

Inequality, Social Problems, and Change

Minor in Inequality, Social Problems, and Change

The Inequality, Social Problems, and Change minor will offer students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the nature of inequality as it takes shape in pivotal societal institutions and to formulate feasible pathways for reducing inequality and improving quality of life. The minor will prepare students to effect change by learning how to move from theory to action on social challenges related to their chosen profession. Course work in the minor is designed to complement the knowledge base students gain in their majors across disciplines. The minor will provide students with foundational knowledge about the causes and consequences of social inequality in its various forms, including economic, racial, gender, and class. All courses attend to social change, ranging from offering hands-on experience in addressing inequality on the ground level to interrogating the relative merits of concrete and empirical avenues for effecting change. Students will transform conceptual knowledge into action by learning about a range of strategies that can be used to address disparities. The minor will facilitate multilevel, multisystem thinking, with the explicit goal of effecting change to reduce social inequality and social problems.

Program Requirements

Students must take a total of five approved courses to complete the minor in Inequality, Social Problems, and Change, including one foundation course and four elective courses.

1. **One foundation course.** Students are required to take one of two foundation courses: Either SSAD 25810 Social Problems, Social Policy, and Social Change or SSAD 25002 Social Welfare Policy and Services. Both of these foundation courses provide students with an understanding of the historical context giving rise to different forms of inequality and strategies for change. Students are strongly encouraged to take one of these courses before taking elective courses in the minor.
2. **Four elective courses:** Students will take four elective courses chosen from the list below. Elective courses are organized into specific domains of inequality (e.g., communities and cities; global and migration; law and social justice; poverty, family, and work; and health and mental health). In consultation with the faculty director, students may choose to take several courses in one domain to deepen their knowledge in a particular topic or take courses across several domains to broaden their understanding of inequality and social change across multiple areas.

Summary of Requirements

SSAD 25810	Social Problems, Social Policy, and Social Change	100
or SSAD 25002	Social Welfare Policy and Services	
Four SSAD electives *		400
Total Units		500

* One of these electives may be an SSAD graduate course.

Elective Courses

Communities and Cities Domain

SSAD 21000	Race & American Public Schools	100
SSAD 21100	How Things Get Done in Cities and Why	100
SSAD 28112	Community Organizing	100
CHDV 20305	Inequality in Urban Spaces	100
SOCI 20269	Policing the City	100
SOCI 30233	Race in Contemporary American Society *	100

Global and Migration Domain

SSAD 21200	Policing, Citizenship, and Inequality in Comparative Perspective	100
SSAD 21300	Global Mental Health	100
SSAD 25003	Immigration, Law and Society	100
SSAD 25112	Contemporary Immigration Policy and Practice	100
SSAD 26922	Structuring Refuge: U.S. Refugee Policy and Resettlement Practice	100
CHDV 23403	Borders, (Im)mobilities and Human Rights	100
PBPL 27809	Violence in the Early Years	100

Poverty, Family, and Work Domain

SSAD 25005	Inequality at Work: The Changing Nature of Jobs and Prospects for Improvement	100
SSAD 25630	Poverty, Work, and Family Policy	100

Law and Social Justice Domain

SSAD 25004	Punishment and Social Theory	100
PLSC 29500	Drugs, Guns, and Money: The Politics of Criminal Conflict	100

Health and Mental Health Domain

SSAD 25732	Prejudice and Discrimination: Individual Cost and Response	100
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* Graduate-level course; permission of instructor is required

Advising and Grading

Courses in the minor may not be double counted with the student's major(s), other minors, or general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Students who elect the minor must meet with the faculty director for the minor before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. The director's approval for the minor program should be submitted to a student's College adviser by the deadline using a form available from the adviser.

Inequality, Social Problems, and Change Courses

Communities and Cities Courses

SSAD 21000. Race & American Public Schools. 100 Units.

This course explores the fundamental role that race and racism have played in the structure, stratification, and social functioning of American public schools. Working within and between historical perspectives, contemporary policy challenges, theory, and empirical research, we will explore questions of purpose, identity, otherness, and justice. What can the histories of Black and Indigenous schooling reveal about the educational project of the nation? How does the notion of whiteness as property shape public presumptions about what makes a "good" school? Perhaps most fundamentally, can schools be engines for racial justice, and if so, how?

Equivalent Course(s): EDSO 21000, HMRT 21000

SSAD 21100. How Things Get Done in Cities and Why. 100 Units.

Innovation. Prosperity. Democracy. Diversity. Cities long have been lauded as unique incubators of these social features. In contrast to the national level, the smaller scale and dense diversity of cities is thought to encourage the development of civic solutions that work for the many. But cities are inhabited by distinct groups of people with divergent interests and varied beliefs about how to address countless urban issues, such as creating jobs, delivering education, ensuring safe neighborhoods, promoting environmental sustainability, and taking care of the vulnerable. Many groups and organizations have an interest in the outcomes of these processes. Some take action to try to shape them to their own advantage, while others have few chances to make themselves heard. This course examines the social and political dynamics that undergird possible avenues for creating social change in cities, including interest representation, decision-making, and inclusion/exclusion. We will draw insights from multiple disciplines and explore a variety of substantive areas, such as housing, public safety, economic development, education, and the provision of social welfare. This course is part of the College Course Cluster program: Urban Design.

Terms Offered: TBD

Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 20294, PBPL 25006, ENST 25006, LLSO 21100

SSAD 28112. Community Organizing. 100 Units.

This is a class about community organizing and how organizing brings about collective action. Through analysis of both historical and contemporary community organizing efforts, students will learn how organizing mobilizes people to gain power and influence over public policy and decision-making that directly impact them. Students will be introduced to different conceptual models of organizing, as well as how these models employ different theories of social change. The course emphasizes the "nuts-and-bolts" of organizing, ranging from strategic vision formulation to campaign development to one-on-one engagement. Students will have the opportunity to learn, discuss, and employ these different organizing skills and techniques through in-class exercises and group projects.

Equivalent Course(s): SSAD 48112, HMRT 34950

CHDV 20305. Inequality in Urban Spaces. 100 Units.

The problems confronting urban schools are bound to the social, economic, and political conditions of the urban environments in which schools reside. Thus, this course will explore social, economic, and political issues, with an emphasis on issues of race and class as they have affected the distribution of equal educational opportunities in urban schools. We will focus on the ways in which family, school, and neighborhood characteristics intersect to shape the divergent outcomes of low- and middle-income children residing with any given neighborhood. Students will tackle an important issue affecting the residents and schools in one Chicago neighborhood. This course is part of the College Course Cluster: Urban Design.

Instructor(s): M. Keels Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): CHDV Distribution: B; 2*

Equivalent Course(s): CRES 20305, EDSO 20305, CHDV 40315, PBPL 20305

PLSC 38200. Political Socialization. 100 Units.**SOCI 20269. Policing the City. 100 Units.**

This course explores the historical origins, evolution, and current manifestations of policing the United States. Using a political sociological perspective, this course explores policing in ways that will provide broader lessons about societal issues of social control, social order, race, class, crime, social psychology, and politics. The course examines key issues in policing, such as police brutality, racial profiling, and the management of social protest. It also reviews the historical origins of the policy in order to understand that modern day policing issues is much more of a continuation of the past than most think. Reading and course material will be discussed in relation to current events.

Instructor(s): R. Vargas Terms Offered: Autumn

SOCI 30233. Race in Contemporary American Society. 100 Units.

This survey course in the sociology of race offers a socio-historical investigation of race in American society. We will examine issues of race, ethnic and immigrant settlement in the United States. Also, we shall explore the classic and contemporary literature on race and inter-group dynamics. Our investigative tools will include an analysis of primary and secondary sources, multimedia materials, photographic images, and journaling. While our survey will be broad, we will treat Chicago and its environs as a case study to comprehend the racial, ethnic, and political challenges in the growth and development of a city.

Instructor(s): S. Hicks-Bartlett Terms Offered: Autumn Spring. Autumn quarter offered at the Undergraduate level only and Spring offered at the Graduate level only

Equivalent Course(s): MAPS 30233, SOCI 20233

Global and Migration Courses**SSAD 21200. Policing, Citizenship, and Inequality in Comparative Perspective. 100 Units.**

Police provide an essential service for citizens - security and protection - without which the exercise of all other rights becomes heavily constrained. Police institutions are also the primary entity of the state with which most citizens come into direct contact. In practice, however, governments throughout the Americas (and beyond) have long struggled to organize police institutions such that they address societal demands for security, and that the deployment of coercion against citizens is applied equitably and constrained by law and external accountability. From São Paulo and Johannesburg to Chicago, police forces engage in widespread extrajudicial killings and torture that largely target marginalized sectors of society, including Afro-descendants, the poor, and those living in the urban periphery. At the same time, these groups are also underserved by their police, leaving them vulnerable to high rates of criminal violence. Through comparative analysis of police institutions in Latin America, the United States, and other regions, this course probes the ways in which police institutions shape the lived experiences of individuals and how police may help reproduce existing social inequalities.

Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 21201

SSAD 21300. Global Mental Health. 100 Units.

Global mental health has emerged as a priority for multilateral institutions like the World Health Organization and World Bank, for international non-governmental organizations, and for academic researchers alike. This course examines the foundations, practices, and critiques of this field. We will explore how sociocultural processes shape the experience of distress and mental illness; various cultures of healing, including Western psychiatry, and their power dynamics; gaps and inequalities in service provision; as well as approaches to and challenges of cross-cultural diagnosis/treatment/epidemiology. Specific attention will be paid to how mental health concerns and interventions affect women, racial/ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups in different societies. Building on these explorations, we will then turn to the tools, programs, and practices that constitute the somewhat amorphous movement called "Global Mental Health." Ongoing debates of this movement will also be examined. This course will take an interdisciplinary approach, with readings drawn from psychiatry, public policy, anthropology, history, sociology, and so on. Through discussions and assignments, students will develop skills to design, evaluate, and critically reflect upon global mental health interventions.

Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 21301

SSAD 25003. Immigration, Law and Society. 100 Units.

Law is everywhere within the social world. It shapes our everyday lives in countless ways by permitting, prohibiting, protecting and prosecuting native-born citizens and immigrants alike. This course reviews the major theoretical perspectives and sociological research on the relationship between law and society, with an empirical focus on immigrants in the United States, primarily from Mexico and Central America. To begin, we explore the permeation of law in everyday life, legal consciousness, and gap between "law on the books" and "law on the ground." The topic of immigration is introduced with readings on the socio-legal construction of immigration status, theories of international migration, and U.S. immigration law at the national and subnational levels. We continue to study the social impact of law on immigrants through the topics of liminal legality; children, families, and romantic partnerships; policing, profiling, and raids; detention and deportation; and immigrants' rights. This course adopts a "law in action" approach centered on the social, political, and cultural contexts of law as it relates to immigration and social change. It is designed to expose you to how social scientists study and think about law, and to give you the analytical skills to examine law, immigration, and social change relationally.

Terms Offered: TBD

Equivalent Course(s): CRES 25003, SOCI 28079, PBPL 25003, LACS 25003, HMRT 25003

SSAD 25112. Contemporary Immigration Policy and Practice. 100 Units.

Today's immigration debates have brought to the fore conflicting visions regarding U.S. immigration policies, including the impacts and inequities faced by an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants and their families. The debates as well impact who will be welcomed to migrate in the future and under what conditions. This course will start with a historical perspective and then take a deeper look at the ways in which our laws and accompanying systems shape the everyday lives of undocumented individuals and mixed-status families. We will look into the realities and consequences affecting multiple immigrant communities and cultures in the U.S. We will delve into the U.S. immigration policy debates and alternative visions. We'll consider how states and the federal government interface, collaborate and clash. As immigration, immigrants and refugees are today a central focus of U.S. politics and affected by these realities, we will explore related current and future political dynamics, advocacy, research and social movements upon the directions of immigration policies. Finally, we will explore the challenges faced in working within the intersection of immigration policy and people's lives, and how this work shapes our various roles as practitioners, policy makers, advocates and allies, including how social change is achieved at the local, statewide and national levels.

Equivalent Course(s): SSAD 45112, HMRT 45112

SSAD 26922. Structuring Refugee: U.S. Refugee Policy and Resettlement Practice. 100 Units.

At the end of 2017 there were over 68.5 million forcibly displaced people around the world, the highest number ever recorded (UNHCR, 2019). The number of newly displaced people in 2017 alone was 16.2 million, which is the equivalent of 44,400 new displacements every single day. Over 25.4 million registered refugees were among those displaced, and of these just 102,800 were admitted to third countries for permanent resettlement. Historically the United States has been the largest resettlement country in the world: since 1975 the US has resettled more than 3 million refugees. Refugees in the U.S. are entitled to an array of federal, state, and local supports that other immigrants must do without. At the same time, refugees in the U.S. are arguably subject to greater scrutiny and systems of social control than most other un-incarcerated domestic populations. However, the terrain of U.S. refugee resettlement has shifted dramatically as a result of the Executive Orders introduced by the Trump Administration. This course asks the central questions: How is refugee status constructed as a political process; what are the interrelationships between institutional actors and refugee policies and what are the implications of these interrelationships for service delivery to refugees in the U.S.; what does research tell us about the resettlement outcomes of refugees in the U.S. and what drives these outcomes; and finally, what are the points of intervention for social workers in the refugee

Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 46922, SSAD 46922

CHDV 23403. Borders, (Im)mobilities and Human Rights. 100 Units.

What is the human cost of border control? To what extent do individuals possess the right to move to other states? How do different states with large populations of refugees and asylum seekers develop and enforce migration policies, and what do the differences in these policies reveal about the social histories and futures of these states? To address these questions, we will consider how borders, institutions, and categories of migrant groups mutually shape one another. We will explore the interrelationships between categories of migration-forced, economic, regular, and irregular-in order to understand the multiple and unequal forms of mobility experienced by those who inhabit these categories. By utilizing a framework of human rights, this course will investigate how contemporary issues in migration-such as border management, illicit movement, and the fuzzy distinction between forced and economic migration-raise and reopen debates concerning the management of difference. We will draw on the work of anthropologists, sociologists, and geographers, as well as journalists, legal, and medical professionals. Our readings each week will include a mix of conceptual, ethnographic, long-form journalism, and policy texts. When possible, we will also invite representatives from different Chicago-based organizations that promote and protect the rights of people in various situations of migration to come to our class to discuss their work.

Equivalent Course(s): GLST 23403, HMRT 23403, ANTH 25255

PBPL 27809. Violence in the Early Years. 100 Units.

This course will address issues related to children's exposure to violence. Classes will cover topics including, but not limited to, the history of violence against children (infanticide, etc), children's literature, parental violence towards children, school-related violence, practices such as female genital mutilation, and other policy-relevant issues related to violence in children's lives. We will analyze policies and reforms, review relevant research on each topic, and examine implications of the findings to policy and practice.

Instructor(s): A. Adukia Terms Offered: TBD

Poverty, Family, and Work Courses**SSAD 25005. Inequality at Work: The Changing Nature of Jobs and Prospects for Improvement. 100 Units.**

This course will consider sources of inequality in the labor market and in workplaces. Empirical evidence and theory on labor markets and job conditions will be analyzed to provide insights into the changing nature of work and workplace inequality for the majority of Americans -- who do not hold a four-year college degree. Although the course will consider ways to ready workers for good jobs in the economy, the emphasis will be on improving jobs themselves, through voluntary employer behavior, collective action, and public policy. The assignment for the course involves observing and/or interviewing workers in an occupation chosen by the student.

Instructor(s): Susan Lambert Terms Offered: TBD

Equivalent Course(s): PBPL 25005, LLSO 25005

SSAD 25630. Poverty, Work, and Family Policy. 100 Units.

This course examines contemporary policy questions regarding the dual spheres of work and family life, with a particular focus on economically impoverished families and communities. Students will analyze the relative merits of different policies designed to improve the conditions of work and family life and mitigate the effects of poverty on children's wellbeing. Throughout the ten-week quarter, we will consider demographic, labor market, and policy trends contributing to family poverty and income inequality in American society; interrogate policy debates concerning the responsibility of government, corporate, and informal sectors to address these critical social problems; and examine specific policy and program responses directed at (1) improving employment and economic outcomes and (2) reconciling the competing demands of employment and parenting. Although our primary focus will be on policies that promote the wellbeing of low-income families in the United States, relevant comparisons will be made cross-nationally, across race/ethnicity, and across income. This course is part of the Inequality, Social Problems, and Change minor.

Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 25630

Law and Social Justice Courses

SSAD 25004. Punishment and Social Theory. 100 Units.

How is the power to punish derived? How has the role of punishment been conceived? What do the practices of punishment produce? What do they tell us about ourselves? Are there alternatives? Taking up these questions, the course outlines major theories of punishment advanced by political philosophers, penologists and scholars who study the role of punishment in society, tracing the trajectory of our modern impulse to punish "wrong doers." We will interrogate the shifting terrain of crime control policy and attend to the ways that prison reformers, scholars, and activists have sought to bring about change. We examine the political economy, culture, and consequences of punishment through readings on the carceral state and conclude by raising new questions about punishment and its alternatives in the age of mass incarceration.

Terms Offered: TBD

Equivalent Course(s): PBPL 25004, HMRT 25004

PBPL 29050. Youth Law and Policy: Child Welfare and Juv. Just. in the U.S. 100 Units.

This course explores how legal institutions protect and punish children in the United States. We will spend the first part of the course exploring the child welfare system, which purports to protect children from abuse and neglect through various mechanisms including foster care and the termination of parental rights. We will spend the second part of the course exploring the juvenile justice system, which purports to prosecute and rehabilitate children for their criminal acts in a system separate from the criminal justice system. In the final part of the course, we will consider special topics in this area of law and policy including "cross-over youth" (i.e. children involved in both systems), unaccompanied immigrant children, homeless and runaway youth, and the so-called "school-to-prison-pipeline." This course will place special emphasis on the judges, lawyers, law enforcement officers, and social workers that comprise these legal institutions.

Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): Course limited to 3rd and 4th year students only.

Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 29050, LLSO 29050

PLSC 29500. Drugs, Guns, and Money: The Politics of Criminal Conflict. 100 Units.

This course examines armed conflict between states and criminal groups, with a focus on Latin America's militarized drug wars. Why do states decide to crack down on cartels, and why do cartels decide to fight back? Are drug wars "insurgencies"? If so, can they be won? Why does drug violence vary over time, over space, and between market sector? We will study these issues from historical, economic, criminological, and cultural perspectives. Throughout, we focus on the interplay of domestic and international politics in formulating and enforcing drug policy.

Instructor(s): B. Lessing Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 27307, LACS 29500

Health and Mental Health Courses

SSAD 25732. Prejudice and Discrimination: Individual Cost and Response. 100 Units.

This foundational diversity class explores the origins and practices of racial/ethnic prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination, and how demographic factors such as class, gender, sexuality, and nationality intersect to solidify and perpetuate inequality. We will explore the resulting psychological, economic, and sociopolitical tolls on individuals, and also examine various individual responses that can mitigate the negative impacts of or engage in resistance towards such discrimination (such as racial/ethnic identity development, deliberate retention of heritage culture, and social/political mobilization). Moreover, we will examine how these individual responses together with organized and collective efforts can bring about social changes. This class consciously expands a dominant binary discourse of race to develop a more inclusive and complex paradigm that accurately reflects the diversity of contemporary America.

Equivalent Course(s): CRES 25732, CRES 45732, SSAD 45732

PBPL 21425. Health in a Changing America: Social Context and Human Rights. 100 Units.

In this interdisciplinary course, students will consider the social context of health and the social and political commitments necessary to protect health as a human right. We will analyze recent trends in population health, such as the obesity epidemic, the opioid crisis, and the large gaps in life expectancy between neighborhoods in urban centers. Using case studies, students will envision a human rights-based response to these and other health challenges. We will examine the ways that framing health as personal versus public responsibility is consequential for social policy.

Instructor(s): Alicia Riley, Graduate Lecturer in Human Rights Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 21403



Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.