Course Description:
This course will review various mechanisms that create unequal socioeconomic outcomes for men and women in contemporary industrialized societies. Mechanisms that produce gender inequality at different points in the life course will be explored in comparative perspective. These include the educational process, marriage, cohabitation, fertility, and union dissolution, and the impact of gender differences in these domains on hours worked, occupational sex segregation, work careers, and earnings. The impact of anti-discrimination and social insurance polices on gender inequality, and the size and explanation for trends in gender inequality will also be addressed.

In addition to providing an introduction to the literature, this course has three principal goals. The first is to familiarize students with a sampling of the important research questions and findings that have characterized the field during the past thirty years. The second goal is to familiarize students with some of the questions and controversies that are active research topics at the present time. The third goal is to develop the analytical skills necessary for research in this field. This latter task is accomplished by in-depth, critical consideration of selected research articles or book excerpts.

Course requirements:
- Regular reading and regular participation in class.
- Weekly short (2 page) critical reviews of readings from the literature. These should be posted on course-works so that everyone in the class has access to them.
- A mid-term take-home exam.
- One long (20+ page) literature review or research paper on a specific issue in the gender and stratification literature.

Oral Discussion and Presentations:
Each week will be devoted to a specific set of readings. Some of these readings will be read by everyone and will form the basis for discussion. The journal articles can be downloaded from Columbia’s library page. Books can be purchased online through Barnes and Noble or Amazon. In addition, I’ll place hard to find articles or selections from expensive books in a class folder in the sociology main office.

Aside from the common assignment, each participant will choose one additional relevant reading each week (which will typically be from the syllabus but can also be
taken from the broader literature), and will make a brief report about this reading to the class. The report should clarify the following issues:

- The central question, puzzle, or problem posed by the author in his/her paper/book/book chapter.

- The (apparent) state of the literature at the point where the author(s) pose the question in order to establish why the question is interesting, and the state of knowledge about the answer to the question before the piece was written. For example, the question had been posed, but not previously answered, the question had been posed, but not yet answered, or not yet “fully” answered (e.g., not answered for an important country, or population group, or time period, etc.). Another possibility is that the question had been answered in the past by one or even several authors but the answer(s) was not definitive. Some possible reasons include (a) inadequacies in the data, or (b) inadequacies in the methodology. Sometimes the author will claim that several or even many previous attempts have been made to answer the question, and that the answers are conflicting.

- The reason why the reader should be interested in the author’s question and/or answer (e.g., because the author has demonstrated the theoretical importance of the question, because the already-existing question is interesting but was not previously answered, or because some demonstrated superiority in the author’s data or methodology holds the promise of a “definitive” answer in contrast to the existing tentative or conflicting answers.

- The credibility of the author’s answer, if the paper is an empirical one and the author has attempted to answer the question.

- Implications for future research.

**Final Paper**

The final paper should take one of three forms:

1) Literature review: This form would clarify the same set of issues as the weekly short papers. However, its focus will be on a particular issue rather than a particular paper or book chapter, and it will address some subset of the literature that has addressed this question. For purposes of a course term paper it is too much to expect that the review will be exhaustive (as one might expect for a paper in the *Annual Review of Sociology*). You should clarify the scope of your paper both with respect to a particular issue and with respect to the subset of the literature that you are addressing.

2) Research proposal: An alternative form of the term paper (for more advanced students) would be a research proposal, which would include the elements of form #1, but would be focused around a particular research problem that would form the basis for a research project. The goal would be to produce the kind of research proposal that you would present to a funding agency.

3) Research paper: The third form would be a paper based upon some empirical research. It is unlikely that a student can complete such a paper in a single semester. This form would be appropriate for students who begin this class with a clear research question that could form the basis of a research project. Alternatively, a student could propose a research paper, turn in a research proposal (form #2) as
credit for this course, and then proceed with the research paper as an independent study.

**Readings**

**General Perspectives**


**Gender and Educational Attainment**


**Gender and the Welfare State**


**Gender and the Labor Market**

**GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**


**CAREER PROCESSES—GENERAL**


**CAREERS PROCESSES IN SPECIFIC LABOR MARKETS**


Spilerman, Seymour; Petersen, Trond. Organizational Structure, Determinants of Promotion, and Gender Differences in Attainment. Social Science Research, 1999, 28, 2, June, 203-227


**Gender and the Family**

**General Considerations**


**Cohabitation, Marriage, and Fertility.**


**HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOR**


**DIVORCE**
