



Political Economy of Inequalities in the Global South
ECON-78960
Credits: 3

1. Teaching team information and student office hours

Professor: Juan Pablo Castilla

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Student office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. **by appointment**

Office location: W-715

Professor: Darío Maldonado

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Student office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. by appointment

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Professor: Paula Jaramillo

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Student office hours: Monday 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. by appointment

Office location: W-811

Teaching Assistant: Sofía Gómez

Email: s.gomez23@uniandes.edu.co

Student hours: Wednesdays 11:00am to 12:00pm by appointment

*can be held either via zoom or in-person at campus

To request an appointment during the established office hours, please send an email to reserve the slot at least 24 hours in advance.

Appointments with any member of the team may also be requested at a time different from the established office hours by email at least 2 days before the meeting.

2. Course description

This course examines how economic and social inequalities are produced, justified, and reproduced in the Global South, combining political economy tools, empirical evidence, and ethical frameworks.

In the course, we will understand *Political Economy* as the study of how institutions and power shape the production and distribution of resources, and how these arrangements can be understood and evaluated. This implies, therefore, that the course has explanatory (or positive) and evaluative (normative) components. You will develop competencies to understand different types of institutional arrangements and to make judgments about the desirability of those arrangements.

Across five modules, the course addresses: what we mean by inequality and how it is classified; how political economy helps explain complex relationships within an institutional setting; how civil-society perceptions shape support for redistribution; how labor markets and institutions operate in contexts of informality; and how industrial policy can (or cannot) transform productive structures with distributive implications.

In parallel, students develop an applied final project in which they select an inequality problem in a country or region of the Global South, diagnose it using course concepts, situate it within an institutional system, and design a public policy consistent with that diagnosis.



3. Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define and analyze inequalities as multidimensional phenomena.
- Explain how historical processes, productive structures, and economic policy decisions translate into today's distributive outcomes in the Global South.
- Evaluate how beliefs about merit, mobility, and justice influence preferences for redistribution, and connect those beliefs with data and comparative debates.
- Incorporate into their understanding of the economic realities of the Global South aspects characteristic of these regions, such as informality and dependency relationships with countries in the Global North.
- Analyze labor informality as part of an institutional and productive equilibrium, contrasting theoretical explanations and discussing policy implications.
- Compare industrial policy approaches and assess their distributive trade-offs through case studies from the Global South.
- Identify key actors, interests, and incentives, and explain how the institutional system (formal, informal, and de facto) shapes policy instruments, implementation, and outcomes.
- Understand directions in which traditional neoclassical economics frameworks should be revised to better understand the realities of the Global South.

4. Schedule

Modules by week:

- Weeks 1–3. Introduction to inequality.
- Weeks 4–5. Introduction to political economy and institutions.
- Weeks 6–8. Preferences and perceptions of inequality.
- Week 9. Teamwork
- Weeks 10–12. Work, employment, and informality.
- Weeks 13–14. Industrial policy and inequality.
- Weeks 15–16. Final project

5. Assessments

- Experiencing inequalities: 10%.
- Informality in the institutional system: 10%.
- Perceptions of inequality: 10%.
- Getting to know formal jobs: 10%.
- Final project, concept map: 15%.
- Final project, text submission 1: 10%.
- Final project, final presentation: 15%.
- Final project, final text submission: 20%.

Due dates

- Experiencing inequalities: 27-01-2026 at 10:50 a.m. (at the end of the class)
- Informality in the institutional system: 19-02-2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- Perceptions of inequality: between 26-02-2026 and 05-03-2026.



- Final project concept map: 12-03-2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- Getting to know formal Jobs: 16-04-2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- Final project text submission 1: 21-04-2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- Final presentation (team): presentations on 19-05-2026 and 21-05-2026.
- Final text submission (team): 27-05-2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Each student has one (1) “free pass” that may be used for one (1) of the deliverables, allowing the deadline for a class activity to be extended by 24 hours. If it is used for a group submission, each member must use their own “free pass”. This pass cannot be applied to the final submission or to the presentations.

All deliverables must be uploaded to Bloque Neón. No submissions are accepted through any other means.

Students who do not submit the course activities and assessments on the established date will receive a grade of zero (0), unless they justify their absence to the professors within the terms established in Article 45 of the General Undergraduate Student Regulations. Valid excuses are those contemplated in Article 45 of the General Undergraduate Student Regulations. Only excuses that can be verified by the School of Economics will be accepted.

6. References

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7. Respect for diversity

Respect for the rights of those who are part of this academic community is the fundamental basis for its proper functioning. In this community we consider unacceptable any situation of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, and/or threats. If any member of this community feels they are experiencing any of these situations, or knows of someone who may be, they may report it and seek guidance and support from any of the following offices:

Course teaching team, Program Director, Dean of Students (DECA), the Ombudsperson (ombudsperson@uniandes.edu.co).

MAAD Committee: lineamaad@uniandes.edu.co

You may also contact the student groups that can provide support and accompaniment: No Es Normal (derechoygenero@uniandes.edu.co); Pares de Acompañamiento Contra el Acoso (paca@uniandes.edu.co).

The values of inclusion and respect for diversity are fundamental to our work. In addition to complying with the institutional policy expressly prohibiting any form of discrimination, in this class you may request to be identified by the name and pronouns you prefer, which may or may not match your legal name registered in Banner.

8. General policies for Economics courses and important dates

Students must consult [this link](#), where you will find the rules on class attendance, valid excuses, academic misconduct and disciplinary offenses, complaints, wellbeing policies, and important dates of the semester.