

Framingham State University
Department of Sociology and Criminology
SOCI 315: *Social Class*
Winter 2023

Professor:	Dr. Ben Brucato
Office Location:	Online only
Office Hours:	Thursdays at 8pm (with appointment) Fridays at 9am (with appointment)
E-mail:	bbrucato@framingham.edu
Standard Class Meetings:	Asynchronous online
Course dates:	December 22 - January 16

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

An exploration of class division in the United States. The course considers questions such as: What are the major social classes in our society? To which class do we belong? How likely is it that we will change our class over time? How does the unequal distribution of wealth affect our life chances, quality of life, power, status, and beliefs? Is the current class system fair, and what are the alternatives?

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Develop your ability to explain class as an economic category and its connections to social categories (e.g., status) and political power.
2. Understand the development of sociological class analysis from its origins in the work of Karl Marx, through its development into the 21st century.
3. Relate different and competing approaches to class analysis.
4. Apply class analysis to varying historical and contemporary contexts.
5. Collaborate in facilitating meaningful discussions about social class and the ways class analysis explains our worlds.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course relies extensively on collaborative learning. Course readings will use the Perusall platform for collaborative reading, allowing students to collectively annotate the text, ask and answer questions, and include comments to help “unpack” the main claims of the authors.

In all higher learning, students are responsible to their peers for enhancing the learning environment. Because of the structure of this course, that responsibility is clearer and so too are failures to meet that responsibility. Adequate preparation and participation must be consistent and thorough.

COURSE POLICIES

Communication norms: Students will have opportunities to discuss with their classmates, to answer questions, and to participate in discussions. Each student is expected to adhere to the following norms:

1. **Take appropriate space:** Contribute to discussions and interactive lectures by asking thoughtful questions and answering questions posed by the instructor or other students, while not speaking so frequently that other students are unable to participate.
2. **Stay on-topic:** This course is driven by texts, and discussions should remain centered around assigned readings and themes raised in them, the information presented during class meetings, and prepared discussion questions.
3. **Intellectual merit:** Contributions to discussion and writing for assignments will be considered in terms of intellectual merit. There are many ways to confront social issues, and in this class, we will confront them *intellectually* and *sociologically*.
4. **Charity:** We will discuss early in the term the “principle of charity.” Students should make a concerted effort to be charitable with the texts they engage, with their instructor, and with other students.
5. **Non-oppressive language:** Students should make their best attempts to use non-oppressive language.

Contacting your instructor: Please review the syllabus for answers to your question before emailing me. I may ignore emails with questions that are clearly answered with reference to the syllabus. I will make all reasonable attempts to answer emails within two business days, and to be quicker when major deadlines are approaching.

Late work: Assignments are available with significant time to complete before they are due. It is your responsibility to manage your own time. Without *both* exceptional circumstances and prior arrangements, late assignments are not accepted. Please contact your instructor as soon as possible to explain and document any exceptional situation that merits an extension.

Notes, slides, video and audio recording: Material provided for this course by your instructor is solely for use by students enrolled in this course. Students may only use notes, slides, and recordings for their own personal use. Students may not share notes, slides, or recordings without instructor permission. Giving or selling recordings to an outside vendor or entity without instructor permission is a violation of the instructor’s copyright protection and may violate rules of the university.

Institution-wide policies (e.g., about plagiarism) are not reiterated here, but students are expected to follow all Framingham State University policies in this class.

The instructor reserves the right to amend course policies, and updates will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas.

COURSE CONTENT NOTIFICATION

At times during this semester, we will be reading about, watching, and discussing things that may be disturbing to some students.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Your instructor is personally and professionally committed to making the class and the university community more accessible. When their needs are known in advance, your instructor will make appropriate accommodations for students with learning or other impairments, even if they are not registered with Disability Services; however, students are advised to work with Disability/Access Services (e-mail: disabilityservices@framingham.edu) and the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (e-mail: academicsupport@framingham.edu). If you already have defined accommodations through Disability/Access Services, please ensure they send a notification as soon as possible.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Participation (60% of total) Education research and your instructor's experience shows that class participation strongly correlates with overall learning and course performance.

- **Collaborative Reading (30%)** Each student has an obligation to members of the class to contribute to collaborative reading on Perusall. This is a large component of your grade, so it is imperative that you access and annotate every assigned reading.
- **Discussion Board Posts (30%)** There are four in-depth discussion board assignments. At the end of weeks one through four, you will have discussion board assignments, where you will post in English about what you learned and discussed on Perusall. These posts will be for you to succinctly summarize some of your annotations and conversations. You are also required in these posts to note some open questions that you have. Prompts will be provided to help direct your writing and to help clarify my expectations. You will read posts from other students and comment on them. These comments are required and graded. Use your comments to help other students clear up confusion, to add to things they said by elaborating on a topic, or to summarize a point that they made that helped you learn more about a topic.

Exam (30% of total) There is one written exam that will have a combination of (8-10) short answer questions (answerable in 3-5 sentences) and (4-6) essay prompts (answerable in several paragraphs). The exam will take several hours to complete.

Reflection and Self-Assessment (10%) At the end of the term, students will reflect on what they have learned and assess their own progress in the course. You will have 1ve days to complete the assignment. Questions will be provided to help direct your writing. Your responses should be 1 ½ to 2 pages long, single-spaced, with 1” margins, and in Times New Roman 12 pt font.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

93-100%	= A	80-82.9%	=B-	67-69.9%	=D+
90-92.9%	= A-	77-79.9%	=C+	63-66.9%	=D
87-89.9	=B+	73-76.9%	=C	59.1-62.9%	=D-
83-86.9	=B	70-72.9%	=C-	0-59%	=F

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

NOTE:

- Refer to the class Canvas page for the most up-to-date assignments and specific due dates.
- Readings subject to change.
- All required readings should be accessed through Perusall. You are advised to acquire *Class Counts*, Student Edition, by Erik Olin Wright.

Week 1

Historical overview

Required reading: Rosemary Crompton, selection from “Class Analysis: The Classic Inheritance and its Developments in the Twentieth Century”

Primitive Accumulation

Required reading: Karl Marx, selections from *Capital*, Vol. 1

Optional reading: Silvia Federici, selections from *Caliban and the Witch*

Marx

Required: David McLellan, Chapter Five from *The Thought of Karl Marx*; Mao Tse Tung, “Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society”

Weber

Required: Max Weber, “Class, Status, Party”; Will Atkinson, “Class as Life Chances,” in *Class*

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Rosemary Crompton, further selections from “Class Analysis: The Classic Inheritance and its Developments in the Twentieth Century”

Week 2

Introduction to contemporary class analysis

Required: Erik Olin Wright, "Class Analysis," in *Class Counts* (read on Perusall)

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Rosemary Crompton, selections from "Class Analysis: The Classic Inheritance and its Developments in the Twentieth Century"

Class, Culture, and the influence of Bourdieu

Required: Rosemary Crompton, "Class and Culture: The Ethnography of Class"

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Chen, Wu, and Miao, "Housing and Subjective Class Identification in Urban China"

Class Structure

Required: Adkins et al., "Class in the 21st century: Asset inflation and the new logic of inequality"

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Erik Olin Wright, "Class Structure," "The transformation of the American Class Structure, 1960-1990," and "The fall and rise of the American petty bourgeoisie," in *Class Counts*

The "Middle Class"

Required: Excerpt on the middle class in the U.S. by David Roediger

Week 3

Oppression

Required: Iris Marion Young, "The Five Faces of Oppression"

Social mobility

Required: Massey and Rugh, "The Great Recession and the Destruction of Minority Wealth"

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Erik Olin Wright, "The Permeability of Class Boundaries," in *Class Counts*

Class and Gender

Required: TBD

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required):

Erik Olin Wright, Part II, Class and gender, in *Class Counts*

Class and Race

Required: Massey and Denton, selections from *American Apartheid*; Oliver Cromwell Cox, selections from *Caste, Class, and Race*

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): McCauley, selections from *The Mind of Oliver Cromwell Cox*

Week 4

Researching Class

Required: Erik Olin Wright, "A general framework for studying class consciousness and class formation," in *Class Counts* (read on Perusall)

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Erik Olin Wright, "Class consciousness and class formation in Sweden, the United States and Japan," in *Class Counts*

Class in Contemporary China

Required: Caixia Du, "The Chinese Precariat"

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): TBD

The Rentier Premium

Required: Jangyoun Lee, "Rentier Premium and Wealth Inequality"

Supplemental/Optional reading (not required): Erik Olin Wright, "Confirmations, surprises and theoretical reconstructions," in *Class Counts*