

**What happened to “All Men are Created Equal”?
The Politics of Inequality in the United States.
POL 40191/40391 Fall 2015
T/Th 12:30 -1:45 in Bowman 301**

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At America’s founding in 1776 Thomas Jefferson crafted the phrase that made it into the Declaration of Independence and America’s DNA: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” Jefferson, a slave owner, was not referring to economic equality per se. With an eye on Europe’s rigid class system that divided the very rich and privileged from the masses, Jefferson believed in a new world committed to promoting the equal value and worth of all citizens.

This course takes up Jefferson’s creed to examine three broad topics:

1. Where is inequality today in the United States and what does it mean?

The United States is more unequal today than at any time since the 1920s. The United States is also more unequal than nearly every other developed country in the world (except Chile). But what does inequality actually mean? How does it affect opportunities in the labor market, housing, health, or education? What does inequality look like for different socio-economic groups? The course moves beyond the statistics to look at what inequality actually means in practice.

2. What are the political and policy decisions that cause inequality?

Throughout U.S. history, local, state and federal governments have passed policies that have had an impact on inequality. The 14th Amendment, the New Deal, the Great Society – all sought to reduce inequality in the United States. However, starting in the 1970s local, state and federal policy makers passed policies that increased inequality. The course examines what these policies did to increase inequality in the United States and Ohio.

3. How has inequality in the United States today affected political

participation and power? A central question for any political science course is how power is distributed and exercised. Based on our history and the experience of other countries, we know that high levels of inequality can affect participation and power in a country. But how does inequality affect power and participation? And, more importantly, how does it matter? To address the topic, the course will explore the US political system today through the lens of inequality with particular attention paid to political participation by citizens and corporations.

The course relies on a mix of media to explore the topics covered, including videos, books, articles, television news reports, interviews, and speakers. We will also incorporate comparisons with other countries. Please note: this will be an interesting and engaging course but it will also be a demanding course. There will be a series of extensive writing assignments and a significant amount of reading. The pay-off, however, will be better understanding of one of the greatest

economic challenges our time.

We will often use the classroom for small group discussions. Thoughtful, prepared participation is expected from everyone. Please remember that the utmost respect for fellow class members is in order when you listen to them and when you speak. We will be talking about politics and public policy. There are tough issues here. People's political views are often related to strongly held values – which may be in conflict with other people's strongly held values, so please be respectful of one another and open-minded.

Class attendance. Class attendance is required and mandatory. I will excuse an absence from class with a legitimate reason and supporting documentation. Legitimate reasons to miss class include, but are not limited to, illness and injury, disability-related concerns, military service, death in the immediate family, religious observance, academic field trips, and participation in an approved concert or athletic event, and direct participation in university disciplinary hearings.

You are permitted three unexcused absences – after that your grade will suffer (note: attendance and participation constitute 10 percent of your final grade). If you have an emergency that precludes coming to class, please let me know by email before or shortly after the class absence.

Ground rules for the classroom:

- 1) Please turn off your cell phones and do not text during class.
- 2) If you have a laptop on during class, please use it only for the classwork of the moment, like taking notes or looking up something up on the web that we need to know. Please don't do things like checking email or surfing the web.
- 3) The style of discussion will be deliberative and respectful. This is not a courtroom in which we are adversaries trying to win a zero-sum game. It is a forum in which we are scholars pursuing understanding together with the potential for win-win outcomes.
- 4) When the professor or a guest speaker is speaking, do not chat. It is distracting to the speaker and to students around you.
- 5) I understand that it is convenient to ask me questions of individual concern at a class meeting rather than come to office hours. Accordingly, I will stay after class as long as it takes for everyone with a question to ask. Before class, I like to focus on setting up the technology and starting on time, so please hold your individual questions for me until after class. Thanks very much!

Readings: All readings listed in the syllabus are **required** and should be read before the class session in which they are covered. Class discussions will build on readings but will not be duplicative. You are responsible for all material, whether from class or the readings.

Book review. A 5-7 page book review of one of the following books:

- Larry Bartels, 2008, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*, Princeton University Press
- Barbara Ehrenreich, 2001, *Nickel and Dimed*, New York: Henry Hold and Company
- Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, Howard Rosenthal, 2006, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Benjamin I. Page and Lawrence R. Jacobs, 2009, *Class War? What Americans*

Really Think About Economic Inequality, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

- ~~Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, 2010. *Winner Take All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*, New York: Simon & Shuster.~~
- George Packer. 2013. [*The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America*](#) (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).
- Or another book related to inequality (with professor's permission).

Reading memos (4): These should be short, two-page responses to the week's readings, submitted in class on the day they are due. Please do not simply summarize the readings. I will send out a set of questions to help inspire you, but don't be bound by them. You could for example focus on one reading and assess its research design and use of evidence, or discuss its theoretical framework and contrast it with other readings, or use it to analyze a current policy debate. Another model is that you identify and discuss one theme or one empirical puzzle that runs across several readings. Or you could raise a series of questions that the readings do not answer well enough, or fail to address at all. The memos don't have to be masterpieces, but do take the time to think them through and write them cleanly. Each reading memo is worth 5 percent of your class grade.

NB: Reading memos will not be accepted late. If you are unable to make it to class on the day a reading memo is due, I will accept an e-mailed copy if it arrives in my box before class begins.

Research Project/Wikipedia Project:

See handout

Grading: There are essentially four different types of assignments that you'll be graded on in this writing-intensive class: 1) attendance and participation; 2) a set of two-page reading memos; 3) a Wikipedia Project/article that includes a set of smaller steps; and 4) an 8-10 page research paper that is an expanded version of the Wikipedia Project including a draft and final version.

- Attendance and participation 5%
- Reading Memos (5 percent each) 20%
 - 9/24, 10/1, 10/22, 11/3
- Book review 15%
- Research paper (Expanded Wiki article) 25%
 - First draft (20%), due October 29th
 - Final draft (80%), due December 17th
- Wikipedia Project 35%
 - Training (5%), due September 10th.
 - Add one or two sentences to Wiki article, due Sept 22nd (5%)
 - First draft of article in sandbox (10%), Oct. 6th
 - Peer reviews (Sandbox and Wiki article) (15%)

- Quality of your main Wikipedia contribution (40%)
- Presentation (10%), TBA last weeks of class.
- Reflective Essay (15%), due on December 10th (last day of class)

I will use Blackboard to post grades. You will therefore be able to keep track of how you are doing throughout the semester

I use the following grading scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	60-66
B-	80-82	F	Below 60
C+	77-79		

Finally students who never attend class or stop attending class will receive grades “NF” and “SF”, respectively.

Learn Course Management: The class makes extensive use of the Blackboard Learn Course Management System. We will take the first class period to review how to access the system and locate course materials. All grades will be posted to the system. The syllabus, readings, and all supporting materials are made available through the system. I will also post outlines what will be discussed in class before class. We will also use Vista’s discussion feature to discuss issues raised in the class. It is therefore important that all students become familiar with Vista.

Disability Policy: University policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit <http://www.kent.edu/sas> for more information on registration procedures).

Academic Honesty: Cheating means to misrepresent the source, nature, or other conditions of your academic work (e.g., tests, papers, projects, assignments) so as to get undeserved credit. The use of the intellectual property of others without giving them appropriate credit is a serious academic offense. As per Kent State University’s policy (3342-3-01.8), if I find that a student has cheated or plagiarized, he or she will automatically receive a failing mark for the course. Repeat offenses result in dismissal from the University. See **Kent State’s Policy Register at** http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel_datapageid_1976529=2037779 **for a complete statement on the university’s policy toward plagiarism.** If you have any questions, please read the policy and/or ask.

Registration. September 13 is the last day to [withdraw from any or all courses](#) that meet the full semester before a grade of "W" is assigned. Access the Detailed Class Search from the [Schedule of Classes](#) or your student printable schedule for deadlines for flexibly scheduled courses. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive

credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline.

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments
I. Ideas and Concepts around Inequality		
9/1	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the course • Assignments and expectations • Introduction to how Wikipedia will be used in the course • Understanding Wikipedia as a community, we'll discuss its expectations and etiquette. 	<p>Readings: Héctor Tobar, 2015. How Los Angeles is Becoming a “Third-World” City <i>Los Angeles Times</i>. July 6. (Blackboard)</p> <p>We'll watch: Video. “9 out of 10 Americans Are Completely Wrong About this Mind-Blowing Fact”.</p> <p>Handout: Editing Wikipedia</p>
9/3	<p>Ideas about inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss different ideas behind inequality • How has our understanding of inequality changed over time? • Is inequality a bad thing? • What do we mean by inequality? 	<p>Readings: Michael J. Thompson, 2007, <i>The Politics of Inequality in America</i>, New York: Columbia University Press, Conclusion (Blackboard). Greg Mankiw, 2014. “Yes, the Wealthy Can Be Deserving” New York Times (Feb. 14).</p> <p>We'll watch and discuss Bill O'Reilly's take on Income Inequality in America.</p> <p>Social Inequality https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_inequality (Only the section on Inequality and Ideology).</p>
9/8	<p>Views and opinion about inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Americans think about inequality? • What factors influence our views about inequality? • What do we mean by "social equality"? 	<p>Readings: Benjamin I. Page and Lawrence R. Jacobs, 2009, <i>Class Inequality</i>, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 2 (Blackboard). Wah: <i>What Americans Really Think About Economic</i></p> <p>Social Equality https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_equality</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of editing • Anatomy of Wikipedia articles, what makes a good article, how to distinguish between good and bad articles • Collaborating and engaging with the Wiki editing community • Tips on finding the best articles to work on for class assignments <p>Handouts: Using Talk Pages, Evaluating Wikipedia</p>
9/10	<p>Inequality as a public problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we care about inequality? 	<p>Readings: Deborah Stone, 2008, <i>The Samaritan's Dilemma: Should Government Help Your Neighbor?</i> New York: Nation</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should government do anything to alleviate inequality? • What is the Samaritan's Dilemma and how is it relevant to how we think about inequality? 	<p>Books, Chapter 1. (Blackboard) Parable of the Good Samaritan https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Good_Samaritan</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment Due by September 10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an account and then complete the online training for students. During this training, you will make edits in a sandbox and learn the basic rules of Wikipedia. • Create a User page. • To practice editing and communicating on Wikipedia, introduce yourself on the user talk page of one of your classmates, who should also be enrolled in the table at the bottom of the page. • Explore topics related to your topic area to get a feel for how Wikipedia is organized. What areas seem to be missing? As you explore, make a mental note of articles that seem like good candidates for improvement. <p>Resources: Online Training for Students</p>
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II. Trends in Inequality

<p>9/15 & 9/17</p>	<p>Changes in inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has inequality changed over time in the United States? • How has inequality changed for different groups? • How do we measure inequality? 	<p>Readings: Lawrence Mishel, et. al. 2012. The State of Working America, Pp. 183--228 and 139--168. (focus on reading the text and understanding the graphs; skim the more detailed tables). Income equality in the United States https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income_inequality_in_the_United_States</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment Handouts: Choosing an article</p>
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<p>9/22</p>	<p>Trends in inequality – Ohio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has inequality changed in Ohio over time? • How have working people in Ohio done over time? • What parts of the state are the most unequal? • What do you think explains the changes in inequality? 	<p>Readings: State of Working Ohio</p> <p>Discussion of Plagiarism and Adding New information.</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment * Add 1–2 sentences of new information, backed up with a citation to an appropriate source, to a Wikipedia article related to the class. Due by September 22.</p> <hr/> <p>Paper Assignment A one-page proposal discussing the topic you plan to research for your final is due September 22 in class.</p>
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		Handouts: Citing Sources and Avoid Plagiarism
9/24	<p>Gender disparities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender disparities are in decline, why? • In addition to pay, are there other ways in which inequality between genders occurs? • Is gender inequality a function of choice or discrimination? 	<p>Readings: Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn, 2000, "Gender Differences in Pay," <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 14(4): 75-99. (Blackboard) Gender Inequality https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_inequality</p> <p>"Destabilizing the American Racial Order" Daedalus: the Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences 140(2): 151-165. (10.1162/DAED_a_00084)</p> <hr/> <p>Reading Memo Assignment 1 Due September 24. See topics but possible topics include: * How significant is gender inequality and why? * What factors do you think contribute to inequality in the United States and Ohio? * Are gender differences in pay justified?</p>
9/29	<p>Racial disparities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does inequality breakdown by race, gender and ethnicity? • What do we mean by race? • With the election of Barack Obama, do we now live in a post-racial society? 	<p>Readings: Jennifer L. Hochschild, Vesla M. Weaver, and Traci Burch, 2011. "Destabilizing the American Racial Order." Daedalus: the Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences 140(2): 151-165 Racial Inequality in the United States https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racial_inequality_in_the_United_States</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment. We will also discuss the topics students will be working on, and determine strategies for researching and writing about them.</p>
10/1	<p>Global Comparisons of Inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does inequality in the US compare with other countries? • What are the different ways one might measure cross-national inequality? What do international comparisons show? 	<p>Readings: Richard Freeman and Lawrence Katz. 1998. "Rising Wage Inequality: The United States vs. Other Countries." Ch. 18 in Amy S. Wharton (ed.) <i>Working in America: Continuity, Conflict and Change</i>. (Blackboard)</p> <p>Alejandro Portes and Saskia Sassen. 1987. "Making it Underground: Comparative Material on the Informal Sector in Western Market Economies." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 93(1): 30-61.</p> <p>International Inequality https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_inequality</p> <hr/>

		<p>Reading Memo 2 due at the start of class October 1.</p> <p>Possible topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does inequality break down by race, gender and ethnicity? How does America compare with the rest of the world? What OECD countries are the most equitable? Why?
<p>III. Causes of Inequality</p>		
10/6	<p>Causes of Inequality – Decline in Unions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a union? • What does a union do? • What role do unions play in reducing inequality? 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld. 2011. “Unions, Norms and The Rise in U.S. Wage Inequality.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 76: 513-57</p> <p>Ken-Hou Lin and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey. 2013. “Financialization and U.S. Income Inequality.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 118(5): 1284-1329.</p> <hr/> <p>Handout: Moving out of your Sandbox</p>
10/8	<p>Causes of Inequality – Decline in Unions and the Power of Corporations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What contributes to a decline in unionization? • Why are unionization rates in Canada and the US different? • Why are labor unions important in protecting labor rights? 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>Kris Warner, 2012, “Protecting Fundamental Labor Rights: Lessons from Canada for the United States,” Center for Economic and Policy Research. (Blackboard)</p> <p>Neil Fligstein and Taekjin Shin. 2007. “Shareholder Value and the Transformation of the U.S. Economy, 1984-2000.” <i>Sociological Forum</i> 22(4): 399-424.</p> <p>Harold Meyerson. 2013. “The Forty-Year Slump.” <i>American Prospect</i>. Sept/Oct.</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment due October 8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a 3–4 paragraph summary version of your article—with citations—in your Wikipedia sandbox. • Continue research in preparation for expanding your article.
10/13	Causes of Inequality	<p>Film: Inequality for All (Part 1)</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select two classmates’ articles that you will peer review in their sandbox and copyedit. On the table at the bottom of this course page, add your username next to the articles you will peer review.
10/15	Causes of Inequality	<p>Film: Inequality for All (Part 2)</p>

<p>10/20</p>	<p>Causes of Inequality - Technological Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been some of the major technological changes in the past 20 years? • How have computers changed the ways in which work is organized? • Are we more innovative today than a hundred years ago? • How does technology affect inequality? 	<p>Readings: Tal Kristal. 2013. "The Capitalist Machine: Computerization, Workers' Power and the Decline in Labor's Share within U.S. Industries." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 78: 361-89. (Blackboard)</p> <p>We'll watch: Tyler Cowen, May 9, 2011, "The Great Stagnation," TEDx Talk: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_93CXTt2K7c</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move your sandbox articles into main space. • Do NOT copy and paste your text, or there will be no record of your work history. Follow the instructions in the "Moving out of your sandbox" handout. • Begin expanding your article into a comprehensive treatment of the topic.
<p>10/22</p>	<p>Causes of Inequality - Technological Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is job polarization? • How would changes in productions affect inequality? • What do Mishel et al. find? • Does your own experience confirm the conclusions of Mishel and his co-authors? 	<p>Readings: Larry Mishel, Heidi Shierholz and John Schmitt, 2013. Don't Blame the Robots: Assessing the Job Polarization Explanation of Growing Wage Inequality.</p> <p>Rachel Dwyer. 2013. "The Care Economy? Economic Restructuring, and Job Polarization in the U.S. Labor Market." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 78(3): 390-416.</p> <hr/> <p>Reading Memo 3 is due in class on October 22. Possible topics include: Role of unionization in increasing inequality. What are the main explanations for inequality? How has technology changed a particular industry's system of compensation?</p>
<p>10/27</p>	<p>Causes of Inequality - Policy and Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do elections matter? • What types of public policies reduce or increase inequality? • How to political and economic explanations for inequality differ? • What do Hacker and Pierson mean by "winner-take-all"? 	<p>Reading: Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, 2010. Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States <i>Politics and Society</i> 38(2): 152-204. (Blackboard) Plurality Voting System.</p> <p>Nathan J. Kelly and Christopher Witko, 2012, "Federalism and American Inequality. <i>Journal of Politics</i> 74(2): 414-426</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plurality_voting_system</p>

10/29	<p>Causes of Inequality - Policy and Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are taxes? • How does tax policy shape inequality? • What does the Congressional Research Service report argue? • What concerns did Republicans in Congress have with the report? 	<p>Reading: Jonathan Weisman. 2012. "Nonpartisan Tax Report Withdrawn After G.O.P. Protest" <i>New York Times</i>. Nov. 1.</p> <p>Thomas L. Hungerford, 2011, "Changes in Income Inequality Among U.S. Tax Filers between 1991 and 2006: The Role of Wages, Capital Income, and Taxes," <i>Congressional Research Service</i></p> <hr/> <p>Draft of research paper due October 29^a. Draft of 8-10 page research paper (not including citations) is due. See assignment sheet.</p>
<p>IV. Effects of Inequality</p>		
11/ 3	<p>Effects of Inequality – Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the connections between health and inequality? • What's missing from Kawachi and Kennedy's measure of health? • Does health contribute to inequality or does inequality lead to health outcomes? 	<p>Readings: Ichiro Kawachi and Bruce P. Kennedy, 1999, "Income Inequality and Health: Pathways and Mechanisms," <i>HSR: Health Services Research</i>, 34(1): 215-227.</p> <hr/> <p>Reading memo 4 is due in class on November 3rd. Possible topics include: Discuss a public policy that shapes inequality? Does local government policy shape inequality differently from state or federal policies? If there was one public policy you could enact to reduce inequality what would it be?</p> <hr/>
11/5	<p>Effects of Inequality –Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is life expectancy tied to inequality? • Is it a public problem that health and inequality are linked? • Who is living longer and why? 	<p>Readings: Michael A. Fletcher, March 10, 2013, "Research Ties Economic Inequality to Gap in Life Expectancy," <i>Washington Post</i>.</p> <p>Morgan Kelly, 2000, "Inequality and Crime," <i>The Review of Economics and Statistics</i> 82(4): 530-539</p> <p>We'll watch: UNNATURAL CAUSES: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?</p>
11/10	<p>Effects of Inequality – Political Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does inequality affect participation or does participation lead to inequality? • What are the ways in which inequality makes ones more or less likely to participate in democracy? 	<p>Readings: Rhodes, Jesse H. and Schaffner, Brian F., 2014. <i>Economic Biases in Representation: Using New Data to Shed Light on How Wealth Affects Access to Political Representation</i> (February 23, 2014).</p> <hr/> <p>----- Wikipedia article Peer review and copy edit two of classmates' articles on the talk pages of their article. Due November 10^a.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a bias in representation in the US? 	
11/12	<p>Effects of Inequality – Political Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reading Gilens' essay, what do you see as the connection between policy and inequality? • Which of the responses to Gilens' essay do you disagree with? • Schiller links inequality to tax policy. Do you agree with his account? 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>“Forum: Under the Influence,” <i>Boston Review</i>, July/August 2012 (read lead essay by Martin Gilens and all responses)</p> <p>Laura D’Andrea Tyson, September 21, 2012, “Income Inequality and Educational Opportunity,” <i>New York Times Economix</i> blog. (http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/income-inequality-and-educational-opportunity/)</p> <p>Zach Schiller. 2015. <i>Kasich-era tax changes reward the wealthy</i></p>
<p>V. Solutions to Inequality</p>		
11/17	<p>Solutions to Inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What institutions does Hacker argue need reform? • What is a "Middle-Class Democracy"? • Why a minimum wage? • What are the arguments in favor and against? 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>Jacob Hacker. 2011. “The Institutional Foundations of Middle-Class Democracy.” Policy Network, May 6.</p> <p>Mike Konczal. 2013 <i>Minimum Wage 101</i>. <i>American Prospect</i>. February 13.</p> <p>Minimum Wage https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_wage</p> <hr/> <p>Wikipedia Assignment</p> <p>Address peer review suggestions by November 17th. Make edits to your article based on peers’ feedback. If you disagree with a suggestion, use talk pages to politely discuss and come to a consensus on your edit. Do additional research and writing to make further improvements to your article, based on your classmates’ suggestions and any additional areas for improvement you can identify.</p>
11/19	<p>Solutions to Inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the submerged state? • What have been Obama's policies to combat inequality? • What policies have done the most to reduce inequality? * • What are tax solutions to inequality? 	<p>Reading:</p> <p>Suzanne Mettler, 2010, “Reconstituting the Submerged State: The Challenges of Social Policy Reform in the Obama Era,” <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 8(3): 803-824. (Blackboard)</p> <p>Daniel Altman. 2012. <i>To Reduce Inequality, Tax Wealth, Not Income</i>. <i>New York Times</i>. (November 19).</p>
11/24	Solutions to Inequality	Open Day

11/26	Thanksgiving
12/1	Student Presentations
12/ 3	Student Presentations
12/8	Student Presentations
12/10	Student Presentations Reflective Essay (15%), due on December 10th
Dec. 17th Final 8-10 page research paper due.	

The Politics of Inequality in the United States Wikipedia Assignment - Selecting an article/topic

You must create a new article or page related to inequality. You can also expand an existing Wikipedia article related to inequality, if there is ample room for expansion (rule of thumb: if the article has only a few sentences, it is a good choice for expansion, if it has a few long sections, probably not). Most articles assessed as a "[stub](#)" qualify for this assignment.

If you are drawing blank on what article you could create or expand, here's an example of an article that should be created or expanded: [And that's just the tip of the iceberg](#).

Important tip: try to select a subject that you are interested in. It's much easier to write about something interesting than it is to write about something boring!

As soon as possible, your group should agree on a topic and get in touch (by email) with the course instructor (Mark Cassell) so he can verify it is a good topic. You may want to select one or more subjects and list them in the order of preference, in case your first choice is rejected, to save time.

What kind of an article are we writing?

[We are not doing any original research](#). You will not be collecting data, analyzing it, or writing about your experiences. We will not be writing an [essay](#) with personal opinions or judgments. Instead, we will be writing an encyclopedic article, summarizing an existing, verifiable state of knowledge from a political science-, sociological- or economic-related area.

Style

The simplest way to understand the style you are supposed to follow is to examine articles that have passed GA or FA. You can see Wikipedia Good Articles from the section "Social science and society" [here](#). Related ones include [Social class in the United States](#), [Anti-nuclear movement in Australia](#), [African American culture](#), [On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog](#). Other good examples include [Featured articles from the section "Culture and society"](#), for example: [Society of the Song Dynasty](#), [Max Weber](#), [Fairy tale](#).

The technical details are explained in the [Wikipedia:Manual of Style](#).

Useful links:

- [Good article criteria](#)
- [Guide for nominating good articles](#)
- [Good article review cheatsheet](#)
- [Good article nominations](#)
- [The differences between good and featured articles](#)

We don't own the articles

Wikipedia is a project with millions of editors, who collaborate on all articles. [We don't own the articles](#) we work on. Don't be surprised if you receive comments from editors who are not part of the course, or if they do edit your article. All editors are here to help; don't hesitate to get extra help - Wikipedia has ton of places you can do so.

Expect to interact (politely) with others

It is likely that over the course of the project, you will receive messages from editors outside our course, and that they will make edits to your article. [Be polite](#) in replying, and don't hesitate to ask them to explain something.

The Politics of Inequality in the United States Wikipedia Assignment - Information to get you started¹

The class is structured around two writing assignments based on a topic of your choosing related to the politics of inequality. The first is a Wikipedia article and the second is a more traditional 8-10 page research paper that expands upon the content from the Wikipedia article. Although they are different, the topics will be the same for both assignments and you will work on both assignments simultaneously. You will first choose a topic related to inequality. Once you have chosen your article, you will write up a one page proposal (due September 22nd), outlining important information about it, what points you will cover in your article, and a short list of resources. You then need to make an appointment to meet with me in my office and discuss your proposal.

Once you have my approval you'll work to create a traditional 8-10 page research paper and a Wikipedia article about your chosen subject. Make sure you familiarize yourself with encyclopedia-type writing before you begin. Writing for Wikipedia is very different from writing an essay, although not that far from writing a descriptive scientific paper, and you need to fit in with the proper format.

A detailed description of the Wikipedia assignment is below. But, in essence, a Wikipedia article is electronic encyclopedia entry. Wikipedia articles are typically no more than one or two pages in length and include: 1) an intro summary ([lead](#) in the Wikipedia terminology); 2) at least 3 body paragraphs; 3) conclusion, and 4) bibliography. NB: A Wikipedia article does **not** contain original research and is written [from a neutral point of view](#) and [verifiable](#).

In addition the actual Wikipedia article, the Wikipedia assignment also includes a set of peer reviews of your class colleagues' work, a 10 minute oral class presentation, and a short 3-4 page "reflective essay" that describes what you learned from the Wikipedia assignment, what worked, what didn't work, and what you wished you had known before you started.

The research paper assigned in this course builds upon the Wikipedia article and should be structured around four sections:

The first section is a description of the phenomenon. For example, you might write about inequality in Portage County or health disparities in Ohio. This first section of the paper describe in a [neutral point of view](#) what the health disparities in Ohio are and how they have changed over time, or what the level of inequality in Portage County is and how that has changed over time. This first section should include information similar to that used in the Wikipedia article.

A second section of the research paper draws on the scholarly literature (from class and based on your own research) to identify and discuss three possible causes for the level of inequality. The section should also state which of the causes you find most convincing and why. The second section, thus, does not take a neutral point view. Instead, I'm asking for an argument as to why you favor one explanation over another for the level of

¹ Much of this supplemental material comes from the work of [Piotr Konieczny](#).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:School_and_university_projects/User:Piotrus/Fall_2009

inequality.

Section three of the paper discusses one or more policies that are currently being proposed or have been implemented to address the level of inequality. The policies might include a national education initiative, a state policy to for example raise the minimum wage, or a local proposal.

Finally, the paper should include a conclusion that summarizes the problem, causes and solutions.

A draft of the research paper is due October 29th. A final version of the paper is due December 17th.

More information about Wikipedia Assignment

[Wikipedia](#), The Free Encyclopedia, is an [encyclopedia](#) that can be edited by anyone. It has many millions (!) of editors ([Wikipedians](#)), many of whom are students like you. The vast majority of them are volunteers who find editing this site to be an enjoyable experience, even a [hobby](#).

[Wikipedia:Tutorial](#) is the best place to start your adventure with this [wiki](#). Please familiarize yourself with [instructions for students](#) and if you have any questions, check the [Wikipedia:FAQ/Editing](#) or [Help:Contents](#) and if you cannot find what you are looking for, ask the friendly people at [Wikipedia:Help desk](#) - or just [contact me \(mcassell@kent.edu\)](mailto:mcassell@kent.edu).

Before making any edits you'll first [create an account \(video tutorial\)](#). You **definitely need to have an account** before attempting to do any wiki-related coursework (otherwise we will be unable to confirm if you have completed the exercise). After you create an account, if you know your group already, add your name to the relevant section of this page. ****Need to edit this***

Remember that Wikipedia is not a project limited only to Kent State. We are guests here and we should all behave accordingly. Please make sure you read [Wikipedia:Wikiquote](#). Please try to think what impression you want other Wikipedians to have of our university — and of yourselves.

You should expect that the professor, other students, your friends, and even (or especially) other Wikipedia editors (not affiliated with our course) will [leave you various messages](#) on your [talk pages](#). When working on the exercises below, you should log in to Wikipedia and check your messages as often as you check your email (I strongly recommend you read 'as often' as 'at least daily'). Whenever you have a new message and are logged to Wikipedia, you will see a large orange message, 'You have new messages', on every Wikipedia page you access. To make this message disappear, you should click on it and read the message. Note that it is customary to leave new messages at the bottom of the talk/discussion pages, and to reply to somebody's messages on their talk pages. If you want to leave somebody a message, make sure you are editing their talk page, not their [user page](#). Remember to [sign your talk and discussion messages \(you may want to watch this tutorial on using talk pages\)](#).

Some other useful tips: whenever you are done with an edit and want to save a page, fill

out the [edit summary box](#) and [view a preview of the page after your edit](#) to make sure it looks as you actually want it to look. Only then click the "Save Page" button. You may find the [page history tool](#) and [watchlist tools](#) to be very useful when you want to check what changes by other editors have been made to the article(s) you are working on.

Please direct any questions to Mark Cassell. You are welcome to send emails, or drop by to see me during our office hours, and ask about Wikipedia how-to; but please try to find the answer first on the [Help:Contents](#).

Project details:

You will first choose an article related to inequality. Once you have chosen your article, you will write up a one page proposal, outlining important information about it, what points you will cover in your article, and a short list of resources. You then need to make an appointment to meet with me in my office and discuss your proposal. The deadlines for this assignment are listed below.

Please read the following guidelines to get a handle on how you should write your article **BEFORE** you start writing:

1. [Wikipedia:What Wikipedia is not](#), which summarizes what Wikipedia is, and what it is not;
2. [Wikipedia:Neutral point of view](#), which describes Wikipedia's core approach to neutral, unbiased article-writing;
3. [Wikipedia:No original research](#), which explains what is, and is not, valid encyclopedic information;
4. [Wikipedia:Verifiability](#), which explains what counts as a verifiable source and how a source can be verified;
5. [Wikipedia:Citing sources](#), which describes what kinds of sources should be cited and the manner of doing so; and
6. [Wikipedia:Manual of Style](#), which offers a style guide.

Wikipedia maintains a high standard of writing, and has taken great pains to improve these standards. You need to follow their directions to the letter, since deviating from these standards will invite article deletion.

Feel free to include photos, but remember that not all pictures on the web are free for the taking. Familiarize yourself with Wikipedia's [Copyright Policy](#) to ensure you are not doing anything wrong (copyright violation, in the real, world, means what [plagiarism](#) in academia).

Your article must include at least three academic book or journal sources. However, keep in mind that this is a minimum requirement. You should also include a list of external links giving the reader more information on your subject, and link to your page from other Wikipedia pages, so your page is not an [orphan](#). To answer that question in your head: yes, you can go on someone else's article and link to your own. That's the beauty of Wiki!

Once you begin writing your article, you are required to respond to any comments on your paper and act accordingly (make proper changes, defend your choices, etc.). These comments will give you substantial feedback on your work, and allow you to make your final product better. (Besides, I'm going to spend the semester reading your work and

commenting on it--if you listen to my feedback, you'll end up with a much better grade.)

Finally, you will read and evaluate/comment on your classmates' articles. Please make your comments constructive and useful. You will not get credit for such comments as "good article!" or "I liked it!" Suggest something that can be realistically improved, compare their article to yours and see if your group has learned any tricks that can help them. Also refrain from any abusive or inappropriate language.

Important tips

[Wikipedia:FAQ/Editing](#) will give you all the information you need to edit pages and start your own. Read it! [Help:Contents](#) and [Wikipedia:Tutorial](#) are very useful, too.

1. Practice

I suggest doing some practice edits on various pages, just to get a feel for how things work. You can start by adding material to your user page, but try to edit real articles, too. If you add some constructive content to sociology-related articles, you may be eligible for [extra credit](#).

If you are drawing a blank as to what you should edit for practice, there are many places you may want to check if you want to improve your Wikipedia-editing skills by editing Wikipedia. Feel free to check the following pages:

- [Wikipedia:Cleanup](#)
- [Wikipedia:Pages needing attention](#)
- [Wikipedia:Peer review](#)
- [Wikipedia:Translation into English](#)
- [Wikipedia:Pages needing translation into English](#)
- [Wikipedia:WikiProject Countering systemic bias](#)

2. Sign in every time you edit

Whenever you edit, [make sure that you are signed in](#) (if in the top right corner of the screen you see "log in" button, you are not signed in!). If you are not signed in, course instructor (Mark Cassell) will not be able to verify that you were the person who made the edit and give you points for it.

When creating a new account, think about the nickname you want to use here. Consider:

- this is a publicly viewable project - do you want to use your real name (or pitt email "nick")?
- you may want to keep editing Wikipedia in the future - chose a nickname that you won't find annoying in a few years...

3. Talk pages

Whenever editing a talk page, add four tildes ~~~~ to the end of all comments you make on talk pages. This will let people know who is talking. You can also just press the [signature button](#) ([you may want to watch this tutorial on using talk pages](#)).

Work on Wikipedia

A. Don't work on a draft in Microsoft Word. Work on a draft in the article on Wikipedia. This way your colleagues (and instructor) will be aware of what you are doing the instant you do so, and can comment on it sooner.

B. Don't exchange comments by email. Exchange comments by using article's talk pages, for the same reasons as above (unless you are certain that your discussion have to stay private). If you like to receive email notifications, you can monitor the article's talk pages (and your own userpage talk page) by subscribing to that page [RSS](#) feed (see [Wikipedia:Syndication](#)).

Remember: gaining experience with [wiki](#) software may be more important to your future career than detailed knowledge of <globalization **replace with your course theme**>. Three years ago, [Technorati](#)'s chief technologist states that in five years "knowledge of wikis will be a required job skill". Do the math.

Plagiarism and copyvio warning

Plagiarism is not only against university's and course policies, it is also against Wikipedia policies (see [WP:PLAGIARISM](#)). And attributing somebody doesn't mean [cut and paste](#) jobs are allowed ([WP:COPYVIO](#)). Violations of plagiarism/copyvio policies will result in lower grade and other sanctions (per university's policy). Please note that the course instructor is not the only person checking constantly for plagiarism and copyright violations; the Good Article reviewer will do so as well, and Wikipedia has a specialized group of volunteers specializing in checking new contributions for those very problems (you don't want your work to appear [here](#) or [here](#)!). In particular, note that extensive quoting is not allowed, and changing just a few words is still a copyvio (it doesn't matter if you attribute the source). Bottom line, you are expected to read, digest information, and summarize it in your own words (but with a source). For more info see: [this plagiarism handout](#), [Wikipedia:Copy-paste](#), [Wikipedia:Quotations](#), [Wikipedia:Close paraphrasing](#), [a guide from Purdue University](#).

Getting extra help

You can always ask the course instructor (me) or [Wikipedia:Ambassadors](#) for help. You should not hesitate to ask your fellow students from other groups for help, for example if you see they have mastered some editing trick you have yet to learn. Wikipedia volunteers are often active in [this chat help channel](#). We are here to collaborate, not compete. If you can lobby and get help/assistance/advice from other editors to improve your work (for example by using [Wikipedia:New contributors' help page](#), [Wikipedia:Requests for feedback](#), [Wikipedia:Peer review](#), [Wikipedia:Help desk](#) or [Wikipedia:Reference desk](#)), I am perfectly fine with it.

Grading

The Wikipedia assignment is worth 50% of the final grade. Out of that, 50% is awarded for the quality of the assignment, 10% is awarded for registering and completing the training, 20% for the reviewing your peers, 10% for an oral presentation in class, 15% for a reflective essay.

Here is a checklist for article quality

- Paper is on one of the subjects approved by the instructor
- Paper includes intro summary ([lead](#) in the Wikipedia terminology), at least 3 body paragraphs, conclusion, and bibliography
- There are no grammatical/spelling errors throughout the paper
- Introduction summarizes the subject properly and does not include unique information not present in the main body of the article
- Conclusion sums up the paper without ending abruptly
- Paper is structured logically, and there are no weird gaps (Note: "weird gaps" occur for example when you chose to write about a historical trend, but your group "forgets" to research few centuries in the middle; or when you are presenting an overview by country, but decide that few random countries are enough, because you use an arbitrary "two countries per group" member rule instead of thinking which countries are important to cover for the subject discussed)
- Sources used are [reliable](#)
- In-paper citations are present and used correctly according to Wikipedia format see [Wikipedia:Citing sources](#)
- In-paper citations are done in a consistent format, and provide all the necessary information (in brief: author's name, publication title, publisher information, page number if source has pages, URL if source is online, see [ASA style](#) for details)
- Body of the paper explores the chosen subject in adequate detail. (Note: "adequate detail" means I shouldn't be able to do a quick literature search and find information not included in the paper. I want you to search current and past literature, books, newspapers, websites, etc. and summarize all the information you find into an easy-to-read and understand paper. If you are missing major bits of information, or have included incorrect information without citations to back up your findings, you will lose major points here).
- Paper should conform to Wikipedia writing standards ([Wikipedia:Neutral point of view](#), [Wikipedia:No original research](#))