**Class Analysis: Theory, Research, Debates**

This seminar will provide an overview of theory and research in the area of class analysis. The course will begin with a discussion of the pervasive denial or dismissal of class inequality and class conflict by ideological representatives of both the political Right and political Left in America. We will then turn to a discussion of the main theoretical perspectives in class analysis (neo-Marxist, neo-Weberian, neo-Durkheimian, neo-Ricardian), debates within and between these theoretical traditions, and noteworthy efforts to develop syntheses between theoretical perspectives. The next section of the course will focus more closely on questions that have been particularly important in contemporary class analysis, both as motivations to theoretical innovation and as topics of empirical research. These include the historical transformation and internal differentiation of the working class, the nature and politics of the middle classes, the relationship between class and race, and the relationship between class and gender.

Evaluation will be based mainly on class participation. Students will be expected to take responsibility for introducing specific readings, proposing questions for class discussion, and being prepared to articulate their own views on strengths, weaknesses, political implications, or empirical applications of the ideas encountered in the readings. There is no required writing assignment for the course; however, I am happy to read and provide feedback and/or meet and discuss any paper you wish to submit so long as it takes the form of a preliminary proposal for work that might result in a theoretical or empirical journal article on class analysis.

I encourage everyone to purchase a copy of Erik Olin Wright (ed.), *Approaches to Class Analysis*. Most other readings for the course will be available online through Knight Library or will be placed on electronic reserve. Copies of this syllabus and other course materials may be found at [http://pages.uoregon.edu/vburris/soc610](http://pages.uoregon.edu/vburris/soc610).

**Course Outline (asterisk indicates required readings):**

**Week 1 (January 5). Introduction (no readings)**

**Week 2 (January 12). The Denial of Class: Mobility, Meritocracy, and Diversity**

*Cultural Diversity versus Class Inequality*


*The Limits of Class Mobility*


*The Myth of Meritocracy*


*The Weakness of Class Awareness in the United States*


*Theories of the Death of Class (and Their Critics)*


**Week 3 (January 19). Marxist and neo-Marxist Theories of Class**

**Classical Marxism**


**Neo-Marxist Theories (and Their Critics)**


**Week 4 (January 26). Weberian and Neo-Weberian Theories of Class**

*Max Weber*


*Neo-Weberian Theories (and Their Critics)*


**Comparisons and Syntheses of Marxist and Weberian Theories**


**Bourdieu’s Synthesis**


Week 5 (February 2). Neo-Durkheimian and Neo-Ricardian Theories of Class

**Neo-Durkheimian (Occupation-Based) Theories**


**Neo-Ricardian (Rent-Based) Theories**


Week 6 (February 9). The Working Class

**The Labor Process, Labor Markets, and Internal Differentiation of the Working Class**


Class Formation, Democratic Class Struggle, and Class Compromise


Working-Class Cultures, Solidarity, and Social Reproduction


**Working Class Histories**


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**Week 7 (February 16). The New Middle Class**

*The Origins and Development of the New Middle Class*


**Competing Theories of the New Middle Class**


**The Politics of the New Middle Class**


**Week 8 (February 23). The Old Middle Class**

*Historical and Comparative Perspectives*


*Politics of the Old Middle Class*


Week 9 (March 2). Race and Class

General Works

The Intersection of Race and Class

Who Benefits from Racism?
Week 10 (March 9). Gender and Class

**The Woman Question**

**Domestic Labor and Exploitation**

**Dual-Systems Theory: Capitalism and Patriarchy**
*Hartmann, Heidi. 1976. “Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex.”* *Signs* 1(3).

**Women in the Class Structure**


**Feminism and Class Struggle**


