Distributional issues are at the core of the study of politics. From Laswell’s famous claim that politics is about who gets what, how, and when, the politics of inequality features prominently among the central themes in the discipline. This centrality is reflected in the significant increase in quantity and quality in the research of the subject witnessed over the last two decades, and in particular in the last few years. New data sources and analytical tools explain a revival that is shedding new light on some of the key mechanisms driving politics.

This seminar is designed to provide you with a critical overview of the field, both theoretically and empirically, and to advance your methodological and analytical skills. After briefly reviewing the normative foundations and conceptual complexities involved in the study of inequality, we will spend two weeks covering methodological issues. As much as with any other field, data production and manipulation matter enormously for our understanding of cross-national and over time variations. In addition, measures of inequality vary in their analytical properties, and it is important to choose the right one. We will review the main issues when measuring inequality and learn how to produce inequality indicators from micro-data using the Luxembourg Income Study database. Thereafter, we will turn to the more analytical part of the seminar. First, we will concentrate on the political and institutional foundations of various forms of inequality. Thereafter, we will focus on the political effects of inequality, paying particular attention to issues such as preference formation, political involvement, and the selection of political and fiscal institutions. Finally, we end the seminar with an analysis of the long-term relationship between inequality and development. We will pay particular attention to some of the key mechanisms governing such relationship and will take stock about where we are and what the new frontiers in the field are.

Schedule and Themes

**PART I: FUNDAMENTALS**


*Required Readings:*

  

• Ronald Dworkin 2000. Sovereign Virtue. Harvard University Press (chapters 1,2).

• John Roemer 2009 “Equality: Nature and Demand” Oxford Handbook of Economic Inequality

Additional Readings


September 14th: Linking Concepts, Measurements, and Analytical Questions.

Required Readings:

• Jenkins, Stephen & Philipp van Kerm 2009 “The Measurement of Economic Inequality” Oxford Handbook of Economic Inequality

• Robin Boadway, Michael Keen 2000 “Redistribution” in Atkinson and Bourguignon (eds) Handbook of Income Distribution (vol 1)

• Rolf Aaberge, Andrea Brandolini 2015 “Multidimensional Inequality and Poverty” in Atkinson and Bourguignon (eds) Handbook of Income Distribution (vol 2)


• Facundo Alvaredo, Leonardo Gasparini 2015 “Recent Trends in Inequality and Poverty in Developing Countries” in Atkinson and Bourguignon (eds) Handbook of Income Distribution (vol 2)


September 21st: From concepts to data: Measuring Inequality II. How to use the LIS database (lecture and hands on practice)

• Relevant LIS links: http://www.lisdatacenter.org/

• Resources: http://www.lisdatacenter.org/resources/

• Self-teaching: http://www.lisdatacenter.org/resources/self-teaching/

• Registration (do it asap!!): http://www.lisdatacenter.org/lis-luli-frontend-webapp/app/request-account-identification
PART II: POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INEQUALITY

September 28th: Inequality and Growth in the Long Run

Required Readings:

- ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
  - Irwin Garfinkel, Lee Rainwater, Timothy Smeeding 2010 Wealth and Welfare States, Oxford University Press (chapters 3 & 4)
  - Peter Lindert: 2000 “Three Centuries of Inequality in Britain and America” in Atkinson and Bourguinon Handbook of Income Distribution (vol 1)
  - Patterns across space and time (selected overviews and sources)
  - OECD Reports (for rich countries, available on line with their associated datasets):
    * Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising (2011)
  - Also, very useful: The World Top Income Datasets (http://g-mond.parisschoolofeconomics.eu/topincomes/#Introduction:)

October 5th: State Capacity and Inequality

Required Readings:

- C. Boix 2015 *Political Order and Inequality*, CUP (selections)

- Peter Lindert 2004 *Growing Public. Social Spending and Economic Growth since the Eighteen Century*. CUP (selections)

**October 12th: Wealth Inequality**

*Required Readings:*

- Anthony B. Atkinson 2015 *Inequality: What can be done?* Harvard University Press (chapters 6 and 7, pdfs made available in Sakai)


- **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS for State Capacity (10/5) and Wealth Inequality(10/12)**

**October 19th: Inequality, Domestic Conditions, and National Interdependencies I: Income Redistribution in Developed Democracies**

*Required Readings:*


• Philipp Rehm 2016 Risk Inequality and the Welfare State, New York, Cambridge University Press (selections, pdf available in Sakai)

• Beramendi et al. (eds) The Politics of Advanced Capitalism CUP (selections)


• N. Lupu and J. Pontusson 2011 “The Structure of Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution” APSR

October 26th: Inequality, Domestic Conditions, and National Interdependencies II: Income Redistribution in Developing Democracies

Required Readings:

• Holland, Alisha 2016 “Forebearance” American Political Science Review, forthcoming


• D. Queralt 2015 From Mercantilism to Free Trade: A History of Fiscal Capacity Building. Quarterly Journal of Political Science

• P. Beramendi, M. Rogers, Alberto Diaz Cayeros “Barriers to Egalitarianism: Distributive Tensions in Developing Federations” LARR, forthcoming

• ADDITIONAL MATERIALS BEARING ON THE POLITICS OF INCOME REDISTRIBUTION

  – M. Altamirano 2012 Economic Informality, Risk-Hedging and Community Safety Nets in Latin America
  – B. Ansell 2010. Ballot to the Blackboard. Cambridge, CUP (selections)
- Deborah A. Bräutigam, Odd-Helge Fjeldstad and Mick Moore: Taxation and state-building in developing countries: capacity and consent, Cambridge University Press (selections)
- Peter Hall and David Soskice 2001: “Introduction” in Peter Hall and David Soskice (eds.) Varieties of Capitalism, Oxford University Press.


– Jonathan Rodden 2010 The Long Shadow of the Industrial Revolution (Selections)


– David Rueda 2007 *Social Democracy Inside-Out* Oxford OUP


– Erik Wibbels 2016 Trade, Development and Social Insurance, book manuscript/CUP
November 2nd: Mobility and Opportunity: the Macro-Level

Required Readings:


- Esping Andersen G. “Equality of Opportunity in an increasingly hostile world” (available here, along with many other relevant pieces, http://dcpis.upf.edu/~gosta-esping-andersen/articles.htm)


- Bukodi, Goldthorpe et al 2015 “The Mobility Problem in Britain: new findings from the analysis of birth cohort data” British Journal of Sociology 66/1


- R. Landerso and J. Heckman 2016 “The Scandinavian Fantasy: The Sources of Intergenerational Mobility in Denmark and the US” NBER-Working Paper

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS


PART III: POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INEQUALITY

November 9th: Economic and Political Inequality: Affluence and Influence

Required Readings:

November 16th: Inequality and Political Conflict

Required Readings:
- Beramendi and Stegmueller 2016 “The Political Geography of the Euro-Crisis” Duke University, WP
- B. Ansell and D. Samuels 2012. Inequality and Democracy. A Contractarian Approach, Book Manuscript (selections)

** November 23rd: Thanksgiving Break. No class! **

November 30th: Inequality and Political Polarization

Required Readings:
- Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal 2006: Polarized America, MIT Press
- John Voorheisy, Nolan McCartyz, and Boris Shorx 2015 “Unequal Incomes, Ideology and Gridlock: How Rising Inequality Increases Political Polarization” WP Oregon/Princeton/Georgetown

December 7th : PAPER PRESENTATIONS. PAPERS DUE DECEMBER 5TH
Course Requirements

- Participation (10 %). You will be expected to have done all the required readings in advance of each class. Though sessions will begin with a short lecture, class sessions will be conducted in a highly participatory seminar format. To ensure we’re all keeping up, please send a half page or so of discussion points/questions bearing on the week’s reading to everyone by 8 PM the day before class. You can raise questions about theory, method, point out conflicts between readings, develop links with previous weeks’ readings, whatever. These comments/questions should be 1 page long max. Participation grade will be awarded on the basis of attendance (unjustified absences imply an automatic loss of participation credit), the quality of these short responses, and the contributions to discussion in class. In doing the readings it may be useful to keep the following questions in mind:
  - What are the central issues at stake in this literature?
  - What are the principal arguments of the works under study?
  - How does each relate to the debates in the field?
  - What are the main theoretical or empirical strengths or weaknesses of these studies?
  - How valuable and viable is the theory that each proposes?
  - How effectively does it marshal empirical evidence in support of the argument?
  - How well have the scholarly disputes been resolved?
  - What further work might still be done to resolve remaining scholarly disputes?

- One Group Exercise (15 %): Depending on the final size of the class, I will organize you in groups of 2-3 students. Each team will be responsible for one group exercise, which can involve either: a) large-n replications and extensions; or b) a research design for a field or lab experiment. Each team must do one of each exercise. Replications/extensions should replicate results from a paper on the syllabus, check for robustness (by, for instance, analyzing subsamples, estimating models using different assumptions, etc), and engage in at least one extension. Experimental research designs should include a discussion of the relevant theory, a justification for the location of the experiment, the principles governing sample size, stratification and randomization, a strategy for data collection and analysis, and preliminary ideas on who your local partners might be and how you might fund the research. You will provide 15-20 minute presentations of these exercises at the end of each class. The specific presentation dates will be arranged in class.

- One data exercises (15 %). The goal of this assignment is to get you to work directly on analyzing income distributions. After teaching the relevant materials, I will circulate a list of questions/problems choose from. You are required to deliver your answer by end of the semester. Your answer should include both the substantive answer to the questions in the assignment and the code you produced to generate the answer. You are welcome to team up in groups of two to complete these data assignments as well (it is not compulsory though). You will need to be familiar with and use the LIS Data Center to complete most of these assignments (http://www.lisdatacenter.org/).

- Research Paper (60 %). You will write an original research paper of 20-25 pages that bears on the themes of the class. I would encourage you to talk with me soon about topics, methods, etc. in advance of starting. Papers are due by 5 pm on December 5th 2012,
ahead of the class presentation on December 7th. Late papers will be penalized by a letter grade per day. Contrary to common practice in the department, I am profoundly averse to issuing “Incompletes”. During this session you will have the task of presenting and discussing someone else’s paper (nobody will present their paper) in a manner similar to what you would do in a professional conference. The session will be entirely devoted to offering feedback on the papers. It is important that everyone receives the papers on time and reads them before hand.

Some general instructions on how to write the paper follow. The paper is an analytical piece. The topic should be arranged with the instructor by the fourth week of the semester. Students are expected to give me a preliminary paper proposal (1 page max) no later than September 17th and a detailed outline (4 pages max) by October 1st. Good papers are the product of original thought and set forth a distinct hypothesis or interpretation of the relevant issues. Research papers add to this kind of theoretical discussion a preliminary empirical test of the hypotheses under discussion. The papers will be evaluated according to the (1) effectiveness and insight with which they illuminate the question under scrutiny in an independent and critically-minded way and (2) the links between the theoretical arguments, the methodology adopted to approach the question, and the evidence marshaled to support the claims.

Style matters. Papers should be of journal article length (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, Times Roman font, 12 pt., excluding references). Prose style matters. Be focused, and selective. Use active voice. Spell-check. Proofread. Please, before planning your papers read these three pieces (all available online):

- Barry Weingast (1995) Structuring Your Papers
- James A. Stimson (n.d.) : Professional Writing for Political Science: A Highly Opinionated Essay
- Paul Krugman (n.d.) : How I Work

**NOTE:** Students are assumed to be aware of Dukes regulations concerning intellectual honesty and plagiarism. Any manifestation of academic dishonesty will result in failing the class and will be formally reported to the relevant academic authorities.