

# Indv 102: Social Issues in America

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Fall 2008

Class: ILC 150, TR 11:00–12:15  
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## Course Description

**Overview.** This course explores key social, economic, and political issues in the contemporary United States. It has four parts. The first will consider developments in living standards, inequality, poverty, economic security, and happiness in the U.S., with an emphasis on comparison to the past and to other affluent nations. The second part explores what might be done to address problems in these areas. The third examines contemporary politics in the United States. The fourth looks at America's role in the world and its contribution to economic and political progress in poorer countries.

**Readings.** The required readings for the course are listed in the schedule below. Articles and book chapters are available at eres.library.arizona.edu. The password is *indv102*. The following books are at the campus bookstore and can also be ordered online (barnesandnoble.com, amazon.com, etc.):

- Krugman, Paul. 2007. *The Conscience of a Liberal*. W.W. Norton.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Henry Holt and Co.
- Layard, Richard. 2005. *Happiness*. Penguin Press.
- Friedman, Milton and Rose Friedman. 1979. *Free to Choose*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Reich, Robert B. 2007. *Supercapitalism*. Knopf.
- Kaus, Mickey. 1992. *The End of Equality*. Basic Books.
- Edsall, Thomas Byrne, with Mary D. Edsall. 1992. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. W.W. Norton.

- Judis, John B. and Ruy Teixeira. 2002. *The Emerging Democratic Majority*. Simon and Schuster.
- Collier, Paul. 2007. *The Bottom Billion*. Oxford University Press.
- Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

**Lecture materials.** During lecture I will show you a large number of charts and tables. I will make these available for downloading or printing at [www.u.arizona.edu/~lkenwor/courses.html](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~lkenwor/courses.html).

**Grading.** Course grades will be based on four exams, each accounting for 25%. The grading scale for the course is: A = 90 and above; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; E = below 60. There will be no extra-credit projects or assignments of any kind.

**Exams.** The exam dates are listed in the schedule below. Make-ups will be permitted only in extreme circumstances. If something happens that forces you to miss an exam, you must notify me — either in person, by email, or by voice mail — within two hours of the scheduled exam start time and (later) provide documented proof of the circumstances. If I don't deem it a reasonable excuse, you will receive a zero for the exam.

**Academic integrity.** Students are expected to observe the University's Code of Academic Integrity. The Code can be found at [dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies](http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies).

**Behavior in the classroom.** Students are expected to observe the University's Student Code of Conduct as it pertains to classroom behavior (see [dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies](http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies)), and should be familiar with University policies against threatening behavior by students (see [policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml](http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml)).

**Students with disabilities.** If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; [drc.arizona.edu](http://drc.arizona.edu)) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

**Officially excused absences.** All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.

## **Schedule**

### **Part 1 Prosperity in America: How Things Stand**

#### Class dates

- August 26, 28; September 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 25 (no class Sept. 23)

#### Topics

- Slow income growth for middle America
- Rising inequality
- Persistent poverty
- Heightened economic insecurity
- Stagnant happiness

#### Readings

- Krugman, Paul. 2007. *The Conscience of a Liberal*. W.W. Norton. Chapters 1-9.
- *E-reserve*: Easterbrook, Gregg. 2003. "Practically Everything Getting Better." Pp. 35-79 in *The Progress Paradox*. Random House.
- *E-reserve*: Rector, Robert. 2007. "How Poor Are America's Poor?" Heritage Foundation.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Henry Holt and Co.
- *E-reserve*: Hacker, Jacob S. 2006. "The New Economic Insecurity." Pp. 11-34 in *The Great Risk Shift*. Oxford University Press.
- *E-reserve*: Gosselin, Peter. 2008. "Unjobs." Pp. 141-164 in *Hire Wire: The Precarious Financial Lives of American Families*. Basic Books.
- Layard, Richard. 2005. *Happiness*. Penguin Press. Chapters 1-6, 8, 14.

### ***Exam 1: Tuesday, September 30***

### **Part 2 Toward the Good Society**

#### Class dates

- October 2, 7, 9, 14, 16

#### Topics

- Putting the brakes on runaway inequality
- Alleviating poverty
- Equality of experience
- Taxes
- Is there a tradeoff between social justice and a healthy economy?

## Readings

- Friedman, Milton and Rose Friedman. 1979. *Free to Choose*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Introduction and chapters 1, 4, 5.
- Krugman, Paul. 2007. *The Conscience of a Liberal*. W.W. Norton. Chapters 10-13.
- Reich, Robert B. 2007. *Supercapitalism*. Knopf. Introduction and chapters 1-3.
- *E-reserve*: Center for American Progress Task Force on Poverty. 2007. "How to Cut Poverty in Half." Pp. 26-63 in *From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half*. Center for American Progress.
- *E-reserve*: Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 2007. "Equal Opportunities and the Welfare State." *Contexts* 6(3): 23-27.
- Kaus, Mickey. 1992. *The End of Equality*. Basic Books. Chapters 1-6, 9-10.

### ***Exam 2: Tuesday, October 21***

## **Part 3 Politics**

### Class dates

- October 23, 28, 30; November 4, 13 (no class Nov. 6, 11)

### Topics

- The 2008 election
- What difference can a president make?
- The collapse of the New Deal coalition
- Polarized America?
- An emerging Democratic majority?

### Readings

- *E-reserve*: Readings on or by the Obama and McCain campaigns — to be announced
- *E-reserve*: Bartels, Larry. 2008. "The Partisan Political Economy." Pp. 29-63 in *Unequal Democracy*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Edsall, Thomas Byrne, with Mary D. Edsall. 1992. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. W.W. Norton. Chapters 1-7.
- *E-reserve*: Fiorina, Morris P., with Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope. 2005. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. Pearson Longman. Pp. 1-33.
- Judis, John B. and Ruy Teixeira. 2002. *The Emerging Democratic Majority*. Simon and Schuster. Introduction and chapters 1-4.

### ***Exam 3: Tuesday, November 18***

## Part 4 America and the World

### Class dates

- November 20, 25; December 2, 4, 9 (no class Nov. 27)

### Topics

- "Pro-poor" growth, "social" growth, or just growth?
- Democracy and development
- When should we intervene?
- How many immigrants should we let in?
- Coming to terms with globalization

### Readings

- Collier, Paul. 2007. *The Bottom Billion*. Oxford University Press.
- Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press. Introduction and chapters 1, 2, 4, 5 (111-127), 6.
- *E-reserve*: Just, Richard. 2008. "The Truth Will Not Set You Free." *The New Republic*. August 27: 36-47.
- *E-reserve*: Jencks, Christopher. 2007. "The Immigration Charade." *New York Review of Books*. September 27: 49-52.
- *E-reserve*: Massey, Douglas. 2008. "Caution, NAFTA at Work: How Europe's Trade Model Could Solve America's Immigration Problem." *Miller-McCune*, [www.miller-mccune.com/article/190](http://www.miller-mccune.com/article/190).
- *E-reserve*: Kristof, Nicholas. 2006. "In Praise of the Maligned Sweatshop." *New York Times*, June 6.
- *E-reserve*: Sperling, Gene. 2007. "Rising Tide Economics." *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, [www.democracyjournal.org/article.php?ID=6547](http://www.democracyjournal.org/article.php?ID=6547).

***Exam 4: Tuesday, December 16 (11:00)***