

Social Policy and Socio-Economic Outcomes in Industrialized Countries

PSC 73903 / Cross listed: SOC 85902, ECON 89400, WSCP 81000

FALL 2021
Tuesdays 4:15pm–6:15pm
Professor Janet Gornick

Faculty:	Janet Gornick Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Graduate Center, CUNY Director, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality
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Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to cross-national comparative research, with a focus on socio-economic outcomes and on the policies and institutions that shape those outcomes. The course is organized around two databases available through [LIS, a data archive located in Luxembourg](#), with a [satellite office](#) here at the Graduate Center.

LIS contains two main micro-databases. The [Luxembourg Income Study \(LIS\) Database](#) includes 300+ micro-datasets from over 50 high- and middle-income countries. These datasets contain comprehensive measures of income, employment, and household characteristics. A smaller, companion dataset – the [Luxembourg Wealth Study \(LWS\) Database](#) – provides microdata on assets and debt. Since the mid-1980s, the LIS data have been used by more than 8000 researchers – mostly sociologists, economists, and political scientists – to analyze cross-country and over-time variation in diverse outcomes such as poverty, income inequality, employment status, wage patterns, gender inequality and family structure.

Many researchers have combined LIS' microdata with various macro-datasets to study, for example, the effects of national social or labor market policies on socio-economic outcomes, or to link socio-economic variation to national-level outcomes such as child well-being, health status, political attitudes and voting behavior. (The LIS and LWS data are accessed through an internet-based "remote-execution system". All students are permitted to use the LIS microdata at no cost and without limit.)

The course has two main components:

- 1) Students will read and assess a selection of published studies based on the data.
- 2) Students will carry out an original piece of empirical research using the LIS or LWS microdata. That work will culminate in a term paper.

While there are no formal prerequisites, students must have a working knowledge of basic statistics, and beginner-to-intermediate capacity in one of these programming languages: SAS, SPSS, Stata, or R.

Neither statistics nor programming will be part of the course's curriculum. Extensive documentation about the data, self-teaching materials, and instructional videos are available on the LIS website.

Comments on Course Structure and Plan:

Virtual Teaching Platform

The course will be taught using Zoom. The professor will serve as host and has provided a link that enables joining. Students do not have to have their own Zoom accounts.

Zoom (as most students know by now!) allows participants to activate both audio and video capacity. In general, students should utilize their video option so that they can be seen; if turning on the video creates any hardship or discomfort, please feel free to discuss that with the professor. When not speaking, students should activate the mute function.

Assignments and Grading

- attendance and participation in discussions 20% of grade
- (eight) weekly reaction papers, classes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 20% of grade
- presentation of reading in one class session
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 10% of grade
- two presentations related to semester-long research project 10% of grade
- research project, culminating in final paper due on December 7
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 40% of grade

Attendance

Weekly attendance is required but – of course – exceptions will be made to meet students' needs. If you need to miss a class (or to arrive late or leave early), please inform the professor before the session.

Learning Goals

- develop understanding of cross-national research on social policy and socio-economic outcomes
- gain familiarity with the LIS/LWS data and carry out a semester-long project related to the data

Study Groups

Students are strongly encouraged to form study groups. Groups might include students using the same software, or exploring similar methodological approaches, or sharing common substantive areas of interest/research.

Note that neither programming nor statistical techniques will be taught in class.

CLASS SCHEDULE / OVERVIEW ¹

Class #1	August 31	Introduction to the Course – 1	
Class #2	September 14	Introduction to the Course – 2	see required reading
Class #3	September 21	Poverty	see required reading
Class #4	September 28	Inequality – 1	see required reading
Class #5	October 5	Inequality – 2 <i>Paper proposal due</i>	see required reading
Class #6	October 12	The “Middle Class”	see required reading
Class #7	October 19	Wealth <i>First round of results due</i>	see required reading
Class #8	October 26	Politics	see required reading
Class #9	November 2	Student Presentations	
Class #10	November 9	Gender, Work, Family – 1	see required reading
Class #11	November 16	Gender, Work, Family – 2 <i>Draft literature review due</i>	see required reading
Class #12	November 23	Student Presentations – 1	
Class #13	November 30	Student Presentations – 2	
Class #14	December 7	Student Presentations – 3 <i>Final paper due</i>	

¹ Note: There will be no class on September 7.

REQUIRED READING

Note: All readings will be distributed via Dropbox or email.

Optional: You may wish to buy this book:

Gornick, Janet C., and Markus Jäntti (Eds). 2013. *Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

It is available from Amazon or from Stanford for approximately \$20 (paperback).

August 31

Introduction to the Course – 1

No Required Reading.

CLASS #2

September 14

Introduction to the Course – 2 – LIS and its Origins

Required Reading:

Smeeding, Timothy, Günther Schmaus, and Serge Allegrezza. 1985. "An Introduction to LIS." LIS Working Paper 1 (scanned copy). ([Skim this!](#))

Atkinson, A.B. 2004. "Luxembourg Income Study (LIS): Past, Present and Future." *Socio-Economic Review* 2(2): 165-190.

Förster, Michael F., and Koen Vleminckx. 2004. "International Comparisons of Income Inequality and Poverty: Findings from the Luxembourg Income Study." *Socio-Economic Review* 2(2): 191-212.

Gornick, Janet C., Berglind Hólm Ragnarsdóttir, and Sarah Kosteck. 2013. "Cross-National Data Center in Luxembourg, LIS." In Brian Kleiner, Isabelle Renschler, Boris Wernli, Peter Farago, and Dominique Joye (Eds), *Understanding Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences*. Zurich: Seismo, 89-99. ([Skim this!](#))

Also: Thoroughly explore the LIS website: www.lisdatacenter.org.

Register for access to LISSY (the remote-execution system).

Learn how to use METIS.

Get acquainted with the LIS Working Papers search engine.

Begin to review the Self-Teaching Materials.

<https://www.lisdatacenter.org/resources/self-teaching/>

<https://www.lisdatacenter.org/resources/online-tutorial-series/>

For fun! View this video ("LIS: The Early Years") <https://www.lisdatacenter.org/about-lis/>

CLASS #3

September 21

Poverty

Required Reading:

Scruggs, Lyle, and James P. Allan. 2006. "The Material Consequences of Welfare States: Benefit Generosity and Absolute Poverty in 16 OECD Countries." *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(7): 880-904.

Chen, Wen-Hao, and Miles Corak. 2008. "Child Poverty and Changes in Child Poverty". *Demography* 45(2), August: 537-553.

Marx, Ive, Lina Salanauskaite, and Gerlinde Verbist. 2016. "For the Poor, but Not Only the Poor: On Optimal Pro-Poorness in Redistributive Policies." *Social Forces*, 95(1): 1–24.

Bradbury, Bruce, Markus Jäntti, and Lena Lindahl. 2018. "Labour Income, Social Transfers and Child Poverty". *Social Indicators Research*, 143: 251-276.

CLASS #4

September 28

Inequality - 1

Required Reading:

Selected chapters in: Janet C. Gornick and Markus Jäntti (Eds). 2013. *Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press:

Gornick, Janet C., and Markus Jäntti. 2013. "Introduction."

Alderson, Arthur, and Kevin Doran. 2013. Chapter 1.
"How Has Income Inequality Grown? The Reshaping of the Income Distribution in LIS Countries."

Ólafsson, Stefan, and Armaldur Kristjánsson. 2013. Chapter 15.
"Income Inequality in Boom and Bust – A Tale from Iceland’s Bubble Economy."

Vanneman, Reeve, and Amaresh Dubey. 2013. Chapter 16.
"Horizontal and Vertical Inequalities in India."

CLASS #5

October 5

Inequality - 2

Required Reading:

Caminada, Koen, Kees Goudswaard, Chen Wang, and Jinxian Wang. 2019. "Income Inequality and Fiscal Redistribution in 31 Countries After the Crisis." *Comparative Economic Studies*, 61:119–148

Guillaud, Elvire, Matthew Olckers, and Michaël Zemmour. 2020. "Four Levers of Redistribution: The Impact of Tax and Transfer Systems on Inequality Reduction." *Review of Income and Wealth*, Series 66(2): 444-466.

Parolin, Zachary, and Janet C. Gornick. forthcoming. "Pathways toward Inclusive Income Growth: A Comparative Decomposition of National Growth Profiles." *American Sociological Review*.

CLASS #6

October 12

The "Middle Class"

Required Reading:

Selected chapters in: Janet C. Gornick and Markus Jäntti (Eds). 2013. *Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press:

Atkinson, Anthony B., and Andrea Brandolini. 2013. Chapter 2.
"On the Identification of the Middle Class."

Kenworthy, Lane. 2013. Chapter 3.
"Has Rising Inequality Reduced Middle-Class Income Growth?"

Also:

Rasch, Rebecca. 2017. "Measuring the Middle Class in Middle-Income Countries." *Forum for Social Economics*, 47(5): 321-336. (This paper reports Rebecca's project for this class in spring 2013).

Also:

Gornick, Janet, and Nathaniel Johnson. 2020

["Income Inequality in Rich Countries: Examining Changes in Economic Disparities"](#) (Items, online)

CLASS #7

October 19

Wealth

Required Reading:

Selected chapters in: Janet C. Gornick and Markus Jäntti (Eds). 2013. *Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press:

Sierminska, Eva, Timothy Smeeding, and Serge Allegrezza. 2013. Chapter 10.
"The Distribution of Assets and Debt."

Jäntti, Markus, Eva Sierminska, and Philippe Van Kerm. 2013. Chapter 11.
"The Joint Distribution of Income and Wealth."

Bradbury, Bruce. 2013. Chapter 12.
"The Fourth Retirement Pillar in Rich Countries."

Also:

Gornick, Janet C., Eva Sierminska, and Timothy Smeeding. 2009. "The Income and Wealth Packages of Older Women in Cross-National Perspective." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 64B(3): 402-414.

CLASS #8

October 26

Politics

Required Reading:

Selected chapters in: Janet C. Gornick and Markus Jäntti (Eds). 2013. *Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press:

Mahler, Vincent, David K. Jesuit, and Piotr Paradowski. 2013. Chapter 5.
"Political Sources of Government Redistribution in High-Income Countries."

Tóth, István György, and Tamás Keller. 2013. Chapter 6.
"Income Distribution, Inequality Perceptions, and Redistributive Preferences in European Countries."

Also:

Burgoon, Brian, Sam van Noort, Matthijs Rooduijn, and Geoffrey Underhill. 2019. "Positional Deprivation and Support for Radical Right and Radical Left Parties." *Economic Policy*, 34(97), January: 49-93.

CLASS #9

November 2

Student Presentations: research project designs – to be scheduled.

CLASS #10

November 9

Gender, Women, Work, and Family - 1

Required Reading:

Gornick, Janet C., Marcia K. Meyers, and Katherin E. Ross. 1998. "Public Policies and the Employment of Mothers: A Cross-National Study." *Social Science Quarterly*, 79(1): 35-54.

Gornick, Janet C., and Jerry A. Jacobs. 1998. "Gender, The Welfare State, and Public Employment: A Comparative Study of Seven Industrialized Countries." *American Sociological Review*, 63(5): 688-710.

Gornick, Janet C. 1999. "Gender Equality in the Labor Market." In Diane Sainsbury (Ed.) *Gender and Welfare State Regimes*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press: 210-242.

Bardasi, Elena, and Janet C. Gornick. 2008. "Working for Less? Women's Part-Time Wage Penalties Across Countries." *Feminist Economics* 14(1): 37-72.

CLASS #11

November 16

Gender, Women, Work, and Family - 2

Required Reading:

Selected chapters in: Janet C. Gornick and Markus Jäntti (Eds). 2013. *Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press:

Harkness, Susan. 2013. Chapter 7.
"Women's Employment and Household Income Inequality."

Folbre, Nancy, Janet C. Gornick, Helen Connolly, and Teresa Munzi. 2013. Chapter 8.
"Women's Employment, Unpaid Work, and Economic Inequality."

Estévez-Abe, Margarita, and Tanja Hethey. 2013. Chapter 9.
"Women's Work, Family Earnings, and Public Policy."

CLASS #12

November 23

Student Presentations – to be scheduled.

CLASS #13

November 30

Student Presentations – to be scheduled.

CLASS #14

December 7

Student Presentations – to be scheduled.