Inequality and Democracy in Urban America
(Political Science 1821V)

I. Course Design: This seminar explores the relationship between democracy and inequality in contemporary American cities. The first part of the seminar considers distinct kinds of inequality - economic, political and social – from the standpoint of different social science disciplines and also from the perspective of national politics in the United States. The focus then shifts to urban politics in the United States, assessing contrasting theoretical perspectives on the causes and consequences of local inequalities in American cities.

II. Learning Goals and Objectives: By focusing on the relationship between democratic politics and different kinds of inequality in the contemporary United States, this course offers students a substantive understanding of some key aspects of the modern political economy of this country. The course also aims to provide students with conceptual and analytic tools for understanding urban politics and political economy in the United States. The weekly readings and discussions are designed to build critical and analytical skills for students to use in forming their own understanding of the politics of inequality. Students will also gain substantial experience in research and writing through the research paper assignment. Lastly, through a series of observational exercises, the course will help students build social science descriptive and analytic skills.

III. Course Time Allocation: Over the semester, students will spend 2.5 hours per week in class (35 hours total). 7 hours per week will be spent doing course reading and other out-of-class work, including three short assignments (98 hours total). In addition, there is a final research paper which will require a minimum of 47 hours to research and write (47 hours total). Total: 180 hours.

II. Requirements
There are three requirements for this course:
1. Participation in class discussion and exercises (20%).
2. 3 short memos (30%) (3-5 pages each).
3. A 15-20 page research paper (50%). A preliminary Research Proposal (3-5 pages) is due on Friday, October 22nd. The final paper will be due on Friday, December 17th.

Regarding class participation, students will be evaluated on a) attendance and b) contributions to class discussions.
III. Readings
The following four books are required; they are available for purchase at the Brown University Bookstore. Copies are also available either on reserve at the Rockefeller Library or as e-books via the library. Additional readings will be available electronically at: https://bit.ly/2WWDAaE


*Items listed below with an asterisk are available at the course Google site: https://bit.ly/2WWDAaE

0. Course Overview and Logistics (September 8)

1. Varieties of Inequality: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives (September 15)
  [Introduction, and Ch. 1]. Available online via Brown library.
- Aída Hurtado, "Intersectional Understandings of Inequality"*
- Frances Stewart, “Changing Perspectives on Inequality and Development”*
- Koji Komatsu, “Not Seeing is Believing: The Role of Invisibility in Human Lives”*

2. Intergenerational Class Inequality (September 22)
- Paul K. Piff, Michael W. Kraus and Dacher Keltner, “Unpacking the Inequality Paradox: The Psychological Roots of Inequality and Social Class”*

3. Inequality in the Contemporary United States: The National-Level View (September 29)
4. Spatial Segregation in the American City (October 6)
- "The Opportunity Atlas"
-John Freeman, ed. Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation. Penguin Books, 2017. [“To the Man Asleep in Our Driveway who Might be Named Phil”; “Looking for a Home”]

5. Historical Roots of Spatial Segregation: "Redlining" (October 13)
-"Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America"
-"Climate Equity Index, Richmond, VA"
- Edwin Slipek, Jr. "The Lost Neighborhood: Within sight of downtown but invisible to most"*
-Groundwork Rhode Island, "Climate Safe Neighborhoods"

6. The Territorially Uneven State and Local Inequalities (October 20)

7. Group Discussion of Research Paper Proposals (October 27)
8. Unequal Access to Housing 1: Eviction  (November 3)

9. Unequal Access to Housing 2: Eviction in Providence, RI
-Listen to Watson Institute podcast, “Less to Lean on”
-Watch video shorts produced by “Signs of Providence”
-Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE)

10. Unequal Access to Justice and Security  (November 17)

10-11. Student Research Presentations  (December 1 and December 8)