

Inequality and the Fate of Liberty

Bachelor Seminar, Summer 2020

Basic Information

- Instructors: Sebastian Findeisen and teaching assistant. Office hours will be announced in the first meeting.
- Time and location:
 - Introductory Session: Monday, May 18, 15:15, Room: tdb
 - Block seminar: Saturday, July 11 and Sunday, July 12
- Grading (planned, might change slightly): term paper (50%), presentation (30%), active participation in class (20%)

Course Outline

This seminar covers individual liberty and freedom from a political economics perspective. Why and how have human societies achieved or failed to achieve it? Why have some societies in Western Europe and North America experienced relatively long periods of liberty and freedom whereas millions or billions of people in the middle East East, Africa, Asian, and Central America are subject to violence, intimidation, or other demeaning acts? And will the future bring a rise of "digital dictatorships" where governments will exploit advances in artificial intelligence to increasingly monitor and control their citizens? Or will economic development ultimately lead to free economic and political institutions everywhere around the world?

The seminar will revolve around these questions and be based on the recent book *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*, by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson You will write a report about parts of the book and do a presentation in class. In addition, you are expected to actively contribute to our discussions in class.

Book

ACEMOGLU, Daron; ROBINSON, James A. *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*. Penguin Press, 2019.