This course will provide an introduction to cross-national comparative research based on microdata (data at the household and person level) available from LIS. LIS is a data archive and research center located in Luxembourg, and with a satellite office at CUNY.

LIS houses two databases: the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Database and the Luxembourg Wealth Study (LWS) Database. The LIS Database contains over 200 microdatasets from more than 40 high- and middle-income countries; these datasets include comprehensive measures of income, employment, and household characteristics. The LWS Database – a smaller, companion database – provides microdata on wealth and debt. For the list of countries, see: http://www.lisdatacenter.org/our-data/lis-database/documentation/list-of-datasets/ and http://www.lisdatacenter.org/our-data/lws-database/documentation/lws-datasets-list/

Since the mid-1980s, the LIS data have been used by more than 4000 researchers – mostly sociologists, economists, and political scientists – to analyze cross-country and over-time variation in diverse outcomes such as poverty, income inequality, employment status, wage patterns, gender inequality, and family structure. Many researchers have combined LIS' microdata with various macrodatasets to study, for example, the effects of national policies on socioeconomic outcomes, or to link micro-level variation to national-level outcomes such as immigration, child wellbeing, health status, political attitudes, and voting behavior. A newer body of research has used the LWS data to study a multitude of questions related to wealth and debt holdings.

The course has two goals: (1) to review and synthesize 30 years of research results based on the LIS data (and, more recently, the LWS data); and (2) to enable students with programming skills (in SAS, SPSS, or Stata) to carry out and complete an original piece of empirical research. The LIS/LWS data are accessed through an internet-based “remote execution system”. All students are permitted to use the LIS microdata at no cost and without limit.

The course will require a semester-long research project. Students with programming skills (which will not be taught in the course) will be encouraged to complete an empirical analysis, reported in a term paper ultimately intended for publication. Students without programming skills will have the option to write a synthetic research paper.

A minimum requirement is the capacity to read articles that present quantitative research results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class #1</td>
<td>January 30</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course - 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #2</td>
<td>February 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #3</td>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>Poverty - 1 [†]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #4</td>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>Poverty - 2 [†]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note that this one class session will end early.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #5</td>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Inequality - 1 [‡]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #6</td>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>Inequality - 2 [‡]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of proposed paper plan due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #7</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Wealth [‡]</td>
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<td>Class #8</td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Politics [‡]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of first results due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #9</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #10</td>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>Gender, Work, Family – 1 [†]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft of literature review due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #11</td>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Gender, Work, Family- 2 [‡]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15-7:30pm – LIS Reception (meet Luxembourg staff).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #12</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Student Presentations / Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #13</td>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Student Presentations / Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class #14</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Student Presentations / Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper due.</td>
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Note:

– February 20    No class – classes follow Monday schedule.
– March 27       No class – Spring Recess.
LOGISTICS

☼ Professor:

Janet Gornick
Professor of Political Science and Sociology, The Graduate Center, CUNY
Director, LIS: Cross-National Data Center in Luxembourg
Director, Luxembourg Income Study Center (Graduate Center, CUNY)

contact information:
Luxembourg Income Study Center
Room 6203.07 / 365 Fifth Avenue / New York, NY USA 10016-4309
TEL: 212 817 1872 / jgornick@gc.cuny.edu

Office hours will be held at the Graduate Center and will be by appointment.

☼ Assignments:

A research project culminating in a final paper 60%
Four brief summaries of class readings (choose four of eight classes [!!]) 20%
Attendance and class participation (including sharing one class discussion) 20%

The research project will require a series of brief written “installments”, to be turned in throughout the semester. While the installments will not be individually graded, they are required. On February 6, a handout will be distributed, describing the requirements for the written assignments.

☼ Required Readings and Other Materials:

In the first class, the professor will distribute flash drives. These drives include the syllabus, some basic information about LIS, and many of the readings (the ones marked *).

☼ Study Groups:

Students are strongly encouraged to form study groups. Groups might include students using the same software; or exploring similar methodological approaches; or sharing common substantive areas of interest/research. Note that neither programming nor statistical techniques will be taught in class.

☼ Course Assistants:

Two Course Assistants will be available for individual consultations. Each student may draw on each of them for up to three hours during the course of the semester (that’s a total of six hours).

Peter Frase PhD candidate, CUNY GC pfrase@gc.cuny.edu
Laurie Maldonado, PhD candidate, UCLA lmaldonado@gc.cuny.edu
REQUIRED READING

* = reading is on the flash drive
** = reading will be distributed electronically, later
*** = book, to be purchased

CLASS #1
JANUARY 30
Introduction to the Course – 1

Required Reading:


CLASS #2
FEBRUARY 6
Introduction to the Course – 2

Introduction to general concepts and methodological challenges – Janet Gornick
Introduction to documentation – Janet Gornick
Introduction to JSI and self-teaching lessons – Peter Frase and Laurie Maldonado

Required Reading:

Read items listed under Class # 1.

Also:
Thoroughly explore the LIS website: www.lisdatacenter.org
Register for access to LISSY.
CLASS #3  
FEBRUARY 13  
Poverty - 1 [i]

Required Reading:


CLASS #4  
FEBRUARY 27  
Poverty - 2 [i] ← Note that this one class session will end early.

Required Reading:


CLASS #5  
MARCH 6  
Inequality - 1 [i]

Required Reading:


Read WP.


CLASS #6
MARCH 13
Inequality - 2 [i]

Required Reading:


Chapter 3. Kenworthy, Lane. “Has Rising Inequality Reduced Middle-Class Income Growth?” **

Chapter 15. Ólafsson, Stefán, and Armaldur Kristjansson. “Income Inequality in Boom and Bust – A Tale from Iceland’s Bubble Economy.” **

Chapter 16. Vanneman, Reeve, and Amaresh Dubey. “Horizontal and Vertical Inequalities in India.” **

CLASS #7
MARCH 20
Wealth [i]

Required Reading:


Plus three chapters from SUP, forthcoming:


Recommended Reading:


Sierminska, Eva, Andrea Brandolini, and Timothy Smeeding. 2006. “Cross-National Comparison of Income and Wealth Status in Retirement: First Results from the Luxembourg Wealth Study (LWS.)” LWS WP 2. *

CLASS #8
APRIL 3
Politics [j]

Required Reading:


CLASS #9
APRIL 10
Student presentations: research project designs.

CLASS #10
APRIL 17
Gender, Women, Work, and Family - 1

Required Reading:


CLASS #11
APRIL 24
Gender, Women, Work, and Family - 2

Three chapters from SUP, forthcoming:


Chapter 8. Folbre, Nancy, Janet Gornick, Helen Connolly, and Teresa Munzi, “Women’s Employment, Unpaid Work, and Economic Inequality.” **


CLASS #12
MAY 1
Student Presentations – to be scheduled

CLASS #13
MAY 8
Student Presentations – to be scheduled

CLASS #14
MAY 15
Student Presentations – to be scheduled