

POLITICAL ECONOMY
HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY
PSCI 360, SPRING 2018
TUESDAY, THURSDAY 3-4:50PM; FOUNDERS HALL 236

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OFFICE: FOUNDERS HALL 130
OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY, 9-11 AM

INEQUALITY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

What is the past, present, and future of income and wealth inequality? In this course, you will address one of the most urgent challenges today: inequality that widens the income and wealth gap within and across countries and communities. In a seminar-style setting, you will analyze the difference between rich and poor, capital and labor, winners and losers, and everything in between. You will spend the first half of the course diving slowly and deeply into old classics: Adam Smith and Karl Marx, and the latest research of Thomas Piketty and Branko Milanovic. You will understand the different structures of political economy, the history of capitalism, and the politics of wealth. Then in the second half, you will shift to country case studies to understand differences in inequality by comparing three countries: one with high inequality, one with low inequality, and the U.S. Ultimately, this course will allow you to understand structures of inequality and to imagine more equal futures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Explain and critically evaluate capitalism as an approach to organizing political economy;
- Recognize and critically assess the relationship between capitalism and inequality at the national and global levels; and
- Apply contending approaches in global inequality studies to country cases and evaluate the role of capitalism therein.

This class also promotes several of the outcomes identified by Humboldt State University:

- Promotes an expanded world perspective by engaging students through case studies and various media sources;
- Promotes effective written and oral communication through in-class writing assignments and discussion; and
- Encourages critical and creative thinking through the exploration of international themes using several different disciplinary lenses.

REQUIRED TEXTS

This is a zero-cost course. All texts are available for free online or will be provided by the instructor.

ADAM SMITH, *WEALTH OF NATIONS* (1776) [[Full text online](#)]

KARL MARX, *CAPITAL* (1867) [[Full text online](#)]

*ROBERT REICH, *SAVING CAPITALISM: FOR THE MANY, NOT THE FEW* (2015)

*THOMAS PIKETTY, *CAPITAL IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY* (2013)

*BRANKO MILANOVIC, *GLOBAL INEQUALITY: A NEW APPROACH FOR THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION* (2016)

*Excerpts available on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

This is a reading and writing intensive seminar that relies on consistent class participation. As a 4-unit course, students are expected to spend an average of 8 hours per week outside class doing the readings and writing papers.

Participation & Canvas Posts: 30%

Class participation + post a brief quotation and analysis on Canvas once a week before class (minimum 10 posts)

2 Summary Papers (1 page): 10%

Due February 3; February 17

3 Analytical Papers (2 pages): 30%

Due February 11; February 25; April 1

Country Analysis (6 pages): 30%

Due May 8

GRADING

HSU's guidelines for grading correspond to student performance where,

A – Outstanding achievement

B – Very good, commendable achievement

C – Satisfactory achievement

D – Minimum performance

F – Failure without credit

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

A = 100 – 93%

A - = 92.5 – 90%

B+ = 89.5 – 87.5%

B = 87 – 83%

B- = 82.5 – 80%

C+ = 79.5 – 77.5%

C = 77 – 73%

C- = 72.5 – 70%

D+ = 69.5 – 67.5%

D = 67 – 60%

F = 59.5% and below

POLICIES

1. Attendance: I expect you to attend all classes and participate thoughtfully and consistently. There will be no make-up assignments for missed attendance.
2. Communication: All students are responsible for checking their HSU email account for official communications per [HSU's Email Policy](#).

I will do my best to respond within 24 hours to your emails except after 6 pm and on weekends. If you do not hear from me, feel free to check in. Please follow this sample email as a guideline:

Professor Srivastava, I am in your PSCI 360 class this semester. I read the syllabus and could not find information on recommended readings for week three. Could you please send me some additional resources? Thank you.

3. Assignments: All assignments will be in the form of short responses or essays. Deadlines are final and late papers will not be accepted.
4. Accommodation: Students requesting disability-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center in the Learning Commons, Lower Library, 826-4678. Some accommodations may take up to several weeks to arrange.
5. Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for knowing HSU's policy regarding [academic honesty](#).
6. Classroom Behavior: Please give others the same respect you would like to receive. Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding [disruptive behavior](#).
7. Add/Drop Period: The last day to drop the class without penalty is Monday, January 29, 2018 at 11:59PM.

READING SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE	
1/16	<i>WHY STUDY INEQUALITY?</i>
1/18	<i>WHAT ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF CAPITALISM?</i> REICH, SAVING CAPITALISM, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 9

WEEK TWO	
1/23	<i>WHAT IS THE PROBLEM OF INEQUALITY AMONG COUNTRIES?</i> MILANOVIC, Chapter 1
1/25	<i>WHAT IS THE PROBLEM OF INEQUALITY WITHIN COUNTRIES?</i> PIKETTY, Introduction
WEEK THREE	
1/30	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM BEGIN?</i> SMITH, Book I, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3
2/1	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM FLOURISH?</i> SMITH, Book I, Chapters 4, 5, 8, 9
WEEK FOUR	
2/6	<i>WHY IS CAPITALISM SOCIALLY GOOD?</i> SMITH, Book II, Chapters 3, 5; Book V, Chapter 2 (only Part II, Articles 2 and 3)
2/8	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM END?</i> SMITH, Book I, Chapter 10; Book III, Chapter 1; Book IV, Chapter 1
WEEK FIVE	
2/13	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM BEGIN?</i> MARX, Book I, Chapters 1 (sections 1, 2, 4), 2
2/15	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM FLOURISH?</i> MARX, Book I, Chapters 4, 5, 6
WEEK SIX	
2/20	<i>WHY IS CAPITALISM SOCIALLY BAD?</i> MARX, Book I, Chapters 10, 25
2/22	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM END?</i> MARX, Book I, Chapter 15 MARX, The Communist Manifesto
WEEK SEVEN	

2/27	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM LEAD TO INEQUALITY? GROWTH PATTERNS</i> PIKETTY, Chapters 1, 2
3/1	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM LEAD TO INEQUALITY? WAGES VS CAPITAL</i> PIKETTY, Chapters 7, 8
WEEK EIGHT	
3/6	<i>HOW DOES CAPITALISM LEAD TO INEQUALITY? WORK AND WORTH</i> REICH, Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13
3/6	<i>CAN CAPITALISM BE RESISTED?</i> REICH, Chapters 14, 15, 16, 17
WEEK NINE	
3/13- 3/15	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
WEEK TEN	
3/20	<i>WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF INEQUALITY WITHIN COUNTRIES?</i> MILANOVIC, Chapter 2
3/22	<i>WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF INEQUALITY WITHIN COUNTRIES?</i> PIKETTY, Chapters 13, 14
WEEK ELEVEN	
3/27	<i>WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF INEQUALITY AMONG COUNTRIES?</i> MILANOVIC, Chapter 3
3/29	<i>WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF INEQUALITY AMONG COUNTRIES?</i> PIKETTY, Chapter 15 MILANOVIC, Chapter 4
WEEK TWELVE	
4/3 - 4/5	NO CLASS: ACADEMIC CONFERENCE
WEEK THIRTEEN	
4/10	COUNTRY ANALYSIS: LOW INEQUALITY To Be Determined

4/12	COUNTRY ANALYSIS: LOW INEQUALITY To Be Determined
WEEK FOURTEEN	
4/17	COUNTRY ANALYSIS: HIGH INEQUALITY To Be Determined
4/19	COUNTRY ANALYSIS: HIGH INEQUALITY To Be Determined
WEEK FIFTEEN	
4/24	COUNTRY ANALYSIS: UNITED STATES PIKETTY, Chapter 4
4/26	COUNTRY ANALYSIS: UNITED STATES To Be Determined