

**Boston College**  
**Department of Economics**

Econ 3317.01-.02 – Economics of Inequality  
Campion 200

Professor Geoff Sanzenbacher  
Day/Time: MW 4:30pm, 6:00pm

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Office Hours: 204 Hovey House, 4:00-5:00pm Friday or by Appointment.

Clicker Device: Should be purchased, will be used frequently in class.

Economics 317 is designed to teach about the structural economic factors that result in or lead to inequality in economic outcomes and opportunity. The course will offer a distinction between inequality in opportunity and inequality in outcomes and will discuss policies currently in place and those that have been suggested to attempt to alleviate these inequalities.

**Class Etiquette:** Please refrain from using computers during class. If you would like to have copies of the slides, you can print them from online prior to class. I will post the slides as PPTs on Canvas prior to class and I recommend printing four slides per sheet.

**Grading and Course Requirements:** The final grade will be assigned based on the requirements and weights described below. The rule for final grade assignment will be: 93+ (A), 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-86 (B), 80-82 (B-), 77-79 (C+), 73-76 (C), 70-72 (C-), 67-69 (D+), 63-66 (D), 60-62 (D-), below 60 (F). I will provide your current grade after the midterm so you know where you stand.

**One Midterm Exam (1 Exam, 40 percent of grade):** There will be one Midterm Exam assigned a score out of 100 to be used in the final grade calculation. A make-up exam for the exam is allowed if I am appropriately informed beforehand. The makeup exam must occur within 3 days of the original exam, which is on **Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>**.

**Short Papers (3 papers, 15 percent of grade):** Each assignment differs slightly, but consists of papers of roughly two pages in length. Will be graded on a check-plus (10 pts), check (8.5 pts), check-minus (7 pts) system. Each paper will have a different rubric and the assignment will be provided at least 2 weeks before the paper is due.

**Partner Paper (25 percent of grade):** Teams of 2-4 members will pick a topic and write a 2,500 – 3,000 word policy Issue Brief on it. Details will be given as we approach the first Midterm. **The paper is due Monday December 10<sup>th</sup>**.

**Final Quiz (1 Exam, 15 percent of grade):** The Final Quiz will be given during the exam schedule on **Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup> during class time**. It is not a cumulative exam, it only covers material discussed after the midterm.

**Attendance and participation (5 percent of grade):** We are using Iclicker, which will help me keep track of attendance and participation. You can miss up to three classes without excuse. The Iclicker needs to be functional by **September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018**. After three misses there is a 0.5 percentage point deduction per class missed unless excused. **You do not need to e-mail me if you miss three or fewer classes.** On your fourth class or later, send an e-mail with “Request for Excused Absence” as the subject and provide a reason in the body of the e-mail, I will let you know if excused or not.

### **Course Organization and Expectations**

**Lectures:** There are two lectures per week most weeks, save for holidays (See schedule below). There is 5 percent attendance and participation grade for the course, attendance is also required to do well on the exam and papers.

**Readings:** I will be providing an important academic article online each class along with discussion questions. You will be required to know answers to discussion questions for the Midterm and Final Quiz.

**Integrity:** Please familiarize yourself with the “Academic Integrity” section of the Boston College Catalog, which is also available online.

**Canvas:** I will be using Canvas to provide you with a variety of information, including handouts I will create, any assignments, and I will post the article readings for the class there.

In conclusion, let me say welcome to the course! Economics is an exciting subject area that will help you better understand the world you live in. Please keep up with current events and feel free to ask me about them in class.

Good luck! Here is a brief outline of the course and reading assignments.

#### **Date**

#### **Topic**

August 27<sup>th</sup>

Introduction  
What do we mean by inequality?

#### **Part I – Inequality of Economic Outcomes**

August 29<sup>th</sup>

Defining and measuring inequality

*Sources of Cross-Sectional Inequality*

**September 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**No Class – Labor Day**

**September 5<sup>th</sup>**

**No Class – Geoff Travel for Auto-IRA**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Labor Supply and Demand
September 12 <sup>th</sup> (Iclicker Registered)	Compensating Differentials
September 17 <sup>th</sup>	Finishing Compensating Differentials Introduction to Human Capital
September 19 <sup>th</sup>	A model of Human Capital Human Capital and Inequality
September 24 <sup>th</sup>	Discrimination in Markets
September 26 <sup>th</sup>	Discrimination in Markets (cont.)
October 1 <sup>st</sup>	Marriage and Inequality
October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Finishing marriage and inequality Inequality in employment
<b>October 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>No Class – Fall Break</b>
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	Crime and Inequality
<i>Changes in Inequality over Time</i>	
October 15 <sup>th</sup>	Unions and inequality
October 17 <sup>th</sup>	CEO Pay/theory of superstars/board stacking
October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Skill-biased technological change
October 24 <sup>th</sup>	Globalization and inequality
October 29 <sup>th</sup>	Capital and inequality
<b>October 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Voluntary Review -- Halloween</b>
November 5 <sup>th</sup>	Midterm Exam
<b>Part II – Inequality in Opportunity</b>	
November 7 <sup>th</sup>	Defining circumstances and choice
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	Defining equality of opportunity
November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Equality of opportunity vs. reality

**Date****Topic**November 19<sup>th</sup>Equality of opportunity vs. reality (cont.)  
An international comparison**November 21<sup>st</sup>****No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday****Part III – Economic Policy towards Inequality**November 26<sup>th</sup>

Policy towards the Young/Nutrition

November 28<sup>th</sup>

Educational Policy/Student Loans

December 3<sup>rd</sup>

Welfare Reform/"Workfare"

December 5<sup>th</sup>

Healthcare and Social Security

December 10<sup>th</sup>

Finishing up Policy/Political Inequality

**Please Note:** This schedule is an outline for the course and is subject to change as I feel necessary or because of inclement weather. Any changes will be noted by me during class.