EC483
Special Topics in
Economics of Distribution
Fall 2025
Syllabus

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Important Note: This syllabus is tentative and possibly subject to change.
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Lectures:
- Tuesday: 14:00–14:50 @ NBZ11
- Thursday: 13:00–14:50 @ NBZ11
Office Hours:
- Thursday 16:00-16:50 @ NB222A or by appointment

Course Website: Boğaziçi University Moodle
Supplementary Textbooks:

- *Measuring Distribution and Mobility of Income and Wealth*, Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, Janet C. Gornick, Barry Johnson, and Arthur Kennickell (2022)
  – ISBN-10: 0226816036
- *Combating Inequality: Rethinking Government's Role*, Olivier Blanchard and Dani Rodrik (2021)
  – ISBN-10: 0262045613
- *Inequality: What Can Be Done?*, Anthony B. Atkinson (2015)
  – ISBN-10: 0674504763
- *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Piketty (2017)
  – ISBN-10: 0674979850
- *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*, Angus Deaton (2015)
  – ISBN-10: 0691165629
- *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*, Alberto Alesina, and Edward Glaeser (2004)
  – ISBN-10: 0199286108
- *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (2016), Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal
  – ISBN-10: 0262528622

Prerequisites: None; *strongly* recommended prerequisites: EC203, EC205, EC331, EC332

Course Description: This course aims to familiarize students with recent advancements in the field of economic inequality research. Due to an increased availability of individual-level data, there has been notable growth in high-quality studies examining the sources, consequences, and interactions of economic disparities in recent years. Through engagement with current academic literature, this course exposes students to state-of-the-art research on factors influencing income and wealth distribution. Students will build skills for comprehending empirical analyses and theoretical frameworks around distributional economics. The course focuses heavily on distilling insights from frontier publications to equip students to actively participate in this rapidly developing area of economic study.

Grading: The cumulative grade will be based on a term project and presentation, some quizzes/assignment(s), and a final exam. The weights are as follows:

- Quizzes/Assignment(s)/Attendance: 20%
- Term Project/Presentation: 40%
- Final Exam: 40%

Quizzes will be unannounced to help students stay consistently engaged with the material.

Assignments will focus on building skills in data analysis, methodology, and theoretical understanding. Late submissions will not receive credit.

The term project and its presentation will be based on inequality-related topics, the details of which I will share throughout the class. I expect the term project to be written using LaTeX and the group presentation to be prepared using Beamer (a LaTeX-based presentation platform).

The standard catalog grading protocol accepted at Boğaziçi University is as follows:

Letter Grade	Interpretation	GPA Points	Percentage Range
AA	Excellent	4.0	90%-100%
BA	Good/Excellent	3.5	85%-89%
BB	Good	3.0	80%-84%
CB	Passing/Good	2.5	75%-79%
CC	Passing	2.0	70%-74%
DC	Poor/Passing	1.5	65%-69%
DD	Poor	1.0	60%-64%
F	Fail	0.0	0-59%

Yet, I reserve the right to adjust your letter based on the distribution of the cumulative grades.

Attendance: Regular attendance is *mandatory*, and I reserve the right to change your grades based on your attendance.

Communication: Most of the course materials will be posted on the course website. E-mail will be used as the primary means of communication outside the classroom, and I will be sending e-mails whenever necessary to inform you of updates on the course. Please make sure that the e-mail address you have with the Registrar's Office is up-to-date so that you will not miss any of the announcements.

Copyrights: Course materials are *copyrighted*. Reproducing or sharing lecture materials without permission is a violation of academic policy and subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity: The undergraduate program of the Department of Economics is conducted within the framework of the Student Discipline Regulations of the Turkish Council of Higher Education (TCHE, Yükseköğretim Kurulu, YÖK in Turkish) and rules accepted by the Boğaziçi University Committee on Ethical Conduct.

For the student discipline regulations by the TCHE (YÖK), see (in Turkish): bit.ly/YOKdisiplin

For the ethics code accepted by Boğaziçi University, see: bit.ly/bounethics

The students of the Department of Economics are also informed about the consequences of academic dishonesty in the EC 103 Orientation to Economics course. For a brief refresher, see bit.ly/bounplagiarism

Outline of topics: Below is a sketch of topics we will cover throughout the semester – it may be modified as the course progresses and is only *tentative*.

Tentative Course Outline

Part 1: Motivation & Introduction

Economic Inequalities: An Overview

- Anthony B. Atkinson (2015), "Inequality: What Can Be Done?", Chapter 1

Measurement of Economic Inequalities

- Haughton, Jonathan, and Shahidur R. Khandker, (2009). "Handbook on Poverty+ Inequality", Chapter 6, World Bank Publications

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Part 2: Capital Accumulation and Economic Inequalities

Capital in the Twenty-First Century

- Piketty, Thomas, (2015). "About Capital in the Twenty-First Century", *American Economic Review*
- Piketty, Thomas, (2015). "Putting Distribution Back at the Center of Economics: Reflections on Capital in the Twenty-First Century", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*

- Acemoğlu, Daron, and James A. Robinson, (2015). "The Rise and Decline of General Laws of Capitalism", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*
- Krusell, Per, and Anthony A. Smith Jr. (2015). "Is Piketty's "Second Law of Capitalism" Fundamental?", *Journal of Political Economy*

Part 3: Inequality, Policy, and Political Economy

Empirics

- Bonica, Adam, Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, (2013). "Why Hasn't Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality?", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*
- Alesina, Alberto, and Edward Glaeser, (2004). "Fighting poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference", Oxford University Press
- McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, (2016). "Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches", MIT Press.
- Kenworthy, Lane, and Jonas Pontusson, (2005). "Rising Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution in Affluent Countries", *Perspectives on Politics*

Theory

- Chugh, Sanjay, (2016). *Modern Macroeconomics*: Static Consumption–Labor Framework & Dynamic Consumption–Savings Framework, Chapter 2 & 3.
- Meltzer, Allan H., and Scott F. Richard, (1981). "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government", *Journal of Political Economy*
- Heathcote, Jonathan, Kjetil Storesletten, and Giovanni L. Violante, (2009). "Quantitative Macroeconomics with Heterogeneous Households", *Annual Review of Economics*
- Huggett, Mark, (1993). "The Risk-Free Rate in Heterogeneous-Agent Incomplete-Insurance Economies", *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*
- Aiyagari, S. Rao, (1994). "Uninsured Idiosyncratic Risk and Aggregate Saving", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*
- Alesina, Alberto, and George-Marios Angeletos, (2005) "Fairness and Redistribution", *American Economic Review*
- Benabou, Roland, and Jean Tirole, (2006). "Belief in a Just World and Redistributive Politics", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*
- Torul, Orhan, (2020). "Education in a Heterogeneous-Agent Economy: Revisiting Transatlantic Differences?", *Journal of Human Capital*

Part 4: Inequality & Intergenerational Mobility

Empirics

- Corak, Miles, (2013). "Income Inequality, Equality of Opportunity, and Intergenerational Mobility", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*
- Chetty, Raj, Nathan Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez, (2014). "Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*
- Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, Emmanuel Saez, and Nicholas Turner, (2014). "Is the United States Still a Land of Opportunity? Recent Trends in Intergenerational Mobility", *American Economic Review*
- Chetty, Raj, David Grusky, Maximilian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca, and Jimmy Narang, (2017). "The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility Since 1940", *Science*
- Torul, Orhan, and Oğuz Öztunalı, (2017). "Intergenerational Educational Mobility in Europe", *Boğaziçi University Working Paper*
- OECD Report, (2018). "Fair Progress? Economic Mobility across Generations Around the World", *OECD Publications*
- van der Weide, Roy, Christoph Lakner, Daniel Gerszon Mahler, Ambar Narayan and Rakesh Gupta, (2024). "Intergenerational mobility around the world: A new database", *Journal of Development Economics*
- Ahsan Md, Nazmul, M. Shahe Emran, Hanchen Jiang, Qingyang Han, and Forhad Shilpi, (2023). "Growing up Together: Sibling Correlation, Parental Influence, and Intergenerational Educational Mobility in Developing Countries", *World Bank Policy Research Working Papers*

Theory

- Becker, Gary S. and Nigel Tomes, (1979). "An Equilibrium Theory of the Distribution of Income and Intergenerational Mobility", *Journal of Political Economy*
- Becker, Gary S. and Nigel Tomes, (1986). "Human Capital and the Rise and Fall of Families", *Journal of Labor Economics*
- Becker, Gary S., Scott D. Kominers, Kevin M. Murphy, and Jörg L. Spenkuch, (2018). "A Theory of Intergenerational Mobility", *Journal of Political Economy*

- Demirtaş, Nizam M., Mehmet A. Soytaş, and Orhan Torul, (2023). "A Theory of Intergenerational Mobility with Government", *Boğaziçi University Working Paper*
- Solon, Gary, (1999). "Intergenerational Mobility in the Labor Market", *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Chapter 29
- Solon, Gary, (2004). "A Model of Intergenerational Mobility Variation over Time and Place", *Generational Income Mobility in North America and Europe*, Chapter 2
- Torul, Orhan, and Oğuz Öztunalı, (2024) "Intergenerational Educational Mobility and Preferences for Redistribution in Europe", *Journal of Income Distribution*

Part 5: Fairness of Economic Inequalities

Equality of Opportunity vs. Equality of Outcome

- Deaton, Angus (2017) "How Inequality Works", *Project Syndicate*
- Starmans, Christina, Mark Sheskin, and Paul Bloom, (2017). "Why People Prefer Unequal Societies", *Nature Human Behaviour*

Experimental Evidence on Inequality and Fairness Perceptions

- Cappelen, Alexander W., Astri Drange Hole, Erik Ø. Sørensen, and Bertil Tungodden, (2007). "The Pluralism of Fairness Ideals: An Experimental Approach", *American Economic Review*
- Cappelen, Alexander W., James Konow, Erik Sørensen, and Bertil Tungodden, (2013). "An Experimental Study of Risk-Taking and Fairness" *American Economic Review*
- Almås, Ingvild, Alexander W. Cappelen, and Bertil Tungodden, (2020). "Cutthroat Capitalism versus Cuddly Socialism: Are Americans More Meritocratic and Efficiency-Seeking than Scandinavians?", *Journal of Political Economy*.
- Gürdal, Mehmet Y., Orhan Torul, and Alexander Vostroknutov, (2020). "Norm Compliance, Enforcement, and the Survival of Redistributive Institutions", *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organizations*

Part 6: Economic Inequality and Intergenerational Mobility in Turkey

Economic Inequality in Turkey

- Kaçmaz, Yavuz S., Kuzubaş, Tolga U., Tarlacı, İslam, & Orhan Torul (2025). "Unequal Outcomes in Unequal Times: The Distributional Consequences of Turkey's Unorthodox Policies". *New Perspectives on Turkey*.
- Tamkoç, Mehmet N., and Orhan Torul, (2020). "Cross-Sectional Facts for Macroeconomists: Wage, Income and Consumption Inequality in Turkey", *The Journal of Economic Inequality*
    - Interactive interface at bit.ly/inequalityinturkey
- Torul, Orhan, and Oğuz Öztunalı, (2018). "On Income and Wealth Inequality in Turkey", *Central Bank Review*
- Aktuğ, Emrehan, Tolga U. Kuzubaş, and Orhan Torul, (2021). "Heterogeneity in Labor Income Profiles: Evidence from Turkey", *Empirical Economics*

Intergenerational Mobility in Turkey

- Aydemir, Abdurrahman B., and Hakkı Yazıcı, (2019). "Intergenerational Education Mobility and the Level of Development", *European Economic Review*
- Öztunalı, Oğuz, and Orhan Torul, (2022). "The Evolution of Intergenerational Educational Mobility in Turkey", *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*
- Demirtaş, Nizam M., and Orhan Torul, (2024). "Intergenerational Income Mobility in Turkey", *The Journal of Economic Inequality*

Part 7

Student Presentations

- Student Group Presentations