

POLITICS OF INEQUALITY

GOVT 391

Spring 2019

Tyler Hall 133

Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 am - 12:20 pm

INSTRUCTOR : S.P. Harish
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OFFICE HOURS : Tue, Thu: 3:00pm - 4:30pm (or by appointment)

Course Overview & Objectives

Inequality is central to many sociopolitical issues, and this course is designed to provide you with a critical understanding of the concept. We will begin with a historical review of the concept followed by the main issues surrounding the measurement of inequality. Next we will examine inequality between countries: why are some countries richer than others? How have these differences changed over time? Following that, we will study inequality within countries: how does the distribution of power affect the distribution of resources, and what policies exacerbate economic and political inequality within a society? In the third part of the course, we will study the link between inequality and various sociopolitical issues like ethnicity, gender, democracy, war and technology. To address these issues, we will use a combination of theoretical and empirical material, and discuss both historical and contemporary cases. At the end of the course, you will (1) gain a good understanding of the main issues surrounding the politics of inequality; (2) understand the reasons behind inequality both between and within countries; and (3) comprehend how inequality is related to other important social and political issues.

This class fulfills the COLL300 requirement and is intended to bring the world to you at W&M. It is one of many courses this semester that will explore the COLL300 theme of Ceremony. Each of these courses will include material that links the theme to the course, and we will also explore how the 'ceremony' theme fits in with the politics of inequality. There are a number of COLL300 activities in which you are expected to participate and these requirements are detailed below. Note that participation in the COLL300 activities is mandatory for all students of this course.

Class Requirements & Expectation

This course is an upper-division class and so the workload is not light. Almost every week will have 3-4 readings and you are expected to have read them before you come to class. The course will be taught using a combination of lectures, readings, and speaker events, and you should treat them as complementary to one another. The outline below lists the class requirements and grading - you are expected to keep abreast to any changes in the syllabus (the most updated version will be on Blackboard).

Required Books

The following books will be used extensively in this course. They will also serve as a good reference if you conduct further research in the field of Inequality.

- James K. Galbraith (2016). *Inequality: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press
- Branko Milanovic (2016). *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

As mentioned above, this class is a COLL300 course and will feature three visitors on campus during the semester. Each of the visitors will hold a public event and you are expected to attend these events. Each of these visitors will hold a public event and it is mandatory for you to attend these events. These events are currently scheduled (a) February 27 at 5:00pm; (b) March 27 at 5:00pm; and (c) April 10 at 5:00pm. Only University-approved reasons can be used as a valid excuse for missing these public events (and note that practice for a sports team or travel for a club is not a University-approved reason for missing these events). In addition, there will be a COLL300 Academic Festival on Wednesday, April 24 at 5:00pm-7:00pm. The festival is where you will showcase a presentation of some aspect of your work. You are expected to attend and participate in this academic festival. Your participation in this festival involves demonstrating a simulation and based on this demonstration, present your findings to the audience. More details on the simulation and presentation will be made available later in the course.

Grading

Reflection Papers, due on the Saturday after each speaker event, 15% It is mandatory for you to attend the speaker events on the dates listed above (we have scheduled class time for you to attend these events) and write three reflection papers (5% each) based on their talks. Each paper should be about 500 words (1-page single spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font), and should discuss how the speaker's experience and talk relates to the topic of inequality. Note that these reflection papers are expected to make you go outside your comfort zone, and you will need to think hard about how their talk fits in with the themes of this course.

In-class Midterm Exam, 19 Feb 2019, 30% The midterm will test you on the material covered in the class until that date. It will cover the lectures, readings, speaker events or any additional material distributed in class. The exam will consist of multiple choice and identification questions.

In-class Presentation, 23 Apr 2019 & 25 Apr 2019, 15% You will be randomly paired within a group of 7-8 of your classmates for a simulation exercise. We will have a session in class (21 Feb 2019) where we will work through an example. All the rules and instructions for this exercise will be handed to you before this session. The in-class presentation is when your group will present the results of these simulations and will be graded. You are then required to demonstrate this simulation and present your findings at the COLL300 Academic Festival (which will not be graded).

Final Paper, 7 May 2019, 5:00pm, 30% The final research paper should examine a key question about the causes or effects of inequality. The paper should be about 5,000 words (20-pages double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font) including references. You will be graded on the following

- Clear question related to the class topic
- Clear argument
- Review that discusses how your thesis fits into the larger scholarly literature

- Research design that includes a discussion of the methodological approach and data
- Findings

Class Attendance/Participation, 10% Class attendance is mandatory and participation in class is critical to understanding the concepts discussed in this course. You are required to read the week's material before class, and come prepared to ask questions and engage in a constructive discussion. I encourage you to ask questions and make your opinion heard at any time during the class. For those of you who would like to boost your participation grade, there may be a couple of other speaker events that you can attend for credit. More information on these events will be even in class.

I will base final course grades on the following scale, with partial-percents typically rounded to the nearest full percent: A 100-93, A- 92-90, B+ 89-88, B 87-83, B- 82-80, C+ 79-78, C 77-73, C- 72-70, D+ 69-68, D 67-63, D- 62-60, F < 60.

Class Attendance

We will meet twice a week during the semester. You can expect me to come prepared to lecture, conduct discussions, and answer any queries you have on the material. During each class, I will work to provide you with an environment where you can ask interesting questions and engage in a constructive discussion. Attendance is mandatory as your class participation grade is dependent on your presence and participation. Note also that the midterm will rely on the lectures and class discussions.

Classroom Policy

The classroom is a place of learning and I expect all of us to strive towards making the class an enjoyable academic environment. It is important that all of us: (1) arrive on time each week; (2) be respectful towards each other in our comments; and (3) turn off or put our cell phones on vibrate mode. You can use other electronic devices such as laptops for note-taking in class as long as it does not distract your fellow classmates or disrupt the class.

Communication

You are encouraged to attend office hours to clarify any of the classroom material and discuss your assignments. You can also send me questions over email, but please include the course number and your full name in the subject header. If you wish to make an appointment outside of my office hours, email me at least 48 hours before our meeting.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) staff at 221-2509 or at sas@wm.edu. An official letter from SAS is required before students can receive an accommodation.

Academic Conduct

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policies for academic integrity. Answers to questions on cheating, plagiarism, or other types of academic dishonesty are available on the William & Mary Honor Councils web site (<http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/honorcodeandcouncils/honorcode/index.php>) and the Honor Code section of the Student Handbook. If I discover any academic misconduct, I will initiate an Honor Council proceeding and recommend that the student receive an F for the course.

Summary of Important Dates

- 28 Jan 2019** Add/drop deadline
- 19 Feb 2019** In-class Midterm
- 21 Feb 2019** In-class Simulation
- 27 Feb 2019, 5:00pm** COLL300 Public Event
- 2 Mar 2019, 11:50pm** Reflection Paper 1 Due
- 15 Mar 2019, 5:00pm** Withdraw deadline
- 27 Mar 2019, 5:00pm** COLL300 Public Event
- 30 Mar 2019, 11:50pm** Reflection Paper 2 Due
- 10 Apr 2019, 5:00pm** COLL300 Public Event
- 13 Apr 2019, 11:50pm** Reflection Paper 3 Due
- 23 Apr 2019 & 25 Apr 2019** In-class Presentations
- 24 Apr 2019, 5:00pm** COLL300 Academic Festival
- 7 May 2019** Final paper due

Class Schedule

Note that the weekly schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and/or on Blackboard.

Week 1, 17 Jan 2019 - Introduction

- Galbraith 2016, chapter 1

Week 2, 22 Jan 2019 & 24 Jan 2019 - History of Inequality

- Galbraith 2016, chapter 2
- Milanovic 2016, chapter 1
- Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage (2009). "Institutions, Partisanship, and Inequality in the Long Run." *World Politics* 61.2, pp. 215–253
- Facundo Alvaredo et al. "World Inequality Report." 2018. URL: <https://wir2018.wid.world/files/download/wir2018-summary-english.pdf>

Week 3, 29 Jan 2019 & 31 Jan 2019 - Measurement of Inequality

- Galbraith 2016, chapters 3-5
- Wilkinson and Pickett 2009, chapter 2

Week 4, 5 Feb 2019 & 7 Feb 2019 - Inequality between Countries

- Milanovic 2016, chapter 3
- Galbraith 2016, chapter 8
- Lawrence H. Summers (2014). “The Inequality Puzzle.” *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*
- Deirdre N. McCloskey (July 2015). “How Piketty Misses the Point.” URL: <https://www.cato.org/policy-report/julyaugust-2015/how-piketty-misses-point>

Week 5, 12 Feb 2019 & 14 Feb 2019 - Inequality within Countries

- Milanovic 2016, chapter 2
- Kent Flannery and Joyce Marcus (2012). “The Creation of Inequality: How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery, and Empire.” : Harvard University Press. Chap. The Rise and Fall of Hereditary Inequality in Farming Societies, pp. 187–207
- Richard V. Reeves and Eleanor Krause (Jan. 2018). “Raj Chetty in 14 Charts.” URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2018/01/11/raj-chetty-in-14-charts-big-findings-on-opportunity-and-mobility-we-should-know/>

Week 6, 19 Feb 2019 & 21 Feb 2019 - Midterm & Simulation

The in-class midterm will be held on 19 Feb 2019

The in-class simulation will be held on 21 Feb 2019

Week 7, 26 Feb 2019 & 27 Feb 2019 - Ceremonies & Inequality

27 Feb 2019, 5:00pm: COLL300 Public Event

- V. Rao (2001). “Celebrations as Social Investments: Festival Expenditures, Unit Price Variation and Social Status in Rural India.” *The Journal of Development Studies* 38.1, pp. 71–97
- Joseph Watts et al. (2016). “Ritual Human Sacrifice Promoted and Sustained the Evolution of Stratified Societies.” *Nature* 532, 228231

Week 8, 5 Mar 2019 & 7 Mar 2019 - SPRING BREAK

There is no class this week

Week 9, 12 Mar 2019 & 14 Mar 2019 - Gender Inequality

- Marianne Bertrand, Claudia Goldin, and Lawrence F. Katz (2010). “Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2, pp. 228–255
- Seema Jayachandran (2015). “The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries.” *Annual Review of Economics* 7, pp. 63–88

Week 10, 19 Mar 2019 - Infrastructure & Inequality

There is no class on 21 Mar 2019

- Clayton Nall (2018). *The Road to Inequality: How the Federal Highway Program Polarized America and Undermined Cities*. Cambridge University Press, chapters 1 & 2
- Jamie S. Davidson (2015). *Indonesia’s Changing Political Economy: Governing the Roads*. Cambridge University Press, Introduction

Week 11, 26 Mar 2019 & 27 Mar 2019 - Ethnicity & Inequality

27 Mar 2019, 5:00pm: COLL300 Public Event

- Alberto Alesina, Stelios Michalopoulos, and Elias Papaioannou (2016). “Ethnic Inequality.” *Journal of Political Economy* 124.2, pp. 428–488
- Avidit Acharya and Matthew Blackwell & Maya Sen (2018). *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*. Princeton University Press, Introduction
- Prerna Singh and Dean Spears (June 2017). “How Status Inequality between Ethnic Groups Affects Public Goods Provision: Experimental Evidence on Caste and Tolerance for Teacher Absenteeism in India.” WIDER Working Paper 2017/129

Week 12, 2 Apr 2019 & 4 Apr 2019 - Democracy & Inequality

- Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage (2017). “Wealth Inequality and Democracy.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, pp. 451–468
- Larry M. Bartels (2010). *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press, chapter 1
- Daron Acemoglu et al. (2015). “Handbook of Income Distribution Volume 2.” : ed. by Anthony B. Atkinson and Francois Bourguignon. Chap. Democracy, Redistribution and Inequality, 18851966, chapter 1

Week 13, 9 Apr 2019 & 10 Apr 2019 - War & Inequality

10 Apr 2019, 5:00pm: COLL300 Public Event

- Walter Scheidel (2017). *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press, selected pages
- Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage (2010). “The Conscription of Wealth: Mass Warfare and the Demand for Progressive Taxation.” *International Organization* 64.4, pp. 529–561

Week 14, 16 Apr 2019 & 18 Apr 2019 - Technology & Inequality

- Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz (2018). “Inequality in the 21st Century: A Reader.” : ed. by David B. Grusky and Jasmine Hill. Routledge. Chap. The Race Between Education and Technology, pp. 48–53
- Virginia Eubanks (2018). *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. St. Martin’s Press, selected chapters
- Martin Ford (2016). *Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future*. Basic Books, selected chapters

Week 15, 23 Apr 2019 & 25 Apr 2019 - Group Presentations

- In-class group presentations on 23 Apr 2019 & 25 Apr 2019
- COLL300 Academic Festival on 24 Apr 2019, 5:00pm

References

- Acemoglu, Daron et al. (2015). “Handbook of Income Distribution Volume 2.” : ed. by Anthony B. Atkinson and François Bourguignon. Chap. Democracy, Redistribution and Inequality, 18851966.
- Acharya, Avidit and Matthew Blackwell & Maya Sen (2018). *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Alesina, Alberto, Stelios Michalopoulos, and Elias Papaioannou (2016). “Ethnic Inequality.” *Journal of Political Economy* 124.2, pp. 428–488.
- Alvaredo, Facundo et al. “World Inequality Report.” 2018. URL: <https://wir2018.wid.world/files/download/wir2018-summary-english.pdf>.
- Bartels, Larry M. (2010). *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton University Press.
- Bertrand, Marianne, Claudia Goldin, and Lawrence F. Katz (2010). “Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 2, pp. 228–255.
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- Eubanks, Virginia (2018). *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. St. Martin’s Press.
- Flannery, Kent and Joyce Marcus (2012). “The Creation of Inequality: How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery, and Empire.” : Harvard University Press. Chap. The Rise and Fall of Hereditary Inequality in Farming Societies, pp. 187–207.
- Ford, Martin (2016). *Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future*. Basic Books.
- Galbraith, James K. (2016). *Inequality: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press.
- Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence F. Katz (2018). “Inequality in the 21st Century: A Reader.” : ed. by David B. Grusky and Jasmine Hill. Routledge. Chap. The Race Between Education and Technology, pp. 48–53.
- Jayachandran, Seema (2015). “The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries.” *Annual Review of Economics* 7, pp. 63–88.
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- Milanovic, Branko (2016). *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Nall, Clayton (2018). *The Road to Inequality: How the Federal Highway Program Polarized America and Undermined Cities*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rao, V. (2001). “Celebrations as Social Investments: Festival Expenditures, Unit Price Variation and Social Status in Rural India.” *The Journal of Development Studies* 38.1, pp. 71–97.
- Reeves, Richard V. and Eleanor Krause (Jan. 2018). “Raj Chetty in 14 Charts.” URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2018/01/11/raj-chetty-in-14-charts-big-findings-on-opportunity-and-mobility-we-should-know/>.
- Scheidel, Walter (2017). *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press.
- Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage (2009). “Institutions, Partisanship, and Inequality in the Long Run.” *World Politics* 61.2, pp. 215–253.
- (2010). “The Constriction of Wealth: Mass Warfare and the Demand for Progressive Taxation.” *International Organization* 64.4, pp. 529–561.
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- Wilkinson, Richard and Kate Pickett (2009). *The Spirit Level*. Bloomsburg Press.