Social Stratification and Social Mobility

SOSC 3880
Fall 2023

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30AM-Noon
G009B, CYT Bldg (70)

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Subject to revision. Please check regularly for revised versions.

Inequality has reemerged as a central concern in social science research. Studies of social stratification and mobility seek to understand how patterns of inequality emerge and persist over time, and what the implications of inequality are for society, families and individuals. The course focuses on economic inequality and its relationship to education, employment, race and ethnicity, housing, and family structure.

Readings in the primary course text mostly refer to the US because the study of stratification and mobility has a long history there, the data and methods are well-developed, and the range of topics is broad. For the first two-thirds of the class we will focus on these readings as a starting point for class discussions of stratification, mobility, and inequality in general and in HK, the mainland and Asia.

The class will be organized as a seminar, with meetings focused on discussion, rather than lecture. I will begin each class with introductory remarks on the topic at hand, and then we will have a discussion led by a team of students. Assigned readings or viewing should be completed in advance of each class meeting. Students will write a reflection each month. The details are described below.

Grading

Component	Percent
Discussion Leadership	15
Proposed Questions for Class Discussion	20
Monthly Reflections	20
Class Participation	15
Class Attendance	5
Proposal for Final Project	5
Final Project	20

Discussion leadership

From the 2nd week onward, teams of students will be responsible for leading discussion in each class session. The size of each team and the number of times each student will need to participate in a team will be determined by the total enrollment. Teams will be responsible

for introducing each reading, reviewing the proposed questions at Canvas (described below) and selecting some for discussion, and managing the resulting discussion.

Normally teams will divide the assigned readings or viewings for the week among themselves, with each team member taking responsibility for a selection of readings or viewings. The team members will summarize the readings or viewings for which they are responsible, offer their thoughts or observations, and then call on classmates who posted relevant questions or responses to share them.

Proposed questions for class discussion

Starting from the 2nd week, students are responsible for proposing a question for discussion on Canvas in advance of each class. It should be no more than 100 words. It should raise a question clearly related to the reading to be discussed in class and should refer to points made in one or more of the readings for that week. I will grade the responses 0-5 as follows:

If you come across recent news reports, opinion pieces or other materials related to a week's reading, you may include links to them in your proposed question, and you may introduce them if you are called on by discussion leaders or the instructor.

0 – No submission or completely off-topic. *Your question must be clearly relevant to the topics of the assigned reading. Seriously off-topic questions will not receive credit.*
1 – Inadequate. Little or no engagement with the assigned reading or effort to develop a question.
2 – Below average. Barely enough engagement with assigned reading and/or effort to develop a question.
3 - Acceptable. Shows engagement with the reading or viewing, and a serious effort to come up with a question. This will be the most common grade.
4- Above average. Superior engagement with the reading and/or effort to come up with a question. Must connect to at least one of the readings or viewings for that week.
5 – Superior. Excellent engagement with the reading and/or highly creative or thoughtful independent thinking about a question for discussion that is related to the assigned reading.

Discussion leaders do not need to post a question in the week in which they are leading discussion.

Because the questions are to be the basis for class discussion, and other students need to review them to choose some to upvote, there will be no credit for late postings.

Proposed questions will normally be due 24 hours before class. I expect you to review the proposed questions before each class and 'like' a few that you would like the discussion to focus on. This will help the discussion leaders and myself identify questions of broader interest to the class. You may also comment on questions proposed by others to express support or add details.

Monthly Reflections

Once a month, that is roughly once every four weeks, you will be required to write a reflection on what you have learned from the readings and discussions for that month. It should be 500-1000 words and should show that you have done the assigned reading and paid attention to class discussion.

Class participation

Students are expected to participate in class discussion. The TA will track contributions to discussion.

In addition, the discussion leader or I may call on you to share the question or response they posted to Canvas with the class, students should be prepared to introduce their question or response. Please review your post before coming to class so that you are ready to share it if called on.

Other contributions to discussion should reflect familiarity with the assigned readings.

Your activity upvoting/commenting on questions proposed for class discussion will be reviewed and will also count under class participation.

Class attendance

The TA will take attendance at every class session. You may miss two classes without penalty. For any additional absences to be excused, you will need documentation. Normally only absences due to illness, family emergency, job interview, or participation in an official school activity. For any of these, you will need to submit documentation to the TA.

Proposal for final project

By week 7, students should submit a short proposal (250 words or so) describing their plans for their final project. They are welcome to discuss this with me in advance and may amend their plans afterwards.

Final project

For the final project, students may produce 1) a review of a major book on inequality, 2) a literature review, 3) a research proposal, 4) or a research project, according to their interests. It should be approximately 2000-2500 words, double-spaced, not including references. This will usually be about 8-10 typed pages.

A book review should be on a major recent book related to the topic of inequality. The review should summarize the book, including its methods, data, and key findings, and discuss it in the context of the material covered in class. Students are welcome to select one of the books excerpted in Grusky and Hill (2018) and read the original in its entirety and report on it.

The literature review should introduce and discuss 5-8 academic journal articles on a specific topic related to inequality and the themes of the class. Normally the articles should

be from major academic journals. The selection of articles should include some recent ones. A literature review should include not only a summary of the works including the data and the methods, but some reflections and some comparison of the different works.

Academic Integrity

All the work you submit must be new, and not previously submitted in any other class. If you are working on a related topic for another class, you will need to inform me and the other instructor so that we can coordinate. It is not acceptable to submit the same work for credit to two classes, unless both instructors consent beforehand, and an arrangement is in place to ensure that the total amount of work is equivalent to two projects done separately.

If you use ChatGPT as a tool to rewrite your original text, please include your original below the rewritten text. If you use ChatGPT to generate text that you then rewrite, please include the content produced by ChatGPT below the final version produced by your rewrite. Your submission must include original content that reflects your original thinking. Failure to declare use of ChatGPT and clearly document the content it produced will result in a 0.

Required Reading and Viewing

David B. Grusky and Jasmine Hill, eds. 2018. *Inequality in the 21st Century*. Routledge.

This book is available electronically at the library website.

For many of the chapters excerpted in Grusky and Hill, videos are available at https://inequality.stanford.edu/publications/americas-poverty-course in which the authors discuss their work. You may wish to watch these videos before or after reading the chapters.

You will also be required to watch selected videos from Raj Chetty's online course at Harvard, Using Big Data to Solve Economic and Social Problems: https://opportunityinsights.org/course/ These will be indicated below as Chetty Lecture X, where X is the number of the lecture.

Additional materials may be announced during the semester.

Suggested reading and viewing

Websites

I will refer to these websites frequently during class. Make sure to visit each of them before the first class.

Inequality.org at the Institute for Policy Studies https://inequality.org/
Opportunity Insights - https://opportunityinsights.org

World Inequality Database - https://wid.world/
Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality - https://inequality.stanford.edu/research
Harvard Program on Inequality and Social Policy - https://inequality.hks.harvard.edu/
Center for Equitable Growth - http://ceg.berkeley.edu/

Schedule

In the following, items identified as *Background* should be read before class, but do not need to be included in student presentations. Items identified as *Further Reading* are optional and included because they may be of interest to students seeking more information about the topic.

Class	Topic and Assigned Reading/Viewing
5/9	Introduction and Overview Why Do We Care About Inequality? Global Trends Sign-up for Discussion Group Leadership Grusky and Hill, 1-10 Alvaredo, Facundo, Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, and Gabriel Zucman. 2022. *World Inequality Report 2022.* Executive Summary and Chapter 1 Global Economic Inequality: Insights. United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. 2020. World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World. Executive Summary and Chapter 1 Inequality: Where We Stand Today.
7/9	Trends in HK Sun, Fiona. 2022. Wealth gap between Hong Kong's crazy rich, miserably poor widens since handover. *South China Morning Post*. 20 June 2022. https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3182249/wealth-gap-between-hong-kongs-crazy-rich-miserably-poor OxFam Hong Kong. 2018. *Hong Kong Inequality Report*. Piketty, Thomas and Li Yang. 2021. Income and Wealth Inequality in Hong Kong, 1981-2020: The Rise of Pluto-Communism. World Inequality Lab Working Paper No. 2021/18 DOWNLOAD PDF Summary of key findings *Optional* Hong Kong's Gini coefficient compared with other countries https://www.hkeconomy.gov.hk/en/pdf/gini_comparison.pdf Undated.

| 12/9 | Trends in the East Asia and the Mainland

Mazzocco, Ilaria. 2022. How Inequality Is Undermining China's Prosperity. Big Data in China Report. Center for Strategic and International Studies. https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-inequality-undermining-chinas-prosperity

Hofman, Bert. 2021. China's Common Prosperity Drive. EAI Commentary #33. National University of Singapore East Asian Institute. https://research.nus.edu.sg/eai/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/EAIC-33-20210903.pdf

Optional

Piketty, Thomas, Li Yang and Gabriel Zucman. 2019. Capital Accumulation, Private Property, and Rising Inequality in China, 1978–2015. *American Economic Review*. 109(7):2469-96. LINK

Xie Yu and Xiang Zhou. 2014. Income inequality in today's China. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 111(19):6928-6933. http://www.pnas.org/content/111/19/6928.full

Yi Fan, Junjian Yi, Junsen Zhang. 2021. Rising Intergenerational Income Persistence in China. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*. 13(1):202-30. https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20170097 |
|---|---|
| 14/9 | Historical Context for China

Bamboo Y. Ren, Chen Liang, James Z. Lee. 2020. Meritocracy and the Making of the Chinese Academe, 1912-1952. *China Quarterly*. 244(December): 942-968. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741020001289

Campbell, Cameron and James Z. Lee. 2011. Kinship and the Long-Term Persistence of Inequality in Liaoning, China, 1749-2005. *Chinese Sociological Review*. 44(1):71-104. PMC3626260 |
| 19/9 | Classic Theory

Grusky and Hill, 11-36 |
| 21/9 | The Recent Rise in Inequality

Grusky and Hill, 37-78 |
| 26/9 | Elites/The One Percent

Grusky and Hill, 79-104 |
| 28/9 | Gender, Sexuality, and Inequality I

Grusky and Hill, 345-379 |
| 3/10 | Gender, Sexuality, and Inequality II

Grusky and Hill, 380-424 |

5/10	Gender Inequality in China

He Guangye and Xiaogang Wu. 2021. Family status and women's career mobility during urban China's economic transition. *Demographic Research*. https://www.demographic-research.org/volumes/vol44/8/

Zhou Yun. 2018. The Dual Demands: Gender Equity and Fertility Intentions After the One-Child Policy. *Journal of Contemporary China*. 28(117):367-384.
Link

Background (not to be included in presentation)

Hong Fincher, Leta. 2020. "China's Leftover Women." *New York Times*, October 11, 2012.
https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/opinion/global/chinas-leftover-women.html

Further reading

He Guangye, Xiaogang Wu. 2017. Marketization, occupational segregation, and gender earnings inequality. *Social Science Research*. 65:96-111.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X16300369

Zhao Menghan and Emily Hannum. 2019. Stark choices: Work-family tradeoffs among migrant women and men in urban China. *Chinese Sociological Review*. 51(4): 365–396.
Link |
| 10/10 | Poverty and the Underclass

Grusky and Hill, 105-130

Chetty, Lecture 3 |
| 12/10 | Why is There So Much Poverty

Grusky and Hill, 131-174 |
| 17/10 | Education

Grusky and Hill, 175-208 |
| 19/10 | Education

Chetty, Lectures 6-7

Chetty, Raj, John Friedman, Emmanuel Saez, Nicholas Turner, and Danny Yagan. 2017. Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility. Website with video, PPT, data and manuscript.

Please also visit the related website where you can look up mobility scores for specific colleges: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility |

24/10	Education in China Wu Xiaogang. 2017. Higher education, elite formation, and social stratification in contemporary China: Preliminary findings from the Beijing College Students Panel Survey. *Chinese Journal of Sociology*. 3(1):3-31. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2057150X16688144 Hu Anning and Xiaogang Wu. 2017. Science or liberal arts? Cultural capital and college major choice in China. *British Journal of Sociology*. 70(1):190-213. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-4446.12342
26/10	*Online* Education in China Wang Xiaobing, Renfu Liao, Linxiu Zhang, and Scott Rozelle. 2017. The Education Gap of China's Migrant Children and Rural Counterparts. *The Journal of Development Studies*. 53(11):1865-1881. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220388.2016.1274395 Zheng Wei and Mark Bray. 2018. Equalising schooling, unequalising private supplementary tutoring: access and tracking through shadow education in China. 44(2):221-238. Link
31/10	Economic and Occupational Mobility Grusky and Hill, 209-274 Chetty, Lecture 1
2/11	Economic and Occupational Mobility Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez. 2014. Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 129(4): 1553-1623. Chetty, Raj, John Friedman, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya R. Porter. 2018. The Opportunity Atlas: Mapping the Childhood Roots of Social Mobility. NBER Working Paper No. 25147.
7/11	Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality Grusky and Hill, 275-344 Chetty, Lecture 10 Wu Xiaogang, Guangye He. 2016. Changing Ethnic Stratification in Contemporary China. *Journal of Contemporary China*. 25(102): 938-954. https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1187364
9/11	*Hukou* and inequality in the mainland

	Wu Xiaogang and Donald J. Treiman. 2007. Inequality and Equality Under Chinese Socialism: The Hukou System and Intergenerational Occupational Mobility. *American Journal of Sociology*. 113(2):415-45. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/518905 Qian Yue and Zhenchao Qian. 2017. Assortative Mating by Education and *Hukou* in Shanghai. *Chinese Sociological Review*. 49(3):239-262. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21620555.2017.1288066 Chan, Kam Wing. 2013. The Chinese Hukou System at 50. Eurasian Geography and Economics. 50(2):197-221. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2747/1539-7216.50.2.197
14/11	How Inequality Spills Over Moving Towards Equality Grusky and Hill, 425-480
16/11	NO CLASS
21/11	Chetty, Lecture 3
23/11	Chetty, Lecture 4 Chetty, Raj, David Grusky, Maximilian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca, and Jimmy Narang. 2016. The Fading American Dream: Trends in American Income Mobility Since 1940. *Science*. 356(6336):398-406.
28/11	Wrap-up discussion
30/11	Wrap-up discussion