

Overview

School of Humanities and Social Sciences/Department of Political Science

POLS 4523: The Political Economy of Poverty and Inequality

3 credits/ Fall 2020

Contact Information/Office Hours:

Instructor: Dr. Tamer ElGindi (tamer.elgindi@aucegypt.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Rana Aly (ranamagdy@aucegypt.edu)

Preferred method of contact: Email

Office Hours: By appointment

Communication Procedures:

The instructor will respond to all questions via email or posted on the discussion board within 24 hours. The students are required to use their official AUC email for communication. The announcements feature will be used throughout this course; these announcements will be sent to your AUC email. You are able to send the instructor an email directly through Blackboard/ Moodle via the link titled “Send Email” that is located on the left hand navigation of the course. Additionally, the students are highly encouraged to contact the instructor and the TA through their official emails for any inquiries.

Course Information

Course Description:

The issues of poverty and inequality are quite controversial issues where researchers and scholars alike differ in their analysis along with the recommended public policies to alleviate them. There is no one single definition for poverty, and the term has evolved throughout the years from the mere absolute poverty definition related to lack of material stuff to encompass broader issues such as nutritional deficiency, lack of education, and social exclusion. Despite this huge emphasis on poverty in the last couple of decades, the issue of inequality has only been on the radar in the last two decades. Various reports from several international organizations have been documenting unprecedented levels of income and wealth inequalities on a global scale. Further, the events of the Arab Spring in 2011 have also emphasized the role inequalities can play in political turmoil.

The focus of this seminar is multiple fold. First, we begin by laying out the foundational issues related to how we define both poverty and inequality and ways to measure them. We also address the different causes of both phenomena and why do we see different developmental outcomes between countries. We then investigate the role of neoliberal

globalization and its effects on poverty and inequality levels on countries. From there, we move on to investigate inequality on the global scale and also within urban cities.

In the last part of this seminar, we move to practical lessons related to poverty and inequality. In this regard, we will cover the experiences of East Asia and Latin America, and how the former was able to achieve growth with equity whereas the latter could not. We will also take a closer look at the Middle East and North Africa and the recent uprisings that were partially fueled by rising inequality levels. Further, we will zoom into the case of Egypt and investigate causes behind increasing inequality levels differentiating between objective and perceived levels of inequality. Last but not least, we will learn about some of the recommended public policies to alleviate both poverty and worsening inequality levels.

Course Learning Outcomes:

The primary objective of this course is to provide students a comprehensive overview about the issues of poverty and inequality. The students will learn a variety of definitions as well as measurement issues associated with poverty and inequality. Through this course, student's research and critical skills will be strengthened through the analysis of critical readings that deal with poverty and inequality on global, regional, and local levels. In addition, students will be taught the importance of inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative indicators in order to gain a solid understanding of the causes of both poverty and inequality.

Course Content:

1. Definition and measurement of poverty and inequality
2. Understanding the underlying causes behind increases in both poverty and inequality
3. Geographical variations in the trends of inequality
4. Objective and subjective measures for assessment of poverty and inequality

Course Materials:

TEXTBOOKS

The course utilizes chapters from various books along with scholarly journal articles. All readings are available through Blackboard. Major textbooks that we will use are as follows:

- 1) Mavrotas, George and Anthony Shorrocks, eds. (2007). *Advancing Development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 2) K.S., Jomo and Jacques Baudot, eds. (2007). *Flat World, Big Gaps*. New York: ZED BOOKS LTD.
- 3) Houghton, Jonathan and Shahidur R. Khandker. (2009). *Handbook on Poverty + Inequality*. Washington DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.
- 4) Grusky, David B., Ravi Kanbur, and Amartya Sen, eds. (2004). *Poverty and Inequality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- 5) Davis, Mike. (2006). *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso.
- 6) Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. (2012). *Why Nations Fail?* New York: Random House, Inc.
- 7) Sassen, Saskia. (2014). *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- 8) Dicken, Peter. (2011). *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*. New York: The Guilford Press.

ADDITIONAL COURSE RESOURCES:

- The World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>)
- The World Development Indicators (<http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>)
- The International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>)
- United Nations Development Programme (<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html>)
- Project Syndicate (<https://www.project-syndicate.org/>)
- UN Comtrade Database (<https://comtrade.un.org/>)
- The Observatory of Economic Complexity (<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/>)
- The World Wealth and Income Database (<https://www.parisschoolofeconomics.eu/en/research/data-production-and-diffusion/the-world-wealth-income-database>)

Course Requirements

Assessment/Grading Criteria:

1) Participation (20%):

Active participation in class discussions demonstrating comprehension of readings is essential for this course. Students need to do required readings **BEFORE** class. **The total of 20% will be divided as follows: 15% class activities, and 5% active participation during online sessions.**

Class activities will include preparing **a question AND a comment** based on the readings for the respective week. These questions and comments need to be uploaded on Blackboard **24 hours before our class meeting**. Late submissions will not be accepted nor graded.

More than six absences will result in a failing grade (F).

2) Class Presentations (20%):

Groups of three will be asked to lead class discussions on a weekly basis based on assigned readings. Each group will conduct four presentations (each worth 5%).

3) Midterm Exam (20%):

The exam will consist of various questions such as essay questions, definitions, multiple choice, and true or false questions. The midterm exam will cover **weeks from one to six.**

4) Take-Home Final Exam (20%):

The take-home final exam will be given to students on **December 7th**, and students will have **96 hours** to complete the exam afterwards. The exam will cover selected weeks as will be indicated by the instructor.

5) Group Project (20%):

The recent coronavirus (Covid-19) global pandemic has taken the entire world by surprise. The world seems to be stuck in a gridlock with global economy potentially sliding into a recession (maybe even depression), healthcare systems overwhelmed, and social lives being put to a halt.

Students are required to work in groups of 4-5 students and submit **either a reflection paper (1500-2000 words) or a short video presentation (10-15 minutes)** reflecting on the current events and their consequences on the various sectors of the economy (economic, political, social, and environmental) both on global and local scales in the coming future.

Final grades will adhere to the following grading rubric:

A = 100-94	A- = 93-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80	C+ = 79-77
C = 76-73	C- = 72-70	D+ = 69-67	D = 66-60	F ≤ 59	

***Grades are NOT negotiable.**

Evaluation Strategy:

Assignment	# of instances	Total % of Grade
Participation	12	20% (active participation in class)
Class Presentations	4	20%
Midterm Exam	1	20%
Final Exam	1	20%
Group Project	1	20%

- Live online Zoom sessions will be held **once a week with the instructor. Attendance is mandatory.**
- Late submissions will have a 0.5% deduction for each day delayed for the first week after their submission date. **NO assignment will be accepted after the first week from**

the due date of the assignment, and the student will receive an F for the respective assignment.

- Any information, data, and arguments used in papers, reports, and oral presentations need to be correctly cited and credited. Failure to do so by cheating or plagiarizing will result in a failing grade and your name will be turned over to all relevant administrative bodies: The Department, HUSS Dean, and Academic Integrity Committee. If you are unsure about proper citation or what is regarded as plagiarism, please feel free to ask.
- Students with any sort of writing problems are encouraged to go and visit the Writing Center (<http://in.aucegypt.edu/auc-academics/mohamed-taymour-writing-center>).
- The university offers a wide range of special needs and additional support services. Students with special needs are encouraged to go and visit the center (<http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/disability-services>).
- Students are highly encouraged to contact the professor through the email

University Policies

Attendance Policy

- Attendance will be taken through the live sessions and discussions; hence, more than six absences will result in a failing grade (F).
- You are required to participate in these discussions by interacting with the instructor and your peers with quality responses to enrich the discussion, ask questions to benefit the group, and enrich the community of learning in this course].

Academic Integrity Policy

AUC academic fraud and dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following categories:

- Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, obtaining unfair advantage, unauthorized access to academic or administrative systems, aiding and abetting, impersonation, threatening harm, and copyright infringement.
- For more elaboration about AUC academic integrity policy, please check the following link [Academic Integrity](#)

<https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/Policies/AUC%20Acceptable%20Use%20Policy.pdf>

<https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/Policies/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf>

https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/about_Policies/Reformatted%20disability%20policy.pdf

Online Course Requirements

Participation requirements:

To be successful in an online course, it is important you access the Blackboard/Moodle course website frequently, at least every other day for announcements and discussions.

Online Course Components:

This course has required online components. This course is taught using multiple instructional methods. You will be required to watch and listen to recorded lectures and videos, participate in online discussions, submit online assignments, and work online in small groups.

- Students are responsible for downloading all course material in a timely manner.
- Online Announcements will be used throughout this course to share important information.

Course navigation:

All course material will be available through the course website on BB. Course materials will be categorized according to the different weeks. Any assignments or online discussions should be submitted online via the course website.

Netiquette Guidelines:

Communication is very important in this online course. In order to maintain a positive online environment for our class, we all need to follow the netiquette guidelines summarized below.

All students are expected to:

1. Show respect for the instructors and for other students in the class.
2. Express differences of opinion in a polite and rational way.
3. Maintain an environment of constructive criticism when commenting on the work of other students.
4. Stay on topic when involved in group discussions or other collaborative activities.
5. Use sentence case in messages. Use of all uppercase in a message is the equivalent of shouting and is considered offensive.
6. Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym it is best to spell out its meaning first, and then put the acronym in parentheses afterward, for example: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). After that you can use the acronym freely throughout your message.
7. Use good grammar and spelling, and avoid using text messaging shortcuts.

Information and Technology Literacy:

Off-Campus library access:

When you access one of our libraries' subscription databases from off-campus, you will be directed to a "proxy-screen" which asks you for a username/password to identify you as an AUC Community member. Once you enter your AUC username and password (details below) you will be directed to the database.

Student technical assistant:

- clt.vid.ser@aucegypt.edu
- <http://itsupport.aucegypt.edu/>

Services for students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Disabilities Services during the first few days of the semester. More information can be found at <https://www.aucegypt.edu/student/well-being/disability-services>.

Course Calendar

Week 1 (7/9): Course Introduction: Transitioning from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Required Readings:

- 1) Fehling, Maya.(2013).“Limitations of The Millennium Development Goals” *Routledge*, Vol.8(10): 1109-1119.
- 2) Pogge, Thomas. (2015).“The Sustainable Development Goals as Drafted: Nice Idea, Poor Execution” *Washington International Law Journal Institution*, Vol.24(3): 1-17.

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 (Full Report)
- 2) The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 Summary
- 3) Sustainable Development Goals
(<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>)

Week 2 (14/9): Changing Geographies of the Global Economy

Required Readings:

- 1) Dicken, Peter. (2011). *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*. New York: The Guilford Press. (Chapter 2: pp.13-48)

Week 3 (21/9): What is Poverty and How to Measure it?

Required Readings:

- 1) Laderchi, Caterina. (2003). "Does it Matter that we do not Agree on the Definition of Poverty? A Comparison of Four Approaches" *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol.31(3): 1-33
- 2) Wagle, Udaya.(2002). "RethinkingPoverty:DefinitionandMeasurements" *UNESCO*.1- 11

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Sen, Amartya. (2006). "Conceptualizing and Measuring Poverty" in Grusky, David B., Ravi Kanbur, and Amartya Sen (eds.), *Poverty and Inequality*, pp.30-46. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Week 4 (28/9): Inequality in Historical Perspective

Required Readings:

- 1) Sutcliffe, Bob. (2007). "A Converging or Diverging World?" in K.S., Jomo and Jacques Baudot (eds.), *Flat World, Big Gaps*, pp.48-73. New York: ZED BOOKS LTD.
- 2) Birdsall, Nancy. (1998). "Life is Unfair: Inequality in the World", *Foreign Policy*. PP.76-93.

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) The World Bank. (2016). *Taking On Inequality*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. (Chapter 4: pp.69-99).
- 2) Birdsall, Nancy. (2006). "Rising Inequality in the New Global Economy", *International Journal for Development Studies*, Vol. 5(1): pp. 1-9.

Week 5 (5/10): Growth, Poverty, and Inequality

Required Readings:

- 1) Dicken, Peter. (2011). *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*. New York: The Guilford Press. (Chapter 16: pp.475-523)
- 2) Yates, Michael. (2004). "Poverty and Inequality in Global Economy" *Monthly Review Press*, pp. 1-13.

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Ferereira, Francisco. (2010). Distributions in motion: Economic growth, inequality, and poverty dynamics. *Working Paper Series 183*. Society for the Study of Economic Inequality: The World Bank.

2) Nissanke, Machiko and Erik Thorbecke. (2007). "A Quest for Pro-Poor Globalization" in Mavrotas, George and Anthony Shorrocks (eds.), *Advancing Development*, pp.252-272. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Week 6 (12/10): Effects of Neoliberal Globalization on Poverty and Inequality

Required Readings:

- 1) Cornia, Giovanni. (2001). "Inequality, Growth and Poverty in the Era of Liberalization and Globalization" *World Institute for Development Economic Research*, pp.1-43.
- 2) Davis, Mike. (2006). *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso. (Chapter7:pp.151-173).

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Easterly, William. (2003). "The Effect of World Bank and IMF Programs on Poverty" in M. Dooley and J. Frankel (eds.), *Managing Currency Crisis in Emerging Markets*, an NBER Conference Report, University of Chicago Press.

Week 7 (19/10): Midterm Exam

Week 8 (26/10): Why Nations Fail? Variations in Developmental Outcomes

Required Readings:

- 1) Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. (2012). *Why Nations Fail?* New York: Random House, Inc. (Chapter 2: pp.45-69)
- 2) Sachs, Jeffrey. (2015). *The Age of Sustainable Development*. New York: Columbia University Press. (Chapter 4: pp.101-138)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Houghton, Jonathan and Shahidur R. Khandker. (2009). *Handbook on Poverty + Inequality*. Washington D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. (Chapter 8: pp.145-159)

Week 9 (2/11): Inequality on a Global Scale

Required Readings:

- 1) Sassen, Saskia. (2014). *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. (Chapter 1: pp.12-79)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) United Nations. (2013). *Inequality Matters* (Report of the World Situation 2013). New York: United Nations. (Chapter 1: pp.25-42).

Week 10 (9/11): Growth with Equity? The Contrasting Cases of East Asia and Latin America

Required Readings:

- 1) Kohli, Atul. (2009). Nationalist Versus Dependent Capitalist Development: Alternate Pathways of Asia and Latin America in a Globalized World. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol.44:386-410.
- 2) Rozenwurcel, Guillermo. (2007). “Why Have All Development Strategies Failed in Latin America?” in Mavrotas, George and Anthony Shorrocks (eds.), *Advancing Development*, pp.457-475. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) K.S., Jomo. (2007). “Growth with Equity in East Asia” in K.S., Jomo and Jacques Baudot (eds.), *Flat World, Big Gaps*, pp.353-375. New York: ZED BOOKS LTD.

Week 11 (16/11): Income Inequality in the Middle East

Required Readings:

- 1) Paciello, Maria Cristina. (2007). “Income Distribution in the Middle East and North Africa, 1960-2000” in K.S., Jomo and Jacques Baudot (eds.), *Flat World, Big Gaps*, pp.272-296. New York: ZED BOOKS LTD.
- 2) The World Bank. (2015). *Inequality, Uprisings, and Conflict in the Arab World*. Washington DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. (Introduction: pp.11-35).

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Bibi, Sami and Mustapha K. Nabli. (2010). *Equity and Inequality in the Arab Region*. ERF Policy Research Report No.33. Cairo: Economic Research Forum.

Week 12 (23/11): Inequality Puzzle in Egypt: Objective Vs. Subjective Perceptions of Inequality

Required Readings:

- 1) ElGindi, Tamer. (2017). “The Inequality Puzzle in Egypt: What Do We Really Know?” *Arab Studies Journal*, Vol. 25(2): 100-143.
- 2) ElGindi, Tamer. (2017). “Well-Being Before the Arab Spring: Objective vs. Subjective Measurements.” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XXIV, No.2, Summer 2017: 110-121.

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) The World Bank. (2014). *Inside Inequality in the Arab Republic of Egypt : Facts and Perceptions*

Across People, Time, and Space, eds. Paolo Verme et al. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Week 13 (30/11): Public Policies for Poverty Alleviation and Improvement of Income Distribution

Required Readings:

- 1) The World Bank. (2016). *Taking On Inequality*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. (Chapter 6: pp.129-170).
- 2) United Nations. (2013). *Inequality Matters*(ReportoftheWorldSituation2013). New York: United Nations. (Chapter 5: pp.99-113).

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Haughton, Jonathan and Shahidur R. Khandker. (2009). *Handbook on Poverty + Inequality*. Washington D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. (Chapter 9: pp.161-180)

Week 14 (7/12): Projects Presentations

Student Resources Centers

University Writing Center:

Provides a place where all University students, faculty, and staff are welcome to discuss their writing with trained writing consultants. The AUC serves online students. More information can be found here, <https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/mohamed-taymour-writing-and-communication-center/writing-center-reservation-system>

University Learning Commons:

Students are encouraged to use the Learning Commons as a hub in which to work quietly with friends, to catch up on the news, to update social media and more. When listening to music or watching videos, please remember to be respectful of those around you and always use headphones. The Learning Commons is a collaborative study space that provides AUC students with the support and resources they need to excel their coursework.

<http://schools.aucegypt.edu/library/about/Pages/L-Commons.aspx>

University Career Center Services:

The American University in Cairo's Career Center offers a variety of services to help students and graduates identify their career goals and paths, as well as gain work experience while studying at AUC.

<https://caps.aucegypt.edu/students/index.htm>