INEquality (SRPP-AD127)                      Fall II 2012

Professor Florencia Torche
Email: ft237@nyu.edu
Meeting Times: Mon / Wed 1:00 – 3:40 Sama 1416
Office Hours: Mon 4-5:30, and by appointment

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In spite of egalitarian values and rhetoric, poverty and inequality are prevalent across the world. Furthermore, in recent years inequality has increased in virtually all wealthy nations and abject misery affects millions of people in the developing world. Why are inequality and poverty so persistent in spite of technological progress and economic growth? What are the consequences of inequality for individuals and for societies?

We will address these questions by discussing current controversies about inequality. We will discuss important questions such as: Is inequality “too much of a good thing”? Is globalization good or bad for poor countries? What is the fair way to deal with climate change in an unequal world? Why do women earn less than men? Do schools reduce inequality?, among others.

In order to address these questions, it is essential to “get the facts right” – to understand the contours and facts about the issue we’re discussing. These questions are important not only theoretically – they also have acute policy implications. That is why our discussion will include theoretical explanations, empirical facts, and policy implications.

TEACHING METHOD: This course will be based on class discussions. It is expected that the students read the assigned material before each class. All readings will be available on Blackboard.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
- Understand the main determinants of inequality and policy around the world
- Distinguish different explanations for inequality at the national and global levels
- Explain the consequences of inequality for individuals and societies
- Apply theory and factual knowledge to concrete problems produced by inequality and deprivation.
- Critically examine different perspectives oriented to address the problems of poverty and inequality
COURSE SCHEDULE (Note: Some adjustment will be made as we go along)


Due: Nothing

Wednesday 10/24. No class

Monday 10/29. No class


Due: 2-page essay answering question about reading

Monday 11/19: Is inequality bad for your health?
Due: Proposal for your final paper (2 pages)

Wed 11/21: Do Schools Reduce Inequality?
Due: Nothing

Mon 11/26: Is there discrimination in the labor market and how do we measure it?
Due: 2-page essay answering question about reading

Due: Nothing

Mon 12/3: Why do women earn less than men?
Due: 2-page essay answering question about reading

Wed 12/5: What is the role that government plays in generating and reducing inequality?
Due: 2-page essay answering question about reading

Mon 12/10 Inequality and politics
Due: Nothing
Wed 12/12 The ethics of inequality
Jencks, C. 1988 “Whom Must We Treat Equally for Educational Opportunity to be Equal?”
   *Ethics* 98(3): 518-533.
**Due:** 2-page essay answering question about the readings.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING.** Because the course is concentrated in a short period, to
make sure you don’t fall behind, the work will be evenly spread out over every week rather
than concentrated at the end. You have assigned readings for every class, and are expected to
come to class prepared to discuss them. A short 2-page essay synthesizing or reflecting
critically on readings will be due some class days. For these days, I will distribute a
question in advance and you will electronically submit the essay before class the day it is due.
These essays will be graded for how much they show your comprehension of the reading and
for whether they show clear and correct writing. You also have to submit a short (15-page)
final paper on one of the topics discussed during the course (you can choose the topic
according to your interests). You will submit a proposal for your paper on Monday 11/12.
Your final paper is due on exam week. There is no test or final exam for this course.

**Components of your grade are as follows:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and class participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essays on readings</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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