Latin America often is considered the most unequal region in the world. Why? Does inequality threaten the stability or content of democracy? And how do governments perpetuate or temper inequalities? This seminar explores the impact of economic, racial, gender, geographic, and citizenship inequalities on the workings of Latin American democracy. The main goal is to understand what we know and how to research questions about inequalities in the region. We begin by surveying the types, origins, and possible political impacts of inequality in Latin America. We then consider how governments shape economic inequality through social policies to help the most vulnerable, tax and corporate policies to restrain the most powerful, and labor and educational policies to influence the distribution of earnings. Finally, we turn to different ways to think about inequality and its effects, from race to gender to the criminal justice system. While focused on Latin America, the course reflects on what wealthy countries with rising inequality like the United States can learn from a region with historically high levels of inequality like Latin America.

While we will review and debate inequalities in Latin America, the seminar is intended to help students to define and at least partially conduct a research project. Some of the readings and class time will be dedicated to how to conduct political science research. We also will conduct brief data exercises to think about how to visually communicate and express ideas about inequality (no special background required). The other assignments are geared towards the successful completion of a final paper, due Thursday, May 7, which can be either a research paper or a well-elaborated research plan accompanied by indicative preliminary findings.
How to Enroll

Enrollment for all Government 94 seminars is limited to 16 undergraduates. Prof. Holland is allotted four slots to assign at her discretion and the remaining twelve slots are assigned via a lottery, which is administered by the Government Department’s Program Office. Government concentrators are given preference in the lottery; however, non-Government concentrators are welcome to enter it. For a full description of the lottery process for Gov94 seminars, see https://undergrad.gov.harvard.edu/gov-94-seminars.

Recommended approach:

1. **Email Prof. Holland**, aholland@fas.harvard.edu anytime before the first class meeting, asking to be considered for a discretionary slot in case you are not admitted by lottery. Introduce yourself (name, concentration, year) and say why you want to take the course.

   ...AND/OR...

2. **Come to the first class** on Monday, January 27, at 6-7 pm in CGIS Knafel K262 to add your name and info to the list of students to be considered for discretionary slots. Note the special meeting time to accommodate the lottery process!

   ...THEN...

3. **Complete a Gov 94 lottery form** available at the Government Undergraduate Office and submit it in CGIS Knafel K151 by the 6 pm deadline on Wednesday, January 29.

4. An email will go out when the lottery results are posted on the Undergraduate Program website on the evening of Thursday, January 30. Prof. Holland then will email the students to confirm whether they want to accept or decline their lotteried slots.

5. Once responses are in, Prof. Holland will email students requesting discretionary spots confirming their availability.
Assignments and Class Policies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Seminar engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Data communication exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Final research paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Paper proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>In-class presentation and comments on peers’ projects</td>
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Seminar engagement (20%): Your engagement is at the heart of this seminar. In class, I will pose discussion questions and sometimes present brief lectures to situate and clarify issues. In the main, though, our meetings will emphasize student participation and dialogue. For this format to work, you will need to read with a critical eye and work to (1) put the assigned readings into dialogue with one another, (2) connect them to issues we’ve discussed in earlier weeks, and (3) develop your own questions and perspectives for class discussion. I expect students to arrive at class ready to articulate their perspectives on what the readings say, which issues most deserve our attention, why some arguments should be seen as stronger than others, and how we should think about the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, and so on. Given that this is a seminar, my role is to stimulate your curiosity and guide us through open questions about inequality in Latin America, not to lecture.

Class engagement will count for 20% of your overall course grade. I hope everyone will feel that participation in this class is about more than getting a grade. But grades matter, so I want to be clear up front that there are subjective elements to evaluating participation. People contribute to class in different ways; quality is at least as important as quantity; and when it comes to quality, listening is as important as talking. So be aware that I do not take a “bean-counting” approach to grading student participation: I don’t have a set number of statements I expect people to make.

Important elements of participation include: consistent class attendance, strong preparation for seminar discussions (such as careful reading and arriving with well-developed questions and perspectives), active engagement in seminar discussions (listening carefully, responding to others, offering good reasons for the views you advance), deliberate efforts to step back from the conversation and help the group see its own assumptions or biases, and so on.

Data communication and analysis exercises (15%): You will complete three short (1 page or 1 visual) data communication assignments during the course of the semester. Inequality is a hard concept for citizens and scholars to understand so these exercises are meant for you to think about how to break down complex ideas visually. They will not assume any technical background.

Final paper (40%): Each student will write a roughly 20 page research paper, which is at the core of this course. Students may write a paper on a Latin American case or set of cases or may write a paper that compares a Latin American case with a case from another region. Your research paper should address some aspect of inequality, and should draw on theories and readings analyzed in the course. Your paper is a political science paper, and thus should be causal and not merely descriptive in nature. This means your paper should have some clear and answerable research questions it will address, will have testable hypotheses, and will draw on either quantitative or qualitative evidence (or both) to test these hypotheses. The papers are due on Thursday, May 7 at 9 AM to the Course
Website. Late papers will lose one-half grade per day, unless you have a medical or emergency excuse verified by the Resident Dean or University Health Services.

*Paper proposal (15%)*: You also will be asked to submit a preliminary “ideas memo” with several possible research questions by **Monday, March 2**. You then will be asked to submit a roughly 5 page (double-spaced) proposal for your final research paper. A good paper proposal will have a clear research question, briefly review literature related to this question, propose hypotheses to test, and describe the data (qualitative or quantitative) that will be used to examine your hypotheses. The proposal is due at 9 AM on **Monday, March 30** to Course Website and will be followed by a mandatory meeting with Professor Holland to discuss your proposal and the next steps.

*Presentation and Peer Comments (10%)*: The last regular class session plus a meeting during reading period (if we haven’t finished) will be reserved for a presentation of preliminary findings of the research. Students will present (7-8 minutes) and mutually comment upon their research designs and preliminary findings. You will be graded based on the quality of your presentation as well as your constructive engagement with your peers’ projects.

*Policy on joint submission of student research proposals and papers*: Juniors in the course may wish to incorporate their work in this course into their senior thesis or in thesis preparation courses (Gov 61 and Gov 62). Students should be aware that Government Department policy requires the permission of both instructors to do so. My expectation is that a proposal will be of significantly greater development, if you choose to submit it jointly. Please see me if you have any questions or would like to ask for permission to do a joint submission.

*Collaboration Policy Statement*: For all written work in this class, students’ ideas must be their own. Students may read each other’s papers and proposals and offer feedback. However, all writing for handed-in assignments must be done individually. In your proposal and paper, you must also adhere to standard citation practices and properly cite resources that have helped you with your work.

*Technology in Class*: Laptops and other electronic devices are allowed for course-relevant purposes. If you find them helpful, don’t hesitate to use them. But please note that a growing body of research suggests that computer-assisted note-taking can increase distractions, encourage rote transcription, and inhibit learning.

*Reading*: There are no required books for this course. All readings are available to download and print from the course website.

*Attendance*: Colds, flu, interviews, performances, sports games, etc. are part of college life but also shouldn’t interfere with your ability to engage with this seminar. All students get a single missed class with no questions asked. After that, missed classes will begin to affect your engagement grade unless you have spoken to me about attenuating circumstances.

*Due dates*: Late memos, prospectuses, and papers will lose one-half grade per day, unless you have documented accommodation, medical or emergency reason verified by your Resident Dean and, if applicable, the University Health Services.

*Accommodations for Ability and Faith*: I am eager to hear from anyone who may require accommodations in this class for reasons related to ability, life circumstances, or religion. Please let
me know if I can help by modifying seating, deadlines, or other features of the class. If you have questions or needs in this regard, I encourage you to contact Harvard’s Accessible Education Office (AEO) and to discuss academic adjustments with me by the second week in the term (February 6). I also encourage students to review the syllabus and contact me to arrange reasonable and timely accommodations for religious practices.

*Mental Health, Stress Management, and Sexual/Gender Harassment:* As a student, you may experience a range of stressors and mental health challenges. These conditions may diminish academic performance, reduce your ability to participate in daily activities, and pose a significant threat to individual wellbeing. Please know that I take this issue very seriously and want to do all I can to help. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Counseling and Mental Health Website. Equally significant challenges to performance and personal wellbeing can arise when students experience sexual or gender-based harassment, a hostile environment, stalking, relationship violence, or sexual assault. If you experience any issues of this sort, I encourage you to reach out to confidential counselors at the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention & Response or discuss them in the third-person with me, as you feel comfortable.
COURSE SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE

Week 1 (January 27): Introduction
Rescheduled to Monday at 6-7 pm in CGIS K262 to accommodate lottery.

Week 2 (February 6): The Measurement and Perception of Inequality


Week 3 (February 13): The Origins and Legacies of Inequality in Latin America


Week 4 (February 20): Political Representation


Week 5 (February 27): Redistribution to the Poor (Social Policy)


Ideas Memo due by 9 AM on Monday, March 2 to Course Website.

Memo, 2-3 pages, double-spaced, outlining several possible research questions that the student would like to discuss in an individual, mandatory meeting with Professor Holland, to prepare for fleshing out one of them more fully in later assignments.

Week 6 (March 5): Redistribution from the Rich (Taxation and Competition Policy)


- For background, skim “A Torrential Leak,” The Economist April 9, 2017.
- And look at the associated figures from the ICIJ.


**Week 6 (March 5): Labor Inequality**


**Week 7 (March 12): Grievances and Popular Resistance**


Read about the following cases of protests in fall 2019:


SPRING BREAK

Week 8 (March 26): Land and Spatial Inequality


Prospectus due by 9 AM on Monday, March 30 to Course Website.
Roughly 5 pages, double-spaced involving a question, hypotheses, and research design for the final research paper. What question do you propose to ask and why; and how do you propose to do the research?

Week 9 (April 2): No class—Individual Prospectus Consultations
Meetings to be scheduled with Professor Holland after submitting Research Prospectus.

Week 10 (April 9): Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Inequality


Week 11 (April 16): Unequal before the Law


**Week 12 (April 23): Wrap Up and In-Class Presentations**
The last class sessions will be devoted to presentation of preliminary findings of the research. Students will present and mutually comment upon their research designs and preliminary findings. Each presenter will have 15 minutes: 7-8 minutes to present and then 7-8 minutes for class discussion.

**Week 13 (April 30): In-Class Presentations** (*meeting during reading period if necessary*)

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<th>Final paper due by 9 AM on Thursday, May 7 to Course Website.</th>
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<td>Roughly 20 pages, double-spaced. Final paper can be a research paper or a well-elaborated research plan accompanied by preliminary findings.</td>
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