The Politics of Inequality

Educational subject description sheet

Basic information

Field of study Joint Bachelor in Sustainability	**Education cycle** 2025/26
Speciality Social Sciences & Humanities	**Realization year** 2027/28
Organizational unit Faculty of Law and Administration	**Subject code** UJ.WPAJBSSSHS.810.16591.25
Study level first cycle (joint degree programme)	**Lecture languages** english
Study form full-time degree programme	**Subject related to scientific research** Yes
Education profile General academic	**Disciplines** Political and Administrative Sciences
Mandatory elective	**ISCED classification** 0312 Political sciences and civics
	USOS code

Subject coordinator	Piotr Szwedo
Lecturer	Thomas Kurer

Period Semester 5	**Examination** exam **Activities and hours** Lecture: 22	**Number of ECTS points** 3.0

Goals

C1	This course provides insights into the political driving forces behind social and economic inequality in contemporary advanced capitalist democracies. It covers the historical development of inequality, the role of institutions and public policies in explaining divergent levels of inequality, and citizens' political reactions to rising inequality.

Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
Knowledge – Student knows and understands:			
W1	the key matters taken up the current debate on the general patterns of changing levels of inequality as well as its most important economic drivers and political moderators.	JBS_K1_W01, JBS_K1_W04, JBS_K1_W06, JBS_K1_W07	written exam
W2	the basic tools at governments' disposal to intervene in and moderate structural change.	JBS_K1_W05, JBS_K1_W06	written exam
Skills – Student can:			
U1	formulate empirically-based answers as to why democracy may only be a limited corrective to rising economic inequality.	JBS_K1_U01, JBS_K1_U03	written exam
U2	critically reflect and evaluate media contributions as well as academic articles and position themselves in the ongoing debate on inequality and ways of addressing it.	JBS_K1_U01	written exam
Social competences – Student is ready for:			
K1	to discuss complex issues related to inequality in a structured and informed way.	JBS_K1_K03, JBS_K1_K05	written exam

Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*	
Lecture	22	
preparation for classes	36	
preparation for the exam	28	
Student workload	**Hours** 86	**ECTS** 3.0

* hour means 45 minutes

Study content

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
1.	Introduction and Overview	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
2.	Inequality Across Time and Space: Patterns and Measurement	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
3.	The Tension between Democracy and Capitalism	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
4.	Policy Intervention: The Government's Toolkit	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
5.	Taxation	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
6.	Public Opinion: A Democratic Corrective to Rising Inequality?	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
7.	Policy Preferences in the Age of Inequality	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
8.	Political Behavior and Elections	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
9.	(Unequal) Political Representation	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
10.	Social Mobility	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
11.	Intersectionality	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
12.	Open Topic (Student's Choice)	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
13.	Exam	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1

Course advanced

Teaching methods :

text analysis, lecture with multimedia presentation, discussion, solving tasks

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Lecture	written exam	Written exam

Entry requirements

None

Literature

Obligatory

1. Jensen, C. and van Kersbergen, K. (2016). The Politics of Inequality. Red Globe Press, New York, NY, 1st ed. 2017 edition edition. Additional literature will be provided digitally.

Effects

Code	Content
JBS_K1_K03	The graduate can consider different visions of the future and develop own evidence-based opinions in reference to the balance of values linked to economic development, social welfare, and environmental protection.
JBS_K1_K05	The graduate can defend the importance of scientific data and methods as a basis for decision-making.
JBS_K1_U01	The graduate can critically analyse academic literature, formulate research questions and conduct research under supervision.
JBS_K1_U03	The graduate can apply adequate methods and tools, including selected IT tools, to solve problems related to data collection, analysis, and management in the context of sustainability.
JBS_K1_W01	The graduate can describe the concept of sustainability and recognize the differences in relevant definitions, models and approaches.
JBS_K1_W04	The graduate can identify sustainability-related problems specific to selected cultural, geographical, and political contexts.
JBS_K1_W05	The graduate can identify essential international instruments and institutions related to sustainability and explain their potential role in resolution of a given problem.
JBS_K1_W06	The graduate can describe interconnections between various aspects of sustainability and identify their significance in the context of natural and social sciences, with a special focus on disciplines included in the selected specialisation track (law and politics; chemistry and physics; chemistry and biology; economics and geography; economics, management and engineering; humanities).
JBS_K1_W07	The graduate can apply the theory and methodology of disciplines included in the selected specialisation track to sustainability-related problems, taking into consideration practical limitations such as protection of intellectual property.