

Study Questions
Week 13

- (1) Why do you think social class is a subject that many Americans prefer to ignore?
- (2) What is the difference between *income* and *wealth*? Explain the distribution of income and wealth in the United States. How do the two differ statistically? How are income and wealth generated, and why does this lead to such discrepancies?
- (3) Explain what it means to say one's life chances are determined by one's social class, using examples to illustrate this point.
- (4) Distinguish *cultural* and *structural* explanations of social stratification. What is meant by *culture of poverty*? On what grounds do structuralists reject the culture of poverty argument?
- (5) What role does education play in our class system? Explain different ways in which schools function to reproduce our class structure.
- (6) What is meant by *structural social mobility*? Explain the logic of the argument that mobility is more dependent on social forces than individual effort or personal qualities.
- (7) Does Kerbo's portrait of the U.S. class system more closely agree with the Marxist or the Weberian notion of stratification? By what means do the elite rule in the U.S.?
- (8) What is meant by the term *underclass*? How does this term apply to groups of Latinos in the U.S.? Describe the typical conditions and lives of various groups of Latinos in the U.S. To what can we attribute these conditions?