

INTL 190 Inequality: Impact, Mechanisms, and Strategies Fall, 2020

Monday 9am-11:50am

Course Description

Across the globe, the wealth gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, and has become even more pronounced during the Covid-19 pandemic. As noted by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a recent UN report on world inequality, “Income disparities and a lack of opportunities are creating a vicious cycle of inequality, frustration and discontent across generations.” A discussion on inequality is much needed during this unprecedented time.

In this course, we will review the current state of economic inequality, discuss its sources and consequences, and assess strategies and policies aimed to address economic inequality. We will examine these topics through the lens of social psychology. That is, we will read about empirical findings based on experiments and surveys, and discuss psychological theories that explain what people believe about structural inequality, how people feel towards individuals who are in poverty, how a state of scarcity may impact people’s decision-making processes and behaviors, and how a cultural difference between middle class and working class may contribute to the self-perpetuating cycle of economic inequality. Finally, we will apply the empirical findings and theories to understanding current events and issues, and develop practices to recognize and reduce inequality in everyday life.

Instructor

Yidan (Dani) Yin
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Office Hours

Monday 12 pm – 2 pm and by appointment
Office hour Zoom link

Communication

Announcements will be posted to this course whenever necessary. While you may choose to deactivate/adjust Canvas-related notification preferences, you are responsible for staying up to date on any changes that are communicated via announcements. **Please be sure that the email you check regularly is set in Canvas, as Canvas will push announcements to your email.**

Course Expectations

What I expect of you	What you can expect of me
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<p>Be informed. Read this syllabus carefully and completely so you understand the course structure and expectations.</p>	<p>Enthusiasm. To be prepared for each class and to bring my enthusiasm for teaching to each lecture, lab, and office hour meeting.</p>
<p>Be attuned. Keep up with readings, as each one builds on the previous one.</p>	<p>Responsiveness. To respond to emails within 24 hours. Emails received on weekends or while I'm traveling may take longer.</p>
<p>Ethical. A good attitude and maintenance of honest and ethical principles towards me, your classmates, and the execution of the course. Please read UC San Diego's Principles of Community and Conduct Code.</p>	<p>Timely feedback. To make every effort to provide feedback on your assignments within one week of the submission date.</p>
<p>Integrity. An honest, fair, responsible, respectful, trustworthy, and courageous effort on all academic work and collaboration. Please read UC San Diego's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship. Then, take the integrity pledge!</p>	<p>Integrity. To uphold integrity standards and create an atmosphere that fosters active learning, creativity, critical thinking, and honest collaboration.</p>

Expectations Regarding Student Dialogue and Civil Disclosure

This course emphasizes a respectful and psychologically safe learning environment at all times, especially during in-class activities and class discussion, so that students can engage in critical evaluation and draw their own conclusions. Students are welcome and encouraged to share their perspectives, but must do so in a respectful manner. Any hateful speech including speech that harasses individuals such that they feel unsafe or threatened will be directly addressed by the instructor. If such speech continues such that it disrupts the lecture or the learning experience of others, its author will be asked to desist, and then to leave. UCSD Policy Regarding Free Speech states the following: "If you disrupt or obstruct the presentation repeatedly or for a prolonged period of time, and fail to comply with the directions of university officials to cease disruption or leave the area, you will violate the university's code of conduct and/or the law. These are grounds for discipline or prosecution.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Recognize how behavioral science examines the sources and consequences of economic inequality
- Identify attitudes and beliefs that justify inequality
- Explain psychological consequences of inequality
- Evaluate policies and proposals that address inequality
- Develop practices to recognize and combat inequality in everyday life

Course Materials

Course materials include academic papers and reports, news articles, and videos. Readings and other materials will be posted on Canvas one week before each class. You may also find these materials online if you have access to UCSD library resources.

There is no textbook requirement for this course. However, below are the books I recommend for further reading if you are interested in how behavioral science (e.g., psychology, behavioral economics, behavioral public policy) addresses inequality.

- Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E. (2013). *Scarcity: Why having too little means so much*. Macmillan.
- Shafir, E. (Ed.). (2013). *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Jetten, J., & Peters, K. (2019). *The Social Psychology of Inequality*. Springer.
- Fiske, S., & Markus, H. (Eds.). (2012). *Facing Social Class: How Societal Rank Influences Interaction*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Assignments

Final Paper

Pick 1-2 questions you want to answer within the realm of social inequality. The questions could originate from news reports, your own experiences, discussions on social media, etc. If you decide to write about two questions, you will need to make a case for why these two questions are connected in the final paper.

The final paper has three major parts. In the introduction, pose the question. Tell us why the question intrigues you, why the audience should care about your answers to the question. In the main body, tell us about your research into the topic. Make at least three main arguments. Support your arguments using evidences from credible sources. You can start from what we discuss in class and directly draw from your after-class reflections (see the assignment below). Be sure to look for sources that are not covered in class to support your arguments. Finding more sources is better since it is difficult to write a 15-page paper with only a few sources. Finally, in the conclusion, you should review your main points, highlight key parts, and draw a conclusion.

The final paper is due on 12/16. To help you plan for the final paper, there will be two checkpoints during the quarter. Please submit the questions you would like to answer in Week 5, and your main arguments in Week 7. I will provide you with feedback and recommendations for resources. Detailed instructions for the final paper (including a template) will be posted on Canvas.

After-class Reflection

This is a bi-weekly assignment. This assignment will help you prepare for the final paper by helping you organize the materials for the final paper. I will provide feedback on your after-class reflection within one week of the submission date.

This assignment is due on Fridays in Weeks 2, 4, 6. During each class, please take notes of any thoughts or comments you have on the lecture, activities, and discussions. Try connecting the materials covered in each class to the topic of your final paper. Organize your notes after each class, and if possible, look for relevant reports and papers. Your notes and research will make up the main body of your after-class reflection. These reflections will help you write up the final paper, which requires you to form positions and use multiple sources to support your arguments. The typical length of this assignment is 450-500 words.

Presentation

In the Week 9 session, you will give a 5-min presentation on your final paper. Preparing for a presentation will help you organize your thoughts. Getting feedback from me and your classmates will also help you improve your final paper.

Before-class Reading Summary

This is a weekly assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to help you prepare for in-class participation. Your comments and questions will serve as a starting point for in-class discussions. I will review your comments and questions and address them in class.

This assignment is due on Sundays Weeks 2-8. Each week, after you have completed the readings, first summarize the main findings/arguments in each of the readings, using your own words. Then, reflect on the readings and jot down your thoughts. You can do so by identifying a common theme across the readings, pointing out discrepancies and confusions, drawing connections between the readings and everyday life experiences, and so on. The typical length of this assignment is 250-300 words.

Grading Information

Assessment	Percentage of total
Weekly/bi-weekly assignments (graded as complete/incomplete)	30%
Weekly before-class reading summary x 7	14%
Bi-weekly reflection x 3 + questions for final paper (week 5)	16%
Participation	20%
Peer evaluation	10%
Instructor evaluation	10%
Presentation	10%
Final paper	40%

Total	100%
Fill Out CAPE – extra credit	1%

Grading Scale

Total Percentage	Grade
98%-100%	A+
93%-97%	A
90%-92%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-
77%-79%	C+
73%-76%	C
70%-72%	C-
60%-69%	D
<60%	F

Grading Procedure and Feedback

Weekly/bi-weekly assignments are graded as complete/incomplete. I will make every effort to provide feedback on your bi-weekly reflections through Canvas within one week of the submission date.

Attendance and Participation

In-class discussions are essential to this seminar course. Sharing your opinions and thoughts helps you reflect on your experiences and enables others to see your perspectives. Likewise, hearing other people's opinions and thoughts helps each one of us see things from others' perspective and recognize our own limitations.

To do well in this course, you need to show up and participate, especially so to develop a strong final paper. At the end of the quarter, your classmates (50%) and I (50%) will grade your participation. Each of your classmates will respond to a prompt similar to the following: "Please choose a fair class participation grade for each student in your class. Consider the following factors as you see fit: How was the quality of the student's contributions in group discussions? Were their comments useful, on point, and/or controversial in a productive way? Did they share relevant experiences from their own background? Did they listen carefully to their classmates, and engage them in thoughtful discussions? Were they well-prepared for class? To what extent did they provide value to your and others' experience in the class?"

Late or Missing Assignments

All due dates are firm. Late submissions are rarely accepted except under the most extenuating circumstances.

Course Schedule

Week	Topics and Activities	Preparation (complete before class)	Due Dates
1	Introduction Current state of Inequality Impact of inequality Activities: Circle of objects, inequality in the US	Preparation work for Circle of Objects activity	
2	Poverty and scarcity Implications for saving and financial decision-making Activity: Scarcity simulation	Readings: Shah et al., (2012) Haushofer & Fehr (2014) Shafir, 2017	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT After class: reflection DUE Friday 11:59 pm PT
3	Class and culture Implications for education and leadership Activity: Independence/interdependence self-assessment	Readings: Stephens et al., 2014 Stephens et al., 2019	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT
4	Inequality and well-being Sign of social class Activity: Hidden rules	Readings: Kraus & Keltner, 2009 Layte & Whelan, 2014 Oishi et al., 2018	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT After class: reflection DUE Friday 11:59 pm PT
5	System justification Social dominance Activities: Cognitive dissonance	Readings: Jost et al., 2003 Norton & Ariely, 2011	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT After class: questions for final paper DUE Friday 11:59 pm PT
6	Privilege Stereotype Identity Activity: Media activity	Readings: Destin, 2020 Piff, 2014 Lott, 2002	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT

			After class: reflection DUE Friday 11:59 pm PT
7	Structural inequality Life chances Activity: Life happens	Readings: Calarco, 2011 Evan, 2006	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT After class: main arguments for final paper DUE Friday 11:59 pm PT
8	Addressing inequality using psychological and behavioral science Activity: Intuitive sociality	Readings: Mo & Conn, 2018 Raver, 2012 Castleman & Page, 2015	Before class: reading summary DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT
9	Final presentation: Each student will give a 5-min presentation on their final paper		Before class: presentation slides DUE Sunday 11:59 pm PT
10	Peer feedback on final paper (in groups): Students will be divided into groups of 4 to give each other feedback on their final paper		Final paper DUE 12/16 11:59 pm PT

Student Resources for Support and Learning

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Geisel Library	Research tools and eReserves
Content Tutoring with the Teaching + Learning Commons	Drop-in and online tutoring through the Academic Achievement Hub
Supplemental Instruction with the Teaching + Learning Commons	Peer-assisted study sessions through the Academic Achievement Hub to improve success in historically challenging courses
Writing Hub Services in the Teaching + Learning Commons	Improve writing skills and connect with a peer writing mentor
Learning Strategies Tutoring	Address learning challenges with a metacognitive approach
OASIS	Intellectual and personal development

	support
Student Success Coaching Program	Peer mentor program that provides students with information, resources, and support in meeting their goals
Academic Integrity	Policy on Academic Integrity of Scholarship and strategies to excel with integrity
Technical Support	Assistance with accounts, network, and technical issues

STUDENT RESOURCES

UC San Diego (as an institution) and I (as a human being and instructor of this course) are committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students with health or other personal concerns, and to students with other kinds of support needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class. Some resources that might be of use include:

Basic Needs	Provides access to food, housing, and financial resources
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)	Provides services like confidential counseling and consultations for psychiatric services and mental health programming
Community Centers	As part of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion the campus community centers provide programs and resources for students and contribute toward the evolution of a socially just campus
Counseling and Psychological Services	Individual, group, couples, and family psychotherapy services for registered undergraduate and graduate students
Office for Students with Disabilities	Documents student disabilities, provides accessibility resources, and reasonable accommodations
Triton Concern Line	Report students of concern at (858) 246-1111
Undocumented Student Services	Programs and services are designed to help students overcome obstacles that arise from their immigration status and support them through personal and academic excellence

Campus Policies

UC San Diego Principles of Community

The University of California, San Diego is dedicated to learning, teaching, and serving society through education, research, and public service. Our international reputation for excellence is due in large part to the cooperative and entrepreneurial nature of the UC San Diego community. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be creative and are rewarded for individual as well as collaborative achievements.

To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UC San Diego strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism. These principles of community are vital to the success of the University and the well being of its constituents. UC San Diego faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice these basic principles as individuals and in groups. [Click here for the complete UC San Diego Principles of Community in English and Spanish.](#)

Nondiscrimination and Harassment Policy Statement

The University of California, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and university policies, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services. The university also prohibits harassment based on these protected categories, including sexual harassment, as well as sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in university programs and activities.

If you have questions about student-related nondiscrimination policies or concerns about possible discrimination or harassment, they should contact the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD) at (858) 5348298, ophd@ucsd.edu, or reportbias.ucsd.edu.