Course syllabus Social Stratification, Spring 2025

Department of Sociology, Stockholm University

Main course instructor

Anton B. Andersson, Institute for Social Research, Stockholm University
anton.andersson@sofi.su.se

Course content

The course focuses on description and explanation of social stratification in modern societies.

(a) theories of social class with empirical applications

(b) social class mobility and inequality of educational opportunity

(c) social stratification in other dimensions, e.g., gender, ethnicity and health.

Intended learning outcomes

After completing this course, participants are expected to be able to:

- Understand the meaning of central concepts and theories in social stratification and class theory.
- Identify important similarities and differences among theories of social stratification.
- Understand how theories of social stratification are tested empirically.
- Account for, and analyse, the content of central classical and modern texts in social stratification in a clear and well-argued manner.
- Critically assess classical and modern sociological theories of social stratification in terms of their merits and limitations.

Course organisation

The course comprises 10 weeks of half-time studies.

- Course participants meet on seven occasions. These occasions combine a two-hour lecture immediately followed by a one-hour seminar where the literature is discussed. Questions for discussion will be posted at Athena before the seminar. *The students are expected to have read the literature and thought about the questions prior to the seminar.*
- Attendance is mandatory. Students who miss more than one class will have the opportunity to write a complementary assignment.

Assessment and examination

Examination

The course is examined based on a written exam with six essay questions where three questions are answered in a digital on-campus exam (with the possibility to bring printed material), and three questions in the format of a take-home exam.

The questions will be about central concepts, theories and important empirical findings in social stratification, and critical assessments of these in terms of their merits and limitations.

Cite the course literature using page numbers in order to build your argument (using page numbers from the course book when appropriate).

Note that for the on-campus exam, preregistration is mandatory and required (student.ladok.se). The student can find the room for the exam a few days before at schema.su.se.

Evaluation

Ability to use the course literature in an independent way to accurately describe, critically analyze and compare concepts and theories and argue convincingly for interpretations and conclusions.

Each essay question is assessed at three levels: i) Good, ii) Acceptable (some flaws), and iii) Fail. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = Excellent (Good on all 6 questions)

B = Very good (Good on at least 5 questions)

C = Good (Good on at least 3 questions)

D = Satisfactory (Good on at least 1 question)

E = Sufficient (Acceptable on all questions)

Fx = Insufficient (Fail on one question)

F = Fail (Fail on more than one question)

E is needed to pass the course. Students who have been graded Fx are entitled to supplement their examination. The supplement will be graded Fail or Acceptable. Students with F are entitled to do the exam again.

Students with E (or higher) are not entitled to another examination to raise their grades.

Students can request to have an examination according to the same Kursplan up to three semesters after it has stopped being valid.

Course Schedule and other important dates

Date	Time	Location	Topic	Lecturer
2025-03-27	09:00-12.00	E420	Introduction to social stratification Lecture + seminar	Anton B. Andersson
2025-04-03	13:00-16.00	D315	Health and stratification Lecture + seminar	Olof Östergren
2025-04-10	13:00-16.00	E420	Intergenerational transmission of income Lecture + seminar	Martin Hällsten
2025-04-15	09:00-12.00	E420	Social mobility and educational inequality Lecture + seminar	Jan O. Jonsson
2025-04-29	09:00-12.00	D315	Skills and Social Class Lecture + seminar	Johan Westerman
2025-05-06	09:00-12.00	B413	Gender stratification Lecture + seminar	Marie Evertsson
2025-05-15	13:00-16.00	D320	Ethnic stratification Lecture + seminar	Anton B. Andersson
2025-05-20	08:00 - 12:00	TBA	On campus exam	
2024-05-21	09:00	The take-home exam is published at Athena		
2024-06-05	Before midnight	Last day to upload the take-home exams in Athena		

Note: All lectures are in “Södra husen”

Länk:
https://cloud.timeedit.net/su/web/stud1/s.html?tab=3&type=courseevent&h=t&object=cevt_38044_VT2025&startdate=20250222&enddate=20250907&l=en

Readings

Below is a list of recommended readings for each lecture. The students are encouraged depending on their own research interest to also read other chapters in David B. Grusky (ed.) Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective, Westview Press (4th Edition).

1. Introduction (Anton B. Andersson)

Chapters in Social Stratification

1. David B. Grusky & Kate Weisshaar "The Questions We Ask About Inequality?"

2. Kingsley Davis & Wilbert E. Moore "Some Principles of Stratification"

14. Karl Marx "Alienation and Social Classes", "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism"

and "Ideology and Class"

17. Immanuel Wallerstein "Class Conflict in the Capitalist World Economy"

18. Max Weber "Class, Status, Party"

24. Donald J. Treiman "Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective"

Journal articles and other texts

Milanovic, Branko. 2024. "The three eras of global inequality, 1820–2020 with the focus on the past thirty years." *World Development* 177: 106516

2. Health and stratification (Olof Östergren)

Chapters in Social Stratification

120. Johannes Siegrist and Michael Marmot "Health Inequalities and the Psychosocial Environment: Two Scientific Challenges"

121. Karen Lutfey and Jeremy Freese "The Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality"

122. Richard Miech, Fred Pampel, Jinyoung Kim, & Richard G. Rogers "Why Do Mortality Disparities Persist?"

Journal articles and other texts

Altmejd, A., Östergren, O., Björkegren, E., & Persson, T. (2023). Inequality and COVID-19 in Sweden: Relative risks of nine bad life events, by four social gradients, in pandemic vs. prepandemic years. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 120(46), e2303640120.

Hoffmann, R., Kröger, H., Tarkiainen, L., & Martikainen, P. (2019). Dimensions of social stratification and their relation to mortality: a comparison across gender and life course periods in Finland. *Social Indicators Research, 145*, 349-365.

Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. (1995). Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease. *Journal of health and social behavior*, extra issue: 80-94.

Montez, J. K., & Bisesti, E. M. (2024). Widening Educational Disparities in Health and Longevity. *Annual Review of Sociology, 50*.

Seeman, T., Epel, E., Gruenewald, T., Karlamangla, A., & McEwen, B. S. (2010). Socio-economic differentials in peripheral biology: Cumulative allostatic load. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1186(1), 223-239.

3. Intergenerational transmission of income (Marin Hällsten)

Chapters in Social Stratification

56. Gary Solon “Intergenerational Income Mobility”

57. John Ermisch, Markus Jäntti, Timothy Smeeding, & James A. Wilson “Advantage in Comparative Perspective”

Journal articles and other texts:

Corak, Miles. (2013). "Income inequality, equality of opportunity, and intergenerational mobility." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(3), 79-102.

Engzell, Per, and Carina Mood. (2023). "Understanding Patterns and Trends in Income Mobility through Multiverse Analysis." *American Sociological Review* 88(4): 600-626.

Fox, Liana, Florencia Torche, and Jane Waldfogel. (2016). "Intergenerational mobility." In: Brady, David, and Linda M. Burton, eds. *The Oxford handbook of the social science of poverty*. Oxford University Press, 2016. Available to download via SU from Oxford Handbooks Online.

Chetty, Raj Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez. (2018). "Economic mobility." In Grusky, David, and Jennifer Hill. (Eds.). Inequality in the 21st century: A reader. Routledge. Available to download from: https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/SOTU_2015_economic-mobility.pdf

Solon, Gary. (2018). "What do we know so far about multigenerational mobility?" *The Economic Journal*, 128(612), F340-F352.

4. Social mobility and educational inequality (Jan O Jonsson)

Chapters in Social Stratification

53. Robert Erikson & John H. Goldthorpe “Trends in Class Mobility: The Post-War European Experience”

54. Richard Breen “Social Mobility in Europe”

55. Jan O. Jonsson, David B. Grusky, Matthew Di Carlo, & Reinhard Pollak “It’s a Decent Bet That Our Children Will Be Professors Too”

62. Richard Breen, Ruud Luijkx, Walter Müller, and Reinhard Pollack “Nonpersistent Inequality in Educational Attainment”

63. Michelle Jackson “Determined to Succeed”

Journal articles and other texts

Erikson & Jonsson 1996, Introduction to Can Education be Equalized? (Available in Athena)

5. Skills and social class (Johan Westerman)

Chapters in Social Stratification

16. Erik Olin Wright "A General Framework for the Analysis of Class Structure"

Journal articles and other texts

le Grand, Carl and Michael Tåhlin. 2013. "Class, occupation, wages and skills: The iron law of labor market inequality." *Comparative Social Research*, 30: 3-46.

Oesch, D. (2006). Coming to Grips with a Changing Class Structure An Analysis of Employment Stratification in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. *International Sociology, 21*(2), 263-288.

Rose, David & Eric Harrison (2007). The European socio-economic classification: a new social class schema for comparative European research, *European Societies*, 9:3, 459-490, DOI: 10.1080/14616690701336518

Tåhlin, Michael. 2007. "Class clues" *European Sociological Review*, 23: 557-72.

6. Gender stratification in the labour market (Marie Evertsson)

Chapters in Social Stratification

95. Claudia Goldin & Cecilia Rouse "The Impact of "Blind" Auditions on Female Musicians"

96. Shelley Correll, Stephen Benard & In Paik "Getting a Job"

97. András Tilcsik "Do Openly Gay Men Experience Employment Discrimination?"

98. Barbara Reskin "Rethinking Employment Discrimination and Its Remedies"

Journal articles and other texts

Birkelund, G. E., Lancee, B., Larsen, E. N., Polavieja, J. G., Radl, J., & Yemane, R. (2022). Gender discrimination in hiring: evidence from a cross-national harmonized field experiment. *European Sociological Review*, 38(3), 337-354.

Evertsson, M., C. Magnusson and M. van der Vleuten (2023). Social Stratification by Gender and Parenthood: The Importance of Family Formation, Gender Roles, and Ideals, in Gangl, G., Platt, L., Polavieja, J., and van der Werfhorst, H (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197539484.013.35

Penner et al. (2023). Within-job gender pay inequality in 15 countries. *Nature Human Behavior* 7, 184–189. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01470-z

7. Ethnic stratification in the labour market (Anton B. Andersson)

Chapters in Social Stratification

81. Bonacich, Edna “A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market”

82. Portes, A. and Manning, R.D. “The immigrant enclave: Theory and empirical examples.”

83. Alba, Richard and Nee, Victor “Assimilation Theory for an Era of Unprecedented Diversity”

84. Portes, A. and Zhou “The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants”

Journal articles and other texts

Bursell, Moa 2014. "The Multiple Burdens of Foreign-Named Men - Evidence from a Field Experiment on Gendered Ethnic Discrimination in Sweden", *European Sociological Review*, 30:3 399-409.

Jonsson, Jan O. F. Kalter, and F. Van Tubergen. 2018. Studying Integration: Ethnic Minority and Majority Youth in Comparative Perspective, In Kalter, Frank, Jonsson, Jan O., van Tubergen, Frank, Heath, Anthony. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 215, 1–39, British Academy. https://www.frankvantubergen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Growing-Up-in-Diverse-Societies-Chapter-1-Jonsson-Kalter-Van-Tubergen-1.pdf

Wimmer, Andreas. "The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: A multilevel process theory." *American journal of sociology* 113.4 (2008): 970-1022.

Andersson, A. B., & Weber, R. (2024). Navigating bias? An assessment of access to, use of, and returns to social capital in the school-to-work transition of descendants of immigrants. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, *91*, 100919. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2024.100919