

## BSOC404 Social Stratification and Equality

ECTS Value: 5 ECTS  
Self-Study Hours: 75

Contact Hours: 25  
Assessment Hours: 25

### Module Description

In this module learners will be exposed to different types of social stratification and inequality. Learners will have the opportunity to explore the influence of stratification on the life chances of individuals and groups in society, and the opportunities for social mobility. Subject content will cover different forms of stratification, sociological theories of stratification, various structural factors, such as gender and ethnicity, as sources of differentiation, and social mobility. Learners will be guided to investigate this content in relation to inequalities in society and to critically evaluate the 'egalitarian' rationale that underpins 'open' democratic societies.

### Overall Objectives and Outcomes

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

#### Competences

- a) start and maintain an objective and critical discussion about social stratification and inequality in society;
- b) sensitise social studies students to issues of inequality in an objective and critical manner;
- c) foster among social studies students an awareness and appreciation of civil movements that promote equality in society;
- d) initiate active participation in projects, both local and global, that target issues of stratification and inequality.

#### Knowledge

- a) demonstrate understanding of sociological theories of social stratification, such as Marx's, Weber's and Bourdieu's theories;
- b) establish different forms of social stratification, mainly the apartheid, caste, feudal, and social class systems;
- c) develop an in-depth analysis of the social class structure (with reference to studies such as those of M. Savage, and F. Devine et al.);
- d) appreciate the relevance of stratification theories to life chances;
- e) demonstrate different types of social mobility, namely vertical and horizontal mobility, and the promotion or hindrance of social mobility by factors like education, marriage, occupation and family background using Malta as a case study;

f) appreciate prominent social mobility studies, and apply these to the Maltese context for instance those of J. H. Goldthorpe et al. and S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix.

## Skills

- a) enhance the social studies students' understanding of stratification and inequality and broaden their knowledge to Maltese society;
- b) discuss inequality issues objectively and critically in an interactive learning environment with social studies students;
- c) refer to past and contemporary social processes, such as protests and civil movements, relating to stratification, inequality and different life chances focusing on 'doing' social studies by way of experiencing different scenarios.

## Mode of Delivery

This module adopts a blended approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

## Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Group Presentation and Project.

## Suggested Readings

- 1) Baldacchino, G., 2011. *Introducing social studies: a Maltese reader*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Miller Distributors Ltd Malta
- 2) Brown, M. and Formosa, M., 2016. Social class. In Briguglio, M. and Brown, M. eds. *Sociology of the Maltese islands*. Gutenberg Press Ltd Malta pp.133-150
- 3) Platt, L., 2011. *Understanding inequalities: stratification and difference*. Polity Cambridge

## Supplementary Reading List

- 4) Bourdieu, P. & Nice, R. 1986. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge London
- 5) Devine, F. et al. 2004. *Rethinking class: cultures, identities and lifestyles*. Palgrave Macmillan Basingstoke
- 6) Savage, M., 2015. *Social Class in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Penguin UK