DSSC 8310
Topics in Development Studies and Social Change
Economic Inequality

FALL 2015
1383 SOCIAL SCIENCES
2:00–4:00 MONDAY
NOV. 2–DEC. 14

OFFICE HOURS: TU 9:30–11:00 AND BY APPOINTMENT

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Course Description

The purpose of this topics course is to survey the issue of economic inequality, with a main focus on the U.S. and also some attention given to the global south.

Books and other readings

The readings for the course will be taken from a number of books and some web-based resources. The articles will be distributed by email or, in some cases, will be available on the library’s e-journals website. Book chapters

How the Course Will Work

The first session will consist mainly of an introductory lecture, but after that we will spend most of our dime in discussion. Students will be expected to have read the required readings before class.

Assigned Workload

The course will rely upon your active participation in discussions during class. Each week after the first week you will also be asked to submit an “insight” into the readings from the current week. An insight is a paragraph or two, definitely less than a page, that describes your views on something interesting or controversial in the material. I expect to learn much from your insights, and I encourage you to play a contrarian role, to embrace controversial ideas, to try to convince me of things that you suspect I will resist. Don’t be afraid to take an advocacy position, so long as it is supported by cogent, concise arguments. Please use both classroom time and your insights to follow your instincts: be skeptical of what your classmates say and and make sure we hear about it.

Grading

Your semester grade of pass or fail will be determined according to the following weights:

| Insights    | 40 percent |
| Class Participation | 60 percent |
University Grading Standards

I will follow the *University Grading Standards*, found on the web at policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Nov. 2</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Stiglitz, pp. 11-21; Surowiecki</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: Nov. 9</td>
<td>Why economics can’t answer the question</td>
<td>Adler; Schofield; Kirman</td>
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<td>3: Nov. 16</td>
<td>Measuring inequality</td>
<td>Atkinson; Wikipedia</td>
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<td>4: Nov. 23</td>
<td>Inequality in the global north</td>
<td>OECD 2015</td>
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<td>5: Nov. 30</td>
<td>Inequality in the global south</td>
<td>Bourguignon; Deaton; World Bank</td>
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<td>6: Dec. 7</td>
<td>Wealth: A longer historical perspective</td>
<td>Piketty; Jones</td>
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<td>7: Dec. 14</td>
<td>Solutions</td>
<td>Bourguignon; Deaton; Smith</td>
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COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Week 1, November 2: Introduction


Week 2, November 9: Why Economics Can’t Answer the Question


Week 3, November 16: Measuring inequality


Week 4, November 23: Inequality in the global north


Week 5, November 30: Inequality in the global south


Week 6, December 7: Wealth: A longer historical perspective


**Week 7, December 14: Solutions**

