PS 948: Political Inequality: Measures, Causes, Effects and Remedies
Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Spring 2016

Class time: Mondays, 8:45-10:45am in Education 151
Professor: Rikhil R. Bhavnani
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-4pm in 312 North Hall. To ensure that I can see everyone, please sign up in advance at https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/DxXsyyez.html.
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Course overview: Political equality is a normative ideal, and is thought to have positive consequences on citizens’ socio-economic outcomes such as income, health and education. As a result, many societies have sought to correct political inequality through various remedies, including electoral quotas. In this course, we will review what political inequality is, and examine how scholars have measured it, and studied its causes, effects and remedies. Our selective examination of the literature will focus on the cutting edge of the empirical literature on inequalities in political participation and representation, and will pay close attention to issues of measurement and causal inference.

Assignments and grading: The class grade will be based on:
• Active, informed class participation, for 20% of the class grade. Participants are expected to have read the assigned works closely, and reflected on them, including possibly by discussing them with their colleagues before class. Participants are also expected to read the week’s reading responses and referee reports, posted on Learn@UW.
• Three five page papers, for 10% of the class grade each. Papers should be critical syntheses of the week’s readings, and must include suggestions on how the literature could be furthered. They should be posted on Learn@UW by 8 pm the day before class, and will form the basis for class discussion. A sign-up sheet for the papers will be circulated in the first class.
• A referee report, for 10% of the class grade. These may be written on one of the starred readings, and should be posted on Learn@UW by 8 pm the day before the reading is discussed. See are.berkeley.edu/courses/ARE251/2004/assignments/RRGuidelines.pdf for advice on how to write a referee report, and http://chrisblattman.com/2012/01/18/how-to-referee-an-academic-paper/ for further leads.
• A draft 10-15 page NSF proposal and its presentation, for 40% of the class grade. Students should discuss their topics with me once by week 6, and a second time by week 11. Draft proposals are to be posted online on Learn@UW at 8 pm the before their presentation in the last two weeks of class. Proposals may be revised thereafter, and are due on week after the last class, on 5/9. The proposal will be graded on the quality of the thinking behind the project, rather than the statistical significance of preliminary results. Students are advised to read Przeworski, Adam and Salomon, Frank “The Art of Writing Proposals” at
Disabilities: Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact me during the first week of class. All information will remain confidential. You may, in addition to contacting me, contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (www.mcburney.wisc.edu) at 1305 Linden Drive and 608.263.2741 regarding questions about campus policies and services.

A detailed class plan (subject to revision) follows.

Week 1 (1/25): What is political inequality? Do we need it? Why?

Week 2 (2/1): Measures

Week 3 (2/8): Causes—Economic inequality


**Week 4 (2/15): Causes—Voter discrimination**


**Week 5 (2/22): Effects—Democratization**


**Week 6 (2/29): Effects—The Value of a Vote**


**Week 7 (3/7): Effects—Of voting**


* Berry, Christopher, and Jacob Gersen. 2010. " Voters, Non-voters, and the Implications of Election Timing for Public Policy."


**Week 8 (3/14): Effects—Descriptive representation**


**Week 9 (3/28): Remedies—Altering participation**


* Cepaluni, Gabriel and F. Daniel Hidalgo. 2015. “Compulsory Voting Can Increase Political Inequality: Evidence from Brazil.” Sao Palo University and MIT.

**Week 10 (4/4): Remedies—Majority-minority redistricting**


**Week 11 (4/11): Remedies—Electoral quotas**


**Week 12 (4/18): Representation without democracy**


**Week 13 (4/25): Class presentations**

**Week 14 (5/2): Class presentations**

Final NSF proposals due, 5/9