

**School for New Learning  
DePaul University  
Course Syllabus: HC 179 Economic Inequality: The Role and Responsibility of  
Business  
Winter, 2009**

**1. General Information**

Faculty: Paul Buchheit  
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773-774-3395

Location: O'Hare

Dates/Time: Mondays, 6:30-9:30 PM

**2. Course Description and Faculty Biographical Sketch**

This course will examine the role of corporations in the growth of economic inequality in the United States and the world. Inequality changes in the U.S. and various other countries will be correlated with the economic, political, educational, geographical, and historical trends that have affected incomes and standards of living since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Likely causes relevant to corporate strategies, especially over the past quarter-century, will be investigated, and possible solutions will be considered.

Students in this course will be required to participate through selected readings, brief reports on those readings, and class discussions. Each student will choose a specific topic of interest for individualized study, which will entail research and writing for an academic paper, and a class presentation.

Paul Buchheit has been a long-time faculty member with the Chicago City Colleges and Northwestern University, and he has taught a course at DePaul based on his book, "American Wars: Illusions and Realities" (Clarity Press, 2008). He has numerous publications in Cognitive Science, with an emphasis on language development. He is the founder of fightingpoverty.org, and in 2006 he founded Global Initiative Chicago (GIChicago.org), which promotes awareness of critical global issues among colleges and high schools in the Chicago area.

University of Illinois at Chicago. Ph.D. in Computer Science (1991).  
Natural Language Processing and Cognitive Science

Northwestern University. MS in Computer Science (1977)

Loyola University. BBA in Finance (6/75)

### 3. Competencies

#### **A-3-C**

Can examine a social issue from an ethical perspective. This class will consider the moral and ethical justifications for advocating economic inequality for the purpose of providing an incentive for workplace advancement.

**H-4 Power and Justice:** Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural, or economic groups in the United States

**H-5 Globalization:** Can analyze issues and problems from a global perspective. A primary emphasis of this class will be the comparison of income disparities in developed and developing countries.

**FX:** Can evaluate the conflicting relationship between capitalism, which purports to ultimately benefit all consumers, and the reality of growing inequality in the world's centers of capitalist activity.

### 4. Learning Experience

This class will include readings, brief written reports on those readings, and follow-up class discussion.

Each student will choose a specific area of interest relevant to the course for a comprehensive and up-to-date research study. Results of the study will be provided through a comprehensive research paper and a class presentation.

#### **Required Readings**

- Reich, Robert B., Supercapitalism. Knopf, 2007.
- Friedman, Thomas L., The Lexus and the Olive Tree. Anchor Books, 2000.

#### **Suggested Readings and Websites**

- Wilkinson, Richard. The Impact of Inequality. The New Press, 2005.
- Gates, Sr., William H. and Collins, Chuck. Wealth and Our Commonwealth: Why America Should Tax Accumulated Fortunes. Beacon Press, 2002.

- Johnston, David Cay. "Free Lunch." Penguin, 2007.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. Making Globalization Work. W. W. Norton, 2006.
- Friedman, Thomas L. The World Is Flat. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- Gallagher, Vincent, The True Cost of Low Prices: The Violence of Globalization. Orbis, 2006.
- Klein, Naomi. The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism. Metropolitan Books, 2007.
- Lardner, James and Smith, David A. (Editors), Inequality Matters: The Growing Economic Divide in America and Its Poisonous Consequences. The New Press, 2005.
- Perkins, John. Confessions of an Economic Hit Man. Plume, 2004.
- Paul Farmer, "Pathologies of Power" (University of California Press, 2005)
- World Bank, World Bank Development Indicators (most recent)
- Human Development Report, United Nations Development Programme (most recent).
- Too Much <http://toomuchonline.org>
- Working Group on Extreme Inequality < <http://extremeinequality.org>>
- "The Inequality Predicament: Report on the World Social Situation 2005," United Nations.
- "Human Security Report 2005"  
<http://www.humansecurityreport.org/HSR2005/Part5.pdf>, p. 152
- "Global Governance Initiative: Annual Report 2006"  
([http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Initiatives/GGI\\_Report06.pdf](http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Initiatives/GGI_Report06.pdf))
- "World Development Report 2006"  
(<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2006/Resources/477383-1127230817535/082136412X.pdf>)
- "The UNU/WIDER World Income Inequality Database"  
(<http://www.wider.unu.edu/wiid/wiid.htm>)
- "Income Inequality in the United States, 1913-1998," Thomas Piketty & Emmanuel Saez, Quarterly Journal of Economics, 118(1), 2003

- "Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig Our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich - and Cheat Everybody Else," by David Cay Johnston (Penguin, 2003)
- Melissa Rossi, "What Every American Should Know About Who's Really Running America" (Plume, Penguin Group, 2007)
- Frank, Robert. Richistan: A Journey through the American Wealth Boom and the Lives of the New Rich. Crown Publishers, 2007.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Class attendance will be part of the student's grade. Points will be deducted for unexcused absences and tardiness, and for leaving class early without permission.

### **5. Outcomes (based on competences)**

1. Students will understand the ethical implications of allowing economic policies to increase income disparities.
2. Students will be able to define the reasons and possible solutions for various forms of social and economic inequality, especially those related to American business policies.
3. Students will gauge the effectiveness of social institutions in addressing inequality and the costs or benefits of trade-policy-initiated government deregulation.
4. Students will study the racial, social, cultural, and economic differences that promote poverty and inequality.
5. Students will derive a global view of inequality and its causes and effects.

### **6. Evidence the Students will Submit**

Students will be required to submit a fully documented, publishable research paper and to make a classroom presentation of their work. Both the research paper and presentation should address the issues of corporatism (the business world) and inequality in the U.S. and throughout the world. Both the research paper and presentation must provide an analysis based on historical and global perspectives.

#### **Guidelines:**

Paper, 1 Competence: 5+ pages, 5+ references (about 2500 words)  
 Paper, 2 Competencies: 10+ pages, 10+ references (about 5000 words)  
 Presentation, 1 Competence: 15-minute talk and discussion

Presentation, 2 Competencies: 30-minute talk and discussion

*NOTE: The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!*

## **7. Criteria for Assessment**

Students will be graded as follows:

33% Research Paper: Relevance and thoroughness of research, quality of writing (clarity, persuasiveness, grammatical correctness)

33% Weekly Reports: Brief written reports and discussion

33% Final Exam

Note: Late assignments will not be accepted. Incomplete grades will be awarded only for documented medical or other emergency reasons.

## **8. Tentative Class Schedule**

**Week 1: Introduction / Preliminary Discussion / Assignment of Readings & Reports / Inequality Video (SANE) / Discussion Questions**

**Week 2: The State of Inequality in the United States and around the World**

- Various readings. Each student will be required to write a weekly one-page report on one of the class discussion questions, and to be prepared to defend his/her findings in class. The weekly report should include a summary of the reading materials and a personal opinion. At least two current (within one year) references should be cited.
- Inequality Video Clips

**Week 3: Capitalism**

- Book: Supercapitalism
- Video: WalMart

**Week 4: Corporatism**

- Video: The Corporation
- Readings on Corporate Responsibility

*One-page outline of paper / Summary of presentation*

**Week 5: Myths and Realities**

- Inequality is not real
- Inequality is real, but beneficial
- Corporatism does not promote inequality
- The Way We Never Were
- Videos: In Debt We Trust, IOUSA

**Week 6: Globalization: Ill Effects**

- Research Reports, Part 1
- Video: The American Ruling Class

*Presentations / First drafts of paper and presentation*

**Week 7: Globalization: Benefits**

- Book: The Lexus and the Olive Tree (Chapters 1-6, 14-16)
- Video: Moneymasters

**Week 8: The Color of Wealth**

- Readings from book of same name
- Video: The Economic Hitman
- Video: The Congo

**Week 9: The Economic Divide and Its Effects**

- Research Reports, Part 2
- Video: Unnatural Causes

*Presentations / Final drafts of research paper*

## **Week 10: Summary / Feedback / Individual conferences / Publishing efforts**

### **Addenda**

#### **DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy**

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

#### **DePaul University Incomplete Policy**

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

n.b. The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

- PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307. s