

Woodrow Wilson School 590D
Social Policy Joint Degree Program
Core Seminar: Psychological Aspects of Inequality

Fall 2014
Professor Betsy Levy Paluck
epaluck@princeton.edu
office hours by appointment

This section of the Social Policy Joint Degree course focuses on psychological processes related to social and economic inequality. We start by reviewing theories and methods in psychological science, including models of decision-making that describe departures from the rational actor framework and that do not assume conscious intent. We then trade off weeks, examining sources of inequality (such as cognitive biases, social interactions, and political ideology) and effects of inequality (such as mental states, cooperative behavior, and health). I loosely categorize sources and effects of inequality within disciplinary subfields (such as cognitive, social, and political psychology), but class discussion will be directed at the many connections among these subfields. By the end of the class we will evaluate proposals to address various forms of inequality based on psychological models of human behavior.

Course Requirements

As in the previous module, there are two kinds of written assignments for the course: (a) Discussion comments and (b) Project bibliography.

Written Assignments

There is no written assignment for the first week of the course. Weekly written assignments are due for the remaining five weeks, but each student may skip one week's assignment, for a total of four assignments per student. Whether or not you do the writing assignment, I expect that all students will read all of the assigned readings before every scheduled class meeting and will come to class fully prepared to discuss.

A. Discussion comments

The primary purpose of the discussion comments is to help you improve your concise critical writing skills. The ability to synthesize and critique large amounts of complex material in three or four pages is one of the most important skills you can master in grad school.

Logistics:

Each discussion comment should be three or four pages in length (no more than 1200 words). Completed assignments should be submitted on Blackboard by 10 P.M. on the Sunday before the Tuesday class for which they are assigned. Post your paper in the "Discussion Board" section of the Blackboard site, under the "Submitted papers" forum topic. Click on "Submitted papers"; and then click on "Add thread" and upload your document as an attached file. Please submit a modify-able document (if you are not a word-user, please let me know and we can work something out—I find it easiest to comment in word) title your document according to the following formula: LASTNAME.WEEK#.docx.

Writing Guidance:

Your comment should only spend one or two sentences summarizing a take-away from each reading. Then you should immediately turn to discussing and analyzing the paper or papers' points. "Discussion" can mean comparing or critiquing or exploring implications. You should avoid simply repeating material

from the readings, and avoid obvious criticisms if possible. Your critiques may be original or you may include and reference outside critiques (including previous readings from the class; it would be good, though it is not a requirement, to bring them into conversation with each other). Comments should be written in concise prose—that is, sentences rather than phrases or bullets.

To receive a strong grade, comments should display knowledge from the majority of the week's readings, or should say something interesting or thoughtful about one in particular. How you organize your response is up to you, but the best strategy is probably to have two to three clear, persuasive points or critiques, backed up with convincing argument or evidence. You will be evaluated on your ability to think and write clearly, creatively, and originally.

To provide feedback on your discussion comments and your writing, I will use a number grade: (4+) inspired, (4/4-) thoughtful and interesting, (3/3-) meets expectations, (2/2-) below expectations, and (1) needs serious improvement. Missing reading responses will receive a zero.

B. Project bibliography

Students will write an annotated bibliography related to their JDP research topic. You should include ten or so references from journals and books in psychological science. This bibliography should include the major scholarly contributions as well as recent developments. It should also reflect the main questions and controversies that have arisen in the research area. The goal is for students to gain an understanding of the literature on their topic outside of their discipline. Psychology students will therefore not write a bibliography in the Psychology segment. They will, however, serve as advisors to the other students. The project bibliography is due on Monday, December 16 at 1PM, submitted via Blackboard, as with the weekly assignments.

Discussion Leaders

In each session (except in the first one) two students will team up to act as discussion leaders for the class following the professor's presentations (the latter will usually give a broad overview of the topic and of the state of the literature). In a brief presentation (not to exceed fifteen minutes) student discussion leaders will identify common themes for discussion and raise questions arising from the readings. Following the presentation they will facilitate deep and comprehensive discussion of the readings' arguments and findings. Discussion leaders should co-ordinate with each other before class.

At the start of the course, we will circulate a roster that allocates discussion leader assignments to each student over the weeks of the class. You may trade assignments with each other, but the two discussion leaders should be from different departments, and run your trade by me first. We will keep a current roster of assignments on a google spreadsheet.

Readings:

All readings will be posted on a shared Dropbox folder (death to Blackboard).

I. Psychological and Applied Behavioral Science: A range of theories and methods for studying inequality

Sendhil Mullainathan & Eldar Shafir (2012). *Decision Making and Policy in Contexts of Poverty* In *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy*, Shafir, E., Ed. Page 281. [Entire pdf of book posted online]

Haushofer, J., & Fehr, E. (2014). On the psychology of poverty. *Science*, 344(6186), 862-867.

Jost, J. T. (1997). An experimental replication of the depressed-entitlement effect among women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21(3), 387-393.

Chow, R. M., & Galak, J. (2012). The effect of inequality frames on support for redistributive tax policies. *Psychological Science*, 23(12), 1467-1469. doi:[10.1177/0956797612450035](https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612450035)

II. Psychological Sources of Inequality: Perspectives from social and cognitive psychology

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Macmillan. Part 1, Sections 1-4.

Eberhardt, J. L., Goff, P. A., Purdie, V. J., & Davies, P. G. (2004). Seeing black: race, crime, and visual processing. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 87(6), 876.

Kraus, M. W., & Keltner, D. (2009). Signs of socioeconomic status a thin-slicing approach. *Psychological Science*, 20(1), 99-106.

Faulkner, J., Schaller, M., Park, J. H., & Duncan, L. A. (2004). Evolved disease-avoidance mechanisms and contemporary xenophobic attitudes. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 7(4), 333-353.

Additional suggested reading:

- Dovidio, J. F., Kawakami, K., & Gaertner, S. L. (2002). Implicit and explicit prejudice and interracial interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 62–68.
- Crosby, F. J., & Dovidio, J. F. (2008). Discrimination in America and legal strategies for reducing it. In E. Borgida & S. T. Fiske (Eds.), *Beyond common sense: Psychological science in the courtroom* (pp. 23-43). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rudman, L. A., Glick, P., & Phelan, J. E. (2008). From the laboratory to the bench: Gender stereotyping research in the courtroom. In E. Borgida & S. T. Fiske (Eds.), *Beyond common sense: Psychological science in the courtroom* (pp. 83-101). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Eberhardt, J. L., Davies, P. G., Purdie-Vaughns, V. J., & Johnson, S. L. (2006). Looking deathworthy perceived stereotypicality of black defendants predicts capital-sentencing outcomes. *Psychological Science*, 17(5), 383-386.
- Banks, R. R., Eberhardt, J. L., & Ross, L. (2006). Discrimination and implicit bias in a racially unequal society. *California Law Review*, 94(4), 1169-90.

III. Psychological Effects of Inequality, Part one: mental states and why they matter

Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E. (2013). *Scarcity: Why having too little means so much*. Macmillan. Sections on: Bandwidth (2), and Poverty (7).

Kahneman, D., & Deaton, A. (2010). High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(38), 16489-16493.

Galinsky, A. D., Magee, J. C., Inesi, M. E., & Gruenfeld, D. H. (2006). Power and perspectives not taken. *Psychological Science*, 17(12), 1068-1074.

Kraus, M. W., Piff, P. K., Mendoza-Denton, R., Rheinschmidt, M. L., & Keltner, D. (2012). Social class, solipsism, and contextualism: how the rich are different from the poor. *Psychological review*, *119*(3), 546.

Stephens, N. M., Markus, H. R., & Townsend, S. S. (2007). Choice as an act of meaning: the case of social class. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *93*(5), 814. [SKIM]

IV. Psychological Effects of Inequality, Part 2: Behavior and health

Smith, E. R., Jackson, J. W., & Sparks, C. W. (2003). Effects of inequality and reasons for inequality on group identification and cooperation in social dilemmas. *Group processes & intergroup relations*, *6*(2), 201-220.

Haushofer, J., & Shapiro, J. (2013). Welfare Effects of Unconditional Cash Transfers: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Kenya. *Unpublished Working Paper*.

Hackman, D. A., Betancourt, L. M., Brodsky, N. L., Hurt, H., & Farah, M. J. (2012). Neighborhood disadvantage and adolescent stress reactivity. *Frontiers in human neuroscience*, *6*.

Smith, H. J., & Huo, Y. J. (in press). Relative deprivation: How subjective experiences of inequality influence social behavior and health. To appear in the inaugural volume of Policy Insights from Behavioral and Brain Sciences.

Additional suggested reading:

- McGarrity, L. A., & Huebner, D. M. (2014). Is Being Out About Sexual Orientation Uniformly Healthy? The Moderating Role of Socioeconomic Status in a Prospective Study of Gay and Bisexual Men. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *47*(1), 28-38.
- Gallo, L. C., & Matthews, K. A. (2003). Understanding the association between socioeconomic status and physical health: Do negative emotions play a role? *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(1), 10-51.

IV. Psychological Sources of Inequality: Perspectives from Political Psychology

Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology*, *25*(6), 881-919.

Wakslak, C. J., Jost, J. T., Tyler, T. R., & Chen, E. S. (2007). Moral outrage mediates the dampening effect of system justification on support for redistributive social policies. *Psychological Science*, *18*(3), 267-274. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01887.x

Walker, L., & Mann, L. (1987). Unemployment, relative deprivation, and social protest. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *13*(2), 275-283.

Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., Van Laar, C., & Levin, S. (2004). Social dominance theory: Its agenda and method. *Political Psychology, 25*(6), 845-880. *Skim: very long. Useful sections are front matter and last section differentiating Social Dominance theory from other perspectives*

Additional suggested reading

- Durante, F., Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Kervyn, N., et al. (2012). Nations' income inequality predicts ambivalence in stereotype content: How societies mind the gap. *British Journal of Social Psychology*.
- Pratto, F., Çıdam, A., Stewart, A.L., Bou Zeineddine, F., Aranda, M., Aiello, A., Chrysochoou, X., Cichocka, A., Cohrs, C., Durrheim, K., Eicher, V., Foels, R., Górska, P., Lee, I., Licata, L., Li, L., Liu, J., Morselli, D., Meyer, I., Muldoon, O., Muluk, H., Petrovic, N., Prati, F., Papastamou, S., Petrovic, I., Prodromitis, G., Rubini, M., Saab, R., van Stekelenburg, J., Sweetman, J., Zheng, W., Henkel, K.E. (2013). Social dominance in context and in individuals: Contextual moderation of robust effects of social dominance orientation in 15 languages and 20 countries. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, in press. doi:10.1177/0022022100031003005
- Vaes, J., Paladino, M. P., Castelli, L., Leyens, J. P., & Giovanazzi, A. (2003). On the behavioral consequences of infrahumanization: the implicit role of uniquely human emotions in intergroup relations. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 85*(6), 1016.

VI. Addressing inequality using psychological and behavioral science

Crosby, F. J., Iyer, A., & Sincharoen, S. (2006). Understanding affirmative action. *Annu. Rev. Psychol., 57*, 585-611.

Wells, G. L. (2001). Police lineups: data, theory, and policy.

Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2007). A question of belonging: race, social fit, and achievement. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 92*(1), 82.

Haque, O. S., & Waytz, A. (2012). Dehumanization in medicine: causes, solutions, and functions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 7*(2), 176-186.

Mullainathan & Shafir (2013). *Scarcity*: Chapter 8: Improving the lives of the poor.