



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,258: When Distribution Matters: Inequality, Mobility, Poverty, and Welfare

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written examination, Analog, Individual work individual grade (60%, 90 mins.)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Presentation, Analog, Group work group grade (40%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,258,1.00 When Distribution Matters: Inequality, Mobility, Poverty, and Welfare](#) -- English -- [Piacquadio Paolo Giovanni](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

Microeconomics II is recommended

Learning objectives

1. Critical understanding of economic measures of inequality, mobility, poverty, and welfare
2. Familiarity with the descriptive and normative properties of these measures
3. Ability to apply these measures to investigate real-world issues

Course content

The course discusses the economic measurement of distributive issues, such as inequality, mobility, and poverty. The course addresses both the descriptive and the normative approaches and highlights the relationship between distributive issues and social welfare.

The simplest setting deals with income distributions. How to rank alternative income distributions? The literature has proposed a large spectrum of measures of inequality (the Gini coefficient, the Atkinson measures, the Theil index, the coefficient of variations, the Bonferroni index, the Palma ratio, etc.). However, there is little guidance about how to choose the most appropriate measure. This course will explain how each measure works, when it is most appropriate, and what it implies for economic policy.

The course also provides an introduction to more complex issues, such as mobility, poverty, and social welfare. In a structured way, it clarifies their connections, their measurement, and their implications.

An eye on real-world data (trends, dynamics, measurement, etc.) accompanies the entire course.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The first part of the course consists of classes on inequality. A particular focus is on discussions and debates around the concepts addressed.

The second part consists of students' group presentations (1-3 members) on inequality measurements in specific settings of interest.



The third part of the course consists of classes on mobility, poverty, and social welfare.

For all sessions, active student participation will be required, including reading of relevant literature and discussions in small groups.

Course literature

Lecture notes and the extra material posted on Canvas.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written examination
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written exam
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Synchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	60%
Duration	90 mins.

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Closed Book

The use of aids is prohibited as a matter of principle, with the exception of pocket calculator models of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series and, in case of non-language exams, bilingual dictionaries without any handwritten notes. Any other aids that are admissible must be explicitly listed by faculty members in the paragraph entitled "Supplementary aids" of the course and examination fact sheet; this list is exhaustive.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.

Supplementary aids

None.



2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	40%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

Groups consist of 1 to 3 students

Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Examination content

1. Group presentation and discussions: apply formal reasoning similar to the one studied in class for the measurement of inequality
2. Written closed-book exam: some problems and open questions similar to the one considered in class

Examination relevant literature

Lecture slides, extra material posted on Canvas (all uploaded before the final exam)



Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).