

Structure and social change

Academic Year: (2019 / 2020)

Review date: 28-04-2020

Department assigned to the subject: Social Sciences Department

Coordinating teacher: AHMED MOHAMED, KARIM

Type: Compulsory ECTS Credits : 6.0

Year : 1 Semester : 2

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Familiarity with the basic conceptual framework of social stratification research as well as common indicators
- 2) Interpretation of empirical data presented in form of table or figure
- 3) Ability to identify and comprehend the main arguments of a scientific text
- 4) Critical thinking
- 5) Search for information and data sources on a relevant topic
- 6) Ability to present orally in front of an audience, and writing skills
- 7) Cooperation and communication with fellow students

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: PROGRAMME

This course introduces students to the major contemporary theories and the central concepts relevant to the study of social stratification in advanced industrial societies, with particular attention to class inequalities. It presents some of the key findings from the comparative literature on social stratification and shows how theoretical debates can be tested against empirical data. The course offers a comprehensive introduction to key debates in the field of social stratification, including debates on meritocracy, the declining significance of social class, the causes of income polarisation, and the determinants of gender and ethnic stratification in contemporary societies.

Detailed program:

1. Basic concepts and the theory of Karl Marx
2. Max Weber's theory of social stratification
3. Contemporary schemes of class and status
4. Demography, social change and inequality
5. Inequality of income and wealth
6. Poverty and deprivation
7. Class mobility
8. Educational mobility
9. Gender stratification
10. Family and inequality
11. Ethnic stratification
12. Inequality and health

LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGY

Theoretical classes for the development of competences and knowledge related to the main debates in the field of social stratification.

Practical classes to further explain certain issues, as well as to carry out individual and group tasks, such as readings, oral group presentations in class, periodical autoevaluation over the course of the semester; all these tasks are oriented toward the acquisition of the specific competences promoted by the course described above.

Individual work of the student includes study of the course material, essay writing, preparation of various tasks and exercises to be carried out during the course of the semester (including coordinating and designing of group presentations), literature search and library work, attending office hours and written correspondence with organizational purposes, both with classmates as well as with the course instructor(s). Finally, studying for and taking the final exam(s).

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The course requires attendance. Active participation in class is considered an essential component of student evaluation. Reading assignments have to be prepared before each practical session.

As part of the continuous evaluation students are asked to:

- a) Write short essays on reading assignments.
- b) Deliver a short group presentation summarizing one of the complementary readings.
- c) Participate in a group presentation called "Stinchcombe test"

The final mark will depend on two major components:

- 1) Class participation, exercises and continuous evaluation: 50%
- 2) Exam: 50%

% end-of-term-examination:	50
% of continuous assessment (assignments, laboratory, practicals...):	50

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Crompton, Rosemary Class and Stratification (2nd edition), Polity Press, 1998
- Marshall, Gordon Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University Press., 1998
- Platt, Lucinda Understanding Inequalities, Polity Press, 2011

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blau, F. Ferber, M and Winkler, A. The Economics of Women, Men and Work (3d edition). , Prentice Hall, 2001
- Collins P.H., and Solomos, J. (eds) Sage Handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies , Sage, 2010
- Marshall, Gordon Repositioning Class. Social Inequality in Industrial Societies. , Sage, 1997