

Course Name	The Spirit Level: Thinking About Inequality		
Semester, Year	Second Semester, 2018	Number of Credits	2 credits
Course level	5000	Course Number	27081
Instructor(s) (Institution)	HOMMERICH CAROLA (大学院文学研究科)		
Course Objectives	<p>In 2009, British scholars Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett published “The Spirit Level ? Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better.” Based on thirty years of research, they demonstrate that more unequal societies are bad for almost everyone within them ? the well-off as well as the poor. Almost every modern social and environmental problem ? ill-health, lack of community life, violence, drugs, obesity, mental illness, long working hours, big prison population ? is more likely to occur in a less equal society. This result goes to the heart of the contradiction between the material success and the social failings many modern societies are experiencing. The book, however, has not only received applause, but also caused controversy, with some critics doubting the accuracy of its main claim.</p> <p>In this class, we will first familiarize ourselves with Wilkinson &amp; Pickett’s main assumptions about why unequal societies are bad not only for the poor, but also for the rich part of its populations. In light of the criticism the book received, we will, then, think about actual research questions to empirically test their claim. For each research question, we will develop hypotheses and an appropriate research design. Thereby, you will actively learn about the process of planning your own original research.</p>		
Course Goals	At the end of the semester you will be familiar with one of the most discussed books in social inequality research of the past years as well as with the criticism it stirred. You will also have thought up an individual research question and developed a research design to test it.		
Course Schedule	<p>Divided into 15 sessions, we will focus on the following:</p> <p>Part I: Reading “The Spirit Level” In the first part of this course, we will read “The Spirit Level ? Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better” by Wilkinson &amp; Pickett (2009), to understand their main assumption about the damaging effects of inequality, as well as some critical reviews of the book.</p> <p>Part II: Researching “The Spirit Level” In the second part, we will translate Wilkinson &amp; Pickett’s ideas into actual research questions. We will develop hypotheses and select a research design specifically fitting each question. In this second part, each student is expected to develop her or his own research question as well as a complete plan for how to answer it.</p>		
Homework	<p>There will be required readings every week, which I will upload for you on Moodle.</p> <p>You will give a class presentation of about 30 minutes on one of the topics of the class as well as lead a class discussion afterwards. You will develop a research design for your own research question, which you will discuss in class as well as hand in to me at the end of the semester in written form.</p>		
Grading System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparing the class readings as well as active participation in class discussions.</li> <li>2. Class presentation of about 30 minutes.</li> <li>3. Development of a research design (research question, hypothesis, research method) for a topic of your choice related to the main topic of this class.</li> <li>4. Class attendance: you can miss a maximum of 2 classes unexcused. If you miss more, you fail the class.</li> </ol> <p>Grading system</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classroom contribution + attendance: 30%</li> <li>2. Class presentation: 30%</li> <li>3. Research design: 40%</li> </ol>		
Textbooks / Reading List	<p>Richard Wilkinson &amp; Kate Pickett. 2009. The Spirit Level ? Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better. Allen Lane.</p> <p>You do not need to buy the book. Readings which will be provided in PDF-format through Moodle.</p>		
Websites	To be announced at the beginning of the semester		
Website of Laboratory			
Additional Information	社会調査士資格 H 科目に対応。		