

# Politics of Inequality and Poverty

POSC 338 – Spring 2014  
(T & Th 10:10 - 11:55 am)  
Library 344

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**Office Hours:** Mon. 10am to 12 Noon & Thurs. 2pm-4pm and by appt.

## Course Description

Inequality has risen in many countries around the globe and is becoming an increasingly divisive political issue. Motivated in large measure by concerns of economic inequality, movements such as Occupy Wall Street, and the protests of the Arab Spring have tested governments around the world. Debates over inequality and the appropriate role for the government in mitigating inequality through the redistribution of income have proven to be among the most contentious in democratic politics. In this course, we will examine in detail how economic inequality shapes politics around the world.

Over the course of the term, we will explore the interactions between economic inequality and politics in two general ways. First, we will explore how political institutions can potentially shape the distribution of income. Second, we will examine how economic inequality affects the political process, especially in the quality of democratic institutions. Can the democratic ideal of political equality survive in a context of increasing economic inequality?

## Course Requirements and Expectations

Classroom discussion and participation will be a critical component of our classes. To facilitate insightful and interesting discussions, you are required to complete the assigned readings *before* each class and contribute to class discussions. Generally the reading load will be around 150 to 200 pages per week. In addition to the readings which will be made available electronically on Moodle and Dropbox, there are two required texts for purchase: Branko Milanovic's book *The Haves and the Have-nots*, and Larry Bartels' book *Unequal Democracy*. I also encourage you to pay attention to current events related to the issue of inequality, which we will discuss in class.

# Grading

Your grade will be based on the following:

Class Participation and Attendance	10%
Leading Two Class Discussion Sessions	20% (10% Each)
Two Critical Analysis Papers	20% (10% Each)
Course Research Project	50 %
Proposal (Due April 15)	5%
Theory and Research Design Paper (Due April 22)	5%
Analysis Paper (Due May 1)	5%
Draft Paper (for peer review) (May 13)	5%
Peer Review of Draft Papers (May 20)	5%
Class Presentation (May 29 & June 3 in class)	5%
Final Paper (May 27)	20%
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<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Class Preparation, Attendance and Participation - 10%**

Attendance and participation is required. Participation grades will be determined by the *quality* not quantity of comments/questions in class discussion.

In addition to participation within class, we will have a class Facebook group (Request to join the group page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/797061603656346/>) which you will be required to participate in. If you have concerns about privacy or do not use Facebook, feel free to create a fake account using a pseudonym (and let me know so I can incorporate participation grades), or as an alternative you may email me your question/comment for the day. Prior to the start of each class, you will submit at least one comment/thought/question on the readings for the day. As a discussion board for the class, feel free to post interesting news articles or commentaries, and comment on the posts of your classmates. In class participation and participation on the Facebook group will each contribute 5% toward your final grade.

## **Leading Two Class Discussions - 20%**

With one other student, you will coordinate and lead discussion of two class topics for the classes between April 24 and May 27. You will select the sessions you wish to lead in class on April 8.

## **Two Critical Analysis Papers - 20%**

For two class session *other* than the two sessions in which you are leading discussion, you will write a three to four page critical analysis of the readings for the class that day. You will select the classes you wish to write an analysis for in class on April 8.

## **Original Research Paper - 50%**

Over the course of the semester, you will work on an original research paper in which you discuss and examine some topic relating politics with economic inequality. The final paper will be between 15 and 20 double spaced pages (not including references).

## **Research Proposal - 5%**

Due April 15. Prepare a research question that is of interest to you and formulate a hypothesis that can potentially answer the question. Your proposal will be 2 or 3 double spaced pages, and will outline what your proposed research is, and how you intend to carry it out.

## **Theory and Research Design Paper - 5%**

In this paper of around 4 to 6 pages, you will explore the literature around your research topic, and outline your plans to answer your research questions.

## **Analysis Paper - 5%**

The analysis paper will be a sketch of the empirical findings of your independent research. This will become the results section of your final paper.

## **Rough Draft for Peer Review - 5%**

Prepare a rough draft that matches the basic guidelines of the final paper. This will be graded on a pass/fail basis, and there will be NO EXCEPTIONS for late rough drafts.

## **Peer Review of Rough Drafts- 5%**

Prepare a one or two page memo review of the rough draft for one of your peers, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their paper project, as well as suggestions on how to improve it.

## **Class Presentation- 5%**

In one of the final classes, you will present your research project to your peers.

## Final Paper- 20%

The final paper should be a polished, finished project - perhaps something that you would feel comfortable submitting to an undergraduate research journal.

## Course Policies

### Grading Policies

I will assign grades using the following scale : A (93.33), A- (90), B+ (86.67), B (83.33), B- (80), C+ (76.67), C (73.33), C- (70), D+ (66.67), D(63.33) D- (60) F (Below 60). I do not round your final grade up or down (so if you receive a 93.327, you will receive an A- for a final grade).

Here are several important details regarding my policy on course grades

1. I will not receive grade complaints if more than two weeks have passed after the assignment has been returned. Before I review your grade you must first:
  - Wait 24 hours.
  - Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
  - Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not to vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”

The second grade, whether higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.

2. Late assignments are not tolerated. Your grade will be lowered 5 points for each day it is late (the exception is for the reading questions/comments, which will not be accepted if late). That is if the assignment is due on Wednesday and you complete it on Thursday, the highest grade you can make is 95. If you complete it on Friday, the highest grade possible will be a 90. And so forth.
3. The **ONLY** acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are family emergencies or illnesses. However, in these cases, I will arrange to give you extra time **ONLY** if you communicate with me **BEFORE** the assignment is due and you provide **DOCUMENTATION** of the circumstance.

### Electronics in Class Policy

You are welcome to bring digital equipment (laptop, ebook reader, etc.) to class. However, I expect you to be responsible in your use of electronic equipment: please avoid visiting social networking sites, or otherwise browsing the internet on sites unrelated to the course. I would

also recommend you read through the discussion (including comments), *Computers in the Classroom*, to think about the possible pros and cons of using computers in a classroom setting. Individuals who abuse this privilege will be asked to turn off their computer. Please turn off all cell phones during class. If I notice that the use of an electronic device is distracting you in class, your participation grade will suffer.

## Academic Honesty

You are expected to abide by fundamental standards of academic honesty. A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>. All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources!

## Disability-Related Accommodations

It is the policy of Carleton College to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible (during the 1st week of the semester), so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at <http://apps.carleton.edu/disabilityservices/>.

## Course Schedule

Readings should be completed prior to class. I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule. I will alert you to any changes made in class, via email, and I will post the updated syllabus on Moodle.

## PART I: Introduction, Concepts and Measurement

### April 1: Introduction

- Introduction to the Course

### April 3: Measuring Inequality

- Milanovic: Essay I, pgs. 3–32.
- James K Galbraith. *Inequality and instability: A study of the world economy just before the great crisis*. Oxford University Press, 2012, Chapter 2, pgs. 20–46.

### **April 8: Trends in Inequality – Within Countries**

- Bartels: Chapter 1 (pgs. 1–28).
- Milanovic: Vignette 1.10, pgs. 83-91.
- Andrea Brandolini and Timothy Smeeding. Inequality patterns in Western democracies: Cross-country differences and changes over time. In Pablo Beramendi and Christopher, editors, *Democracy, Inequality, and Representation: A Comparative Perspective*, pages 25–62. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2008

### **April 10: Trends in Inequality – Between Countries**

- Milanovic: Essay II, Vignettes 2.1-2.3, pgs. 95–123, Essay III, Vignettes 3.1-3.2, pgs. 149–175.

## **PART II: Inequality as a Political Outcome**

### **April 15: Models of Redistribution: Esping-Andersen’s Three Worlds**

- Wil A. Arts and John Gelissen. Models of the welfare state. In Jane Lewis Herbert Obinger Francis G. Castles, Stephan Leibfried and Christopher Pierson, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State*, pages 569–583. Oxford University Press, 2010

### **April 17: Models of Redistribution: Varieties of Capitalism**

- Peter A. Hall and David Soskice. An introduction to varieties of capitalism. In Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, editors, *Varieties of Capitalism: The institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, pages 1–68. Oxford University Press, 2001

### **April 22: Models of Redistribution: Power Resources**

- D. Bradley, E. Huber, S. Moller, F. Nielsen, and J.D. Stephens. Distribution and redistribution in postindustrial democracies. *World Politics*, 55(2):193–228, 2003
- Milanovic, Vignette 1.5, pgs. 53–60.

### **April 24: Public Opinion Models: Meltzer-Richard & POUM**

- Milanovic, Vignette 1.7, pgs. 68–73.
- R. Benabou and E.A. Ok. Social Mobility and the Demand for Redistribution: The POUM Hypothesis. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 116(2):447–487, 2001
- L. Kenworthy and L. McCall. Inequality, Public Opinion and Redistribution. *Socio-Economic Review*, 6(1):35, 2008

### **April 29: Public Opinion Models: Relative Deprivation & Social Insurance**

- T. Cusack, T. Iversen, and P. Rehm. Risks at work: The demand and supply sides of government redistribution. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 22(3):365, 2006
- W.G. Runciman. *Relative deprivation and social justice: A study of attitudes to social inequality in twentieth-century England*. University of California Press, 1966, Chapter 2, pgs. 9–35.

### **May 1: Public Opinion Models: Social Identity Politics**

- A. Alesina and E.L. Glaeser. *Fighting poverty in the US and Europe: A world of difference*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2004: Chapter 6, pgs. 133–182.
- K. Baldwin and J.D. Huber. Economic versus Cultural Differences: Forms of Ethnic Diversity and Public Goods Provision. *American Political Science Review*, 104(4):644–662, 2010

### **May 6: Politics and Redistribution in the United States**

- Bartels, Chapters 2-4, pgs. 29–126.

### **May 8: Politics and Redistribution in Developing Countries**

- Nicolas Van de Walle. The institutional origins of inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12:307–327, 2009
- E. Huber, T. Mustillo, and J.D. Stephens. Politics and social spending in Latin America. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(2):420–436, 2008

## **PART III: Politics as an outcome of inequality**

### **May 13: Inequality and Representation**

- L.M. Bartels. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press, 2008: Chapters 9 & 10 (pgs. 252–303).
- Martin Gilens. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton University Press, 2012: Chapter 3, pgs. 70–96.

### **May 15: Turnout**

- Christopher J. Anderson and Pablo Beramendi. Income, inequality, and electoral participation. In Christopher J. Anderson and Pablo Beramendi, editors, *Democracy, Inequality, and Representation: A Comparative Perspective*, pages 278–311. Russell Sage Foundation, 2008

- Michael Bratton. Poor people and democratic citizenship in Africa. In Anirudh Krishna, editor, *Poverty, Participation, and Democracy: A Global Perspective*, pages 28–64. Cambridge University Press, 2008

#### **May 20: Stability and Conflict**

- Milanovic, Vignettes 1.8 and 1.9, pgs. 74–82.
- Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford economic papers*, 56(4):563–595, 2004

#### **May 22: Transitions to Democracy**

- Ben Ansell and David Samuels. Inequality and democratization: A contractarian approach. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(12):1543–1574, 2010
- Robert R. Kaufman. The political effects of inequality in Latin America: Some inconvenient facts. *Comparative Politics*, 41(3):359–379, 2009

#### **May 27: Political Polarization**

- Nolan M. McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. MIT Press, 2006, Chapters 1 & 2, pgs. 1–70. (Available as a library E-book).

#### **May 29: Student Presentations**

#### **June 3: Student Presentations**