

Political Science 1821V
W: 3:00-5:30
111 Thayer St-Watson Institute 114

Professor Richard Snyder
111 Thayer St., Rm. 316111
Richard_Snyder@brown.edu
Office Hours: Mon., 3:00-5:00
Office Hours sign up:
<https://bit.ly/3tnRcYh>

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/2WWDAAaE>

*Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*, 2nd edition. Princeton University Press, 2016.

*Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown, 2016.

*John Freeman, ed. *Tales of Two Americas*. New York: Penguin, 2017.

*Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Picador 2014.

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

0. Course Overview and Logistics (September 8)

1. Varieties of Inequality: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives (September 15)

-Thomas Piketty, *The Economics of Inequality*. Harvard University Press, 2015
[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"*

-Daniel Golden, *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges-and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*. Random House, 2007. [Introduction, Chs. 1, 3, 8, 10, and Epilogue]*

- John Freeman, ed. *Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation*. Penguin Books, 2017. ["Youth from Every Quarter"; "Outside"; "Fault Lines"; "Hurray for Losers"]

3. Inequality in the Contemporary United States: The National-Level View (September 29)

-Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*, 2nd edition. Princeton University Press, 2016. [Selections]

-John Freeman, ed. *Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation*. Penguin Books, 2017. ["American Work"; "Fieldwork"; "Some Houses"; "Mobility"]

4. Spatial Segregation in the American City (October 6)

- Douglas S. Massey, "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass"*
- Joe Pinsker, "[How Do Rich Neighborhoods Exist So Close to Poor Ones?](#)" *The Atlantic* June 26, 2019.
- "[The Opportunity Atlas](#)"
- Richard Thompson Ford, "The Color of Territory: How Law and Borders Keep America Segregated," Pp. 223-236 in Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom, eds. *Justice and the American Metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.*
- Susan S. Fainstein, "Redevelopment Planning and Distributive Justice in the American Metropolis," Pp. 149-76 in Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom, eds. *Justice and the American Metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.*
- 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)

- Daniel Aaronson, Daniel Hartley and Bhashkar Mazumder, "The Effects of the 1930s HOLC "Redlining" Maps," *Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago*, Feb. 2019.*
- Brad Plumer and Nadja Popovich, "[How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering](#)," *New York Times* Aug. 24, 2020.
- Jeremy S. Ho, Vivek Shandas and Nicholas Pendleton, "The Effects of Historical Housing Policies on Resident Exposure to Intra-Urban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas," *Climate*, 2020.*
- "[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)

- Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems (A Latin American View with Glances at Some Post-Communist Countries)." *World Development* 21, no. 8 (August 1993): 1355-70.*
- Margaret Weir, "Creating Justice for the Poor in the New Metropolis," Pp. 237-57 in Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom, eds. *Justice and the American Metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.*
- Stephen Macedo, "Property-Owning Plutocracy: Inequality and American Localism", Pp. 33-58 in Clarissa Rile Hayward and Todd Swanstrom, eds. *Justice and the American Metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.*
- John Freeman, ed. *Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation*. Penguin Books, 2017. ["Death by Gentrification"; "Leander"; "Hillsides and Flatlands"]

7. Group Discussion of Research Paper Proposals (October 27)

8. Unequal Access to Housing 1: Eviction (November 3)

-Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Crown Publishers, 2016. [Selections].

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)

-Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Picador 2014. [Selections].

-Rebecca Bell-Martin, Jerome Marston and Richard Snyder, "Who is Safe? Varieties of Security in an American City," Unpublished ms., Department of Political Science Brown University, 2018.*

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