

Justice:
Confronting Wicked Problems

Summer 2022

Instructor: Jonas Brodin
E-mail: jonas.brodin@swedishprogram.org
Class hours: TBA
Office hours: TBA, A987

“Wicked Problems” is a term that refers to complex and interrelated social issues that have resisted political solutions over time. This course focuses on three such “wicked problems” facing societies across the globe, examining both the consequences of these “wicked problems” and policies attempting to address them, with a special emphasis on the approaches used in Sweden. The framework of the course will focus on how economic inequality underlies many of these “wicked problems” across the world. More specifically, we will study how inequality within a specific country and across countries affects the following:

- Public health outcomes, e.g., life expectancy, disease burden, and health inequalities;
- Environmental justice, e.g., unequal burdens faced by marginalized communities because of environmental degradation;
- Immigration/economic and social integration, racism, democracy, and the far right.

The course will feature weekly study visits to relevant government agencies, organizations, and research institutes engaged in efforts to solve the aforementioned problems, as well as lectures and in-class discussions about the theories and practices relating to each week’s topic. The aim of the course is to not only understand existing social science research on the core topics, but also the political efforts in Sweden to solve these wicked social problems. The final week of the course will involve student-led panel discussions on future public policies that are deemed necessary to address these wicked problems.

Google Classroom: The Swedish Program uses the Google Classroom platform for all its courses. On the course Classroom page, you will find the readings, assignments, and lecture notes, as well as links to useful resources for further study. The course platform is also where you will submit your assignments. It also functions as a discussion forum outside of class: you are highly encouraged to participate in extending class discussions by posting questions and links throughout the semester. I will use the course platform to post links to

articles and books that are relevant to the class, as well as reminders of deadlines and questions I have for you as a group outside of class.

Readings: The readings for the course will be announced closer to the start of the course, but will comprise primarily of academic and journalistic articles, as well as policy reports from research institutes.

Grading: Your grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

<i>Attendance and participation:</i>	20%
<i>Research report:</i>	60%
<i>Panel discussion:</i>	20%

Attendance & Participation (20%): Attendance is mandatory. An unexcused absence may negatively affect your final grade. Your grade will not be affected if you miss a class due to illness or in the case of a (documented) emergency situation. This course is a seminar, which means that in addition to attendance, your active participation in class discussions is essential. Please prepare for seminar by writing down the questions you have about the reading or the topic of that day's class.

Research project (60%): The research project is an in-depth investigation into a single "wicked problem" of your choosing, and is meant to give you a better sense of the multidimensional complexities involved in addressing a "wicked problem" than we could possibly do during classtime. You will, in consultation with the instructor, choose the topic of your project during the first week of the course, and then research the topic independently until the final week of the course, when you will submit a written research report as well as participate in a panel discussion about your project. The research project should use and incorporate what you have learned in lecture and through the class readings. You will be given guidelines to help structure your written project.

Panel discussion (20%): The final week of the course is dedicated to panel discussions about the students' research projects; each day will feature a different panel of students. Each student on the panel will first give a brief presentation on their project, after which the panel will discuss each other's projects.

Study visits and guest lecturers: Study visits to relevant organizations, research institutes, and/or agencies will be an essential part of the class in order to discuss how "wicked problems" are currently being addressed by researchers and policy makers. The specific organizations to be visited will be announced closer to the start of the course, in early April, 2022. There might also be guest lecturers by specialists on the specific topics discussed in the course.

Course learning outcomes: At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge about both the nature of "wicked problems" more generally and the details of specific case studies in the topic areas of public health, environmental justice, and political polarization and marginalization

- Acquire knowledge about a case study of their choosing
- Produce a long, rigorous, empirically based research paper
- Prepare for and participate in a panel discussion on their case study

Schedule:

Week 1 Why inequality causes “wicked problems”

Day 1 *The cost of inequality: a global perspective*

Reading: Saez, “Income and Wealth Inequality”
 Banerjee & Duflo, “How Poverty Ends”
 “A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility”
 (executive summary)
 “Public Good or Private Wealth?”

Day 2 *Social disinvestment in local communities*

Reading: Klinenberg, *Palaces for the People* (excerpts)
 Semuels, “Good School, Rich School; Bad School, Poor School”
 Couloute, “Getting Back on Course: Educational Exclusion and
 Attainment among Formerly Incarcerated People”
 McIntire & Keller, “The Demand for Money Behind Many Traffic
 Stops”

Day 3 *The changing nature of work*

Reading: Kalleberg, “Job Insecurity and Well-Being in Rich Democracies”
 Hacker, *The Great Risk Shift* (excerpts)
 Chen, “All Hollowed Out: The Lonely Poverty of America’s White
 Working Class”
 Jaffe, “The Battle for the Future of ‘Gig’ Work”

Day 4 *Spatialized inequalities*

Reading: Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (excerpts)
 Jargowsky, “The Architecture of Segregation”
 Bloch, “Shade”
 Desmond, “Forced Out”
 Lawton, “Situating Revanchism in the Contemporary City”

Gustafsson, "Spatial, Financial and Ideological Trajectories of Public Housing in Malmö, Sweden"

Week 2 Public health outcomes

Day 1 *Health inequalities and deaths of despair*

Reading: Case & Deaton, "The Epidemic of Despair"

Avendano & Kawachi, "Why Do Americans Have Shorter Life Expectancy and Worse Health Than Do People in Other High-Income Countries?"

Wolf et. al., "How Are Income and Wealth Tied to Health and Longevity?"

Prasad, "The Human Cost of Insulin in America"

Day 2 *The opioid epidemic: cause and effect*

Reading: Kliff, "The Opioid Epidemic Changed How Doctors Think About Pain"

Quinones, *Dreamland* (excerpts)

Macy, *Dopesick* (excerpts)

Radden Keefe, "Empire of Pain"

Luthra, "How Germany Averted An Opioid Crisis"

Day 3 *The consequences of food insecurity*

Reading: Nestle, *Food Politics* (excerpts)

Fernald & Gosliner, "Global Approaches to Addressing Childhood Poverty and Food Insecurity"

Schanzenbach et. al., "Twelve Facts about Food Insecurity and SNAP"

Florida, "It's Not the Food Deserts: It's the Inequality"

Wolfson, "Food Insecurity During COVID-19"

Day 4 *Maternity care: costs and outcomes in Sweden and the U.S.*

Reading: Rosenthal, "American Way of Birth, Costliest in the World"

Villarosa, "Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis"

Martin & Belluz, "The Extraordinary Danger of Being Pregnant and Uninsured in Texas"

Thielking, "Sky-High C-Section Rates in the US Don't Translate to Better Birth Outcomes"

Thomas, "Trusting Women, Respecting Birth: Prenatal Care in Sweden"

Week 3 Environmental justice

Day 1 *Whose clean water? The many dimensions of environmental justice*

Reading: Davis, "Slum Ecology"

Purdy, "The Long Environmental Justice Movement"

Campbell et. al., A Case Study of Environmental Injustice: The Failure in Flint"

Day 2 *Environmental justice and the Sámi in Sweden*

Reading: "Rights at Risk: Arctic Climate Change and the Threat to Sami Culture"

Hanle, "The Fight for the Reindeer"

Persson et. al., "What Local People? Examining the Gállok Mining Conflict and the Rights of the Sámi Population in Terms of Justice and Power"

Cambou, "Uncovering Injustices in the Green Transition: Sámi Rights in the Development of Wind Energy in Sweden"

Day 3 *Environmental racism in the United States*

Reading: Bullard, "Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement"

Benz, "Toxic Cities: Neoliberalism and Environmental Racism in Flint and Detroit Michigan"

Williams, "Pesticides, Plantations, and Environmental Racism in the United States South"

Pilkington, "Hookworm, a Disease of Extreme Poverty, Is Thriving in the US South. Why?"

Day 4 *Climate migration: adaptation and vulnerability*

Reading: McLeman & Hunter, "Migration in the Context of Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change"

Lustgarten, "Where Will Everyone Go?"

Migration and Global Environmental Change (excerpts)
Kartiki, "Climate Change and Migration: A Case Study from Rural Bangladesh"

Week 4 Political polarization and marginalization

Day 1 *The rise of the populist far right*

Reading: Müller, *What Is Populism?* (excerpts)
Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (excerpts)
Brubaker, "Why Populism?"
Krastev, "The Age of Populism: Reflections on the Self-enmity of Democracy"
Joppke, "Immigration and the Identity of Citizenship: The Paradox of Universalism"

Day 2 *Integration and disempowerment of marginalized groups*

Reading: Packer, "The Other France"
Strang & Ager, "Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas"
Rieting, "Germany's New Approaches to Integrating Refugees into the Labor Market"
Barry & Selsoe Sorensen, "In Denmark, Harsh New Laws for Immigrant 'Ghettos'"

Day 3 *Free movement and exclusion: Roma migrants in Sweden*

Reading: Carens, "The Rights of Irregular Migrants"
Hansson & Mitchell, "The Exceptional State of 'Roma Beggars' in Sweden"
Djuve et. al., *When Poverty Meets Affluence* (excerpts)
Gehring, "Free Movement for Some: The Treatment of the Roma after the European Union's Eastern Expansion"

Day 4 *Democratic deconsolidation and elected authoritarianism*

Reading: Foa & Mounk, "America after Trump: From 'Clean' to 'Dirty' Democracy?"
Achen & Bartels, "Democracy for Realists"
Levitsky & Ziblatt, "This Is How Democracies Die"

Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom* (excerpts)

Week 5 Panel discussions

Day 1 Panel discussion I

Day 2 Panel discussion II

Day 3 Panel discussion III

Day 4 Panel discussion IV