



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,623: Gesellschaft/Society: Inequality - Perspectives on Society, Policies and the Economy

ECTS credits: 3

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written work, Digital, Individual work individual grade (50%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Written work, Digital, Individual work individual grade (50%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,623,1.00 Gesellschaft/Society: Inequality - Perspectives on Society, Policies and the Economy](#) -- English -- [Wagschal Uwe](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

None

Learning objectives

The course has five main learning objectives, which are to be achieved through a mix of theories, methods and forms of learning:

1. Comprehend Foundational Theories of Inequality:
Analyze and critically evaluate major theoretical frameworks on inequality and justice, including the works of Rawls, Sen, Nozick, and Hayek, to understand their implications for contemporary social and political systems.
2. Master Inequality Measurement Methods:
Develop proficiency in quantitative and qualitative methods for measuring inequality, including the Human Development Index (HDI), Gini Index, and Atkinson Index, and apply these tools to analyze real-world data.
3. Evaluate Intersectional Aspects of Inequality:
Explore and assess how factors such as gender, migration, health, education, and race intersect to produce and perpetuate systemic inequalities across different societies.
4. Critically Engage with Global Inequality Trends:
Investigate the driving forces of global inequality, including the effects of globalization, welfare state policies, and the COVID-19 pandemic, and propose evidence-based strategies to address these disparities.
5. Formulate Policy-Oriented Solutions:
Synthesize insights from inequality research to design and recommend public policy solutions aimed at reducing economic, social, and health disparities, integrating ethical considerations and interdisciplinary approaches.

These objectives are designed to provide students with a holistic understanding of inequality, equipping them with analytical, methodological, and policy-oriented skills.

Course content

The **Inequality Seminar** offers a comprehensive exploration of one of the most pressing issues in contemporary society: inequality. This course provides students with a profound understanding of the multifaceted nature of inequality, encompassing economic, social, racial, gender, health, and educational dimensions.



The seminar is designed to cover a wide array of interconnected topics, including:

1. **Concepts and Measurements of Inequality:** Students will learn to apply critical tools like the **Gini Index**, **Atkinson Index**, and **Human Development Index (HDI)** to assess inequality. Fundamental definitions and theoretical frameworks of equality and inequality will be examined in depth.
2. **Global Inequality:** The course addresses the forces driving worldwide disparities in wealth and opportunity, with readings like **François Bourguignon's** *Globalization of Inequality*.
3. **Theories of Justice and Equality:** Foundational texts by **John Rawls**, **Amartya Sen**, **Robert Nozick**, and **Friedrich von Hayek** offer diverse philosophical perspectives on justice, fairness, and the role of state intervention.
4. **Welfare State and Policy Solutions:** Discussions on welfare state models, inspired by **Esping-Andersen's** typology, will highlight how different political and economic systems influence inequality.
5. **Educational and Health Inequality:** Analysis of how disparities in education and health outcomes perpetuate systemic inequality, referencing works like **Michael Marmot's** *The Health Gap* and comparative studies on education systems.
6. **Gender, Race, and Migration:** The seminar delves into intersectional aspects of inequality, focusing on gender inequality (**Martha Nussbaum**), racial and ethnic disparities (**Michael Omi & Howard Winant**), and the impact of migration on social and economic justice (**Stephen Castles**).
7. **Current Challenges:** The course also addresses contemporary issues such as the impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** on inequality and the increasing concern over **intergenerational justice**.

Methods and Approaches

- **Theoretical Analysis:** Students will engage with classical and modern theories of justice, fairness, and equality, critically comparing and evaluating different viewpoints.
- **Empirical Methods:** The seminar emphasizes empirical research, including data analysis, case studies, and the application of statistical indices to measure inequality.
- **Interdisciplinary Perspectives:** Combining insights from **political science**, **economics**, **sociology**, and **philosophy**, the course encourages an interdisciplinary approach to understanding inequality.
- **Policy-Oriented Learning:** Students will explore real-world policy solutions aimed at reducing inequalities, such as welfare reforms, educational interventions, and health policies.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is organized as a block seminar.

Contextual Studies are considered part of **Contact Learning**; thus, taking part properly implies **regular attendance**. It is the students' own responsibility to ensure that there is **no timetable clash** between the courses they have chosen. A detailed course outline and all relevant documents will be made available on **Studynet**. Only the current timetable as published on **Stundenplan** online does apply.

Course literature

Atkinson, Anthony B. (2015). *Inequality: What Can Be Done?* Harvard University Press. Reading: Pages 1-81.
 Bourguignon, François (2015). *The Globalization of Inequality*. Princeton University Press.
 Castles, Stephen & Mark Miller (2009). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. 4th Edition. Palgrave Macmillan. Reading: Chapters 1, 2, and 14.
 Lorber, Judith (2009). *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*. Oxford University Press. Reading: Part I and Part VI.
 Marmot, Michael (2015). *The Health Gap*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Reading: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 4.
 Nussbaum, Martha (2000). *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge University Press. Reading: Pages 1-33, 167-174, Conclusion.
 Piketty, Thomas (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press. Reading: Chapters 1, 2, and 13.
 Rawls, John (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press. Reading: Pages 3-77.
 Sen, Amartya (1992). *Inequality Re-examined*. Oxford University Press. Reading: Chapters 1 and 3.

Additional course information

Prof. Uwe Wagschal received his M.A. in Political Science (1992), his Diploma in Economics (1993) and his PhD in Political Science (1996) from the University of Heidelberg. He has taught as an adjunct professor at several universities (Heidelberg, Bremen, Zurich, Vienna, Sankt Gallen). In 2003 he became Professor of Public Policy and Empirical Methods at the University of Munich and in 2005 at the University of Heidelberg. Since 2009 he is Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Freiburg. He has published on public finance, direct democracy, and public policy.



Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

examination paper written at home

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	50%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

Two take away assignments are expected



Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Examination content

1. **Examination paper written at home (individual) (50%)** Students will write a paper on one of the specific subjects of the seminar. The students will have to write a paper about a minimum size of 14.000 characters. Concrete subjects and the used methods have to be discussed and agreed with the lecturer. There are several possibilities for the paper, e.g. own empirical research, secondary data analysis and evaluations of existing research. The paper should include an introduction with the research question, a main part and a final discussion.
2. **Examination paper written at home (individual) (50%)** Students have to answer two assignments out of six. The questions refer to the literature and subjects of the seminar. The students will to answer each assignment with a length of a minimum size of 3500 characters. Each assignment consists of several questions, which have to be answered.

Examination relevant literature

See Course-Literature

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).