

**PLCP 4500: DEMOCRACY & INEQUALITY (Spring 2023)**  
**Thursdays 2:00-4:30 in Monroe 114**

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Equality is a fundamental prerequisite for democracy as well as for a just, stable society. If children from poor families have no chance of improving their economic status because the powerful have stacked the system to give themselves every advantage, the lower classes will eventually revolt. Yet most democratic countries are becoming more and more unequal—to the point that in some countries a few very rich individuals and corporations are able to use their superior resources to drown out the voices of average citizens. If the rich use this power to further entrench their wealth and power, at some point it makes no sense to call these societies “democratic.”

One solution to the above problem would be to use the powers of the state to redistribute wealth, income, and power. But accomplishing that without triggering civil war and democratic breakdown has proven challenging in many societies. When poorer segments of society have attempted to use their numbers (at the ballot box or in the streets) to redistribute land, money, or change the rules of politics to weaken the control of the rich and powerful, those who risk losing their wealth and power often fight back by extralegal means. So efforts to reduce inequality can also lead to democratic breakdown.

If we believe that the democratic form of government is essential for human flourishing, how can our societies best thread the needle between the risks of too much inequality and the risks that redistribution will cause a breakdown of democracy? This seminar asks how much and what kind of equality is needed in order for our democratic societies to remain “democratic” and also considers which approaches to reducing inequality have proven most successful in achieving this aim without triggering civil war and democratic breakdown. By exploring how societies around the world are attempting to address inequalities in order to build better democracies, and critically examining how this project is faring in the United States, students will be encouraged to imagine ways to improve democratic performance in this country.

**Requirements:**

The grade in this seminar will be based on four components: participation in weekly discussions; an “Inequality Audit” of a country of your choice (not the United States) that you will compile over the course of the semester; an oral presentation examining a specific inequality challenge and presenting data on how the challenge is manifested and addressed across a variety of countries; and a final research paper.

All students are required to do all of the assigned reading and come to all seminar sessions ready to participate actively in discussions. Students' **Participation** grades (20% of the semester grade) will be based on the degree to which their participation on a weekly basis is active and informed. Because such participation is only possible if students attend class, missing more than one class during the semester will result in a 10-point reduction (e.g. a 95 will become an 85) in the participation grade.

Each student will also complete an **Inequality Audit** on the country of their choice (20% of the semester grade). This will be compiled over the course of the semester as students research and present to their classmates the way in which their country approaches each of the inequality challenges we discuss over the course of the term. You are encouraged to write a paragraph or two each week about how your country experiences the inequality challenge discussed that week so that by the end of the term you will be able to turn in a completed essay with sections on each topic. **A total of 5 pages, double-spaced 12-point font, is due on May 3.** Note that you are encouraged to share your findings about your country's experience with the challenge each week in discussions, so this will count toward your participation grade as well.

In addition to participating in these ways on a weekly basis, students will be asked to choose one of the inequality challenges from the syllabus and make a 15-minute **oral presentation** (20%) and write a 15-page **final research paper** (40%) on how two or more nations approach this challenge. Presenters (typically two each week, total of 30 minutes) will be responsible for doing extra reading on the inequality challenge, presenting information on how it affects democratic performance in two or more countries, and examine how these countries have or have not sought to mitigate the challenge. Students should plan on committing to the country they will examine in their "inequality audit" and the inequality challenge they will tackle by week two of the class. Students are invited to visit with me during office hours early in the semester to talk about approaches to their topic. **The final paper (due on May 3)** must have citations (parenthetical format, with page numbers for specific quotes and data) and an alphabetical list of works cited with all bibliographic information. The works cited are not included in the page total. You are encouraged to incorporate figures with relevant data. Late papers will be accepted, if permission has been given prior to the due date based on a very good reason. Unexcused delays will result in a deduction of one letter for each day the paper is late.

### Readings:

Assigned readings are a very important part of the course. We will read substantial sections of the following books, which you are encouraged to purchase (physical copies or digital).

Thomas Piketty, *A Brief History of Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2022).

Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010).

In addition to these books, we will be reading each week two to four somewhat dense (with political science theory) articles and/or book chapters. These readings, marked with a \*, will be available in PDF format on the Canvas site for this class under “files.” I encourage you to download them to an **e-reader** such as “Notability” and learn how to highlight and make notes on them with an e-pencil (to save on paper and printing costs).

#### Library Research (including remote access instructions):

In addition, students will be expected to read several books and additional articles on their country and inequality challenge, while also finding relevant data. I have listed suggested readings under each of the inequality challenges, but you will very likely need to search for academic journal articles and books from the library on the inequality challenges in your country. Since you will be doing so weekly, so that you can tell your classmates how your country deals with each inequality challenge, you will need to go to the library physically or online.

I strongly encourage you to use Google Scholar to get you started on finding articles and books on your topic. Enter the name of a key author, a key book title, or a couple topical terms (e.g. “Egypt AND inequality”; or “India AND gender AND inequality”) and you will see the most frequently cited book and articles at the top of the list. Check some of these out and also check out the (more recent) works that cite a high-quality source you have found.

One benefit of Google Scholar is that it can get you instant access to pdf’s of articles if you click on the articles from On Grounds. If you are **OFF Grounds** and want this kind of access, you will need to use the **Cisco Anyconnect VPN** (virtual private network) to access these materials. First, check to see if your computer already has this software (under applications). If you do, just click on this (and via Netbadge or a Digital Certificate) you should be connected to “UVA Anywhere”. Once that is done, you can surf Google Scholar, find articles, and access them as if you were on grounds.

If you do not have this software on your computer, you can download it from ITS by following these steps:

1. Go to <https://virginia.service-now.com/its>
2. Click on “Networks & WiFi”
3. Click on “Virtual Private Network”
4. Follow instructions to download the VPN for students: UVA Anywhere.

Once it is downloaded, open the app and click on “AnyConnect VPN”. Once it is turned on, open up your browser and do a Google Scholar search for articles, and you should be able to access articles that are normally only available On Grounds. Hopefully you can figure this out and it will help you not only with our class but with homework for other classes.

Finally, a few tips on finding data relevant to your country or inequality challenge:

- A good starting point is the website of the **Luxembourg Income Study**, which reports various measures of inequality for many countries over time. You can

search for data from this site (<http://www.lisdatacenter.org/lis-ikf-webapp/app/search-ikf-figures>).

- Another gold mine for data on wealthier countries is the **OECD**. This link will take you to a figure on income inequality <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm>), but there is much more to be found via the data.oecd portal.
- A third gold mine for data is **Our World in Data** which makes it easy for you to build charts with data from a variety of sources. Here's a link to their portal for inequality data: <https://ourworldindata.org/income-inequality>.
- A fourth source of data on inequality is the World Inequality Database, which can be found here: <https://wid.world/>, which is curated by a team that includes Thomas Piketty, whose book we will read early in the term. You can find, for example, how the income and wealth shares of the top 10% and bottom 50% have changed over time for 100 different countries.

## **SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION: MOTIVATION (1/19)**

### **II. THE HISTORY OF EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY (1/26)**

Thomas Piketty, *A Brief History of Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2022).

Questions to ponder as you read: When did societies start to become more equal? What forces (political / economic / social / policy) pushed some societies to become more equal? What is the relationship over time between democracy and equality, going both directions? Pay attention to all of the figures and be ready to explain what they show.

### **III. WHAT KIND OF INEQUALITY MATTERS MOST? (2/2)**

- Inequality of Income or Wealth
- Inequality of Opportunity or Outcome
- Class Inequality or Racial Inequality
- Class Inequality or Gender Inequality
- Class Inequality or Inequality of Status/Education

**Assignment: Choose one side of one of these debates and make the argument that inequality in your area matters more for societal welfare, meaningful democracy, and democratic stability. Why does your type of inequality matter? How should we measure whether a society is doing better or worse in this area of inequality? How is the United States doing on this dimension relative to other countries?**

\*Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992): 12-30 (Chapter 1).

To help investigate the “how should we measure?” question, you should also survey the various data measures and graphs that are available via links provided above.

#### **IV. HOW MUCH EQUALITY DO YOU NEED TO BE A “DEMOCRACY”? (2/9)**

\*Jeffrey Winters and Benjamin Page, “Oligarchy in the United States?” *Perspectives on Politics* 7:4 (December 2009): 731-751.

\*Mark E. Warren, “Voting with Your Feet: Exit-Based Empowerment in Democratic Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 105:4 (2011): 683-701.

#### **V. DOES TRYING TO FIX INEQUALITY CAUSE DEMOCRATIC BREAKDOWN? (2/16)**

\*Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 48-87 (Chapter 3).

\*Dan Slater, Benjamin Smith, and Gautam Nair, “Economic Origins of Democratic Breakdown? The Redistributive Model and the Postcolonial State,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12:2 (June 2014): 353-374.

#### **VI. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: WAGE POLARIZATION (2/23)**

\*Jonas Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe vs. Liberal America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006): 32-66 (Chapter 3).

\*Jane Mayer, “Back to the Jungle: How Trump is Helping Tycoons Exploit the Pandemic,” *New Yorker* July 20, 2020, pp. 28-39.

Supplemental Reading: Wolfgang Streeck, *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism*. (London; New York: Verso, 2014); Torben Iversen, *Capitalism, Democracy and Welfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo, “Robots and Jobs: Evidence from US Labor Markets,” *Journal of Political Economy* 128:6 (2020): 2188-2244; Martin Ford, *The Rise of Robots* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

#### **VII. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: GENDER INEQUALITY (3/2)**

\*Mary C. Brinton and Eunsil Oh, “Babies, Work, or Both? Highly-Educated Women’s Employment and Fertility in East Asia,” *American Journal of Sociology* 125:1 (2019): 105–140.

\*Michelle J. Budig, Joya Misra, and Irene Boeckmann, “The Motherhood Penalty in Cross-National Perspective: The Importance of Work-Family Policies and Cultural Attitudes,” *Social Politics* 19:2 (2012): 163-193.

Supplemental Reading: Essays by Janet Yellen and others in *19A: The Brookings Gender Equality Series*, posted in 2020 (online); Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn, “Understanding International Differences in the Gender Pay Gap,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 21:1 (2003): 106-144; Margitta Mätzke and Ilona Ostner, “Introduction: Change and Continuity in Recent Family Policies,” *Journal of European Social Policy* 20:5 (2010): 387-398; Linda White, “Ideas and the Welfare State: Explaining Child Care Policy Development in Canada and

the United States,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 35 (2002): 713-743; Patricia Boling, *The Politics of Work-Family Policies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kimberly Morgan, *Working Mothers and the Welfare State: Religion and the Politics of Work-Family Policies in Western Europe and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers, *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment* (New York: Russell Sage, 2005).

### **VIII. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (3/16)**

Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Press, 2010). All should read pp. 8-15 and then pick one of the three characters and read the pages that tell that person’s story: Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, George Swanson Starling; or Robert Joseph Pershing Foster.

\*Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic* (June 2014): 55-71.

\*George Reid Andrews, “Racial Inequality in Brazil and the United States, 1990-2010,” *Journal of Social History* 47:4 (2014): 829-854.

Supplemental Reading: Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (Random House, 2020); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Nicolas Van de Walle, “The institutional origins of inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 307–327.

### **IX. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: UNEQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION (3/23)**

\*Miles Corak, “Income Inequality, Equality of Opportunity, and Intergenerational Mobility,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27:3 (2013): 79-102.

\*Marius Busemeyer, *Skills & Inequality: Partisan Politics and Political Economy of Education Reforms in Western Welfare States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 58-122 (Chapter 2).

Supplemental Reading: Michael A. Seelig, “How 20 Years of Education Reform Has Created Greater Inequality,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 18 June 2020; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, “The Inheritance of Inequality,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 16:3 (2002): 3-30; Raj Chetty, et al, “The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility Since 1940,” *Science* 356 (2017): 398-406; Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane, eds., *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances* (New York: Russell Sage, 2011); Ben W. Ansell, “Traders, Teachers, and Tyrants: Democracy, Globalization, and Public Investment in Education,” *International Organization* 62:2 (Spring 2008): 289-322; Ben Ansell, *From the Ballot to the Blackboard: The Redistributive Political Economy of Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Torben Iversen and John D. Stephens, “Partisan Politics, the Welfare State, and Three Worlds of Human Capital Formation,” *Comparative Political Studies* 41:4 (2008): 600-637.

## **X. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: UNEQUAL HOUSING / WEALTH (3/30)**

\*Jessica Trounstein, "Segregation and Inequality in Public Goods," *American Journal of Political Science* 60:3 (July 2016): 709-725.

\*Ben Ansell, "The Politics of Housing," *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (2019): 165-185.

Supplemental Readings: Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2017); Jessica Trounstein, *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Broadway Books, 2016); Herman Schwartz and Leonard Seabrooke, "Varieties of Residential Capitalism in the International Political Economy: Old Welfare States and the New Politics of Housing," *Comparative European Politics* 6 (2008): 237-261; Karin Kurz, ed, *Home Ownership and Social Inequality in Comparative Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

## **XI. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: "HORIZONTAL" INEQUALITY ACROSS RELIGIOUS, LANGUAGE, AND ETHNIC GROUPS (4/6)**

Christian Houle, "Ethnic Inequality and the Dismantling of Democracy: A Global Analysis," *World Politics* 67:3 (July 2015): 469-505.

Christian Houle and Cristina Bodea, "Ethnic Inequality and Coups in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Peace Research* 54:3 (2017): 382-396.

Supplemental Reading: John D. Huber, *Exclusion by Elections: Inequality, Ethnic Identity, and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); Wolf Linder and Sean Mueller, *Swiss Democracy: Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Arnim Langer and Frances Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflict: Conceptual and Empirical Linkages," *Centre for Research on Peace and Development Working Paper* No. 14, May 2013 (11 pages); Frances Stewart, ed., *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in Nigeria* (Syracuse University Press, 1988); Thad Dunning and Janhavi Nilekani, "Ethnic Quotas and Political Mobilization: Caste, Parties, and Distribution in Indian Village Councils," *American Political Science Review* 107:1 (2013): 35-56.

## **XII. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURES (4/13)**

\*Richard V. Reeves, "How to Save Marriage in America," *Atlantic*, February 2014.

\*Susan Harkness, "Single Mothers' Income in Twelve Rich Countries: Differences in Disadvantage across the Distribution," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 702:1 (July 2022): 164-187.

Supplemental Reading: See other articles in the *Annals* Special Issue from which the Harkness reading is drawn; Sara McLanahan and Christine Percheski, "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities," *Annual Review of Sociology* 34 (2008): 257-276; Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009); Lasse Eika, Magne Mogstad, and Basit Zafar, "Educational Assortative Mating and Household Income Inequality," *Journal of Political Economy* 127:6 (December 2019): 2795-2835.

### **XIII. INEQUALITY CHALLENGE: THE STATUS DIVIDE (4/20)**

\*Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-nots and Cultural Backlash," *Kennedy School Faculty Research Paper Series*, 2016 (40 pages).

\*Douglas Stuart, "The Englishman," *The New Yorker*, September 14, 2020 (13 pages).

Supplemental Reading: \*Michael Sandel, "Populism, Liberalism, and Democracy," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 44:4 (2018): 353-359; Michael Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2020); Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: The New Press, 2016); Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Kenneth Roberts, "Latin America's Populist Revival," *SAIS Review* 27:1 (2010): 3-15; Vedi Hadiz and Angelos Chrysogelos, "Populism in World Politics: A Comparative Cross-Regional Perspective," *International Political Science Review* 38:4 (2017): 399-411 (plus case studies of Greece, Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, and Zambia in special issue).

### **XIV. WRAP-UP: HOW IS BIDEN DOING? (4/27)**

#### **INEQUALITY AUDITS AND RESEARCH PAPERS DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, via Canvas**

#### **PROF. SCHOPPA'S CLASS RULES**

1. **LATE PAPERS:** The final grade on the paper/project will be docked one letter grade (a paper worthy of a "B-" will be marked down to "C-") for every day it is late unless the delay has been approved by me (based on a very good reason) prior to the due date. Last minute computer problems are not an excuse!!! Back-up your work to avoid losing it, and leave time for you to deal with last minute hitches by aiming to finish well before the deadline.
2. **PLAGIARISM:** Using someone else's words or ideas without attribution constitutes an offense of "plagiarism" that is grounds for expulsion under the University's Honor System. If you are using more than four words in a row that are identical to those in another source, you should put them in quotation marks and cite the source of the quotation. If you refer to a fact (e.g. statistical data; historical details) or idea that is not "general knowledge," you should identify the source, including the page number, from which this fact or idea is drawn. I consider something to be "general knowledge" if I



could easily find this “fact” in three different published sources. For example, many sources tell us Columbus sailed to the Americas in 1492, so you would not need to cite this date.

## **COUNTRY STUDIES TO GET YOU STARTED**

**Japan** – Sawako Shirahase, *Social Inequality in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2013).

**Germany** – Wendy Carlin et al, “The Transformation of the German Social Model,” in Jon Erik Dolvik & Andrew Martin, eds., *European Social Models from Crisis to Crisis: Employment and Inequality in the Era of Monetary Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

**France** – Jacques Le Cacheux and George Ross, “France in the Middle,” in Jon Erik Dolvik & Andrew Martin, eds., *European Social Models from Crisis to Crisis: Employment and Inequality in the Era of Monetary Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

**Britain** – Ken Mayhew and Mark Wickham-Jones, “The UK’s Social Model,” in Jon Erik Dolvik & Andrew Martin, eds., *European Social Models from Crisis to Crisis: Employment and Inequality in the Era of Monetary Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

**Italy or Spain** – Sofia Perez & Martin Rhodes, “The Evolution and Crises of the Social Models in Italy and Spain,” in Jon Erik Dolvik & Andrew Martin, eds., *European Social Models from Crisis to Crisis: Employment and Inequality in the Era of Monetary Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

**Sweden** – Jon Erik Dolvik et al, “The Nordic Social Models,” in Jon Erik Dolvik & Andrew Martin, eds., *European Social Models from Crisis to Crisis: Employment and Inequality in the Era of Monetary Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

**South Africa** – Murray Leibbrandt et al, “Describing and Decomposing Post-Apartheid Income Inequality in South Africa,” *Development Southern Africa* 29 (2012); Jeremy Seekings and Nicoli Nattrass, *Policy, Politics and Poverty in South Africa* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

**Brazil** – Elisa P. Reis, “Inequality in Brazil: Facts and Perceptions,” in Goran Therborn, ed, *Inequalities of the World* (London: Verso, 2006).

**Mexico** – Raymundo Campos-Vazquez et al, “The Rise and Fall of Income Inequality in Mexico, 1989-2010,” in Giovanni Andrea Cornia, ed., *Falling Inequality in Latin America: Policy Changes and Lessons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

**Chile** – Dante Contreras and Ricardo French-Davis, “Policy Regimes, Inequality, Poverty,

and Growth: The Chilean Experience, 1973-2010,” in Giovanni Andrea Cornia, ed., *Falling Inequality in Latin America: Policy Changes and Lessons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

**Turkey** – Tim Dorlach, “The Prospects of Egalitarian Capitalism in the Global South: Turkish Social Neoliberalism in Comparative Perspective,” *Economy and Society* 44:4 (2015).

**India** – Parthapratim Pal and Jayati Ghosh, “Inequality in India: A Survey of Recent Trends,” *DESA Working Paper* No. 45 (July 2007).

**South Korea** – Shin Kwang-Yeong and Kong Ju, “Why Does Inequality in South Korea Continue to Rise?” *Korean Journal of Sociology* 48:6 (December 2014): 31-48.

**Taiwan** – Christian Aspalter, *Democratization and Welfare State Development in Taiwan* (Routledge, 2019—reprint of 2002 book).