Democracy and Distribution
Michael Graetz and Ian Shapiro
Fall 2009

Monday 3:30 to 5:20 pm
Room 124

Office Hours
Michael Graetz: Mondays, 2:00-3:00
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An examination of the relations between democracy and the distribution of income and wealth, principally but not exclusively in the United States. Particular attention will be paid to the ways in which different groups, classes, and coalitions affect, and are affected by, democratic distributive politics. Attention will be divided among theories of distribution, distributive instruments, and the implementation of policies affecting distribution. Substantive topics covered will include taxes, welfare, public opinion, gender, race, affirmative action, education, and trade unions.

Open to juniors and seniors.

Course Requirements

Law and graduate students will be expected to write a 20 to 25 page research paper over the course of the semester. A one to two page paper prospectus must be discussed with the instructors and submitted for approval by Monday, October 12th. The instructors will suggest additional readings once paper topics have been selected. Because this is a research-oriented seminar, it is not appropriate for Credit/D/Fail. Undergraduate students can either pursue this option, or write two literature reviews (of approximately 10 pages). The topics should be approved by the instructors.

Students enrolled in the course will be expected to attend all classes and to initiate the discussion of at least three readings with a five minute introduction as assigned by the instructors the preceding week.

Key:
[L] Book available at Labyrinth
[O] Available online at the classes server
September 7
Facts about inequality in US and the world

Required:

Recommended:

September 14
Why has inequality increased?

Required:

Recommended:


• Jencks, Christopher, Susan Mayer, and Joseph Swingle, 2008. “Can We Fix the Federal Poverty Measure So it Provides Reliable Information About Changes in Children's Living Conditions?”. Unpublished paper.


September 21
No class

September 28
Analytical Tools I

Required:
• Olson, Mancur, 1965. The Logic of Collective Action. Chapters 1 and 6. [L]
• Hirschman, Albert, 1970. Exit, Voice and Loyalty. Chapters 1, 2, 3. [L]
Recommended:


October 5

Analytical Tools II

Required:

Recommended:

October 12

Politics I

Required:

Recommended:

October 19

Politics II

Required:

October 26

Instruments of distribution I

Required:

November 2

Instruments of distribution II

Required:
Recommended:

November 9
Women and Distribution
Invited speakers: Frances Rosenbluth

Required:
- Iversen and Rosenbluth, Women, Work, and Politics. Chapters 3 and 4 are optional.

November 16
Implementation I: Affirmative Action and Race

Required:
- Supreme Court documents on Ricci v. DeStefano [O]

Recommended:
- Alesina and Glaeser, Fighting Poverty. Chapter “Race and Redistribution”.
- Edsall, Mary and Thomas Edsall, 1992. Chain reaction: the impact of race, rights and taxes on politics. All other chapters.

November 23
Fall recess—no class

November 30
Implementation II: Education

Required
- Cohen, Justin, 2006. “Can Minimizing the Regressive Properties of Georgia’s HOPE Scholarship Program Make Merit-Based Aid Programs Appealing Methods of Downward Redistribution?” Final paper presented for the course Democracy and Distribution, taught by Ian Shapiro. Yale University. [O]
Recommended:

December 7
Unions and Workplace Democracy

Required:

Recommended: