

SOC 800: PLAN OF STUDY, SPR/2012

COURSE DESCRIPTION. It has long been acknowledged that societies and groups tend to divide into relative hierarchies based on status. These status hierarchies reflect how good or competent people think others are. The status-relevant information people use to construct and reproduce these hierarchies are known as status characteristics, which can take general and diffuse forms (i.e., gender and race) or meritocratic and specific forms (i.e., certified car mechanic or real estate agent). Thus, when individuals in a group are collectively oriented towards a joint task, they use information based on status characteristics to create a subjective rank of each person's competence in the group's status hierarchy. And when individuals are perceived to be of higher standing within this status hierarchy, they garner greater respect from other members, have greater influence, have more opportunities to speak, are more likely to be positively (as well as leniently) evaluated, are perceived to be more honest, and generally receive higher wages. Although much research has investigated how gender and race as diffuse status characteristics impact these outcomes, very little research has explored the role of age.

LEARNING GOALS/PURPOSE OF COURSE. My hope with these 10 credits of SOC 800 is to (a) review the literature on status characteristics theory along with prior empirical research on the effects of age and ageism in various market sectors, and (b) write an outline and generate hypotheses for my dissertation prospectus.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND LEARNING RESOURCES. The first half of the course will be spent reviewing and reading the literature. The latter half of the course will be spent writing and drafting an outline for my prospectus. On-line search engines and my dissertation chair will be used as learning resources to help accomplish these goals.

MEETING SCHEDULE. I will meet with my dissertation chair three times throughout the quarter. Once at the beginning of the quarter to discuss the literature review; once in the middle of the quarter to discuss results of the literature review and to brainstorm a dissertation prospectus outline; and once at the end of the quarter to review the outline and hypotheses.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND PRODUCT. At the quarters end, I will hopefully have the foundation for the literature review, a sense of what I want to specifically investigate, and a written summary of this material.

METHOD OF EVALUATION. My dissertation chair and I have decided to evaluate my performance based on the extent of the literature review and the written outline of my dissertation prospectus.