

SYLLABUS

Name of the course:	Elites and Inequality			
Teacher:	Ujithra Ponniah			
University / organisation:	University of the Witwatersrand			
Language of teaching:	English			
ECTS:	10			
Semester (S1, S2, S3 or S4):	<input type="checkbox"/> S1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S2	<input type="checkbox"/> S3	<input type="checkbox"/> S4
Teaching method(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture courses		<input type="checkbox"/> Flipped classroom	
	Other: _____			
Type(s) of evaluation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sitting exam		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written report	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral defence		<input type="checkbox"/> Group project	
	Other / comments: Class participation: 10%) Essay 1: 15% Essay 2: 25% Diary: 10% Final Exam: 40%			
Expected deadline(s) for the evaluation(s)	Continuous throughout semester			
Expected date of final results:	End of Semester (July)			
Summary of the content:	<p>In this elective paper, we will engage with conceptual and methodological pathways to understand inequality by focusing on elite actors. Some of the questions that will guide our class discussions are: who are elite actors? Are nation borders for the poor? What is the philosophical underpinning that motivates technocrats to perceive themselves as demi-gods? What are the escapist elite strategies in the wake of the unfolding climate crisis? How have elites safeguarded themselves behind the high securitized walls of private cities while weakening public institutions? How do elites justify their existence and legitimate their wealth making activities? Is the face of wealth still white, male, and upper-caste men? What are the characteristics of wealth inequality and elite action in the global South? Through the course of the sessions, we will look out for ways to hold elites accountable.</p>			
Indicative list of lectures:	<p>The OG Frameworks: Clout, Coin, and Status The Bedtime Stories Elites Tell Themselves Pale, Male, and Brahmin Men? The Homogeneity of Hegemony Elites in Corporate South Africa Stepping into the Elites: Success without Betrayal? ‘Studying Up’ and the Power of Prosopography</p>			

SYLLABUS

	<p>Geographies of Privilege and the Neo-Apartheid City Unpacking the Transnational Capitalist Class The Ecology of Exclusion Elite Politics in the Southern Interregnum Ctrl +Alt + Elites</p>
<p>Short bibliography:</p>	<p>Armytage, R. (2020). Big capital in an unequal world: The micropolitics of wealth in Pakistan. Berghahn Books.</p> <p>Clancy, L. (2021). Running the family firm: How the monarchy manages its image and our money. Manchester University Press.</p> <p>Innes, D. (1984). Anglo American and the rise of modern South Africa. Monthly Review Press.</p> <p>Jodhka, S. S., & Naudet, J. (Eds.). (2019). Mapping the elite: Power, privilege, and inequality. Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Kantola, A., & Kuusela, H. (2019). The super rich: Wealth and distinction in times of inequality. Polity Press.</p> <p>Khan, S. R. (2011). Privilege: The making of an adolescent elite at St. Paul's School. Princeton University Press.</p> <p>Kisana, R. (2025). Meet the Savarnas: Indian millennials whose mediocrity broke everything. Ebury Press.</p> <p>Kunz, S. (2023). Expatriate: Following a migration category. Manchester University Press.</p> <p>Mears, A. (2020). Very important people: Status and beauty in the global party circuit. Princeton University Press.</p> <p>Myburgh, P.-L. (2017). The Republic of Gupta: A story of state capture. Penguin Random House South Africa.</p> <p>Naudet, J. (2018). Stepping into the elite: Trajectories of social achievement in India, France, and the United States (R. George, Trans.). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Pallister, D., Stewart, S., & Lepper, I. (1987). South Africa Inc: The Oppenheimer empire. Simon & Schuster.</p> <p>Ramos-Zayas, A. Y. (2020). Parenting empires: Class, whiteness, and the moral economy of privilege in Latin America. Duke University Press.</p> <p>Reeves, A., & Friedman, S. (2024). Born to rule: The making and remaking of the British elite. Harvard University Press.</p> <p>Savage, M. (2021). The return of inequality: Social change and the weight of the past. Harvard University Press.</p> <p>Schimpfössl, E. (2018). Rich Russians: From oligarchs to bourgeoisie. Oxford University Press.</p>



SYLLABUS

	Sinha, A. (2019). Business and politics in India. In S. Ganguly, L. Diamond, & M. F. Plattner (Eds.), <i>The Oxford handbook of Indian politics</i> . Oxford University Press.
--	--