SOC3358 WEALTH AND SOCIETY

Lecturer: Dr. Jane Doe
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Time: Mondays 12:30-15:30, January 19-March 30
Total Course Hours: 45

Course Description

This course will focus on sociological analysis of wealth, poverty, and inequality in contemporary Hong Kong. In particular, we focus on social class and the distribution of wealth. Topics will include:

- social mobility in contemporary Hong Kong
- globalization and its impact on social order
- analysis of class with regard to social stratification
- sociological theory and class analysis
- race, gender, sexuality in relation to inequality

Prerequisites

Introduction to Sociology

Assessment

- Tutorial participation 10%
- Group Project/Presentation 15%
- Final Essay 35%
- Final Exam 40%
Assignments

**Group project/Presentation:** (20 minutes in duration)
Students (in groups of 3-4 people) are required to pick a topic related to wealth and inequality. Together, you must give a group presentation in class. Your presentation must address the most significant changes in wealth and inequality in contemporary Hong Kong, especially in relation to the global economic system. The presentation will not exceed 20 minutes and will be held at the end of the semester.

**Final Essay:** (~3000 words or 10-12 pages)
In this final paper, you must examine one or more compelling questions or issues associated with one of the topics below in the context of wealth and social class in Hong Kong. Students must explore this topic through a research project and theoretical investigation. This investigation should involve online ethnography, survey, interviews, and a review of literature beyond assigned class readings. Tables, graphs, and figures should be included, showing the results of your investigation.

- a. The increasing gap between the wealthiest and poorest in society.
- b. Erasure of economic stability and steady growth
- c. Intersections of race and gender in socially-marginalized groups.
- d. Social mobility of minority groups in contemporary Hong Kong.

## Lecture Topics

**Global poverty and stratification**

*Jan 19*
What paths exist for escape from poverty?
Is there a natural order with regard to stratification?
What is the impact of the international trade and deregulation?
How does the experience of poverty affect social mobility?

**Analysis of class and controversies of development**

*Jan 26*
Who has defined the discourse around development?
How can contemporary class issues in Hong Kong be understood from the Marxist perspective?
Reducing poverty and Weber’s polar night of icy darkness
Feb 2
How can we theorize class and poverty within the global context?
From the perspective of Weber, how can we understand poverty across countries and individual approaches to poverty reduction?
How does Weber’s conception of the Iron Cage fit into contemporary issues of wealth and inequality?

Economic structures and the dilemma of international aid
Feb 9
What are the development goals of neighboring countries in southeast Asia?
What social movements have formed in response to changes in the global economic system?

A structural conception of class and society in Hong Kong
Feb 16
How can we measure the impact of inequality?
What can class be signaled?
How do we reconcile the actions of multilateral agencies at the global level with consequences and experiences of individuals in society?

Hong Kong as a global city in the age of corporate capitalism
Mar 2
What processes take place in the formation of class?
How porous are borders surrounding class?
What does corporate involvement in Hong Kong society tell us about contemporary social order?

Inequality and corporate social responsibility
Mar 23
What is the impact of economic globalization over the last 30 years in Hong Kong?
How do societies hold large global companies accountable?
What response can be seen by social elites and marginalized groups.

Redistribution and intersections of race and gender
Mar 30
How are minority groups affected by changes in the economy?
How is society stratified along lines of race, gender, and ethnicity?
**Recommended Text**


**Required Readings**


