

American Class System, SOCI 3943- 01  
Spring 2017

Prerequisite: Introductory Sociology

Instructor: Tiffany A. Parsons

Office: Pafford 207

Hours: T: 9:45 – 10:45 a.m.; 12:15 – 2:00 p.m.; 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

R: 12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

Phone: 678.839.6335

Email: within CourseDen

Campus email for non-class related correspondence: tparsons@westga.edu

Class Meetings: T/R 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

**Course Description:** Analysis of the contemporary class system in the U.S. Attention to theoretical perspectives, the history of inequality, and social mobility will be included.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify and apply basic concepts and perspectives.
2. Connect sociological concepts to issues and events outside of the classroom.
3. Analyze social issues and current events using sociological perspectives.
4. Construct an organized, informed, and detailed description of the nature of culture and social structure.
5. Construct an organized, informed, and detailed explanation of the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society.
6. Construct an organized, informed, and detailed description the diversity of American society.
7. Demonstrate an ability to think critically and write well.
8. Engage in scholarly dialog with others.

**Required Material:**

Text:

- Gilbert, Dennis. 2011. *The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality 8<sup>th</sup> ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Keller, Bill, et al. 2005. *Class Matters.* NY: Times Books.
- There is an additional text that is assigned based on group assignment. This information is available on CourseDen.

Media:

- The Line (Documentary & available for streaming through Amazon)

UWG Bookstore: <http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/>

**Attendance Policy:** All enrolled students may and are expected to attend class. Students are required to attend class on January 10, 12, 17, & 19. Not doing so may result in you being dropped or withdrawn from the course. If you will be absent on one of the required dates (after enrolling in the class) due to a school related function, notify me prior to class.

Note: After January 19, there is no attendance policy. However, as there are several in-class, graded assignments, please note the Late/make up work policy below.

**Course Participation Policy:** It is expected that all students will actively participate in the course, including engaging the course material beyond the required course content and graded tasks, studying and learning the course material prior to class, actively listening during lecture and presentations, use critical thinking skills during group and class-wide activities, consistently voice informed perspectives in group activities.

- Excellent course participation may result in an addition of up to 3 percentage points to a students' final grade.
  - Note: excellent participation is not a sliding scale in which good participation might earn two points. Either one has excellently participated or one has not. Those who have excellent participation and are within three points of the next high letter grade, will earn the participation boost.
- Poor course participation may result in the loss of up to 3 percentage points from one's final grade.

**Late/Make up work:** Under most circumstances, I do not accept late work or give make up work. If you are contagious, have a severe illness, have a car accident on the way to class, give birth, or have a funeral during class time or out of town, you may ask for an exception in person during my office hours. In either of two last cases, the request should precede the event.

**Communication:**

- In Person: The best and preferred way to communicate with me is in person during office hours. However, if you cannot make office hours, we can schedule an in-person meeting outside of office hours. (See "CourseDen email" below).
- Phone: I will generally answer my phone during office hours. Please do not leave a message. Just pop by my office hours or schedule a meeting.
- Westga.edu email: Only use this address for non-course related communication & emergencies. I typically respond to emails that require a response within 48 hours, Monday – Friday. Note: I do not generally read or respond to emails after 5 p.m. Fridays and before 8 a.m. Mondays.
- CourseDen email: You should only email me to set up a one-on-one meeting with me in the event my office hours conflict with your class schedule. Use the subject line "Meeting Request." Your message should include at least two times when you would like to meet and a brief (one to two sentence) description of the reason for the meeting. Email for any other reason will not be considered or acknowledged. I will respond to

appropriate CourseDen emails within 48 hours, Monday – Friday. Note: I do not generally read or respond to emails after 5 p.m. Fridays and before 8 a.m. Mondays.

- **Class Lounge:** Located in the Discussions section on CourseDen. Post and reply to questions or advice pertaining to the class, teacher, texts, instructions, schedule, content, lectures... All questions about the syllabus, assignments, etc., that are not private or do not only and directly relate to you should be posted in the class lounge. ***You are responsible for*** checking the Class Lounge regularly and ***answering questions as you have knowledge.*** (The bold portion will be considered when determining excellent participation.)

**Changes, Notices, etc.:** I reserve the right to change the schedule, assignments, or requirements. I will announce changes via CourseDen News or email within the course. You are responsible for knowing changes.

**Technology outside of class:** This is a technology enhanced class. You are 100% responsible for access to reliable and properly working technology and knowing how to use CourseDen as well as the technology and software required for this course. You will need

- access to a reliable computer and internet access capable of streaming movies.
- basic computer literacy skills. You will be required to do the following:
  - complete interactive activities
  - take timed quizzes,
  - read text in html, and
  - watch linked videos.

NOTE: Tablets, Smartphones, and Internet Explorer are not compatible with some functions in CourseDen.

DISTANCE ED: The following is a link to UWG Online Connection website (includes links to Orientation, basic software/hardware requirements, Online Student Guide, and all student services) - <http://www.westga.edu/~online/>

- If you have a computer, software, or CourseDen questions, contact distance education: 678.839.6248 or <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help/>

**Technology in class:** Only technology that is permissible under the ADA or being used to enhance your learning/studying for THIS class may be used in class. Class may not be recorded via video or audio without prior written permission from the professor. Violation of this policy may result in withdrawal from the course and legal action.

### **Classroom etiquette:**

1. Be on time for class.
2. Turn off phones, music players, etc. and put them out of sight prior to the start of class.
3. Wait to pack up your belongings until dismissed.

4. Stay in the classroom until dismissed.
  - a. In the case there is a legitimate reason why you may need to leave class (family member in the hospital, you're a volunteer fire fighter, etc.) discuss this possibility with me prior to class.
5. **If someone is presenting to the class, wait until they are finished to enter or leave.**
  - a. In the case you must leave class during a presentation for an emergency, take all of your belongings with you, do not return to class, and visit me during the very next scheduled office hours.
6. Stay alert and focused during class.
  - a. Sleeping, doing other work, or carrying on private conversations with classmates during class will not be tolerated.
7. Voice informed positions and make informed comments.
8. Finish eating/food before entering the classroom.
9. Be respectful of others.
  - a. All students are expected to be respectful to all other students, including when one disagrees with or has had an alternate experience than the one being shared.
  - b. Respect further includes not speaking (or interrupting) while others (both other students and instructor) are speaking.

**Academic Integrity & Honesty:** You read and agreed to the UWG Honor Code, which includes academic honesty and integrity, when you applied to UWG. You are responsible for knowing and understanding this policy. You will be held to this standard. A copy of the Academic Honor Code Pledge Statement that you signed is available for review in the Welcome Module.

Student Handbook: <http://www.westga.edu/~handbook/index.php>. (for more information and definitions on cheating, plagiarism, and academic honesty and integrity, click the Honor Code and Appendix A.)

Any incident of academic dishonesty, intended or unintended, whether the assignment is worth 1% or 75%, may result in an F for the course, and it will result in a letter to the VPAA. If you already have a violation of Academic Honesty on your record, I will seek your expulsion from the University.

**Content:** Students are expected to complete, study, and learn the course content prior to class. Content may include readings, videos, or audio components.

**Content Guides** are provided to lead students through the substantive course material. There are 11 guides throughout the semester, and they consist of approximately 15 long answer questions and prompts.

**Quizzes** consist of approximately 10 - 20 true/false and multiple choice questions. In the case one does poorly on the quiz, she or he should return to the course material, study and learn the material. Students may attempt the Quizzes twice BUT the scores from both

attempts will be averaged. There are 11 quizzes throughout the semester, and they are due at 11:59 p.m. Thursdays.

**Test:** consist of approximately 25 fill-in-the-blank questions predominately covering the content. There are three Tests throughout the semester, and they are due at 11:59 p.m. on Sundays.

**NOTE:** Working together – any collaboration – while taking or after having taken (before the due date/time) a Quizzes or Tests constitutes academic dishonesty. See Academic Honesty Policy above.

**Final Exam:** The final exam is take home. I will give it out in class on Thursday, April 20. It is due in class on April 27.

**In Class:** Class time will predominately be spent in groups working through difficult concepts, critically thinking, applying the knowledge you gained outside of class, analyzing and discussing social issues, developing answers to in-depth sociological questions, and presentations.

**Assignments:** Assignments will mostly be completed in groups during class. Occasionally, there will be a homework component. Assignments will vary from week to week: discussion, analysis, explaining...

#### **Notes about group work:**

- The in-class graded assignments rely on each individual group member coming to class informed (having completed, studied, and learned the assigned course material) and actively participating. In the case, a group member is not pulling her/his weight, the group may vote to kick her/him off the island.
  - Procedure:
    - 1<sup>st</sup>: A representative (1 person!) from the group is to speak with the offending group member and ask her/him to step up her/his game.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>: A majority of group members are to come to my office hours prior to class. If I judge the group to have completed step 1 and the offending group member to continue to be acting in bad faith, I will notify her/him of the consequences.
  - Those kicked off their islands will form a new group. Under the circumstance that only one person has been kicked off their island, she/he will work alone on in-class activities.
- If you believe your group's work is incorrect, you may turn in a personal assignment. **HOWEVER:**
  - If you turn in a personal assignment and it is incorrect or scores lower than the group assignment, you will earn a 0.
  - If the group assignment is, in fact, incorrect or scores lower than your personal assignment, the remainder of the group will earn a 0.

**Class Leader:** Twice throughout the semester, groups will be required to lead the class. Each member is to become “experts” on the assigned course material. Individually, members will write a scholarly reflection. The group will work together to create an outline of the material, present an application/expansion of the material using outside research, and lead the class in discussion. There are four parts to the exposition. Detailed instructions and groups’ assigned dates can be found in CourseDen.

**Book Project:** Each group is assigned a different text relating to class. Group members are to read their assigned text throughout the semester, write a book report, review, & reflection individually. Then, work together to develop an outline and presentation of the book. Detailed instructions and groups’ assigned dates can be found in CourseDen.

**Grading:**

Quizzes: 25%

Assignments: 20%

Tests: 15%

- Test 1 accounts for 3% of your overall grade.
- Test 2 accounts for 5% of your overall grade.
- Test 3 accounts for 7% of your overall grade.

Class Leader: 20%

Book Project: 15%

- Individual Report, Review, & Reflection accounts for 10% of your overall grade.
- Presentation accounts for 5% of your overall grade.

Final Exam: 5%

Points	Letter Grade
90+	A
80-89.9999	B
70-79.9999	C
60-69.9999	D
59.999 & below	F

**NOTE:**

- Poor behavior and/or participation may result in the loss of points from your final grade.
- Excellent participation may result in the addition of points to your final grade.
- Academic dishonesty will result in failing the class without regard to your other grades in the course.

Library: <http://www.westga.edu/library/>

Common Language: <http://tinyurl.com/UWGSyllabusPolicies>

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT:**

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A CDS Counselor will coordinate those services:

[http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index\\_8884.php](http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php)

**If you are entitled to and desire accommodation: Email me your packet immediately – before the end of day Monday, Jan 12 – along with a list of the accommodations you desire – through CourseDen with the subject “ADA Accommodations.”**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT:**

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT:**

University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

American Class System, SOCI 3943- 01, Spring 2016  
Tentative Schedule

Dates	Topic	Course Material Assignments	Due 11:59 p.m. unless otherwise noted
Week 1			
1/10/17	Syllabus		
1/12/17	Introduction/Groups		
Week 2			
1/17/17	Theory	Two American Families (Linked) & Born Rich (Linked)	
1/19/17	Group Mtgs		
Week 3			
1/24/17	Class	Keller 1; Gilbert 1;	
1/26/17			Quiz 1
Week 4			
1/31/17	Position & Prestige	Keller 9; Gilbert 2;	
2/2/17			Quiz 2
Week 5			
2/7/2017	Occupation & Change	Keller 10; Gilbert 3	
2/9/2017			Quiz 3
2/12/17			TEST 1
Week 6			
2/14/17	Wealth	Keller 11; Gilbert 4	
2/16/17			Quiz 4
Week 7			
2/21/17	Socialization	Keller 2; Keller 3; Gilbert 5	
2/23/17			Quiz 5
Week 8			
2/28/17	Mobility	Keller 4; Keller 14; Gilbert 6	Book Report & Reflection Due IN CLASS
3/2/17			Quiz 6
3/5/17			TEST 2
Week 9			
3/7/17	Group Mtgs		
3/9/17	Group Mtgs		
Week 10			
3/14/17	Family & Education	Keller 6; Keller 7; Gilbert 7	
3/16/17			Quiz 7
Week 11			
3/28/17	Elites	Keller 12; Gilbert 8	Book Reviews Due IN CLASS
3/30/17			Quiz 8



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Week 12

4/4/17	Class Consciousness	Keller 5; Gilbert 9	
4/6/17			Quiz 9

Week 13

4/11/17	The Poor	Keller 8; Gilbert 10; The Line	
4/13/17			Quiz 10

Week 14

4/18/17	Growing Inequality	Keller 13; Gilbert 11	
4/20/17			Quiz 11
4/23/17			Test 3

Week 15

4/25/17	Book Reports		
4/27/17	Book Reports		Final Exam IN CLASS