CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL INEQUALITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION (Online/Onsite)

2020/21 Fall
US 2 Credits / ECTS 4 Credits

Sociology/Social Anthropology
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Course Description

The rise of globalization has been accompanied by the debate of whether it comes at the cost of growing inequality. This graduate seminar will focus on the contemporary theoretical and methodological debates in the field of global inequality and globalization. The course will begin with an overview of globalization, visions of globalization, and debate on globalization, poverty and inequality. Then the course will turn to major theoretical approaches on globalization, including explanatory theories, which range from the Marxist systems approach to the sociological approach that modernity implies globalization, transformational theories and critical theories. Then, we will discuss the North-South Divide, measurement of global inequality, and a selection of substantive topics, including income inequality, migration and immigration, and work and labor markets.

Course Objectives

After completing the course, students who complete the course will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of globalization and global inequality
- Examine the theoretical underpinnings, justifications and criticisms of globalization
- Strengthen their capacities to gauge the impacts of globalization on various global inequalities
- Investigate issues on global inequality based on their research interests and complete an original paper

Course Evaluation

1. Reading Memos (30%)

Reading memos are important for the development of good writing habits and research ideas by identifying gaps in the literature. All students are expected to do all the assigned readings. Starting from Week 3, you will need to write at least 10 writing memos and
post your reading memo on Moodle-Discussion Forum 24 hours before class. Each reading memos must be at least one full page long (double-spaced). Late submission will not be accepted without prior arrangement or a documented medical incident.

It is optional to make comments on other students' memos, but each student should read all the memos before coming to class. Reading each other’s memos will further lay the basis of class discussion, and they will enable me to more effectively plan the class around your perspectives and interests.

Your reading memos will be evaluated based on how well you summarize and evaluate the concepts and arguments in the readings and the quality of the writing. Generally, your reading memo should summarize and respond to a concept(s) or argument(s) presented in the readings. You do not need to mention every reading for the week to show that you have read them all. You can refer to multiple readings to the extent that they all relate to the same focal concept/point. You might compare different works (among the readings or to other works you know) or relate the readings to a different case. You could explain why you disagree with an author or explain why you think one author is right or another is wrong, or you could explain what you think is missing from the analyses we read. You can also raise questions/confusions of the readings in your memos. You may also consider applying some concepts/arguments from the readings to your research project/potential thesis topic/personal experience. You can use the memo to think through the implications the reading(s) have for your final paper.

2. Class Participation and Attendance (30%)

All students will be expected to come to each session with their own questions based on the reading and knowledge about different countries around the world. You should actively engage in class discussions. Participation and discussions are highly valued.

3. Presentation and Final Paper (40%)

One class is set aside towards the end of the term for final paper presentations. Each student will make a 10-minute presentation of your final paper. This will be followed by questions and discussion.

Each student must submit a paper on an approved topic related to globalization or global inequality. It can be a critical analysis, a comprehensive literature review or an extended research proposal. Final paper must be 2000-3000 words, double-spaced (not including references, tables, or figures), and use 12-point Times Roman fonts. Paper must be supported by proper attribution of sources.

The final paper will be evaluated based on 1) the quality of the argument; 2) the quality of the research; 3) the quality of the writing. Late submission will be penalized a grade increment per day. A failure to attribute sources will have adverse consequences on the grade of the paper.
Course Outline

[Recommended readings are not required]

Week 1: Introduction


[Recommended: skim the rest]

Week 2: Visions of Globalization


Week 3: Theories of Globalization I


Week 4: Theories of Globalization II


Week 5: Theories of Globalization III


Week 6: The Debate on Globalization, Poverty and Inequality


[Recommended: Aisbett, Emma. 2003. “Globalization, Poverty and Inequality: Are the Criticisms Vague, Vested, or Valid?” Prepared for the NBER Pre-conference on Globalization, Poverty and Inequality October 24-25. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ca0e/89adc7aca4f89fa332be55729a1625b0b7de.pdf]

Week 7: Globalization and the North-South Divide


Week 8: Measurement of Global Inequality


Week 9: Global Income Inequality


Week 10: Migration and Immigration


*Week 11: Work and Labor Markets*


*Week 12 Final Paper Presentations*

Final Paper Submission: TBA