

DSSC 8310
Topics in Development Studies and Social Change
Economic Inequality

FALL 2015
1383 SOCIAL SCIENCES
2:00–4:00 MONDAY
NOV. 2–DEC. 14

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OFFICE HOURS: TU 9:30–11:00 AND BY APPOINTMENT

Course Description

The purpose of this topics course is to survey the issue of economic inequality, with a main focus on the U.S. and also some attention given to the global south.

Books and other readings

The readings for the course will be taken from a number of books and some web-based resources. The articles will be distributed by email or, in some cases, will be available on the library's e-journals website. Book chapters

How the Course Will Work

The first session will consist mainly of an introductory lecture, but after that we will spend most of our time in discussion. Students will be expected to have read the required readings before class.

Assigned Workload

The course will rely upon your active participation in discussions during class. Each week after the first week you will also be asked to submit an “insight” into the readings from the current week. An insight is a paragraph or two, definitely less than a page, that describes your views on something interesting or controversial in the material. I expect to learn much from your insights, and I encourage you to play a contrarian role, to embrace controversial ideas, to try to convince me of things that you suspect I will resist. Don't be afraid to take an advocacy position, so long as it is supported by cogent, concise arguments. Please use both classroom time and your insights to follow your instincts: be skeptical of what your classmates say and make sure we hear about it.

Grading

Your semester grade of pass or fail will be determined according to the following weights:

Insights	40 percent
Class Participation	60 percent

University Grading Standards

I will follow the *University Grading Standards*, found on the web at policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Readings
1: Nov. 2	Introduction	Stiglitz, pp. 11-21; Surowiecki
2: Nov. 9	Why economics can't answer the question	Adler; Schofield; Kirman
3: Nov. 16	Measuring inequality	Atkinson; Wikipedia
4: Nov. 23	Inequality in the global north	OECD 2015
5: Nov. 30	Inequality in the global south	Bourguignon; Deaton; World Bank
6: Dec. 7	Wealth: A longer historical perspective	Piketty; Jones
7: Dec. 14	Solutions	Bourguignon; Deaton; Smith

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Week 1, November 2: Introduction

1. Stiglitz, Joseph E., “Rewriting the Rules of the American Economy: An Agenda for Growth and Shared Prosperity,” Roosevelt Institute, 2015. rooseveltinstitute.org/rewrite-the-rules/
2. Surowiecki, James, “Why the Rich Are So Much Richer,” *New York Review of Books*, Sept. 24, 2015. www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2015/sep/24/stiglitz-why-rich-are-so-much-richer/

Week 2, November 9: Why Economics Can’t Answer the Question

1. Adler, Moshe, “How Economics is Biased Toward the Rich,” in *Divided: The Perils of Our Growing Inequality*, D.C. Johnston, editor, (New York: The New Press, 2014).
2. Schofield, Philip, “Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832),” *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2nd ed., 2008, editors S.N. Durlauf and L.E. Blume.
3. Kirman, Alan, “Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923),” *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2nd ed., 2008, editors S.N. Durlauf and L.E. Blume.

Week 3, November 16: Measuring inequality

1. Atkinson, Anthony B., *Inequality: What Can Be Done?*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), ch. 2.
2. Wikipedia.org, “Income Inequality Metrics,” en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income_inequality_metrics.

Week 4, November 23: Inequality in the global north

1. OECD, *In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All*, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015). dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264235120-en
2. Piketty, Thomas, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), ch. 9.

Week 5, November 30: Inequality in the global south

1. Deaton, Angus, *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), ch. 1.
2. Bourguignon, François, *The Globalization of Inequality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), ch. 1 and appendix.
3. World Bank, “Poverty,” *World Development Report*, 2015, ch. 4. www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Publications/WDR/WDR%202015/Chapter-4.pdf

Week 6, December 7: Wealth: A longer historical perspective

1. Piketty, Thomas, “Putting Distribution Back at the Center of Economics: Reflections on *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 29 (Winter 2015), 67–88.
2. Jones, Charles I., “Pareto and Piketty: The Macroeconomics of Top Income and Wealth Inequality,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 29 (Winter 2015), 29–46.

Week 7, December 14: Solutions

1. Bourguignon, François, *The Globalization of Inequality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), ch. 5.
2. Deaton, Angus, *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), ch. 7.
3. Smith, Hedrick, *Who Stole the American Dream?*, (New York: Random House, 2013), ch. 21.