
Political and Social Inequality

Spring 2019



Dates / contact hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:00-2:30 pm, Seminar 3B 3103

Academic credit: 4 DKU credits

Course format: seminar

Instructor's Information

Andrew MacDonald

Andrew.macdonald@dukekunshan.edu.cn

Office: CC2064

Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 1-5 pm or by appointment

My interest in political inequality comes from understanding power dynamics and how those with less power navigate and challenge those in power. I invite you to view examples of my work at: www.andrewmacdonald.org. If you're interested in my work I'm happy to chat further about it during office hours!

Contact Policy:

I urge you to think deeply about the material introduced in class during the evenings and on the weekends. In doing this thinking you will likely have questions.

You are also welcome (and encouraged) to come to my office hours and ask any question—silly, serious or anything in between.

If you are unable to get an answer from office hours, my general policy is that I answer email during work hours (I sometimes try to have my own home life!) and I promise a response within 48 hours. Usually I answer student emails in the afternoons.

What is this course about?

How do different groups with different levels of political power shape political outcomes? How do social inequalities express themselves through the political system? What is a 'fair' level of inequality? How do different institutional designs shape and channel inequality?

This class introduces you to readings, arguments, and concepts that begin to explore the answers to these questions. We are not going to solve the problem of inequality in this class (we may not even agree what the 'problem' of inequality is!) but hopefully at the end of this class you can begin to think about the relationship of various power structures and how they shape everyday citizens' lived experience in the real world.

Another goal of the class is to become more comfortable reading academic texts. The reading load for the class is not particularly heavy but we will be engaged in close readings of key texts for the class and that should help you develop the skills to read and understand dense academic arguments.

What background knowledge do I need before taking this course?

None

What will I learn in this course?

Upon completing the course, you will develop the following abilities:

- Define key features of inequality that matter to politics
- Explain how inequality matters in various social and political contexts
- Illustrate how inequality can affect politics in specific circumstances
- Question existing political power arrangements if they perpetuate inequality
- Formulate a logical and complete argument as to the scope of the inequality problem in at least one social or political context
- Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of various authors' arguments regarding problems related to inequality

What will I do in this course?

We will meet 2 days a week for class. Each class is a full discussion with no lecture so it will certainly be in your interest to come prepared.

How can I prepare for the class sessions to be successful?

The best way to prepare for class is to do the readings carefully. I suggest that as you read, you keep a notebook near you.

While reading, have three separate pages. First, make a running list of questions as you do the readings. Second, make note of any interesting observations or thoughts you have responding to the readings. Third, have a section that includes any references or connections to previously studied material.

Making lists 1) and 2) will make it very easy to complete the required homework for the week and 3) will make your discussion participation be especially well informed and interesting.

What required texts, materials, and equipment will I need?

There are no textbooks though there are a number of readings that will be made available on Sakai that we will discuss each class. Some of these will be academic articles and others will be popular articles.

How will my grade be determined?

Assessment: Grades in the class will be determined by:

- *Participation (20% of grade):* This class is designed to be highly interactive. We will spend significant amounts of time in pair, group, and class discussions. You do not need to be a frequent speaker to get a good grade but you do need to meaningfully participate in all discussions. At the midterm and at the end of the term I will have you self-assess your participation and these self-assessments will form the foundation of your participation grade (though I reserve the right to modify your self-given grade – it will not help you to just give yourself all As!)
- *Pre-Class Warmups (25% of grade):*

- Before each class there will be a series reading questions posted on Sakai. You must answer, with one paragraph, two separate questions. You must answer at least one question for each reading – you cannot answer both questions on the same reading You must submit these to Sakai by 10:00 am before class and bring a printout of your answers to class.
- Additionally, you should write out a list of substantive questions relevant to the reading. They do not have to be profound but must show that you have thought about the reading. You should make a list of at least five questions, with at least two questions per reading. These should be submitted to Sakai by 10:00 am before class and bring a printout of the questions to class.
- *Class Co-discussion Leader (15% of grade)*: Each student will be asked to co-lead one class during the term. Leading the class involves coming up with the pre-class questions to be posed to the other students, collating the questions other students have about the readings, presenting your understanding during the start of class in a 10-15 minute presentation, managing discussion, and possibly doing some outside reading to further expand on the topic for the day. I strongly encourage you to meet, as a pair, with me before class so we can go over how the class will be run. I know it sounds scary but the experience will be rewarding ☺
- *Midterm Paper (15% of grade)*: The midterm will respond to one of several essay prompts that I distribute after week 2. You will have two weeks to develop an argument that responds to the prompt with a clear, convincing argument that uses available readings in an appropriate way. 1000 words. DUE FEB 1 at 5 pm.
- *Final Paper (25% of grade)*: The final paper should attempt to link together two aspects of inequality we have discussed in class, one from the first half of class and the other from the second half of class, such as institutional design and democratic stability. Make an argument for why they are connected and reference the materials in class and some of your own research to connect the two concepts. We will workshop your paper before the final due date so you will have plenty of opportunity to revise them. 2000 words. DUE MAR 5 at 5 pm (subject to change).

Grading Scale

The grading scale is as follows:

A+	4.0	100- 98
A	4.0	97 - 93
A-	3.7	92-90
B+	3.3	89 - 87
B	3.0	86 - 83
B-	2.7	82 - 80
C+	2.3	79 - 77
C	2.0	76 - 73
C-	1.7	72 - 70
D+	1.3	69 - 67
D	1.0	66 - 63
D-	1.0	62 - 60
F	0	59 and below

What are the course policies?

Laptop/Tablet Policy:

There has been significant research showing that unfocused computer use in class hinders learning (I know you all like to spend time browsing Facebook and Taobao) not only for you but for everyone else in class that can see your screen. However, I recognize some people do have specific learning situations that require a computer. If you have a specific situation that requires a computer use in class please either contact me directly with your needs or speak to the relevant advising department and ask them to contact me.

Therefore, unless you or someone from the advising center have contacted me in advance, on teaching days you may not use your laptop or tablet during class.

Late Homework Policy:

Homework forms an essential part of our in-class discussion and so not having done the homework will make it difficult for you to participate. You will need to turn in your homework at the start of class. Late homework will be penalized 50% not to because I am a jerk but because the homework is such an essential part of our class environment. I will not accept homework later than 48 hours after the due date.

Collaboration Policies:

You are expected to strictly adhere to the Duke Kunshan University Community Standard in all of your work and participation, and violations will be enforced. More details can be found in Duke Kunshan University Academic Polices (add link to the policy).

All work must be done exclusively by the individual to whom it has been assigned. You should assume that collaboration on assignments, the use of previously-assigned homework, quizzes and answer keys, outside sources or outside aids (both written and electronic) are not allowed unless explicitly noted in the assignment guidelines. All cases of suspected cheating will be referred for adjudication to the Dean's Office. Any violation for which a student is found responsible is considered grounds for failure in the course.

It may sound cliché to say, but if you cheat and copy others' answers or papers you are only cheating yourself; you will not learn how to write and succeed in college. Cheating is ultimately self-defeating so for both of our benefit, please, don't do it. If you are having trouble completing any of the assignments and feel tempted to cheat, please contact me directly instead with the difficulties you are having.

What is the expected course schedule?

We will try to cover one topic in depth each week. In addition to the academic readings listed below, I will upload several topical and related articles to Sakai for each subject that you will also read and incorporate into your question answers and discussion.

W1D1. Introduction – Tuesday, Jan 8th

Introductions, ice breaker, concept map of inequality

Setting the Stage – History and Philosophy of Inequality, Basic Models

W1D2. Inequality of What? – Thursday, Jan 10th

John Rawls, 2004, "Justice as Fairness" in Colin Farrelly (eds.) *Contemporary Political Theory*

"The Entitlement Theory of Justice" in in Colin Farrelly (eds.) *Contemporary Political Theory*

"Equality of What?" in in Colin Farrelly (eds.) *Contemporary Political Theory*

W2D1. The State of World Inequality – Tuesday, January 15th

Branko Milanovic, 2011, *The Haves and the Have-Nots* (select chapters)

W2D2. Basic Models – Thursday, January 17th

Allan Meltzer and Scott Richard, 1981. "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government." *Journal of Political Economy*

Barrington Moore, 1993. *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world* (select chapter)

W3D1. Social-Historical Forces – Tuesday, January 22nd

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, 2000, "Why Did the West Extend the Suffrage? Democracy, Inequality, and Growth in Historical Perspective." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Carles Boix, 2010, "Origins and Persistence of Economic Inequality." *Annual Review of Political Science*.

Political Determinants of Economic Inequality

W3D2. Welfare State – Thursday, January 24th

John Dryzek and Robert E Goodin, 1986, "Risk-sharing and Social Justice: The Motivational Foundations of the Post-war Welfare State" *British Journal of Political Science*

Torben Iversen and David Soskice, 2011, "Inequality and Redistribution: A Unified Approach to the Role of Economic and Political Institutions." *Revue économique*.

W4D1 Non-Democracies – Tuesday, January 29th

Casey B. Mulligan, Ricard Gil and Xavier Sala-i-Martin, 2004, "Do Democracies Have Different Public Policies than Nondemocracies?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*

Jeremy Wallace, 2013, "Cities, Redistribution, and Authoritarian Regime Survival." *Journal of Politics*

W4D2 Societal Makeup – Thursday, January 31st

Noam Lupu and Jonas Pontusson, 2011, "The Structure of Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution," *American Political Science Review*

Charlotte Cavallé and Kris-Stella Trump, 2015, "The Two Facets of Social Policy Preferences," *The Journal of Politics*

Midterm Due by 5:00 pm Feb 1

Political Consequences of Economic Inequality

W5D1. Institutional Structure – Tuesday, February 12th

Kenneth Sokoloff and Stanley Engerman 2000 “Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World,” Journal of Economic Perspectives

Ronald Rogowski and Duncan McRae 2008: “Does Inequality determine institutions? What history and some data tell us” in Beramendi and Anderson (eds.) Democracy, Inequality and Representation

W5D2. Democratic Performance? – Thursday, February 14th

Frederick Solt, 2008, "Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement," American Journal of Political Science

Robert Andersen, 2012, “Support for democracy in cross-national perspective: The detrimental effect of economic inequality,” Research in Social Stratification and Mobility

W6D1. Democratic Performance Cont. – Tuesday, February 19th

Robert J. Barro, 1999, "Inequality, growth, and investment." No. w7038. National bureau of economic research

Eric M. Uslaner and Mitchell Brown, 2005, "Inequality, trust, and civic engagement," American politics research

W6D2. Authoritarian Stability? – Thursday, February 21st

C. Boix 2003 Democracy and Redistribution, New York, Cambridge University Press (select chapter)

Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman. 2012 “Inequality and Regime Change: Democratic Transitions and the Stability of Democratic Rule” American Political Science Review

Closing Arguments

W7D1. Why Have Regimes Failed to Curb Inequality? – Tuesday, February 26th

Adam Przeworski, 2010, Democracy and the Limits of Self-Government, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (select chapter)

Vladimir Gimpelson and Daniel Treisman, 2018, “Misperceiving Inequality” Economics & Politics

W7D2. Closing and Final Paper Review – Thursday, February 28th

Tony Judt 2009 “What is living and what is dead in social democracy?,” New York Review of Books

FINAL PAPER DUE MAR 5 at 5 PM (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)