Overview

When do governments represent the interests of a marginalized group? Why do some democracies suffer more from economic and social inequalities than others? Under what conditions do citizens take action and stand up against inequality? This course surveys the nature, causes, and consequences of the continued growth in economic and social inequality. In the past several decades, politics in many advanced democracies — including United States — has been defined by various forms of inequality. A series of socio-economic changes — deepening globalization, de-industrialization and increasing women participation in the workforce — have created newly marginalized groups. Society is not only divided between the poor vs. the rich and between different races and ethnicities, but also by splits between secure vs. insecure workers, females vs. males, nationals vs. immigrants and so on. By examining cases from advanced democracies in North America, Europe, and East Asia, we will consider how economic and social inequalities shape and are shaped by democratic politics and existing public policies. In particular, the class opens with a review of political causes and consequences of economic inequality. Then, we will focus on various forms of subalternity — gender, ethnic and racial. Finally, we will examine recent changes to social and economic unevenness: population aging, post-industrialization, and digitalization.

Course Objectives

1. Gaining Factual Knowledge *(IDEA #1)*

2. Developing Knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures *(IDEA #2)*

3. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view *(IDEA #11)*
Important Dates

Since we won’t be able to meet in person, all the important announcements will be made via Canvas or email. Please keep your eyes on these notifications. It is your responsibility to pay close attention to these email updates and instructions. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of these changes. Any change will be announced in advance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Assignments/Activities and Submission Places</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/31</td>
<td>Zoom Class Meeting: Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/02</td>
<td>Zoom Class Meeting: What Is Economic Inequality?</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/20</td>
<td>Movie Review #1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/21</td>
<td>Zoom Discussion Session #1 (Questions submission by 9/20 via Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/27</td>
<td>Inequality Memo Due #1 (Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/05</td>
<td>Zoom Discussion Session #2 (Questions submission by 10/04 via Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>Zoom Mid-term Exam Review Online Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Mid-term Exam Submission Due by 11:59pm (Canvas Assignments — Midterm exam)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Movie Review #2</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>Inequality Memo Due #2 (Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Zoom Discussion Session #3 (Questions submission by 10/26 via Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/09</td>
<td>Zoom Discussion Session #4 (Questions submission by 11/08 via Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Inequality Memo Due #3 (Canvas Discussions)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/09</td>
<td>Final Exam Review Online Meeting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14</td>
<td>Final Exam Submission Due by 11:59pm (Canvas Assignments — Final exam)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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*Note: All online meetings will be done from 3:00pm to 4:15pm via Zoom on the dates indicated in the table above.

Zoom Link: Click Here
Passcode: aggies
Requirements

- **Online Lectures**: All lectures except the first lecture will be recorded and uploaded on Canvas Media Gallery. The first lecture will be offered through a zoom meeting on **09/02 at 3:00pm**. Students are required to watch the designated lectures before each zoom discussion session. These lectures are the most important materials for the midterm and final exams.

- **Three Inequality Memo Posts (5% each) (IDEA #18 #11)**: Throughout the semester, students will write three memos on inequality by posting news articles/columns/policy reports and sharing their thoughts on a given piece on Canvas Discussions.

  All three postings will be on the **same country** that a student chooses to study.

  For each posting:

  1) Include a link to a relevant news article/column/policy reports (from reliable sources)
  2) Provide students’ brief analysis (**NOT** summary) of the key problems covered in a chosen text AND suggestion for policy alternatives (100 to 150 words)
  3) Inequality issues addressed in a blog post can cover a variety of topics including, but not limited to, gender inequality, economic inequality, racial inequality...etc
  4) Make a comment on at least two posts by other students.
  5) All memos should be posted by the deadlines listed below. No late submission (both for your posting and comments) are allowed.

  - Memo 1 due 09/27
  - Memo 2 due 10/25
  - Memo 3 due 11/29

  Good sources for recent reports and research on inequality issues include, but not limited to:
  The Economist
  The New York Times
  The Washington Post
  BBC
  The Wall Street Journal
  Times
  The Guardian
  The Atlantic

- **Two Movie Reviews (2.5% each)**: Students will watch two movies and write a one to two page review. The review should **not** be a mere summary of the film, but it should provide students’ critical analysis and reflection on the film. Each review should be submitted **via Canvas by 11:59pm** on the dates indicated below.

  - 09/20: Capital in the 21st Century (Available through USU Kanopy)
– 10/25: Whose Streets? (Available through USU Kanopy)

• **Four Zoom Discussion Sessions (10% each) (IDEA #1, #2 & #11):** Throughout the semester, students will participate in four zoom discussion sessions. Each session is worth 10% of the total grade.

The participation in the group discussion will be graded based on the following criteria:

  – A short summary of the article/movie assigned (less than 300 words), due 11:59pm on one day prior to the meeting date via Canvas Discussions (2.5%)
  – A list of 3 (or more) discussion questions, submitted with the summary (2.5%)
  – class attendance and participation (5%)

**Zoom Link:** Click Here  
**Passcode:** aggies

* Pre-requisites for each discussion session:

  – Online courses that are designated under each of four themes, preceding the discussion session
  – Mandatory reading assigned for the session
  – A short summary of the assigned text or film and a list of discussion questions before the meeting

* Mandatory Readings for Discussion Sessions:

  – Discussion Session #1: Economic Inequality (09/21, 3:00pm)
    * Sandel. 2020. NYT Op-ed: Are We All in This Together?
  – Discussion Session #2: Racial Inequality and Economic Disparity (10/05, 3:00pm)
  – Discussion Session #3: Gender and Inequality (10/26, 3:00pm)
  – Discussion Session #4: Population Aging and Inequality (11/09, 3:00pm)
    * The Atlantic. 2020. Millennials Don’t Stand a Chance

• **Midterm & Final Essay Exams (20% each) (IDEA #1, #2 & #11):** There are two at-home essay exams in this class. For each exam, students will write one essay on a given topic. The exam will cover reading materials and any contents covered in class. The exam question will be posted at 9:00am on an exam date on Canvas,
and students have to submit the exam electronically on Canvas by 11:59pm on the same day.

It is an open-book exam. However, the exam will require you to critically think about issues discussed in class and present your own argument with strong support. Also, importantly, no plagiarism is allowed. If students are using texts from other sources, they should be properly cited. Any plagiarism, if caught, will be given F.

Essay evaluation criteria:

- Demonstration of clear understanding of a topic in the context of selected countries
- Clear and logical development of argument/evaluation of a given issue
- Substantive examples from selected country cases
- Proper citations of assigned readings, demonstrating understanding of the texts
- Any plagiarized essay will be given no point

Readings

All readings for the class will be provided. You can download them from Canvas. Only readings with an asterisk are mandatory.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Other Course and University Policies

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating or academic misconduct in any manner will not be tolerated and will result in an F for the course. All written assignments and exams will be thoroughly checked for plagiarism and cheating. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and observe Utah State Universitys policies against cheating and plagiarism. The Universitys Code of Student Conduct in relation to academic integrity violation is available at https://studentconduct.usu.edu/aiv.
Students with Disabilities

USU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities, including students who have learning disabilities, health impairments, psychiatric disabilities, and/or other disabilities. If you believe you have a disability which requires accommodation, please the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible (University Inn 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu) so that the necessary arrangements can be made. More information is available at http://www.usu.edu/drc/.

Late Assignments and Missed Exams

All assignments (e.g., exams and summaries of the assigned readings) should be turned in on time. However, given the unprecedented circumstance, unexpected emergencies can occur (e.g. illness, child care emergency). In such a case, students should notify the instructor at the earliest convenience. If necessary, I will permit the rescheduling of assignment deadlines and exam dates.

Civility and Courteous Behavior

Civility in the (virtual) classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything which is said or discussed in the classroom. However, (virtual) classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Any discrimination against and disrespectfulness of others, whether in verbal or non-verbal form, targeting an individual or group based on age, color, religion, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated in our classroom.
Course Contents

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule and reading assignments. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of these changes. Any change will be announced in advance during class.

*** Economic Inequality ***

1. What Is Economic Inequality and (Why) Is It a Problem?
   - Wolff. An Introduction to Political Philosophy. Ch5.
   - Sen. Inequality Reexamined. Ch1.
   - Friedman and Friedman. Ch1 & 5.

2. Does Politics Only Represent the Rich?
3. When Do the Poor Have More (or Less) Power?


4. Public Opinion and Behavior


• Rehm. 2016. Risk Inequality and Welfare States: Social Policy Preferences, Development, and Dynamics


5. Social Welfare and Different Forms of (In)Equalities


6. The Consequences of Inequality

- John Voorheisy et al. 2015. “Unequal Incomes, Ideology and Gridlock: How Rising Inequality Increases Political Polarization”
*** Social Dimensions of Economic Inequality ***

7. Racial/Ethnic Dimension of Economic Inequality I


8. Racial/Ethnic Dimension of Economic Inequality II


9. Gender and Inequality


10. Gendering Public Policy I: Actors


• Folke et al. Forthcoming. “Gender and Dynastic Political Selection.” Comparative Political Studies


11. Gendering Public Policy II: Institutions


12. Globalization and Inequality

13. Gender, Labor, and Globalization

- Lan. 2006. Global Cinderellas. Ch4*

*** New Challenges ***

14. Post-Industrialization

15. Population Aging


16. Digitalization


