

Sociology 38: Status and Power in Social Interaction

Spring 2018, Dartmouth College
Mon/Wed/Fri, 12:50-1:55 pm
X-hour: Tues 1:20-2:10 pm
Classroom: 205 Life Sciences Center

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Course Description. This course explores how status and power dynamics in interactions shape social life, using theories and research from sociological social psychology. We will learn how status beliefs emerge from social differences in resources and power, and how they perpetuate inequalities over time by shaping our interpretations of social events and our behavior and emotions when we interact with others. We will explore why broad social inequalities are often durable, and how the dynamics of social interaction serve to sustain them. We will also consider the means by which these inequalities can be overcome. By learning how we “participate in the construction of our own realities, we can take a more active and purposeful approach toward making this the sort of world in which we want to live” (O’Brien 2009: xi). Since our central focus will be on the relationship between self and society through interactions, there will be little overlap with material you may have encountered in psychology courses.

Course Format. You will be introduced to a new social psychological theory each week, learning how the theory explains social inequality through interactions. Most weeks, you will read an overview of the theory for Monday, read about applications of the theory to inequality for Wednesday, and read about social interventions derived from the theory for Friday. You are expected to complete the reading prior to class, submitting reflections on specific course readings prior to class as well as longer weekly reflections that draw linkages between different concepts and readings. You are also expected to participate actively in class activities and discussion, leading group discussion at two points in the term, and contributing to these discussions in various capacities each week. You will complete a group project that identifies a problem of inequality operating through social interactions on the Dartmouth campus, then explains, applies, and proposes an intervention based on one of the theories we studied in class. You will produce a one-page project memo and team presentation in the final week of class. We will only use x-hour if we need to schedule a make-up class meeting.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the goals and contributions of experimental research in sociology
- Become familiar with major theories and concepts in sociological social psychology
- Explain the role of status, power, and resources in the reproduction of inequality
- Use social psychological theories and concepts to analyze interaction dynamics
- Grasp key concepts and themes across readings by cultivating a reflective practice
- Develop theoretically-derived solutions to pressing social problems
- Lead and actively contribute to group and class discussions

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available on our course Canvas site: <http://canvas.dartmouth.edu>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reflection Journal

You will complete written reflections on the assigned readings throughout the term. This will include two main types of writing: reflections on specific course readings prior to class and longer weekly reflections that draw linkages between different concepts and readings.

Reflections on Course Readings. Your reflections on course readings will take a form known as QCCQ – *quotation, concept, comparison, question*. You will select a (2 to 4 sentence) *quotation* from each reading that captures one of its main arguments; summarize, in your own words, the *concept* or idea the quotation captures; make a *comparison* between this reading and another reading from the unit; and pose a critical thinking *question* to that can be used in class to generate discussion. These will be due each Tuesday by 11:59 pm, and should address each of the readings we will discuss in class that Wednesday and Friday. These entries will be worth 25% of your final grade in the course.

Weekly Reflection Papers. You will write a 1,000-word reflection paper each week in response to a prompt that I will post for you on Canvas. These reflections are designed to help you understand the major themes and concepts in our reading for the week. While you are welcome to submit them sooner, weekly reflections will be due each Saturday by 11:59 pm. These entries will be worth 25% of your final grade in the course.

Discussion Groups

We will have small group discussions in class on Wednesdays and Fridays. You will discuss your assigned readings in these groups, but will also consider additional applications of the theory we are studying that week (Wednesdays) and theoretically-derived social interventions that could be used to reduce inequality (Fridays). The effectiveness of group discussions is a shared responsibility. You will be assigned to teams early in the term, and rotate through different responsibilities within your group each week. *Group leaders* will be responsible for keeping the group on task and facilitating participation of all members of the group. *Recorders* will keep a written record of the ideas generated through group discussion and log the roles each member performed that day. A copy of these notes should be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 pm each Friday. *Reporters* will speak on behalf of the group, sharing the ideas generated through discussion with the broader class. *Discussants* should come to class having read the assigned articles carefully, and prepared to engage in a thoughtful discussion. Each member of the group should perform each role at least twice during the term. Discussion groups will account for 20% of your final grade in the course.

Group Project

In lieu of a final exam, you will complete a group project that identifies a problem of inequality operating through social interactions on the Dartmouth campus, then explains, applies, and proposes an intervention to reduce inequality based on one of the theories we studied in class. You will produce a one-page project memo and a team presentation in the final week of class. We will invite key campus stakeholders to attend these presentations, in hopes that your insights can affect change. You will also complete peer and self evaluations of each team member's contribution to the project. Each of these three components is worth 1/3 of your grade on the project, and the project is worth 20% of your final grade in the course.

Class Participation

The final 10% of your grade will come from class participation. Your participation grade will reflect your preparation for class, including the completion of any assigned homework and reading and active participation in class discussions and exercises. It will also reflect your adherence to the guidelines set forth in the sections on Class Conduct and Absences below. Review these guidelines carefully to ensure that you understand my expectations and how you will be graded.

Final Grade

Your final numeric grade in the course will be determined by your weekly reflection papers (25%) and reflections on course readings (25%), participation in discussion groups (20%) and class activities (10%), and your performance on the group project (20%). Your final numeric grade will be converted into a letter grade using the scale below. A description of the quality of work necessary to receive a certain letter grade in the course is available [here](#).

A	95-100	B+	89-91.99	B-	80-82.99	C	73-76.99	D	60-69.99
A-	92-94.99	B	83-88.99	C+	77-79.99	C-	70-72.99	E	0-59.99

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Responsibility

Dartmouth College is a community of scholars and learners committed to the principles of academic and personal honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. All students should conduct themselves in accordance with the Dartmouth community standards, particularly the [academic honor principle](#). Cheating, plagiarism, use of the same work in multiple courses, and unauthorized collaboration will not be tolerated. Minor violations of the honor principle may result in loss of credit or failure for a given piece of work or in the course. Major violations may result in suspension or expulsion from the College. Guidelines for the [proper use of sources and citations](#) are available through the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric. They also offer [writing and research support](#).

Class Conduct

The materials we will read and class discussions we will undertake this semester deal with issues that may in some cases be sensitive and personal to students in the class. These materials are important in helping us to expose the ways in which inequalities of power, status, and resources affect social life, come to understand our own experiences and the experiences of others through a sociological lens, and develop a class dialogue about how we can work to overcome inequalities and understand our own privilege.

Class participation is about thinking carefully, listening, and posing questions to others as much as it is about sharing your ideas. This requires us to be present, set aside distractions, and focus our attention on engaging with one another. To help us accomplish this goal, ***laptops and tablets may be used in class expressly for note-taking, and must be disconnected from the internet unless we are using it for a class activity. No cell phones may be used in class.*** Violations of this policy will impact your final grade in the course.

The tone with which we engage one another is also extremely important, and should come from a place of mutual respect and understanding. You are free to disagree with the views raised in the material or by others in the class, but must do so with a reasoned critique based on a complete consideration of their argument. Your own argument should be supported by sociological evidence rather than opinion or anecdotes. Disrespectful behavior such as talking while others are talking, dominating the floor, or engaging in personal attacks will not be tolerated. You are expected to treat one another and me with respect at all times.

Absences

Attendance and participation are important parts of this course. My expectations for your participation are described above, in the section on Class Conduct. Chronic unexcused absences will cause a significant loss of points from your course grade. You can miss up to 3 class meetings without penalty, no questions asked. ***Any more than three absences over the course of the term will cause you to lose a third of a letter grade from your final grade for each class missed (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+...).*** It is your responsibility to keep up with any material that you miss because of an absence, including announced changes to the schedule. Class policies on late and missed work are outlined in more detail below. If you expect to miss class meetings because of athletic participation, religious observances, or some other reason, please arrange a meeting with me at the start of the term, and bring documentation of the expected conflicts.

Late Work Policy

Lots of unexpected things will come up over the course of the semester. To make sure you don't wind up in a difficult position, plan ahead: start your assignments early and finish them well in advance of the deadline. Speak with me at the beginning of the semester if you anticipate any circumstances that might affect your ability to get your work in on time. Reflection journal entries are designed to help you prepare for in-class activities and reinforce what you've learned each week. ***They will not be accepted late.*** Other graded work that comes in after the deadline will be ***penalized one letter grade per day.*** If the deadline has arrived and your work is incomplete, it's best to turn in whatever you have finished.

Assignment extensions will only be given if the deadline was missed because of extreme circumstances beyond your control, e.g.: severe illness requiring a doctor's visit or hospitalization, death in the family, or college-excused events (which must be approved ahead of time). Generally not feeling well, forgetting about the deadline, having computer problems, needing to help your friend or family member with something, scheduling conflicts with interviews, appointments, or exams in other classes, etc. are not considered extreme circumstances. If you believe you're eligible for an extension, ***it is your responsibility to notify me before missing the deadline, and explain in writing why you feel your circumstances warrant an exception.*** Students who have been granted accommodations by Student Accessibility Services should arrange to meet with me early in the term so we can plan ahead.

Canvas and Course Assignments

Canvas and email are important forms of communication for this class; be sure to check both regularly to stay informed. Your readings and assignments will be posted on Canvas, which can be accessed at: <https://canvas.dartmouth.edu>. Canvas is also the main forum by which most of your

assignments will be submitted. If you have any difficulties accessing the site, or are unsure of how to use its necessary features, please contact me as soon as possible. Confusion about the use of Canvas is not a valid excuse for the late submission of assignments.

Re-Grading of Assignments

If you believe that I have made an error in grading an assignment, please provide me with a written explanation of why your grade should be changed, not to exceed one page, along with a clean (unmarked) copy of the work in question. Based on your rationale and my careful examination of your work, *your grade may go up, go down, or remain the same*. You have one week from the date the assignment is returned to you to request that it be re-graded.

Accommodations

Students requiring academic accommodations, modifications, or auxiliary aids should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) at Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu or 603-646-9900. Once your accommodations have been established with SAS, we should arrange a private meeting early in the semester to discuss how I can best support you in the course.

Student Wellness

I recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding aspect of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your [undergraduate dean](#), [counseling services](#), and the [Student Wellness Center](#). I encourage you to take advantage of these resources, and to speak with me if you need support in the class.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1: Sociological Social Psychology

Monday 3/26	Review syllabus for today
Wednesday 3/28	Lucas, <i>Group Processes</i> Schwalbe, <i>Making Sense of the World Differently</i>
Friday 3/30	O'Brien, <i>Shared Meaning is the Basis of Humanness</i> Zerubavel, <i>Making Distinctions in Everyday Life</i>
Due this week	QCCQ #1 and Weekly Reflection #1

Week 2: Affect Control Theory

Monday 4/2	Robinson, Smith-Lovin, and Wisecup, <i>Affect Control Theory</i>
Wednesday 4/4	Smith-Lovin and Douglass, <i>An Affect Control Analysis of Two Religious Subcultures</i> Boyle, <i>Social Psychological Processes that Facilitate Sexual Assault within the Fraternity Party Subculture</i>
Friday 4/6	Francis, <i>Ideology and Interpersonal Emotion Management</i> shuster and Campos-Castillo, <i>Measuring Resonance and Dissonance in Social Movement Frames with Affect Control Theory</i>
Due this week	QCCQ #2 and Weekly Reflection #2

Week 3: Identity Theory

Monday 4/9	Stets and Burke, <i>The Development of Identity Theory</i>
Wednesday 4/11	Cast, <i>Power and the Ability to Define the Situation</i> Collett et al., <i>Using Identity Processes to Understand Persistent Inequality in Parenting</i>
Friday 4/13	Burke and Cast, <i>Stability & Change in the Gender Identities of Newly Married Couples</i> Cast and Welch, <i>Emotions and the Self: Depression and Identity Change</i>
Due this week	QCCQ #3 and Weekly Reflection #3 Initial Statement of the Problem

Week 4: Expectation States Theory

Monday 4/16	Correll and Ridgeway, <i>Expectation States Theory</i>
Wednesday 4/18	Foschi, <i>Double Standards for Competence</i> Correll, <i>Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations</i>
Friday 4/20	Cohen and Lotan, <i>Producing Equal-Status Interaction in the Heterogeneous Classroom</i> Wagner, Ford, and Ford, <i>Can Gender Inequalities Be Reduced?</i>
Due this week	QCCQ #4 and Weekly Reflection #4

Week 5: Status Construction Theory

Monday 4/23	Ridgeway and Erickson, <i>Creating and Spreading Status Beliefs</i>
Wednesday 4/25	Ridgeway et al., <i>How Easily Does a Social Difference Become a Status Distinction?</i> Brezina and Winder, <i>Status Generalization and Negative Racial Stereotyping</i>

Friday 4/27 Ridgeway and Correll, *Consensus and the Creation of Status Beliefs*
Harkness, *The Consequences of Interpersonal Rewards*
Due this week QCCQ #5 and Weekly Reflection #5

Week 6: Justice Theory

Monday 4/30 Hegtvedt, *Examining the Roles of the Group in Justice Research*
Wednesday 5/2 Fallin-Hunzaker, *Making Sense of Misfortune*
Long et al., *The Normative Order of Reporting Police Misconduct*
Friday 5/4 Clay-Warner et al., *Justice Standard Determines Emotional Responses to Over-Reward*
Hegtvedt et al., *When Will the Unaffected Seek Justice for Others?*
Due this week QCCQ #6 and Weekly Reflection #6

Week 7: Power in Social Exchange

Monday 5/7 Molm, *The Structure of Reciprocity*
Wednesday 5/9 Molm, Quist, and Wiseley, *Imbalanced Structures, Unfair Strategies*
Molm, Peterson, and Takahashi, *Procedural Justice in Social Exchange*
Friday 5/11 Molm et al., *Building Solidarity through Generalized Exchange: A Theory of Reciprocity*
Molm, *Risk and Power Use: Constraints on the Use of Coercion in Exchange*
Due this week QCCQ #7 and Weekly Reflection #7

Week 8: Affect Theory of Social Exchange

Monday 5/14 Lawler, Thye, and Yoon, *Social Exchange and Micro Social Order*
Wednesday 5/16 Collett and Avelis, *Reciprocal and Negotiated Exchange in Fragile Families*
Taylor and Pillemer, *Using Affect to Understand Employee Turnover*
Friday 5/18 Lawler and Yoon, *Commitment in Exchange Relations*
Seymour et al., *Generating Trust in Congregations*
Due this week QCCQ #8 and Weekly Reflection #8

Week 9: Term Wrap-Up and Final Presentations

Monday 5/21 Term Wrap-Up and Project Working Groups
Wednesday 5/23 Group Presentations, Day 1
Friday 5/25 Group Presentations, Day 2
Due this week Project Memo and Presentation Slides
Peer/Self Evaluation Sheet