This course examines theories that address how status, power, and legitimacy processes operate in small group interaction. We will see the development and extension of theories in the status, power, and legitimacy areas, as well as review the empirical support for these theories. We will discuss the various new directions in the status and networks literature. The status characteristic, gender, will be emphasized, but other status characteristics will be given attention as well.

Requirements include:

1) Memos:

For each weekly topic, class members will offer reviews of the readings. A memo consists of a summary of the article, identification of its strengths and weaknesses, statement of how a reading fits in with others, and identification of new questions stemming from the article. Class members and I will choose readings to review within each weekly session. Students should write up their critiques in no more than two double-spaced, type-written pages (per article). Students will do the same number of critiques during the course of the semester. These will be graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory. The evaluation is based on thoroughness and thoughtfulness. Students will re-write any memo on which they receive an unsatisfactory.

2) Paper or Two Essays:

a) A 15-20 page extensive theoretical paper to be discussed in class. I will expect a short proposal of your paper before the Thanksgiving break:

Because students take this course for different reasons, and are at different stages of their graduate student careers, the intent of this research paper is to allow you to study in detail a topic that is specific to your own purpose. Thus it may take one of the following forms:

1) a position paper presenting a cogent argument regarding a theoretical or empirical issue on a topic relevant to evaluations in social interaction.

2) a research proposal that includes a review of relevant literature, hypotheses, and/or tentative research methods.

3) an analytical synthesis of topics stemming from the two different parts of the course.

4) a substantially revised version of a previous paper that draws upon the areas studied in this course.

Or

b) Two 10-page essays (prelim-like) – one required in the status area and one in the power area.

3) Paper Critiques:

Seminar members will read and critique papers of two of their classmates. Authors are responsible for copying papers and distributing them to class members approximately one week before discussion dates.
Readers will take the role of “journal reviewer” in examining the papers. Each review (1-2 pages) should critique the author’s argument and identify other inadequacies as well as offer constructive suggestions for revisions. Readers should provide copies of their reviews to all class members. The critiques will form the basis for the paper discussions; authors will have the opportunity to address these critiques and use the reviews as a basis for revising their papers.

Course schedule

Sept. 1  Introduction to Course

I. Framing the Issue: Classical Studies of Emergence and Operation of Status Orders.


II. The Expectation States Theory of Status Processes

A. Overview and Basic Assumptions


Sept. 15  B. Gender Status and Interaction


Ridgeway, C. 1987. Nonverbal behavior, dominance, and the basis of status in task


Review of Sociology* 25:191-216.

Sept. 22  no class

Sept. 29  C. Status and Legitimacy


Ridgeway, C. and J. Berger. 1986. Expectations, legitimation and dominance in task


*Social Forces* 87:1623-1648.

“The Legitimation and Delegitimation of Power and Prestige Orders.” *American

in Contemporary Social Psychological Theories edited by Peter J. Burke. Stanford:
Stanford University Press.

Oct. 6  D. Status and Legitimacy Processes in Organizations

Owen-Smith, Jason. 2001. Managing Scientific Laboratory Work Through

Lucas, Jeffrey N. 2003. Status Processes and the Institutionalization of Women as


Oct. 13  
F. Origin of Status Characteristics


Oct. 20  
G. Status, Legitimacy, Race, and Ethnicity


II. Framing the issue: Conceptions and Theories of Power and Legitimacy

Oct. 27  
1. Individual-Based Power


2. Relational Dependence Power

3. Legitimate Forms of Power


4. Power in Organizations


Nov. 3

B. Social Exchange Networks


Nov. 10

C. Exchange Network Extensions


**November 17** D. Status, Power, and Legitimacy


**Nov. 25** Thanksgiving

**Dec. 1** Discussion of Paper Drafts/Wrap-up

**Dec.10** FINAL PAPERS/ESSAY DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, BY 5:00 P.M.