Course Summary

Along with the growing threat of global warming and environmental degradation, the growing divide between the economic power of the globe’s most wealthy citizens and everyone else is one of the most important threats to the sustainable economic and social development. The purpose of this course is to consider the politics of economic inequality and redistribution within contemporary advanced industrialized democratic states. Some decades ago, political scientists began to refer to political contestations over the distribution of social resources as ‘old politics,’ with the implicit suggestion that new political cleavages were slowly replacing concerns rendered less important or irrelevant by the economic progress of the world’s most productive economies. Given the gradual decline in the rates of per-capita economic output and increasing levels of economic inequality that have characterized these states’ economic development, however, it seems unsurprising that distributional—and redistributional—issues and public policies have once again reemerged as critical arenas of political competition. In this sense, the primary subject of this course is ‘new old politics’: the reemergence of the salience of political cleavages between those who have more and those who have less.

Course Objectives

The principal pedagogical objective of this course is to enable you to critically reflect on key aspects of the politics of economic inequality and redistribution in the comparative political science literature, and their interrelations to the key themes of Kyung Hee University’s Global Collaborative Summer Program, including peace, sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, and global governance.
This course has been constructed around three core learning objectives. The first is to allow you to develop a breadth of understanding of the broad patterns and trends that underlie and affect the politics of economic inequality and redistribution in advanced industrialized democratic states. These foreign contexts are not only interesting in their own right. Many of the factors influencing the Canadian political economy are also identifiable in other advanced industrialized democratic states. As many students are likely to be most familiar with the political circumstances of their own country, the Canadian context can often be used as an instructive starting-point from which to begin to understand patterns and trends that are emerging abroad. But conversely, even students principally interested in an understanding of the Canadian case can learn not only what is currently happening and what we can expect to take place abroad, but also about different approaches that might be used to identify solutions to the problems that arise here in Canada.

The second objective is to develop a deeper understanding of the political circumstances that are currently affecting the United States. Given this country’s historic role as an outlier in the field of material egalitarianism and social policy progressiveness, the current political turmoil which is currently being experienced by there is perhaps not overly surprising. However, what is particularly interesting about American exceptionalism in an age of growing economic inequality and seemingly perpetual austerity is that the American case is no longer merely a social policy laggard, but rather can be conceived of as being on the leading edge of a path that the citizens of other advanced industrialized democracies may be in the process of following, or attempting to avert. Coupled with the indubitable consequences of American political decision-making on the well-being of the citizens of other countries, this gives us good reason to pay particular attention to current political contestations over redistributive politics in the United States. As economic integration has increased over the course of the last two decades, more than ever, students of comparative and global politics are encouraged to be willing to engage with the American fact in order to understand how the government and politics of the United States influences our own economic, social, and political development.

The third objective is to enable and empower students to understand some core quantitative methodological principles used by social scientists in the study of inequality and redistribution. Given the nature of the subject matter that we will be studying during the course, we will have the opportunity to discuss and develop students’ capacities to read, understand, and interpret a range of quantitative methodological approaches and techniques. Students will be presented with the opportunity to use statistical software applications to develop and present findings in their own research, and students will be provided with the appropriate support to do so.

Finally, the fourth objective is to allow students to develop a marked level of expertise with one key aspect of the politics of inequality and redistribution. The essential question to answer is what interests you most about redistributive politics and public policies? Perhaps you are interested in normative or descriptive theories of inequality and redistribution? You might be curious to learn more about the growing levels of economic inequality within the U.S., South Korea, and other advanced industrialized democratic states, or about the impact of mounting inequality on economic growth or sustainability? Perhaps you want to examine the potential for global governance solutions to countenance the mounting disparity in the distribution of socioeconomic resources. By investigating one of these particular areas of inquiry from a cross-national perspective, you are certain to gain valuable insights into your chosen topic that you might have overlook had you constrained your analysis to a specific case or setting.
Course Organization

The course is organized as a daily seminar over the three weeks of the Global Collaborative Summer Program. All students are expected to complete the core (C) reading prior to each class, and to contribute to in-class discussions. Each class will begin with a brief quiz to assess your degree of preparedness, followed by either a short presentation that outlines the topic for the day and some of the important themes identified in the readings, or by dividing the class into smaller groups to facilitate collegial conversation in a cordial, informal environment. Dialogue will then be extended to allow the entire class to contribute to the discussion and to address key questions raised by the literature. A daily outline will be provided in order to provide a degree of structure to the discussion while enabling the class to pursue themes and lines of inquiry that you find most interesting. Finally, each class will conclude with a brief presentation by the instructor summarizing some of the most important ideas presented in the literature, which students can use as an assessment tool in order to evaluate the quality of the class’ discourse.

Course Evaluation

The evaluation of the course includes three basic components: (1) in-class participation, (2) three short summaries, and (3) a term paper.

The relative weights of each of these three components are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class participation:</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm participation:</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>End-of-term participation:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short summaries (3 x 15%):</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper:</td>
<td>40%</td>
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In-class participation is worth 15% of the final grade for the course. A grade worth a minimum of 5% will be provided to students by the midway period in the course in order to ensure that they have a reasonable sense of their general level of progress with respect to this component of the grade. Participation will be based on attendance, punctuality, preparedness and contribution. Each day, students should bring with them the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them in detail. Please endeavour to inform me at the earliest possible opportunity should you find it necessary to miss or be late for a class. If you arrive late, please draw this fact to my attention at the end of the class in order to ensure that I’ve made a note of your arrival. Part of the evaluation of your preparedness will be based upon a series of very short quizzes that should be easy for those who have finished the assigned readings for the class. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of each class. You are ardently encouraged to contribute to the discussion each day. It is important, however, for students to exercise good judgment in their effort to engage their colleagues in discussion. The quality of your participation is at least as important as the quantity, and you should always attempt to provide your classmates with every opportunity to engage in any given dialogue. Particular emphasis will be attached to each student’s contribution beyond the required readings during days in which they are submitting a summary, so please be particularly careful to avoid arriving to class late during the days that you intend to make these submissions.

Please note: It is worthwhile to mention that a significant portion of the class will be organized in the form of small-group exercises. The course is designed to be interactive, and student
participation is encouraged and valued. In order to stimulate discussion, classes will often begin with students being given the opportunity to engage with a group of their colleagues before extending the conversation to the class as a whole. At all times, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, cordial manner. It is also worthwhile to bear in mind that a substantial proportion of the materials that we will consider in this course is quantitative in nature, so students uncomfortable with critically assessing quantitative analyses may wish to reconsider whether they might prefer to enroll in an alternative course.

A series of three (3) summaries should be prepared. Each should be about 2½ to 3 double-spaced pages in length. These papers should synthesize the principal ideas of the ‘core’ (C) and at least two of the ‘additional’ (A) readings for any given day of the course, drawing attention to core themes and inter-relationships within and between them. You are not expected to go beyond these readings. The first is to be submitted on a topic within the first four days of the course, the second within the fifth to eighth days of the course, and the third in a day before the final day of the course. Summaries are due at the beginning of the class in which the readings are covered prior to the beginning of the quiz. Late summaries will be accepted up to one day (24 hours) beyond the time at which the paper was originally due. Given the constrained nature of the course, grades of summaries submitted after the start of class will be reduced by a grade point (3%), but given that students may have the opportunity to improve their work through a consideration of in-class discussions, save for documented medical and personal emergencies, all late summaries not received within an hour of the completion of class will be reduced by a full grade (10%). If you are not able to arrive on time, please consider simply writing another summary for an upcoming day.

The third component of the evaluation for the course is a term paper that requires a significant degree of originality in the thesis and research of the paper. While you are certainly encouraged to include materials from the daily readings of the course, you are expected to engage in research on your chosen topic beyond the materials required for your daily summaries. An extensive array of additional resources has been provided for each of the considered topics on the course outline; please feel welcome to select those readings which seem of the greatest value to your specific thesis. You are also encouraged and will be required to investigate and incorporate supplementary material that is of particular relevance for your paper. You are also enthusiastically encouraged to further develop the findings and ideas presented in one of your summaries. In the ninth day of the course, you should submit a very brief (maximum one page) proposal of your intended term paper topic which includes your proposed thesis and a brief outline of your research to date. If a student later intends to deviate significantly from what they propose in this description, they should first discuss this with the course instructor and resubmit a new one-page proposal shortly thereafter. Term papers should be about 12 double-spaced pages in length, and in no case should exceed 15 pages. Please be sure to carefully review the directions contained in the handout provided for the term paper. This will be available on or before the middle (i.e. seventh class) of the term. Papers are due in the final class of the course; please come to class prepared to discuss how your paper fits in conceptually to the overall theme of the course. Save for documented medical and personal emergencies, late papers will be accepted at a penalty of 5% per 24-hour block of time (i.e. a paper that is one hour late will be penalized 5%, a paper that is 25 hours late will be penalized 10%, et cetera). The same penalties will be assessed to the final grade of the term paper if the proposal is not submitted on the due date. Please bear in mind that the proposal is not graded, so it’s just important that you submit something on time.
A schedule of the *key due dates* for each of the requisite submissions is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summaries</td>
<td>At the beginning of class on or before the 5th day</td>
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<tr>
<td>First summary:</td>
<td>At the beginning of class on or before the 5th day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second summary:</td>
<td>At the beginning of class on or before the 10th day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Summary:</td>
<td>At the beginning of class on the 14th day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper proposal:</td>
<td>At the beginning of class on the 11th day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper:</td>
<td>At the beginning of class on the 15th day</td>
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Evaluations will be returned to students at the beginning of the class the day following their submission.

If unforeseen circumstances arise, please inform the course instructor of your situation as soon as you can, ideally before the due date; please avoid simply submitting late work with medical documentation attached without some type of forewarning. Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before handing in their assignments and papers. These should be retained at least until the graded materials have been returned. Please note that computer problems are not considered to be an emergency, so be sure that the computer you use is in good working order and that you back up your work and print out and retain rough work and drafts. Please bear in mind that papers can only be submitted during regular business hours of the department, which typically vary marginally from those during the regular academic year.

**A Brief Note on Plagiarism**

*Plagiarism is a serious academic offense.* You must be careful to indicate the source of all thoughts and ideas that you use in your papers. All references to or paraphrasing of course readings or outside readings must be properly documented to avoid plagiarism. If the words you are using in your paper are the same as or very similar to those of another author, you must be sure to enclose them in quotations marks and indicate their source. If you draw an idea of yours from the thoughts of another author, you should be sure to provide a citation for the relevant literature. If you use other material during the course of your research but do not include any of the specific words or ideas contained within the material, be sure to include it in your bibliography. Papers that do not correctly indicate attribution to the full range of sources used will be penalized. Evidence of substantial plagiarism will be communicated to the department. If you have any doubts, please ask me before submitting your paper. More detailed instructions on proper use of sources and references will be provided in the directions for the term paper.

Normally, students will be required to submit their papers to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as course documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.
Religious Accommodations
The university is committed to the accommodation of religious observances, and cultural diversity is welcome in this course. By and large, please try to provide advanced warning of any type of accommodation that you anticipate that you may require as close as possible to the beginning of the course as this will enable your course instructor to integrate these requests as seamlessly as possible into the overall structure of the course.

Accessibility
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations.

Course Plan and Readings
The following list outlines the readings for each day of the course. Students can find links to these documents via the on-line syllabus available on the website for site for the course. Students should read each of the core readings each day (designated below with an ‘C’). In the days that students will submit a short paper, they should also read and integrate additional articles for the day (designated with an ‘A’). Extra readings (designated with an ‘X’) are suggested for the term paper component of the course.

Day 1: An Introduction to the Course
No readings assigned.

Day 2: Normative Theories of Inequality and Redistribution


**Day 3: Descriptive Theories of Inequality and Redistribution**


Day 4: Recent Trends in Economic Inequality


**Day 5: Cross-National Differences in Approaches to Economic Redistribution**


Day 6: Public Attitudes towards Redistribution


Day 7: Determinants of Redistributive Policy Outputs and Outcomes


Day 8: Gender and the Politics of Redistribution


Day 9: Contemporary American Redistributonal Politics: Winner-Take-All?


**Day 10: Economic Inequality, the Financial Crisis, and Contemporary Social Movements**


Associated Public Opinion Polls:


Day 11: The Social Consequences of Economic Inequality


**Day 12: Economic Inequality and Conflict, the Implications for War and Peace**


Day 13: Economic Inequality and Sustainable Development


Day 13: Resolving Growing Economic Inequality through Corporate Social Responsibility?


Day 14: Resolving Growing Economic Inequality through Global Governance?


**Day 15: Paper Submissions, Discussions and Reflections**

No readings assigned.