This seminar will examine the political causes and consequences of the rise in the inequality of the distribution of income and wealth in the United States, other industrialized democracies, transition countries, and globally. The first half of the seminar will focus on the United States, and the second half will look at inequality comparatively and globally. Economic and political theories explaining increasing inequality will be discussed, along with the implications of rising inequality for democracy and governance.

Three books are assigned in addition to readings available on Blackboard:


Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Inequality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2007)

Timothy Noah, *The Great Divergence* [NB: will be published in January 2013]

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam, each worth about 30% of the final grade, both take-home exams. In addition, each student will write a research paper. The research paper will be weighted about 35%. The quality of participation in seminar discussion will also be taken into account in determining the final grade. You must clear your choice of a paper topic with me.

Prerequisites: Political Science 120 or equivalent plus upper division courses in comparative politics and/or political economy.

Outline of Topics and Readings:

Jan. 28. Political equality

Feb. 4. Global trends in inequality
   *The Economist*, special report on inequality, October 18, 2012.
Feb. 11. Evaluating theories of inequality

Feb. 18. Economic determinants of inequality

Feb. 25. Political consequences of income inequality in the US: 1
Lawrence Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Inequality and American Democracy* chs. 1-4

Mar. 4. Political consequences of income inequality in the US: 2
*PS* special issue, "Inequality and American Democracy," selected articles
(Brandolini & Smeeding; Weissberg; Bartels; Piven; Hacker; Bennett; Schlozman; Macedo & Karpowitz)

(Take-home midterm)

Mar. 18. Political sources of rising inequality in the US: 1
Jacob Hacker and Paul Pearson, *Winner-Take-All Politics* (Simon & Schuster, 2010), chs. 4-6

Mar. 25. Political sources of rising inequality in the US: 2
Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy* (Princeton UP, 2008), chs. 6 - 8

Apr. 1. Inequality Trends in the Rich World
OECD, "Growing Income Inequality in OECD Countries," May 2011

Apr. 8. Transition countries

Apr. 15. Attitudes toward inequality in comparative perspective
Gallup Poll, "Americans Prioritize Economy Over Reducing Wealth Gap"

Pew Research Center, Public Views of Inequality, Fairness and Wall Street
<<http://pewresearch.org/databank/dailynumber/?NumberID=1400>>

<<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/01/11/rising-share-of-americans-see-conflict-between-rich-and-poor/>>


Apr. 22. Inequality and Democratic Transitions
   Acemoglu and Robinson, chs. 1-2 of Economic Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship

Apr. 29. Global inequality
   Branko Milanovic, Worlds Apart, ch. 1, pp. 7-11.
   OECD report, Divided We Stand (2011), Special Focus: Inequality in Emerging Economies, pp. 47-78

(Paper due)