social institutions with an eye toward how we are positioned within them. In other words, we use this term to ascertain how all of the qualities that make each of us who we are intersect to produce privilege and disadvantage. We will conclude the semester with a literature review of your choosing that situates the role of social institutions and inequality in your own work. Through reading, writing and group reflection, I hope you all gain a better sense of how individuals and groups "fit" in the social matrix.

Office Hours and Availability: I will be available after class (11:10 am -12:10 pm) or by appointment if necessary. I will announce any changes to my availability via email and class announcement with as much notice as possible. I rarely check my mailbox and I don't have an office phone (that I know of) so email is the best way to contact me (jhendri2@depaul.edu). I will always do my best to respond to any questions, comments, or issues within 24 hours. HOWEVER, I may require more time for questions sent on weekends and I cannot guarantee a response to emails the night before class. Please keep in mind; I have taken the time to include

as much as possible in this syllabus and on D2L so when questions come up, look to this document as your first resource.

Changes to the Syllabus: We have a great deal of material to cover and not much time to do it. With this in mind, I certainly do not plan on changing the syllabus. Some in-class work may need to change or be adjusted based on our progress but those adjustments will not increase your commitment for the day. If any change does occur, I will post a new syllabus or calendar updates ASAP. Further, time will be given to discuss all work in advance to decrease anxiety and confusion so nothing should come as a surprise to anyone. If any unexpected issues arise and larger changes need to be made, we will do so in order to cover all the necessary material. I understand and respect that you need to plan your lives, so you will always receive advanced, emailed notice from me.

Required Texts: The primary text should be available at the campus bookstore, but feel free to request it from the library or purchase them elsewhere, such as online. While I understand that these books aren't cheap, we will be using this book a great deal, so make sure you have a copy.

Ore, Tracy. *The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality*, 6th edition. McGraw Hill Publishers.

Additional Materials: There are a few additional readings outside of the text throughout the semester. These will all be posted to D2L ASAP. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are having difficulty with any of the posted materials.

Course Grading: 90-100%: A
80-89%: B
70-79%: C
60-69%: D

The following system will account for the total grade you receive:

Assignments	**Points**	**% of Grade**
Attendance	100	20
Group Work	100	20
Standpoint Position Paper	100	20
Literature Review	200	40
Discretionary	**15**	**3**
Total	500	100

Assignment Descriptions

As I'm sure I will continue to point out over the term, we have very little time together. Therefore, I have designed a variety of assignments for in and out of the classroom. Some will be graded more heavily than others but ALL of them are important for your understanding and your grade. When assignments are to be uploaded to D2L they must be **typed, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, one-inch margins, single-spaced** (just like this syllabus) **with your name, the**

assignment name, and the date present in the top, left-hand corner. When uploading a file to D2L, please name the file in the following fashion:

LASTNAME_DATE_ASSIGNMENT.doc (ex. "Hendricks_0502_StandpointPaper.docx")

A similar procedure should be used for emailing me as well. So, **in the subject line of an email**, I would like the following information:

SOC340: LASTNAME - ISSUE (ex. "SOC340: Hendricks - Question about Berger and Luckmann")

Attendance (100 pts): Attending class is extremely important! How else can you discuss the readings and interact with your colleagues and me? Because of the interactive nature of most in-class work, I cannot allow an excused absence of any sort. I have made an exception for emergencies below but these should only be dire situations. There will be some form of attendance every day that will count toward a final grade and WORK DONE IN CLASS CANNOT BE MADE UP. I understand that you have a life outside of our class. However, I urge you to make a commitment to the work for yourself and your colleagues. You can earn 5 points per class by simply being here.

Group Work (100 pts): There will be four days where we will get into groups to discuss readings or do a brief exercise pertaining to the weekly topic. This in-class work will be collected and count toward a total group work grade. This work is not intended to be difficult so these points should be quite easy to obtain. However, if you choose to come to class unprepared or decide to skip class altogether, you may have a problem here.

Standpoint Position Paper (100 pts): In this paper I want you to draw on Ore's definition of standpoint and enculturation, Mills's discussion of the sociological imagination and Sprague's critical grounding of the researcher in a specific position, biography and agenda. Use your situated perspective to critically assess one issue of inequality that resonates most with you. In 3-4 pages you must objectively summarize the issue and consider major concepts through the use of empirical sources from class and at least three others. Through summary and discussion, I want you to take a position and make an informed argument based on how this issue intersects with your own standpoint. Due to D2L by 11pm 05.02.

Literature Review (200 pts): There are multiple ways that we develop literature reviews in sociology. Here, I am looking less for an overview of an entire field and more for a compelling argument regarding the current state of an issue. This type of literature review requires an understanding of current debates, the main arguments from opposing viewpoints, and an understanding of your own position as it relates to the field. I'll offer more information on this project in the weeks to come. For now, know that you will be required to bring in 10 contemporary sources to develop the review and I will require an annotated bibliography as a piece of the final paper. Due to D2L by 11pm 06.09.

Discretionary Points: I do not provide extra credit of any kind. However, I have added fifteen bonus points for those individuals that hand in everything on time, maintain perfect attendance

and a high level of effort throughout the course. These points may not make much of a difference for some of you (it only comes out to about 3% percent) but if you find yourself on the border of one grade or another they could make a significant difference. Therefore, you are encouraged to get involved in the course, stay organized, stop by my office hours, ask questions, and let me know how things are going.

Grade Issues: I understand that you may not always agree with grading. However, I often have a hard time understanding what it is students are upset about (beside the 'letter' or 'number'). In order to avoid the conflict that can arise from emotional responses to graded material, I insist we all abide by the following procedure concerning grade disputes. First, because of the quantity of grading I may have at any given time we may not always be the best at providing feedback. So, please email me a feedback request and we will expand on any grade ASAP. Second, if you have a specific complaint after a grade is posted, please submit it in written form. This written complaint will include your specific issue and provide examples from your work that show why you believe the grade is inappropriate. I will respond to this written complaint and we can schedule a time to discuss the matter if at this point the issue is still unresolved. This process may seem involved but please trust me that it allows for clear and appropriate discussion of disputed grades.

Late Assignments: The assignments for this class are pretty straight-forward. Due dates are provided in the syllabus, on D2L, and will be discussed in class; nothing should come as a surprise to anyone. In-class work will not be accepted after the designated due date. Because all assignments outside of class will be posted to D2L, you will need to contact me as soon as is possible if you are unable to meet the deadline requirement. If you are having technical difficulties, you should contact me **before** the deadline has passed. To be fair to your colleagues, I am not inclined to accept late work at all. If you have an emergency excuse, I will consider it on a case-by-case basis and possibly accept your assignment late at a severe penalty.

Academic Integrity and Honesty: I start all semesters with the belief that no one means to plagiarize. Still, I see plagiarism more than I would like and it often is a result of simple things students overlook. Please review all guidelines regarding Academic Integrity and if you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask or email. If I determine that you have intentionally plagiarized on an assignment, you will receive no credit (a zero grade) for that assignment and a possible failing grade for the course as stipulated in university policy.

Citations: All quotes or references should be properly cited in your work. Citations in the text include the author's last name and year of publication. Page numbers are included when quotes are taken directly from a work or refer to specific pages. Format guidelines are found in *American Sociological Association Quick Style Guide* posted on D2L or on one of the many style guides found online (just google "asa style guide"). Here are a few important examples:

- **Author's name in text**… as Jackson stated (1992).
- **Author's name in a reference**... rather than serving the main purpose (Simpson 1995).
- **Joint authors**… (Hurt and Wallace 1997).
- **Multiple author**s… (Brown, White, and Green 1982) or (Brown et al. 1982)

- **Quotations in the text…** "… rather than serving the main purpose" (Hendricks 1992, 30).

Cell Phones and Internet Usage: Please refrain from using your cell phones during class. It drives me nuts and as much as I try to ignore them, I'm compelled to stare at people who feel the need to text or take calls during class. ☺ Moreover, it's obvious when you are distracted by technology and it has the tendency to distract others. Similarly, laptops can be a great tool in class but please keep their use to note taking and documentation only. If you are expecting an important call or need to be reachable, let me know in advance and set your phone to vibrate.

Excused Absences: There are no excused absences. If anyone has an unavoidable emergency, I will judge them on a case-by-case basis. Further, I need to know as soon as possible and I will need some form of documentation (like an obituary, doctor's note, the receipt from your mechanic, or anything you can provide to document why you needed to be elsewhere). Generally, family trips are not an emergency absence out of fairness to your colleagues.

Students with Disabilities: Please let me know as soon as is possible if you require any assistance. Please visit the Center for Students with Disabilities for more information.

Religious Observances: I'm unaware of any religious observances on our class days. However, if you are observing a religious holiday, please notify me in advance and as soon as possible in order to arrange for an alternative assignment if necessary.

Drop Policies: If you need to drop this course for any reason, please read and consider all Registration Policies beforehand.

Calendar: Please use the D2L calendar as a primary resource to stay on task and come to various sessions prepared. Readings listed for a given date will be the primary focus of that day and should be read prior to class. I will also include reminders of due dates and class activities so you know what to expect on a day to day basis. As I have mentioned earlier, I designed this syllabus to answer most all questions that arise. So, **before you email me** about the class, **look to this document and the D2L calendar** for your answer.