

Public Policy (PLCY) 71H 001 Justice and Inequality – 3 Credits
Spring 2021
Instructor: Douglas MacKay (Prof MacKay/Dr. MacKay, he, him, his)
Email: dmackay@email.unc.edu
Phone: 919-962-5096
Modality: In Person On Campus + Remote
Lectures: MWF 12:20-1:10pm
Room: Global Center 1005
Office: Abernethy Hall #217
Office Hours: Thursday 1-3pm or by appt (Zoom)
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

The value of equality is a foundational principle of the United States of America. The Declaration of Independence proclaims that “all men are created equal” and possess unalienable rights to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The Constitution of the United States requires that no State “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Additionally, equality has been the goal of a number of influential political movements, including the Civil Rights movement, the Feminist movement, Occupy Wall Street, the LGBTQ movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement. Yet despite this prominence of the value of equality, the U.S. is becoming a more unequal society in a number of domains, particularly, with respect to the distribution of income, health, political influence, and social mobility. This course investigates the value of equality, and asks which forms of inequality are unjust and ought to be remedied. We will focus on a variety of different spheres of U.S. social, political, and economic life, including the distribution of income and opportunities, education, health, criminal justice, voting and political influence, and employment. We will also ask whether equality is a value that applies beyond U.S. borders, particularly with respect to immigration policy.

Instructional Procedures

PLCY 71H is an In-Person On Campus + Remote class. Instruction will feature a combination of synchronous lectures, class discussion, and small group activity. Significant instructional time will also be dedicated to developing students’ critical thinking, reading, and writing skills, skills that students require regardless of major.

Course Goals

1. Student understanding of the most influential theories of the nature and scope of equality as a political ideal.
2. Development of student ability to employ these theories – which is not merely a matter of applying them – to think critically about the ethical aspects of contemporary public policy problems.
3. Development of students’ critical reading, thinking, and writing skills.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the theories of equality discussed in this class;
2. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of these theories, as well as the way in which they relate to each other;
3. Critically evaluate these theories;
4. Employ these theories to critically engage in current public policy debates.
5. Read challenging theoretical texts and write clear, concise, well-argued papers.

Course Audience

This course is directed at freshman students interested in:

1. Understanding the nature and implications of equality as a political ideal;
2. Exploring the ethical aspects of contemporary public policy problems;
3. Participating in small-group and class discussions;
4. Developing their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills; and
5. Completing an independent research project.

Texts

Required readings will be drawn from two sources: required texts that you need to purchase from the UNC bookstore and online sources, accessible through the UNC Libraries website. I will also post the required online readings on the course website.

Required Texts:

1. Jason Brennan, *Why Not Capitalism?* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

Course Website

The course website is sakai.unc.edu. Course documents will be posted on the website. As well, I will use the website to make announcements regarding changes in the reading schedule or other aspects of the course.

Course Requirements

10 Critical Reading/In-Class Assignments 100 words/0.5 page each (0.5% each)

Participation (5% - 2% attendance; 3% active engagement – students will be penalized if they miss more than 2 classes without documentation)

First Paper 1250-1500 words/5-7 pages (20%) Due: February 21st 11:59pm

First Paper Revision (10%) Due: TBA

Second Paper 2000-2500 words/8-10 pages (30%) Due: April 11 11:59pm

Research Project: Case Analysis 2000-2500 words/7-10 pages (30%) Due: May 7 11:59pm

Students **will receive the essay questions, detailed instructions regarding the writing and submission of essays, and a statement of evaluation** guidelines well in advance of the due dates.

Evaluation Policy

Writing is essential to success in public policy analysis. Students will be held to professional standards in the field of public policy. Students should not submit first drafts and should carefully proof read all work. The following factors will be considered in evaluating your **papers**:

- 1. Thesis:** Does the paper/exam advance a clearly formulated thesis? Is the scope of the thesis appropriate? Or, does the paper/exam set out to accomplish too much or too little?
- 2. Understanding and Reconstruction of Text/Positions/Arguments:** Does the paper/exam demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the text/arguments/positions under discussion? Does the paper/exam support its interpretation of the text by appeal to textual evidence? Does the paper/exam reconstruct the positions/arguments under discussion in a systematic way, making clear the way in which the different components of the argument/position fit together? Or, does the paper/exam only present a superficial understanding of the text/arguments/position? Is the paper/exam fair to the positions/arguments under discussion by reconstructing them charitably? Or, does the paper/exam reconstruct the arguments in a way that fails to recognize their strength.
- 3. Strength of Argumentation:** Does the paper/exam present strong arguments to support its thesis? Does the paper/exam consider possible objections to its position? Or, does the paper/exam present arguments that invite immediate objections or that commit fallacies? Do the thesis and arguments of the paper/exam consider the complexity of the issue under discussion? Or, does the paper/exam advance claims that are overbroad or too general?
- 4. Organization:** Is the paper/exam well organized? Is its structure apparent to the reader? Does the paper/exam proceed in a rational fashion? Does the paper/exam contain a helpful introduction and conclusion?
- 5. Clarity of Expression:** Is the paper/exam clear? Does the paper/exam use simple language and grammatical sentence structure? Does the paper/exam define the concepts that it introduces?

The following factors will be considered in evaluating your **case analysis/research project**:

- 1. Comprehensiveness:** Does the case analysis provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the case? Does the reader have access to all of the relevant information?
- 2. Strength of Argumentation:** Does the case analysis consider all of the ethically relevant factors? Does it present strong arguments to support its recommendations? Does the case analysis consider possible objections to its recommendations? Or, does it present arguments that invite immediate objections or that commit fallacies?
- 3. Recommendations:** Are the recommendations clear and reasonable? Do they provide an answer to the question of the case analysis?
- 4. Organization:** Is the case analysis well organized? Is its structure apparent to the reader? Does it proceed in a rational fashion?
- 5. Clarity of Expression:** Is the case analysis clear? Does it use simple language and grammatical sentence structures? Does the case analysis define the concepts that it introduces?

Grading System

Grade	GPA	Percentile (absolute grades)*
A	4.0	94-100%
A-	3.7	90-93%
B+	3.3	87-89%
B	3.0	84-86%
B-	2.7	80-83%
C+	2.3	77-79%
C	2.0	74-76%
C-	1.7	70-73%
D+	1.3	67-70%
D	1.0	60-66%
F	0.0	< 60%

“A” indicates *mastery of course content*

“B” indicates *strong performance*

“C” indicates an *acceptable performance*

“D” indicates *marginal performance*

“F” indicates *unacceptable performance*

Course Policies

1. Regular attendance is expected.
2. Late papers will be penalized 3% per day, including weekends. Extensions will only be permitted on the grounds of illness (including mental illness) or bereavement. Documentation is required.
3. All students are entitled to eight, no penalty “late days.” Students may use these days as they wish for either the first paper, first paper revision, or second paper. They may not be used for the Case Analysis. The instructor will keep track of students’ use of these dates. Note: the eight late days are for the whole semester, not for each assignment.
4. No late CRAs or ICAs will be accepted.
5. The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Honor Code

You are encouraged to form study groups to review the reading material and questions posed for the discussion papers. However, you are expected to undertake the actual writing of the papers and the exams entirely independently. Plagiarism of published work is a violation of the honor code. Any two papers or exams that are submitted containing the same sentences will be considered a breach of the honor code (<http://honor.unc.edu/>).

Plagiarism

In written work (including overheads or handouts used in presentations) words drawn from others should be indicated by quotation marks and ideas drawn from others should refer to their source. If you are unsure about what needs to be cited, please talk with me or ask for assistance from the writing center. Plagiarism is a serious offense which can result in failure of the course and suspension from the University. To make sure that you understand what plagiarism is, please see the following:

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/>

Grade Appeal Policy

I take the evaluation and grading of your papers and exams very seriously because I know that most of you take the preparation and writing of your exams very seriously. If you think you deserve a higher grade on a paper or exam, you may write a letter and explain why you would like to appeal the grade. Before making an appeal, you should review your work and the grading criteria I have provided. After I receive your letter, I will re-read your paper or exam within 1-2 class periods. Depending on my re-reading, your grade may stay the same, be raised, or be lowered. This system is designed to minimize frivolous grade appeals and to ensure that you have carefully examined and reflected on the quality of your work before deciding to initiate a grade appeal.

UNC Protest Policy

Students are required to first attempt to resolve disagreements regarding grades with the instructor concerned. If that fails, students and/or faculty may seek additional mediation with the assistance of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. However, the instructor (not TAs or the DUS) is ultimately responsible for the determination of student grades. Finally, after course grades are posted for the end of

the semester, students may follow the process outlined in the undergraduate bulletin (pg. 392) and protest their grades to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The protest must be made in writing, must be made no later than the last day of classes of the succeeding fall or spring semester, and must be based upon one of the following grounds:

- Arithmetic or clerical error
- Arbitrariness, possibly including discrimination based on race, sex, religion, or national origin of the student
- Personal malice
- Student conduct cognizable under the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance

Email Policy

I will respond to legitimate email inquiries within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Illegitimate email inquiries include: administrative or scheduling questions whose answers are readily available online (i.e. course website); questions concerning the content of missed (without reason) lectures; and substantive philosophical questions better addressed in class or in office hours. Email is not an alternative to communication in lectures or office hours. All emails must include the course code PLCY 71H in the subject line.

UNC Copyright Policy

UNC's Copyright Policy clearly prohibits students from making commercial use of notes taken in class or labs; you may not sell or otherwise acquire financial or commercial gain from notes you take in this class. Students found to have violated this prohibition are in violation of the Honor Code and are subject to Honor Court proceedings.

Accessibility Resources & Service

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.
(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.
(source: *Student Safety and Wellness Proposal for EPC, Sep 2018*)

Title IX Resources

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.
(source: <https://curricula.unc.edu/curriculum-proposals/cim/syllabus/>)

Diversity Statement

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve, I appreciate suggestions.

Community Standards in Our Course and Mask Use

This semester, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, all enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me — as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see [Carolina Together](#).

Lectures and Required Readings

Introduction

Jan. 20 Introduction

Jan. 22 The Declaration of Independence

Readings:

1. Danielle Allen, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 21-23, 27-30, 160-166.

Part 1 Justice and Economic Inequality

Jan. 25 Economic Inequality: Basic Concepts and Trends

Readings:

1. Matthew Yglesias, "Everything you Need to Know about Income Inequality," *Vox* May 12, 2015.
2. Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, "Where is the Land of Opportunity?" Executive Summary, January 2014.
3. Emily Badger, Claire Cain Miller, Adam Pearce, and Kevin Quealy, "Extensive Data Shows Punishing Reach of Racism for Black Boys," *The New York Times*, March 19, 2018.

Jan. 27 Opportunity and Class

Readings:

1. Richard V. Reeves, *Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That is a Problem, and What to do About it* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 1-38 (chapters 1-2).

Jan. 29 Opportunity and Parenting/Schools

Readings:

1. Reeves, *Dream Hoarders*, 39-76 (chapters 3-4).

Feb. 1 Equality of Opportunity?

Readings:

1. G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-45.

Feb. 3 Essay Writing Workshop

Feb. 5 Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy

Readings:

1. Reeves, *Dream Hoarders*, 77-95 (chapter 5).

Feb. 8 Inequality of Opportunity and Policy Solutions

Readings:

1. Reeves, *Dream Hoarders*, 125-154 (chapter 7).
2. G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?* 46-82.

Feb. 10 Why Not Capitalism? 1

Readings:

1. Brennan, *Why Not Capitalism?* 3-7, 17-21, 22-46.

Feb. 12 Why Not Capitalism 2?

Readings:

1. Brennan, *Why Not Capitalism?* 70-99.

Feb. 15 Wellness Day – No Class

Feb. 17 Discussion/Catch-Up

Part 2 Justice and Political Inequality

Feb. 19 Political Sectarianism

Readings:

1. Eli J. Finkel et al., "Political Sectarianism in America," *Science* 370 (2020): 533-536.

Feb. 21 First Paper Due 11:59pm

Feb. 22 Democracy and Unequal Influence

Readings:

1. Martin Gilens, "Under the Influence," *Boston Review*, July 1, 2012.
2. Larry Bartels, "The Muddled Majority," *Boston Review*, July 1, 2012.
3. Matthew Yglesias, "Holding Politicians Accountable," *Boston Review*, July 1, 2012.

Feb. 24 Gerrymandering 1

Readings:

1. Christopher Ingraham, "This is the Best Explanation of Gerrymandering You Will Ever See," *The Washington Post*, March 1, 2015.
2. David Wasserman, "Hating Gerrymandering is Easy. Fixing it is Harder," *FiveThirtyEight*, Jan. 25, 2018.
3. Andrew Prokop, "How Canada Ended Gerrymandering," *Vox*, Oct. 4, 2017.
4. Will Doran and Lucille Sherman, "Redistricting will be one of the Biggest Stories of 2021. Here's What you Need to Know," *The News and Observer*, January 12, 2021.

Feb. 26 Gerrymandering 2

Readings:

1. Charles R. Beitz, "How is Partisan Gerrymandering Unfair?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 46 (2019): 323-358.

Mar. 1 The Electoral College

Readings:

1. Allen Guelzo, "In Defense of the Electoral College," *National Affairs* Winter 2018.
2. Sean Illing, "A Definitive Case Against the Electoral College," *Vox*, Oct. 16, 2020.

Part 3 Health Inequality

Mar. 3 COVID-19 Health Inequalities and Deaths of Despair

Readings:

1. Daniel Wood, "As Pandemic Deaths Add Up, Racial Disparities Persist – And In Some Cases Worsen," *NPR*, September 23, 2020.
2. Anne Case and Angus Deaton, "Rising Morbidity and Mortality in Midlife Among Non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century," *PNAS* 112 (2015): 15078-15083.

Mar. 5 Social Justice and the Social Determinants of Health

Readings:

1. Norman Daniels, Bruce Kennedy, and Ichiro Kawachi, "Social Justice is Good for our Health," *The Boston Review*, February 1, 2000.

Mar. 8 Health Justice and Racial Justice

Readings:

1. Erika Blacksher, "Shrinking Poor White Life Spans: Class, Race, and Health Justice," *The American Journal of Bioethics* 10 (2018): 3-14.

Part 4 Discrimination

Mar. 10 What is Discrimination?

Readings:

1. Andrew Altman, "Discrimination," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7.

Mar. 12 Wellness Day – No Class

Mar. 15 Religious Liberty and LGBTQ Discrimination

Readings:

1. Zack Ford, "The Equality Act Could End Legal LGBT Discrimination For Good," *Think Progress*, July 23, 2015.
2. Katelyn Burns, "Republicans are Introducing a New Compromise LGBTQ Rights Bill. But Everyone Already Hates It." *Vox* Dec. 6, 2019.
3. Jonathan Rauch, "Nondiscrimination for All," *National Affairs*, Summer 2017.

Mar. 17 Affirmative Action and College Admissions 1

Readings:

1. Robert Fullinwider, "Affirmative Action," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Sections 5 and 7.
2. Kate Murphy, "Trial on UNC-Chapel Hill's Race-Related Admissions Ends, But Ruling Could Take Months," *The News and Observer*, Nov. 19, 2020.
3. Thomas Peele and Daniel J. Willis, "Dropping Affirmative Action Had Huge Impact on California's Public Universities," *EdSource*, Oct. 29, 2020.

Mar. 19 Affirmative Action and College Admissions 2

Readings:

1. Kristina Meshelski, "Procedural Justice and Affirmative Action," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 19 (2016): 425-443.

Mar. 22 Is Statistical Discrimination Wrong?

Readings:

1. Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, "On Statistical Discrimination," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 15 (2007): 385-397, 400-403.
2. Joseph Goldstein, "Judge Rejects New York's Stop-and-Frisk Policy," *The New York Times*, Aug. 12th, 2013.

Mar. 24 Discussion/Catch-Up

Part 5 Inequality and Race

Mar. 26 Racial Progress and Integration

Readings:

1. Shaylyn Romney Garrett and Robert D. Putnam, "Why Did Racial Progress Stall in America?" *The New York Times*, Dec. 4, 2020.
2. Elizabeth Anderson, "The Future of Racial Integration," in *The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems*, Edited by Russ Shafer-Landau (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 229-238.

Mar. 29 Racial Integration or Black Self-Segregation?

Readings:

1. Tommie Shelby, *Dark Ghettos, Injustice, Dissent, and Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 49-50, 62-76.

Mar. 31 Racial Inequality and Criminal Justice 1

Readings:

1. Michele Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2020), ix-xlv, 1-23.

April 2 Holiday – No Class

April 5 Wellness Day – No Class

April 7 Racial Inequality and Criminal Justice 2

Readings:

1. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 25-28; 50-73; 75-88.

April 9 Racial Inequality and Criminal Justice 3

Readings:

1. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 121-140.
2. Sharon LaFraniere and Andrew W. Lehren, "The Disproportionate Risks of Driving While Black," *The New York Times*, Oct. 24, 2015.
3. Virginia Bridges, "Durham Traffic Stops, Searches Down; Concerns about Disparities Continue," *The News and Observer*, May 10, 2017.

April 11 Second Paper Due at 11:59 pm.

April 12 Research Day/Case Analysis Kick-off

April 14 Racial Inequality and Criminal Justice 4

Readings:

1. German Lopez, "Why You Can't Blame Mass Incarceration on the War on Drugs," *Vox*, May 30, 2017.
2. Brian D. Earp et al., "Racial Justice Requires Ending the War on Drugs," *The American Journal of Bioethics* 20 (2021): 1-16.

April 16 Racial Inequality and Criminal Justice 5

Readings:

1. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 175-201.
2. Dara Lind, "'Ban the Box' Might Just Replace One Kind of Discrimination With Another," *Vox*, June 6, 2016.

April 19 Racial Inequality and Criminal Justice 6

Readings:

1. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 221-273.

April 21 Discussion/Catch-up

Part 6 Equality Beyond Borders

April 23 Immigration 1

Readings:

1. Dara Lind, "The Basics of the US Immigration System," *Vox*, August 4, 2015.
2. Michael Huemer, "Is There a Right to Immigrate?" *Social Theory and Practice* 36 (2010): 429-436.

April 26 Immigration 2

Readings:

1. Huemer, "Is There a Right to Immigrate?" 436-455.

April 28 Immigration 3

Readings:

1. Joseph Carens, "The Case for Amnesty," *Boston Review*, May 1, 2009.
2. Carol M. Swain, "Reply to Carens," *Boston Review*, May 1, 2009.

April 30 Global COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation

Readings:

1. Ezekiel J. Emanuel et al., "An Ethical Framework for Global Vaccine Allocation," *Science* 369 (2020): 1309-1312.

May 3 Discussion/Catch-up

May 5 Case Analysis Workshop