

## DRAFT SYLLABUS AS OF 1/4/17

University of Pennsylvania

Graduate School of Education

Inequality & Education (EDUC 545)

Spring 2017

**Instructor:** Kenneth Shores

[kshores@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:kshores@gse.upenn.edu)

Office: 3720 Walnut Street, Office B12

Office Hours: Thursday & Friday, 10am – 12pm

Office hours are by appointment at  
[www.kennethshores.youcanbook.me](http://www.kennethshores.youcanbook.me)

Course Location: GSE 400

**Course Structure:** This course will meet once per week during the Spring of 2017, Wednesdays 10am – 12pm

**Course Description:** This course combines normative and empirical approaches to better understand economic and academic/educational inequality and how economic and educational inequality are related. We focus on four indicators of inequality—income, achievement, mobility/opportunity, and segregation (spatial inequality). The course begins with a review of key pieces from normative theory that provide us with conceptual tools for understanding *why* and in what circumstances different aspects of inequality are troublesome (or not). We then turn to how these different indicators of inequality are measured in practice, recognizing that aspects of inequality can be captured in different ways. We will critically evaluate these constructs based on how well they capture the normative principles laid out previously. Having established a normative and empirical foundation, we then review a series of papers that explore the causal effects of inequality and the complex relationships between the different indicators of inequality.

**Classroom Norms:** The class will consist of lecture, discussion and student presentations (percentages will vary depending on the topic). It is expected that students will have read all required readings *prior to* attending class on Wednesday. There is a custom in philosophy that I will pass on here and encourage throughout the semester: whenever possible, provide the most generous interpretation of an opponent's argument before criticizing. Behaving in this way encourages both intellectual rigor and collegiality. Much of the course will involve in-class discussion, and it is expected that students engage in classroom discussions while following the norms of mutual respect.

### Course Requirements and Grading:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of:

- (1) Participation (10 percent): Because this class is a seminar, its success depends on the informed and respectful participation of everyone. This includes monitoring your own participation to ensure that you do not dominate the discussion and that you engage in a dialogue with others.
- (2) Memo and Discussion (20 percent): For one of the course meetings, prepare a five-page (double spaced) memo circulated to all members of the class by noon on the Monday prior to that week's meeting. The memo should raise questions and offer comments about the readings and should avoid simply summarizing the material. Memo writers are responsible

for facilitating the discussion for that week. A sign-up sheet will be circulated the first day of class.

- (3) Seminar Paper or Empirical Investigation, due 5/1/17 (70 percent). Please choose ONE of the following options. An option must be chosen by Week 3 (2/1/17) and a 1 to 2-page proposal must be submitted to me by Week 6 (2/22/17). I heavily encourage students to schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible to discuss ideas.

Option 1: A seminar paper (15-20 pages). A seminar paper is an original and thorough discussion of one or more topics presented in the course. Students are encouraged to take key ideas from one or more week's of reading material and to "dive deep" into the topic. Many of the papers we will read throughout the semester provide only a cursory exploration of the topic and there are many opportunities to critically evaluate a topic. Moreover, you might find that certain philosophical treatments are very detached from what we know about the world empirically; this paper gives you an opportunity to articulate what you think is missing from these philosophical treatments. Conversely, you might think that standard measures of inequality are detached from what is important about the dimension of equality in question; this paper gives you an opportunity to discuss what measures would be useful given our normative priors. Please understand that these topics are old and well researched; therefore, I do not expect you to discover new modes of measurement or normative thinking. I do expect you to demonstrate deep understanding of the topic and to make original connections between different strands of literature.

Option 2: An empirical investigation (20-25 pages). This option is for students who have some familiarity with data analysis and manipulation, but the option is not limited to students with statistical proficiency. The purpose of this investigation is for students to conduct a unique data analysis with existing data to describe a dimension of inequality in the United States or international context. The paper may be descriptive—detailing the magnitudes and locations of inequalities—or causal—linking inequalities to outcomes or inputs to inequalities. There are many publicly available datasets available today that allow for detailed descriptions of educational inequality and its consequences. As an example, Russell Sage has funded two projects making use of publicly available data. See [here](#) and [here](#) for descriptions of how these data are used. It is also possible for students to take a "case study" approach, providing a detailed description of specific places (such as those that have very high/low achievement gaps). The 20-25 page length includes tables and figures.

#### **Other Information:**

- (1) Academic Honesty: Please consult the GSE Student Handbook or the following webpage for details on expected student conduct:  
<http://www.gse.upenn.edu/policies/academicintegrity> Please be sure to read the material this document contains. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will be dealt with according to University policy, which can be found at: <http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity>
- (2) Use of cell phones and laptops: Please do not text or use your cell phone in class. Of course, you may set your phone to vibrate and leave the class to answer emergency calls or send emergency texts. Please do not use your laptop for anything other than taking notes in class.

- (3) Communicating with me: Email is the best way to communicate with me. Since many students use multiple email addresses and because I receive many emails, please indicate “ED545: subject” (for example: “ED545: question about writing assignment”) in the subject line of your email so that I can reply efficiently and promptly.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability should initiate the request with the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) Weingarten Learning Resources Center. The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of [Student Disabilities Services](#) (SDS). Please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible in order to discuss your accommodations and your needs.

If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling SDS 215.573.9235. The office is located in the [Weingarten Learning Resources Center](#) at Stouffer Commons 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300.

All services are confidential.

**Readings:** For the most part, readings will consist of published or working papers, which are available for download online. In those cases, the syllabus will contain a MLA citation as well as an embedded URL to the journal repository where the article can be viewed.

## **Course Meetings:**

### **Week 1 (1/18/17)**

**Topic:** Introduction to the course, patterns and trends of inequality

#### **Readings:**

List, Christian, and Laura Valentini. "The Methodology of Political Theory." [Oxford Handbooks Online](#). 2016-08-03. Oxford University Press. Date of access 10 Jan. 2017 [available through UPenn library online]

Wolff, Jonathan. "Analytic Political Philosophy." [Oxford Handbooks Online](#). 2013-10-01. Oxford University Press. Date of access 10 Jan. 2017 (skim with attention to 27.4 The Revival of Advocacy) [available through UPenn library online]

### **Week 2 (1/25/17)**

**Topic:** Different dimension of equality

#### **Readings:**

Rawls, John. "Justice as fairness: political not metaphysical." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1985): 223-251.

Sen, Amartya. Equality of what?. Vol. 1. na, 1980.

Cohen, Gerald A. "Equality of what? On welfare, goods and capabilities." *Recherches Économiques de Louvain/Louvain Economic Review* (1990): 357-382.

Arneson, Richard J. "Equality and equal opportunity for welfare." *Philosophical studies* 56.1 (1989): 77-93.

### **Week 3 (2/1/17)**

**Topic:** Alternative patterns to equality

#### **Readings:**

Frankfurt, Harry. "Equality as a moral ideal." *Ethics* 98.1 (1987): 21-43.

Shields, Liam. "The prospects for sufficientarianism." *Utilitas* 24.01 (2012): 101-117.

Arneson, Richard J. "Luck egalitarianism and prioritarianism." *Ethics* 110.2 (2000): 339-349.

Nozick, Robert. "Distributive justice." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1973): 45-126.

### **Week 4 (2/8/17)**

**Topic:** Normative approaches to equality

#### **Readings:**

Otsuka, Michael, and Alex Voorhoeve. "Why it matters that some are worse off than others: an argument against the priority view." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37.2 (2009): 171-199.

O'Neill, Martin. "What should egalitarians believe?." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 36.2 (2008): 119-156.

Phillips, Anne. "Defending equality of outcome." *Journal of political philosophy* 12.1 (2004): 1-19.

### **Week 5 (2/15/17)**

**Topic:** Normative approaches to equal opportunity (social mobility)

#### **Readings:**

Westen, Peter. "The concept of equal opportunity." *Ethics* 95.4 (1985): 837-850.

Shiffrin, Seana Valentine. "Race, labor, and the fair equality of opportunity principle." *Fordham L. Rev.* 72 (2003): 1643.

Alexander, Larry. "What makes wrongful discrimination wrong? Biases, preferences, stereotypes, and proxies." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 141.1 (1992): 149-219.

Arneson, Richard J. "Against Rawlsian equality of opportunity." *Philosophical Studies* 93.1 (1999): 77-112.

\*\* see also Stanford Plato Equality of Opportunity  
(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egalitarianism/#EquOpp>)

\*\* for educational context, see Stanford Equality of Educational Opportunity  
(<https://edeq.stanford.edu/sections/equality-opportunity-introduction>)

### **Week 6 (2/22/17)**

**Topic:** Normative approaches to educational inequality

#### **Readings:**

Satz, Debra. "Equality, adequacy, and education for citizenship." *Ethics* 117.4 (2007): 623-648.

Temkin, Larry S. "The many faces of equal opportunity." *Theory and Research in Education* 14.3 (2016): 255-276.

Taylor, Robert S. "Self-realization and the priority of fair equality of opportunity." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 1.3 (2004): 333-347.

### **Week 7 (3/1/17)**

**Topic:** Normative approaches to spatial inequality (segregation)

#### **Readings:**

Anderson, Elizabeth. *The imperative of integration*. Princeton University Press, 2010. (skim chapters 1-5, read chapters 6 and 7) [available through UPenn library online and through JSTOR]

Shelby, Tommie. "Integration, Inequality, and Imperatives of Justice: A Review Essay." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 42.3 (2014): 253-285.

### **Week 8 (3/8/17)**

#### **Spring Break**

### **Week 9 (3/15/17)**

**Topic:** Measurement of income inequality

#### **Readings:**

Lorenz, Max O. "Methods of measuring the concentration of wealth." *Publications of the American statistical association* 9.70 (1905): 209-219.

Atkinson, Anthony B. "On the measurement of inequality." *Journal of economic theory* 2.3 (1970): 244-263.

Allison, Paul D. "Measures of inequality." *American sociological review* (1978): 865-880.

### **Week 10 (3/22/17)**

**Topic:** Measurement of social mobility (opportunity)

**Readings:**

Chetty, Raj, et al. "Where is the land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129.4 (2014): 1553-1623.

Fields, Gary S., and Efe A. Ok. "The measurement of income mobility: an introduction to the literature." *Handbook of income inequality measurement*. Springer Netherlands, 1999. 557-598.

Piketty, Thomas. "Theories of persistent inequality and intergenerational mobility." *Handbook of income distribution* 1 (2000): 429-476.

**Week 11 (3/29/17)**

**Topic:** Measurement of educational inequality

**Readings:**

Ladd, Helen, and Susanna Loeb. "The Challenges of Measuring School Quality." *Education, justice, and democracy* 19 (2013): 22-55.

Ho, Andrew Dean. "The problem with "proficiency": Limitations of statistics and policy under No Child Left Behind." *Educational researcher* 37.6 (2008): 351-360.

Quinn, David M. "Black–White Summer Learning Gaps Interpreting the Variability of Estimates Across Representations." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 37.1 (2015): 50-69.

Bond, Timothy N., and Kevin Lang. "The evolution of the Black-White test score gap in Grades K–3: The fragility of results." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 95.5 (2013): 1468-1479.

**Week 12 (4/5/17)**

**Topic:** Measurement of spatial inequality (segregation)

**Readings:**

Reardon, Sean F. "A conceptual framework for measuring segregation and its association with population outcomes." *Methods in social epidemiology* 1.169 (2006).

Reardon, Sean F. "School segregation and racial academic achievement gaps." *RSF* (2016).

**Week 13 (4/12/17)**

**Topic:** Measurement of poverty

**Readings:**

Sen, Amartya. "Poor, relatively speaking." *Oxford economic papers* 35.2 (1983): 153-169.

Atkinson, Anthony Barnes. "On the measurement of poverty." *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society* (1987): 749-764.

**Week 14 (4/19/17)**

**Topic:** What are the consequences of income inequality and segregation?

**Readings:**

Neckerman, Kathryn M., and Florencia Torche. "Inequality: Causes and consequences." *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 33 (2007): 335-357.

Burtless, Gary T., and Christopher Jencks. "American inequality and its consequences." Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 2002.

Card, David, and Jesse Rothstein. "Racial segregation and the black–white test score gap." *Journal of Public Economics* 91.11 (2007): 2158-2184.

Ananat, Elizabeth Oltmans. "The wrong side (s) of the tracks: The causal effects of racial segregation on urban poverty and inequality." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 3.2 (2011): 34-66.

**Week 15 (4/26/17)**

**Topic:** How are the different dimensions of equality related; What role does education play in reducing/increasing inequality?

**Readings:**

Autor, David H., Lawrence F. Katz, and Melissa S. Kearney. "Trends in US wage inequality: Revising the revisionists." *The Review of economics and statistics* 90.2 (2008): 300-323.

Autor, D. "Skills, education, and the rise of earnings inequality among the `other 99 percent'." *Science* 344 (2014): 843-851.

Reardon, K., Kalogrides, D., and Shores, K. "The Geography of Racial/Ethnic Test Scores", Working Paper (2016).

**Week 16 (5/3/17)**

**Topic:** What policy remedies exist for combating inequality?

**Readings:**

Bradbury, Bruce, et al. *Too many children left behind: The US achievement gap in comparative perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation, 2015. (slides available for download, book worth purchasing)

Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence F. Katz. "The effects of exposure to better neighborhoods on children: New evidence from the Moving to Opportunity experiment." *The American Economic Review* 106.4 (2016): 855-902.

Jackson, C. Kirabo, Rucker C. Johnson, and Claudia Persico. "The Effects of School Spending on Educational and Economic Outcomes: Evidence from School Finance Reforms." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131.1 (2016): 157-218.

Johnson, Rucker C. Long-run impacts of school desegregation & school quality on adult attainments. No. w16664. National Bureau of Economic Research, (2011).

Krusell, Per, Anthony Smith, and Joachim Hubmer. "The historical evolution of the wealth distribution: A quantitative-theoretic investigation." NBER Working Paper No. 23011  
Issued in December 2016.