

Core Colloquium - CCOL-UH 1035 - INEQUALITY

T, R: 10:25-11:40 (A2, 018)
New York University Abu Dhabi
Spring 2018

Duration of Course: 14 Weeks

Course Credits: 4

Prerequisites: None

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Office Hours: Tuesday: 3-4:30 (and by 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 class will mostly entail discussing the readings, and is organized around discussion questions as provided as provided by the students. Individual students will sign up in advance to initiate the discussion for each reading. Prior to initiating each new topic, I will give a short lecture introducing the topic, some of the main debates and the readings assigned for this topic.

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

16% of the total grade will be based on class participation. 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 will also be asked at the beginning of each class which questions you want answered based on the reading(s) for class. While every student is encouraged to provide questions, three students will be randomly assigned to provide questions for that class. You can miss up to two classes unexcused, after which points from this portion of your grade will be deducted.

30% of the total grade will be based on two in-class presentations (2 x 15% each). This grade will involve both the quality of presentation for the material(s) in which a student is serving as a discussion initiator and quality of comments in general discussion.

You are required to come see me to discuss your in-class presentation (topics you'll focus on, questions you'll ask, etc.) at least ONE day prior to class.

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. 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.

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 February 20th. The second is due before Tuesday, April 10th. See the guidelines for more information.

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

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

Course Outline

Tuesday, January 23rd

General Introduction

Thursday, January 25th

What is Inequality? Why do we Care?

- Vonnegut, Kurt. 1961. *Harrison Bergeron*.
- Ferrante, Elena. 2011. *My Brilliant Friend*. pp. 27-85

Tuesday, January 30th – Thursday, February 1st

Long-Run Trends in Health and Well-Being

- Deaton, Angus. 2013. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth and the Origins of Inequality*. Princeton University Press.
 - Tuesday – Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-100
 - Thursday – Chapters 3-4, pp. 101-164

Tuesday, February 6th – Thursday, February 8th

Global Inequality – Trends and Explanations

- Milanovic, Branko. 2016. *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. Harvard University Press. pp.10-117.
 - Tuesday – Chapters 1, 2 – pp. 1- 116
 - Thursday – Chapter 3 – pp. 118-154

Tuesday, February 13th – Thursday, February 15th – Tuesday, February 20th

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

- Tuesday, February 13th
 - Robert Lane. 1959. “The Fear of Equality.” *American Political Science Review*
 - Starman, Christina, Mark Sheskin and Paul Bloom. 2017. “Why do People prefer Unequal Societies?” *Nature*
- Thursday, February 15th
 - 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*.
- Tuesday, February 20th
 - Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2017. “The First White President”. *The Atlantic*.

Thursday, February 22nd – Tuesday, Feb. 27 – Thur., March 1st – Tues., March 6th – Thursday, March 8th

History of Inequality

- Thursday, February 22nd
 - 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)
- Tuesday, February 27th
 - 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)
- Thursday, March 1st (LP)
 - Sokoloff, Kenneth L., and Stanley L. 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)
- Tuesday, March 6th (LP)
 - Nunn, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa" *American Economic Review* 101:3221-52
- Thursday, March 8th (LP)
 - Fanon, Frantz. 2004 [1963]. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press. Chpt. 1 (On Violence), pp. 1-52.

Spring Break – No Class – Tuesday, March 13th – Thursday, March 15th

Tuesday, March 20th – Thursday, March 22nd

Democracy, Political Inequality and Economic Inequality

- Tuesday, March 20th
 - Peter Lindert. 2004. *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth since the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press.
 - Chacon, Mario and Jeffrey Jensen. 2017. "De Facto Power, Democracy and Taxation: Evidence from Military Occupation During Reconstruction"
- Thursday, March 22nd
 - Winters, Jeffrey and Benjamin Page. 2009. "Oligarchy in the United States?" *Perspectives on Politics*. – Now on Tuesday, March 27
 - Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage. 2016. "Wealth Inequality and Democracy."

Tuesday, March 27th

Summarizing Remedies to Economic 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. 345-388 (Chpts 12-13)
- Winters, Jeffrey and Benjamin Page. 2009. "Oligarchy in the United States?" *Perspectives on Politics*.

Thursday, March 29th – Tuesday, April 3rd

Does Religion Affect Our Views about Inequality?

- Thursday, March 29th
 - Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage. 2006. "Religion and Preferences for Social Insurance", *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*
 - Sigrun Kahl (2005) "The Religious Roots of Modern Poverty Policy: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Protestant Traditions Compared" *European Journal of Sociology*.
- Tuesday, April 3rd
 - Thomas Pepinsky and Bozena Welborn. 2011. "Piety and Redistributive Preferences in the Muslim World."
 - Binzel and Carvalho. 2017. "Explaining the Islamic Revival in the Arab World: Evidence from Egypt." [p. 1-15, 27-29]

Thursday, April 5th – Tuesday, April 10th – Thursday, April 12th

Gender and Inequality

- Thursday, April 5th
 - Lisa Blaydes and Drew Linzer. 2008. "The Political Economy of Women's Support for Fundamentalist Islam." *World Politics*.
- Tuesday, April 10th
 - Goldin, Claudia. 2015. "How to Achieve Gender Equality" *Milken Institute Review*.
 - Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2004. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. Holt. [p. 1-30]
- Thursday, April 12th
 - Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2004. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. Holt [p. 254-274]
 - Solnit, Rebecca. 2014. *Men Explain Things to Me: and Other Essays* [p. 1-36]

Tuesday, April 17th – Thursday, April 19th

Globalization and Inequality, and the Political Backlash in the West

- Tuesday, April 17th
 - Milanovic, Branko. 2016. *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. Harvard University Press. Chpt 4. pp. 155-239
- Thursday, April 19th
 - Rodrik, Dani. 2017. “Populism and the Economics of Globalization”
 - Kenneth Scheve and Matthew Slaughter. 2007. “A New Deal for Globalization.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Tuesday, April 24th
 - Andrea Cerrato et al. 2016. “Trump Won in Counties that Lost Jobs to China and Mexico.”
 - Gidron, Noam and Peter Hall. 2017 “The politics of social status: economic and cultural roots of the populist right”
 - Cramer, Katherine. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment*. Univ. of Chicago Press, p. 1-25

Thursday, April 26th – Tuesday, May 1st – Thursday, May 3rd

The Future of Inequality (& Review and Recap)

- Thursday, April 26th
 - 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. 403-444
- Tuesday, May 1st
 - Film – *Snowpiercer*
- Thursday, May 3rd
 - Robert Allen. 2017. “Lessons from History for the Future of Work.” *Nature*.
 - “Robots, Growth, and Inequality.” 2016. *IMF: Finance and Development*