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 approved elective courses. The list of approved electives changes every year. Examples of approved electives are listed below. The full list of approved courses for the current academic year can be found at ssa.uchicago.edu/college-minor (http://ssa.uchicago.edu/college-minor/). 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSAD 25810 (or SSAD 25002)</td>
<td>Social Problems, Social Policy, and Social Change</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four SSAD electives*</td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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
- PBPL 24756 Exploring the Resilient City 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 24901
Trade, Development and Poverty in Mexico
100

### PBPL 27809
Violence in the Early Years
100

### PLSC 21820
Global Justice and the Ethics of Immigration
100

### SOCI 20251
Trade, Development and Poverty in Mexico
100

### Poverty, Family, and Work Domain

**SSAD 20550**  
Food Insecurity and Food Policy in the U.S.
100

**SSAD 25005**  
Inequality at Work: The Changing Nature of Jobs and Prospects for Improvement
100

### Law and Social Justice Domain

**SSAD 25004**  
Punishment and Social Theory
100

**SSAD 27452**  
Smart Decarceration: A Grand Challenge for Social Work
100

**PBPL 25860**  
Crime, Justice, and Inequality in the American City
100

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

### Health and Mental Health Domain

**SSAD 22812**  
Examining Historical Trauma: Intergen Resp. to Holocaust
100

**SSAD 25732**  
Prejudice and Discrimination: Individual Cost and Response
100

**CHDV 23405**  
Cultural Diversity, Structural Barriers, and Multilingualism in Clinical and Healing Encounters
100

* 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): HMRT 21000, CRES 21000, EDSO 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): PBPL 25006, SOCI 20294, LLSO 21100, ENST 25006

**SSAD 25002. Social Welfare Policy and Services. 100 Units.**
This course introduces students to the issues and problems associated with social welfare interventions at the policy level, including an overview of its history in the US. Students are expected to learn and develop competencies in analyzing the components of current social welfare policies; designing programmatic
SSAD 25810. Social Problems, Social Policy, and Social Change. 100 Units.
This course is designed to provide an analytic framework that enables students to understand how social problems are socially constructed, how social policies are created in response to those identified problems, and how social change efforts both shape and respond to the policy environment. During the quarter, we will examine how social problems, policies and programs are framed, re-framed, and addressed and how individuals, organizations, and relevant constituencies take part in social change. In addition to providing an overview of the relationship between social problems, social policy, and social change efforts, the course encourages critical thought about the role of and relationship between professional elites (philanthropists, advocates, researchers, etc.) and ground-level activists (affected populations, community leaders, etc.) in constructing and contesting social problems and promoting social change.
Instructor(s): Marcy Ybarra Terms Offered: Autumn

SSAD 28112. Community Organizing. 100 Units.
This is a class about community organizing and how organizing brings about collective action. Through analysis of both historic 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): EDSO 20305, PBPL 20305, CRES 20305, EDSO 40315

PLSC 38200. Political Socialization. 100 Units.
This survey course in the sociology of race offers a socio-historical investigation of race in American society. It 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 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): SOCI 20233, CRES 20233, MAPS 30233

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 immigration, 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): HMRT 25003, SOCI 28079, PBPL 25003, LACS 25003, CRES 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
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): HMRT 45112, SSAD 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. The U.S. in the 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
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): HMRT 23403, ANTH 25255, GLST 23403

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

PBPL 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

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

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: Not offered in 2020-21
Prerequisite(s): Course limited to 3rd and 4th year students only.
Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 29050, HMRT 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): LACS 29500, LLSO 27307

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 45732, SSAD 45732, CRES 25732

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