

Core Colloquium - CCOL-UH 1035 - INEQUALITY

New York University Abu Dhabi
Fall 2020

Tuesday: Recorded Lecture

Thursday: Synchronous Class Discussion

Section 1: 10:20 - 11:05 am (GST)

Section 2: 11:10 - 11:55 am (GST)

Section 3: 16:45 - 17:30 pm (GST)

Duration of Course: 13 Weeks

Course Credits: 4

Prerequisites: None

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Office Hours: send an email to set up an appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Inequality is a fundamental issue with which every human society, past and present, has had to deal. This course explores why inequality occurs and why it matters, questions which have taken on critical importance in this time of deepening global inequalities. The course will approach these questions by considering inequality in comparative and historical perspective so that students will gain a deeper perspective on today's debates. In addition to economic inequality, we will also explore other aspects of inequality, such as political, gender and racial inequality. In turn, we will consider how these are related to economic disparities. While the course will focus on the wide-ranging consequences of inequality, particular emphasis will be placed on the relationship between inequality and government. How does governmental action influence inequality, and why? Does the presence of inequality influence what type of government is possible? To answer these questions the course will draw on sources from a range of academic disciplines including political science, history, economics, and literature. However, no prior expertise in any of these areas will be required.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The key objective is to provide useful frameworks for addressing key questions regarding inequality, such as: What is inequality? How does it affect us? Why is it important? With this, students will have a strong platform from which to engage the key debates regarding the sources and consequences of inequality within their own society and across the globe. By the end of the course students will be in a better position to formulate their own normative opinions about inequality while also understanding how it functions in practice.

ORGANIZATION: Each week will have both recorded lectures, which takes the place of Tuesday's class, and one synchronous live discussion via Zoom, which will be held on Thursdays. There are assigned readings for both recorded lectures and the synchronous class discussion, which you are expected to read before class.

REQUIREMENTS: Student evaluation will be based on class participation, two in-class presentations, and three short response papers.

Literature Summaries – 20% of the total grade will be based on short literature summaries. Before each recorded lecture (i.e., prior to Tuesday's class), beginning on the readings for Tuesday, September 29th, you are expected to submit a short summary of each reading for that class. These summaries should state the main idea(s) in the reading, and identify a key concept, question or issue you would like to thinking about further. There is no “right” answer in summarizing a reading; different people react differently and have varying perspectives about the same piece of literature. The aim is for you to have thought carefully about the readings before class, so that you have a more complete understanding of the course material. Finally, explaining complex ideas in a few words is an important skill.

Literature summaries must be submitted to me by email by 23:59 / 11:59 pm (GST) on Monday evening, the night prior to the lecture in which the readings are assigned. I will not accept summaries submitted late for any reason, including sickness or technological mishaps. However, you may miss two summaries during the semester without penalty. Please see the guidelines for this assignment, as posted on NYU Classes, for further information regarding requirements and expectations.

Participation - 26% of the total grade will be based on class participation during synchronous class on Thursdays. You will need to demonstrate knowledge of the readings and engage with the materials and debates during class. In order to get a good grade, it is essential to demonstrate knowledge of the readings and subject, in addition, of course, to insight. You can miss up to one class unexcused, after which points from this portion of your grade will be deducted. For any additional classes missed result in a penalty to this grade. *You can reduce the penalty by providing a short summary of each paper that is assigned that day.*

Response Papers - 54% of the total grade will be based on three response papers (3 x 18% each). Each response paper corresponds to a particular set of readings and should be approximately 5 (double-spaced) pages. Eligible readings are starred in the course outline below. These should NOT be summaries of the readings, but rather should provide a brief critical analysis of them and how they contribute to the debates introduced in class.

Response papers should be submitted to me by email by 23:59 / 11:59 pm (GST) on the day prior to class in which the eligible reading is to be covered. The due dates and eligible readings for each possible response paper, along with the criteria for completing these papers, are posted on NYU classes. Note that at least one response paper is due before

October 15th. The second is due before November 5th. See the Response Paper guidelines, as posted on NYU Classes, for more information regarding requirements and expectations.

Availability of texts: A large number of texts for this course are available electronically, and those can be accessed via the NYU Classes site for this course. Required books.

- Angus Deaton. 2013. *The Great Escape*. Princeton University Press.
- Branko Milanovic. 2016. *Global Inequality*. Harvard University Press.
- Ferrante, Elena. 2011. *My Brilliant Friend*.
- Walter Scheidel. 2016. *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press.

Note: A number of the texts in this course use quantitative empirical methods. Students will NOT be assessed based on their skill level with such methods in this course.

ASSIGNED GRADES: The grade you are assigned will be solely based on how your final score corresponds to following grading scale. Fairness concerns dictate that there are no exceptions.

Grading scale:

100-93%: A	86.9-83%: B	76.9-73%: C	66.9-60%: D
92.9-90%: A-	82.9-80%: B-	72.9-70%: C-	<59.9%: F
89.9-87%: B+	79.9-77%: C+	69.9-67%: D+	

COURSE OUTLINE

Tuesday, September 8th – RECORDED LECTURE

General Introduction

I. What is Inequality? Why do we Care?

Thursday, September 10th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Artistic Depictions of Inequality

- Vonnegut, Kurt. 1961. *Harrison Bergeron*.
- Ferrante, Elena. 2011. *My Brilliant Friend*. pp. 1-85
- Ferrante, Elena. 2019. “A Power of Our Own,” *The New York Times*.

Tuesday, September 15th – RECORDED LECTURE

Defense of Inequality

- Brooks, David. 2019. “I was once a socialist. Then I saw how it worked.” *New York Times*.
- Friedman, Milton. 1961. “Capitalism and Freedom,” selection

Thursday, September 17th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Further considerations of the consequences of capitalism

- Discussion of *Parasite* (Film)

II. The State of Global Inequality

Tuesday, September 22nd – RECORDED LECTURE

Long-Run Trends in Health and Well-Being

- *Deaton, Angus. 2013. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth and the Origins of Inequality*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-100

Thursday, September 24th – SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Global Inequality – Trends and Explanations

- *Milanovic, Branko. 2016. *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. Harvard University Press. pp.10-117.

NOTE – Literature summaries for Tuesday’s readings now due every Monday.

III. Do People Want Equality? What Do they know about Inequality?

Tuesday, September 29th – RECORDED LECTURE

Do People Want Equality?

- Starbans, Christina, Mark Sheskin and Paul Bloom. 2017. “Why do People prefer Unequal Societies?” *Nature*

Thursday, October 1st - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Do People Want Equality?

- *Robert Lane. 1959. “The Fear of Equality.” *American Political Science Review*

Tuesday, October 6th – RECORDED LECTURE

What Do they know about Inequality?

- McCall, Leslie, Derek Burk, Marie Laperriere, and Jennifer Richeson. 2017. “Exposure to rising inequality shapes Americans’ Opportunity Beliefs and policy support” *PNAS*.
- “Psychology of Inequality”. 2018. E. Kolbert. *New Yorker*.

Thursday, October 8th – RECORDED LECTURE

Psychology of Inequality

- *Suhay, Elizabeth, Marko Klasnja, and Gonzalo Rivero. 2020. Ideology of Affluence: Explanations for Inequality and Political Attitudes among Rich Americans, *The Journal of Politics*.
- *Thal, Adam. 2020. “The Desire for Social Status and Economic Conservatism Among Affluent Americans,” *American Political Science Review*

IV. History of Inequality and Historical Roots of Contemporary Inequality

Tuesday, October 13th – RECORDED LECTURE

Historical Causes of Inequality and the Leveling of Inequality

- Walter Scheidel. 2016. *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press. pp. 1-112 (Chpts 1-3)

Thursday, October 15th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Historical Causes of the Leveling of Inequality (con’t)

- *Walter Scheidel. 2016. *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press. pp. 113-210 (Chpts 4-6)

Monday, October 19th (Legislative Day) – RECORDED LECTURE

Consequences of Colonialism on Contemporary Inequality

- *Sokoloff, Kenneth, and Stanley Engerman. 2000. "History lessons: Institutions, factors endowments, and paths of development in the new world." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14(3): 217-232.
- Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2017. “The Economic Impact of Colonialism”. *The long economic and political shadow of history* - Volume I. A global view (selection)

NO CLASS —Thursday, October 21st (FALL BREAK)

V. Political Roots of Contemporary Inequality

Tuesday, October 27th – RECORDED LECTURE

How politics affects inequality: Democracy and Economic Inequality

- *Peter Lindert. 2004. *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth since the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press.
- Winters, Jeffrey and Benjamin Page. 2009. “Oligarchy in the United States?” *Perspectives on Politics*.

Thursday, October 29th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

How economic inequality affects politics

- *Gidron, Noam and Peter Hall. 2017 “The politics of social status: economic and cultural roots of the populist right” *British Journal of Sociology*
- “End of Apartheid in South Africa? Not in Economic Terms,” *The New York Times*.
- “In Latin America, the Pandemic Threatens Equality Like Never Before,” *The New York Times*.

VI. The Cultural, Religious, and Social Roots of Contemporary Inequality

Tuesday, November 3rd – RECORDED LECTURE

Does Religion Affect Our Views about Inequality?

- *Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage. 2006. “Religion and Preferences for Social Insurance”, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*
- *Thomas Pepinsky and Bozena Welborn. 2011. “Piety and Redistributive Preferences in the Muslim World.”

Thursday, November 5th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Inequality and the Islamic Revival

- *Lisa Blaydes and Drew Linzer. 2008. “The Political Economy of Women’s Support for Fundamentalist Islam.” *World Politics*.
- *Binzel and Carvalho. 2017. “Explaining the Islamic Revival in the Arab World: Evidence from Egypt.” [p. 1-15, 27-29]

Tuesday, November 10th – RECORDED LECTURE

Gender and Inequality

- *Goldin, Claudia. 2015. “How to Achieve Gender Equality” *Milken Institute Review*.
- “Why promoted Women are more likely to divorce,” *BBC Worklife*.

Thursday, November 12th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Gender and Inequality (con't)

- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2004. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. Holt. *Selections*
- Solnit, Rebecca. 2014. *Men Explain Things to Me: and Other Essays*. *selections*

Saturday, November 14th (Legislative Day – Tuesday schedule) – RECORDED LECTURE

Gender and Inequality (con't)

- *Folke and Rickne. 2020. “Sexual Harassment and Gender Inequality in the Workplace”

VII. Remedies to Social and Economic Inequality

Tuesday, November 17th – RECORDED LECTURE

Remedies to Economic Inequality – Poverty Reduction

- *Walter Scheidel. 2016. *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press. pp. 345-388 (Chpts 12-13)
- Banerjee A. and Ester Duflo. 2020. “How Poverty Ends: The Many Paths to Progress—and Why They Might Not Continue,” *Foreign Affairs*.
- “It’s an Unequal World. It Doesn’t Have to Be.” *New York Times*. Dec. 2014.

Thursday, November 19th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Remedies to Economic Inequality – Forced Integration

- *Rao, Gautam, 2019. “Familiarity Does Not Breed Contempt: Generosity, Discrimination and Diversity in Delhi Schools,” *American Economic Review*.
- Hannah-Jones, Nicole. 2019. “It was never about busing: Court-ordered desegregation worked. But white racism made it hard to accept.” *The New York Times*.

Tuesday, November 24th – RECORDED LECTURE

Remedies to Economic Inequality – Migration

- *Goodman, Sara, and Thomas Pepinsky. 2020. “The Exclusionary Foundations of Embedded Liberalism,” *International Organization*

Thursday, November 26th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Remedies to Economic Inequality – Universal Basic Income (UBI)

- Heller, Nathan. 2018. “Who really stands to win from Universal Basic Income,” *The New Yorker*.
- Arnold, Carrie. 2020. “Pandemic Speeds Major Test of Universal Basic Income,” *Nature*.

NO CLASS —Tuesday, Dec. 1st - Thursday, Dec. 3rd (National Day holiday)

VIII. Final Considerations of the Causes and Consequences of Inequality

Tuesday, December 8th – RECORDED LECTURE

The Future of Inequality

- “Robots, Growth, and Inequality.” 2016. *IMF: Finance and Development*
- TBD

Thursday, December 10th - SYNCHRONOUS CLASS DISCUSSION

Course Wrap-up: What is inequality? What should be done about it?

- Discussion of *Snowpiercer* (Film)