



GO GLOBAL PARTNER UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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
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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

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| Jan 19 | Global poverty and stratification
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? |
| Jan 26 | Analysis of class and controversies of development
Who has defined the discourse around development?
How can contemporary class issues in Hong Kong be understood from the Marxist perspective? |

- Feb 2** **Reducing poverty and Weber's polar night of icy darkness**
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?
- Feb 9** **Economic structures and the dilemma of international aid**
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?
- Feb 16** **A structural conception of class and society in Hong Kong**
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?
- Mar 2** **Hong Kong as a global city in the age of corporate capitalism**
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?
- Mar 23** **Inequality and corporate social responsibility**
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.
- Mar 30** **Redistribution and intersections of race and gender**
How are minority groups affected by changes in the economy?
How is society stratified along lines of race, gender, and ethnicity?

Recommended Text

Bermingham, D. (2011). The politics of global education policy: the formation of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI). *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(4), 558-569.

Required Readings

Cohen, J., & Easterly, W. (2009). *What works in development?: thinking big and thinking small*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Chiu, SWK & Lee, CK (1997) *After the Hong Kong Miracle: Women Workers under Industrial Restructuring*. *Asian Survey*, 37(8): 752-770.

Goodstadt, LF (2013) *Poverty in the Midst of Affluence: How Hong Kong Mismanaged Its Prosperity*. Hong Kong University Press. Chapters 4, 5.

Harvey, D. (2010). *The enigma of capital: and the crises of capitalism*. London: Profile.

Lee, WKM (2004) *Ethnic and Gender Relations in Hong Kong: The Work Experiences of Recent Mainland Chinese Immigrant Women*. *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal*, 13(2): 233-253.

Postiglione, G.A., B.Jiao & M. Goldstein (2011) *Education in the Tibetan Autonomous Region: policies and practices in rural and nomadic communities*, in J.Ryan (ed.) *Education Reform in China*. London: Routledge Press.

Sachs, J. (2005). *The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time*. New York: Penguin Press.

Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2012). *Economic development* (11th ed.). Boston, Mass.: Addison-Wesley. [Earlier editions of this book are also fine.]