Term: Spring 2018  Instructor: Michelle A. Schwarze
Day/time: W 1:20-3:15pm  Office: 222 North Hall (2nd Floor)
Location: Education L151  Office hours: R 11am-12pm
Email: mschwarze@wisc.edu  and by appointment

Canvas site: https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/d2l/home/4009825

PS 931/900: Economic Inequality in Modern Political Thought
[Course # 54318; 3 Credits]
Syllabus

Course Description
Economic inequality is a topic that dominates contemporary political debate. Yet, long before Bernie Sanders opined about the moral injustice of economic inequality, theorists in the eighteenth and nineteenth century grappled with the political and moral meaning of rapid shifts in production, the distribution of wealth, and education. In some accounts, these shifts held enormous promise for improving the material and psychological well-being of all and especially of the least well-off, while others were wary of the moral and political consequences associated with commercial development. Economic inequality in particular seemed inextricably linked to commercial progress, yet that inequality often (or always) had pernicious psychological, moral, and political consequences.

The purpose of this seminar is to explore the arguments made for and against commercial society from a political theory perspective at three historical moments (its birth, post-industrial revolution, and contemporarily) in spite of (or sometimes as a result of) the economic inequality it fosters. Is economic inequality necessarily unjust, or do certain conditions need to hold for it to violate principles of justice or legitimacy? What constitutes economic inequality? Does economic inequality lead to political instability or personal unhappiness? Does it always lead to political inequality? Should we treat all economic inequality equally? We will address these as well as related questions by reading and analyzing primary texts in modern political theory and the history of economic thought. We will often pair these historical analyses with contemporary issues. My hope is that doing so will also allow us to explore the contemporary relevance of these thinkers and the historical nature of the questions we are addressing.

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the courses learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor/student meeting times, reading, writing, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Course Objectives
Students who closely and carefully engage course readings, attend and participate in class discussion, and complete course assignments will be able to:
- Explain important concepts and arguments made by thinkers in the history of political thought
- Analyze political and ethical theories, both historical and contemporary
- Assess political and ethical theories made by thinkers in the history of political thought
- Apply course concepts to analysis of contemporary political and ethical debates
- Do independent research in the history of political thought
- Dissent respectfully

**Required Texts**

**Recommended**

**Course Expectations & Policies**
I expect you to complete the readings assigned for each week prior to our class meeting, to take notes on your readings, to prepare and submit your weekly discussion questions on time (more on this in the section below), and to actively participate in our seminar discussion. Active participation requires you bring the relevant readings to class each day (which may mean printing them beforehand) and that you respectfully engage with both the course content and your peers’ contributions. I agree entirely with the University’s institutional statement on inclusion and diversity, and value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways
their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich our intellectual community (https://diversity.wisc.edu/).

You will need to complete your assignments on time, as I will accept no late work without an approved accommodation prior to the due date. Accommodations will be made for those students who have documented proof of an emergency or those students who have documented evidence of learning disabilities. I am firmly committed to ensuring equal learning access for all and therefore encourage individuals with disabilities to participate in the McBurney Center’s available programs and activities (https://mcburney.wisc.edu/students/howto.php#contentanchor4). If you need an accommodation, you must contact the center at (608) 263-2741 or mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu to obtain documentation for your specific needs. I ask that you seek accommodation as soon as possible and contact me in advance to make appropriate arrangements for papers, etc.

Finally, I strictly adhere to the UW Academic Misconduct Process and will report all incidents of academic misconduct the Dean of Students Office, as it is a prerequisite for maintaining academic integrity in our course. To avoid plagiarism, be sure to use either text-specific (e.g., citations to part, section, chapter and paragraph number of Smith’s Theory of Moral Sentiments) or APSA-style citations (http://www.apsanet.org/files/APSAStyleManual2006.pdf) for references unless otherwise stated.

**Assignments & Grading**

For those graduate students enrolled in the 3-credit course for a letter grade (i.e. POL 931), your grade will be calculated according to your score(s) on assignments in the following categories. More detail on each of these requirements is provided below. Incompletes will only be assigned under extraordinary circumstances.

**Short paper [& optional rewrite] (25%) + Seminar paper (30%) + Discussion questions (15%) + Discussion Leading (20%) + Participation (10%) = Final Grade (100%)**

Your final grade will assigned according to the following grading scale:

\[
\begin{align*}
A & \geq 93.5 \\
AB & = 87.5-93.4 \\
B & = 82.5-87.4 \\
BC & = 77.5-82.4 \\
C & = 69.5-77.4 \\
D & = 60-69.4 \\
F & \leq 59.9
\end{align*}
\]
Note: Auditors or those students enrolled in POL 900 are only required to attend class, participate, and submit weekly discussion questions.

Short paper: You will be required to write a one-page single-spaced response paper (12 pt. Times New Roman font) designed to allow you to critically engage with primary texts by Week 4 (2/14). You will receive a short paper prompt by the end of Week 2.

I want to give you the opportunity to improve your writing as well. David Hume, when reflecting on the quality of his own work, emphasized what I believe to be a particularly important part of the learning process:

A man who is free from mistakes can pretend to no praises except from the justness of his understanding. But a man who corrects his mistakes shows at once the justness of his understanding and the candour and ingenuity of his temper. (T App.1)

To reward those of you who are interested in exercising your candor and ingenuity, I allow all students the option to resubmit one-page papers by Week 6 (2/28). I will only include the higher score of the two submitted papers in your grade, so no student will be penalized for resubmission.

Seminar paper: You will be required to write an 8500-10000 word (12 pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced) seminar paper on a topic of your choice related to the course theme. This assignment will need to be completed in three stages: first, you will need to meet with me to discuss your paper proposal; second, you will need to submit a 500 word paper abstract by Week 9 (3/21); and, third, you will need to submit your final paper by no later than Week 14 (4/25).

Ideally, this paper would serve as a first draft of a paper to present at an academic conference, as the basis for your preliminary exam, or as a draft to revise to send out for publication.

Discussion questions: Each week, each student must submit a discussion question on that week’s assigned readings by no later than Wednesday at 10:00am to our shared Google Doc on the Canvas course site (available on Canvas). This question may ask for clarification of something from the reading(s), it may be analytic, or it may be synthetic. Each student will be responsible for reading all of the discussion questions submitted prior to that week’s class meeting.

Discussion leading: Each week, one student will serve as discussion leader for the class. The discussion leader will be responsible for preparing a brief introduction and discussion (30 min) of that week’s readings. The discussion leader should build on submitted discussion questions, but also incorporate their own to structure the discussion. Each student will serve as discussion leader twice over the semester.

Participation: Participation in any course, but especially in a graduate seminar, is paramount to the course’s success. I expect you to be in class, each week, on time, unless you have notified me otherwise. As aforementioned, I also expect you to actively participate in each class. I make a
point of enabling relatively equal participation from all students.

**Schedule**

**Week 1 (1/24): Economic Inequality Today**
- Piketty, selections from *Capital in the 21st Century*

**Week 2 (1/31): Early Justifications for Commercial Development & Wealth Accumulation**
- Hume, *Essays*, “Of Commerce” (pgs. 253-267); “Of Refinement in the Arts” (pgs. 268-280); “Of the Jealousy of Trade” (pgs. 327-331); “Of Public Credit” (pgs. 349-365)

**Week 3 (2/7): Early Justifications for Wealth Accumulation, Continued**
- Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, Part Two, Chapter 1, “Montesquieu” [available on Canvas]

**Week 4 (2/14): The Social and Psychological Consequences of Wealth Inequality**
- Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality* (all; make sure to read Rousseau’s notes on pgs. 119-151!)
- Neuhouser, “Rousseau’s Critique of Economic Inequality” [available on Canvas]

**DUE: SHORT PAPER**

**Week 5 (2/21): Political Solutions to Economic Inequality?**
- Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, selections from *The Social Contract* (Book I, Chapters 1-3, 5-8; Book II, Chapter 7, 10 (pgs. 163-166, 171-178, 190-194, 197-199)
- Hanley, “Commerce and Corruption: Rousseau’s Diagnosis and Adam Smith’s Cure” [available on Canvas]

**Week 6 (2/28): The Moral and Historical Foundations for Economic Inequality**

- Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I, Section 1, Chapters 1-5, Part I, Section 2, Chapters 3-5, Part I, Section 3, Chapters 1-3, Part II, Section 1, Chapter 5, Part II, Section 2, Chapters 1-3, Part II, Section 3, Introduction, Chapters 2-3, Part III, Section 1 (there is only 1 section), Chapter 2, selections from Chapter 3 (paragraphs 30-41), selections from Chapter 5 (paragraphs 5-10), selection from Chapter 6 (paragraphs 6-7), Part IV, Section 1 (there is only 1 section) Chapters 1-2, Part VI, selections from Section 3 (paragraphs 31-46) (pgs. 9-26, 34-43, 43-66, 92-93, 97-108, 113-134, 149-154, 164-169, 172-174, 179-193, 253-259)
- Rasmussen, “Adam Smith on What is Wrong with Economic Inequality” [available on Canvas]

**DUE: OPTIONAL REWRITE**

**Week 7 (3/7): The Historical Grounds for Economic Inequality**

- Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, selections from *Early Draft of Wealth of Nations* [available on Canvas]
- Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Volume 1, “Introduction and Plan of Work” [Note: Smith’s introduction, not the general introduction!], Book 1, Chapters 1-2, 8, selections from Chapter 9 (paragraphs 14-24), 10 Part II (i.e. I.x.c), Book III, Chapter 1, selections from Chapter 2 (paragraphs 1-12), Chapter 4, (pgs. 10-12, 13-30, 82-104, 111-115, 135-159, 376-380, 381-390, 411-427)
- Pitts, “Irony in Adam Smith’s Critical Global History” [available on Canvas]
- Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, “Adam Smith and the End of a Vision” [available on Canvas]

**Week 8 (3/14): Economic Growth and Solutions to Economic Inequality**

- Herzog, “The Normative Stakes of Economic Growth; Or, Why Adam Smith Does Not Rely on ‘Trickle Down’” [available on Canvas]

**Week 9 (3/21): The Historical and Religious Grounds for Capitalism**

- Marx, *Marx-Engels Reader*, “On the Jewish Question” (pgs. 25-52); selections from *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (pgs. 67-108)
- Green, “Marx, Utility, and Right” [available on Canvas]

**DUE: SEMINAR PAPER ABSTRACT**

**Week 10 (3/28): No class. Spring break.**
Week 11 (4/4): Capitalism and Accumulation
- Marx, *Marx-Engels Reader*, selections from *Capital, Vol. 1*
  - “From the Afterword to Second German Edition”; Part I “Commodities and Money” (all); Part II “The Transformation of Money into Capital” (all); Part III, Chapter VII, Section 2 “The Production of Surplus Value”; Chapter X, Section 2 “The Greed for Surplus-Labour. Manufacturer and Boyard”; Part IV (all); Part V (all); Part VIII (all) (pgs. 299-302, 302-329, 329-343, 351-361, 364-367, 376-417, 417-431, 431-438)
- Marx, *Marx-Engels Reader, Capital, Vol. 3*, “Classes” (pgs. 441-442)
- Husami, “Marx on Distributive Justice” [available on Canvas]

Week 12 (4/11): Capitalism, Socialism, and Cooperative Ownership

Week 13 (4/18): Economic Inequality and Racial Injustice
- Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* [selections available on Canvas]

Week 14 (4/25): Economic Inequality and Social Justice
- Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical” [available on Canvas]
- Nozick, selections from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Part II “Beyond the Minimal State?” [available on Canvas]
- Iversen, Vegard, “Intra-household Inequality: A Challenge to the Capability Approach?” [available on Canvas]

**DUE: SEMINAR PAPER**

Week 15 (5/2): Contemporary Solutions to Economic Inequality
- Piketty, *Capital in the 21st Century*, Conclusion (pgs. 571-577)
- Piketty, “Toward a Reconciliation between Economics and the Social Sciences” [available on Canvas]
- Pateman, “Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income” [available on Canvas]
- Mills, *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism*, Chapter 6, “European Specters” [available on Canvas]

*Schedule tentative and subject to change. Students will always be given advance notice of changes.*