**Chapter 7: Stratification: Rich and Famous—or Rags and Famine?  
This American Life**

**Recommended Readings**

William Adler, Mollie's Job: A Story of Life and Work on the Global Assembly LineIn this book, the consequences of economic globalization and free trade are discussed by using the example of an electrical manufacturing company.

Jill Duerr Berrick, Faces of Poverty: Portraits of Women and Children on WelfareBerrick details the stories of five women on welfare to explain the circumstances that brought them to needing public support, the underground economies they rely on to supplement their meager support checks, and the reasons that various reform policies are unlikely to help pull these women out of poverty.

William Domhoff, Who Rules America? Power, Politics, and Social Change Domhoff argues that, in some ways, the owners and top-level managers at major corporations actually influence local, state, and national government more than politicians themselves.

Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting by in AmericaIn this work, Ehrenreich attempts to survive by doing a variety of minimum wage jobs, including hotel worker, maid, and waitress. She discovers that the ability to live on a low wage job is often a fragile enterprise.

Barbara Ehrenreich, Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American DreamEhrenreich examines the struggles that American middle class professionals face when trying to find employment. Among other things, she attends "professional" job search seminars and job fairs, and discovers that most are exercises in futility.

Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner MenLiebow's study of black men in 1960's inner-city Washington D.C. was one of the first to offer an alternative to the "culture of poverty" thesis.

Jay MacLeod, Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low Income NeighborhoodMacLeod follows two groups of young men living in poverty (the "Brothers" and the "Hallway Hangers") from adolescence into adulthood. He discovers that despite their individual ambitions, most end up imprisoned, unemployed, or chronically underemployed.

Mary Romero, Maid in the USARomero interviews domestic workers to explore their concerns of low wages, unkind employers, and leaving their own families to sell their labor to others.

William Julius Wilson, When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban PoorWilson investigates aspects of the inner city (e.g., the rise of fatherless families, gang violence, and drugs), which many blame on the "culture of poverty." Wilson concludes that structural factors (a lack of jobs and high levels of social inequality), rather than individual factors have led to many of the problems of the inner city.

Robert H. Frank, Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class   
In this book, Frank argues how dangerous the quest for status through material goods can be for society.

Robert Frank, Richistan: A Journey Through the American Wealth Boom and the Lives of the New Rich

In Richistan, Frank explores how the financial boom of the 1990s resulted in rising inequality in the United States by focusing on the lives of the extremely wealthy.

Douglass S. Massey, Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System Massey tried to understand how the United States has become the most unequal modern capitalist society through exploring group relations.

Katherine S. Newman and Victor Tan Chen, The Missing Class: Portraits of the Near Poor in America Newman and Chen tell the life story of several working poor individuals to understand the experiences of the near poor and growing economic inequality in the United States.

The New York Times, Class Matters This book is a compilation of a series on social class that the New York Times ran in 2005. The series examined growing class inequality as well as how these inequalities play out in several key social institutions.

Sean Safford, *Why the Garden Club Couldn’t Save Youngstown: The Transformation of the Rust Belt*

In this book, Safford illustrates the differences between Pennsylvania and Ohio communities when the steel industry left. Safford argues that the way the elites viewed the labor issues play an important role in whether or not the community recovered after the industry left.

Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley, *Social Class: How Does It Work?*

Lareau and Conley’s text incorporates work from prominent sociologists to show the role social class plays across multiple dimensions of social life.

Mark Rank, *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All*

Rank illustrates the structural causes and consequences of poverty in America. He argues that although America is a wealthy society, we overlook our responsibility to all our members, making many Americans susceptible to poverty and likely to experience poverty over the course of our lives.

Gilbert, Dennis*. The American Class Structure in an Age of Growing Inequality*. Newbury Park: Pine Forge Press.

Gilbert explores historical and contemporary empirical studies of class inequality in America through the lens of nine key variables. Focusing on the socioeconomic core of the American class system, Gilbert describes a consistent pattern of growing inequality in the United States since the early 1970s. In his search for the answer to why class disparities continue to increase, Gilbert examines changes in the economy, family life, and politics, drawing on vivid first-person accounts to illustrate the human emotion wrapped up in class issues.

Kevin Bales. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Considers the more than 27 million people around the world who are victims of coerced labor. Offers case studies of Brazil, India, Mauritania, Thailand, the United States, and parts of Europe.

Marilyn Waring. *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics*. Waring, a social scientist from New Zealand, considers how women’s labor is overlooked in the global economy.