



Soc 311 01W: Social Class, Wealth and Power

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025 (Web-Based)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Nicole Farris, Professor

Office Location: Ferguson Room 218

Office Hours: On Campus: M/W 7:00 am to 9am, 10:00 am to 10:30 am and by appointment

University Email Address: Nicole.Farris@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **Email**

Communication Response Time: 24 to 48 Hours, M-F, 8am to 5pm

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

Lareau, Annette. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0520271425

Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City.* New York: Crown Publishers, 2016. ISBN: 978-0553447453

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America.* New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, 2001. ISBN: 978-0312626686

Software Required

Optional Texts and/or Materials

Course Description

This course examines the relations among social classes as systems of privilege with inequalities of wealth, power, and prestige among individuals and groups. We explore the forces that give rise to class systems, how one's position affects behavior and life chances, and the intersection of class with other institutions including education, housing, and politics.

Student Learning Outcomes

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- 1. Identify and define key sociological concepts related to social class, wealth, and power.**
 - *Assessed through:*
 - Concept Check Quizzes 1–3
 - Reflection #1
- 2. Apply classical and contemporary sociological theories to analyze real-world examples of inequality.**
 - *Assessed through:*
 - Reflection #2 (media analysis)
 - Final Project
- 3. Interpret and summarize quantitative and qualitative data that illustrate class stratification and poverty.**
 - *Assessed through:*
 - Group Project – “Inequality in Our Community”
 - Creative Assignment #2 – “Design an Anti-Poverty Initiative”
- 4. Assess the impact of economic, educational, and political institutions on the maintenance and disruption of class hierarchies.**
 - *Assessed through:*
 - *Unequal Childhoods* and *Evicted* based written reflections
 - Creative Assignment #1 – “My Class Storyboard”
 - Concept Check Quiz 2
- 5. Develop and present original sociological analyses using written reports, visual artifacts, or multimedia presentations.**
 - *Assessed through:*
 - Final Project (student-selected format: visual, multimedia, or written)
 - Creative Assignments #1 and #2

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Instructional Methods

This fully online course integrates readings, mini-lectures, interactive media, creative assignments, and group-based projects to explore course concepts. Students are encouraged to draw connections between course materials and real-world examples through applied and reflective work.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

1. Stay Organized and Plan Ahead

- Check the course calendar and weekly modules early each week.
- Note due dates for reflections, creative projects, and quizzes.
- Set personal reminders or use a planner to manage time effectively.

2. Engage Consistently

- While this course limits traditional discussion boards, engagement still matters.
- Watch all posted lectures, complete readings thoughtfully, and take notes.
- Participate in group work actively and respectfully.

3. Complete All Assignments Promptly

- Submit work by the posted deadlines unless you've made prior arrangements.
- Late work policies will be enforced as outlined in the course policies.

4. Practice Academic Integrity

- All submitted work must be your own unless collaboration is explicitly allowed.
- If you use AI or other tools for inspiration or organization, clearly cite how and where it was used.

5. Communicate Early and Often

- If you encounter personal or technical challenges, reach out to the instructor as early as possible.
- Use the preferred communication method listed in the syllabus.

6. Apply What You Learn

- This course is designed to connect theory to the real world—use personal experiences and current events to deepen your understanding.
- Reflect on how class, wealth, and power shape your environment and opportunities.

7. Be Creative and Curious

- Embrace the creative assignments and final project as opportunities to express your understanding in meaningful, relevant, and accessible ways.
- Ask questions—this is how you deepen your sociological imagination.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

Grade Components:

- Reflections (3 x 15 pts): 45 points
- Creative Assignments (2 x 30 pts): 60 points
- Concept Quizzes (3 x 15 pts): 45 points
- Group Project: 50 points
- Final Project: 100 points

TOTAL: 300 points

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 270–300 Points

B = 240–269 Points

C = 210–239 Points

D = 180–209 Points

F = 179 & below

Assessments

- **Reflections (3 x 15 points = 45 points total)**
Students will complete three short written reflections (300–500 words each) spaced throughout the course. These reflections ask students to apply sociological concepts to personal experience, current events, or course texts. Due Weeks 4, 8, and 14.
- **Creative Assignments (2 x 30 points = 60 points total)**
Students will complete two creative, applied assignments.
 - Assignment #1 (Week 6): "My Class Storyboard" – a visual or digital collage exploring students' own class background using sociological terms.
 - Assignment #2 (Week 12): "Design an Anti-Poverty Initiative" – students develop a brief proposal or advocacy tool in poster, podcast, or infographic form.
- **Concept Quizzes (3 x 15 points = 45 points total)**
These short, open-book quizzes assess understanding of foundational course content and key terms. Each quiz includes multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Quizzes are due Weeks 2, 9, and 15.
- **Group Project: Inequality in Our Community (50 points)**
Working in small groups, students will research and present a case study of inequality in a selected U.S. community. Deliverables include a short write-up and a visual (infographic, mini-slide deck, or zine). The project launches in Week 11 and is due Week 13.
- **Final Project (100 points)**
Students will choose from three formats (written paper, visual project, or multimedia analysis) to synthesize what they've learned. Projects should demonstrate critical understanding of course materials and theories. Due Week 16.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Late Work Policy: Late work (except the projects) will be accepted without question for up to one week after the original due date and will be subject to a 10% penalty. Assignments submitted more than one week late will not be accepted unless prior approval has been granted by the instructor. Please reach out as early as possible if you anticipate needing additional time.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Student Disability Services](#)

<https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI IN DR. FARRIS' CLASSROOM

You're welcome to use AI tools (like ChatGPT), Grammarly, or similar support services in this class—as long as you're using them the way you'd use me: as a resource to support your learning, not as a shortcut to avoid doing the work.

Think of it like this:

Would you ask me to write your discussion post for you?

Would you ask me to complete your final project or reflection?

Probably not—and if you did, I'd (kindly) say no!

But would you ask me to help brainstorm ideas, explain a sociological concept, give feedback on a rough draft, or suggest ways to structure your response?

Absolutely. That's using support in a way that still keeps the work (and the learning) yours.

If you do use any AI tools (including Grammarly or ChatGPT), you must note it at the bottom of your assignment.

Just a short line is fine—for example:

- “I used Grammarly to check grammar and clarity.”
- “ChatGPT helped me outline my initial ideas for this post.”
- “I asked ChatGPT to explain symbolic interactionism in simpler terms.”

Being transparent helps build trust and keeps our academic work ethical and clear.

If you're ever unsure whether you're using AI appropriately, just ask yourself: *Is this something I would ask my professor to do for me?*

If the answer is yes, you're probably on the right track.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Everything is open Monday at 12:01 and due Sunday at 11:59pm,
unless otherwise noted.

Week	Topics & Activities
Week 1 (Aug 25–Aug 31)	Introduction to Class & Stratification – Welcome Video & Bio Padlet
Week 2 (Sept 1–Sept 7)	Classical Theories of Stratification – Concept Quiz 1
Week 3 (Sept 8–Sept 14)	Modern Class Theory & Bourdieu – Read *Unequal Childhoods* Ch. 1–3
Week 4 (Sept 15–Sept 21)	Parenting & Class – *Unequal Childhoods* Ch. 4–7 – Reflection #1 Due
Week 5 (Sept 22–Sept 28)	Education & Opportunity – *Unequal Childhoods* Ch. 8–10
Week 6 (Sept 29–Oct 5)	Class & Identity – Creative Assignment #1 Due
Week 7 (Oct 6–Oct 12)	Poverty & The American Dream – Begin *Nickel and Dimed*
Week 8 (Oct 13–Oct 19)	Media & Class Blame – Finish *Nickel and Dimed* – Reflection #2 Due
Week 9 (Oct 20–Oct 26)	Labor & Precarity – Concept Quiz 2
Week 10 (Oct 27–Nov 2)	Housing & Displacement – Start *Evicted* Ch. 1–5
Week 11 (Nov 3–Nov 9)	Eviction & Race – *Evicted* Ch. 6–10 – Group Project Launch

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Week 12 (Nov 10–Nov 16)	The Cost of Poverty – *Evicted* Ch. 11– End – Creative Assignment #2 Due
Week 13 (Nov 17–Nov 23)	Policy & Solutions – Group Project Due 11/24
Week 14 (Nov 24–Dec 1)	Thanksgiving Week – Reflection #3 Due 12/1
Week 15 (Dec 2–Dec 8)	Final Project Work – Concept Quiz 3
Week 16 (Dec 9–Dec 12)	Final Project Due 12/12

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.