



Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 635

Equality in Context (Revision 4)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision ✕

Delivery mode:

Paced study . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Arts

Prerequisites:

None

Precluded:

None

Faculty:**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences** [↗](#)**Notes:**

Students in Group Study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the Moodle site for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

Overview

Masters of Arts-Interdisciplinary Studies 635: Equality in Context is a course that explores ideas about equality in the context of a number of scholarly disciplines, social movements, and globalization. Through an interdisciplinary approach that includes philosophy, sociology, political studies, environmental studies, and global studies, the course examines which equalities matter, who the recipients of equality are, and how ideas about equality can be put into practice in the global era.

In Part I of the course, we begin with some introductory ideas that will help students to understand the complexity of the concept of equality. We also look at which equalities matter in Canada, one of the most socially progressive countries in the world. Despite an impressive bill of rights, Canada has been unable to achieve anything more than formal equality for many of its citizens.

In Part II, we delve more explicitly into the dimensions of equality. Specifically, we look at the philosophical debates around *Equality of what?* and *Equality of who?* Here, we examine notions

such as equality of opportunity, equality of treatment, equality of resources, and equality of welfare within the liberal philosophical tradition from which they emanate.

Then, in Part III, we turn to critiques of these liberal notions of equality, particularly in relation to how recognition of difference, including differences of nonhuman life, disrupts the proposed universality of liberal theories. We also examine the tensions that occur around equality because of group identity being created by structures that difference hopes to dismantle.

From there, in Part IV, it makes sense for us to explore how reorganization of structures that produce inequalities might be achieved.

Finally, in Part V, we turn to the state of equality and social justice in the global context.

Outline

MAIS 635: Equality in Context consists of five parts that comprise ten units.

- **Part I: Which Equalities Matter?**

- Week 1 Unit 1: Does Equality Matter any More?
- Week 2 Unit 2: Which Equalities Matter in Canada?

- **Part II: Dimensions of Equality: Philosophical Debates**

- Weeks 3 to 4 Unit 3: Equality of What?
- Week 5 Unit 4: Equality and Other Values: Justice, Liberty, Rights

- **Part III: Equality and the Recognition of Differences**

- Week 6 Unit 5: Complex Equality

- Weeks 7 to 8 Unit 6: Recognition of Differences

- **Part IV: From Recognition to Reorganization**

- Week 9 Unit 7: Contexts of Change
- Weeks 10 to 11 Unit 8: Putting Equality into Practice

- **Part V: Global Equality**

- Week 12 Unit 9: Globalization
- Weeks 13 to 14 Unit 10: Globalization and Equality

Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 percent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts — Interdisciplinary Studies **grading system** [↗](#). Please note that it is students' responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of "F" in one course, or a grade of "C" in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them:

Activity	Weight
Online Participation	20%

Activity	Weight
Annotated Bibliography and Proposal	40%
Final Project	40%
Total	100%

Materials

Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Baker, John, Lynch, Kathleen, Cantillon, Sara, & Walsh, Judy. 2009. *Equality: From theory to action*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hurrell, Andrew, & Woods, Ngaire, eds. 1999. *Inequality, globalization, and world politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Phillips, Anne. 1999. *Which equalities matter?* Malden, MA: Polity Press/Blackwell Publishers.

Athabasca University Online Materials

Course Home Page: You will find Course Information (including the Assignment File and other pertinent information) at the top of the course home page. You will also find your Study Guide

presented unit by unit online. You will find your assignments and links to submit your work to your professor on the course home page.

Athabasca University Library: Students are encouraged to browse the Library's Web site to review the Library collection of journal databases, electronic journals, and digital reference tools:

<http://library.athabascau.ca> .

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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Updated October 13, 2026

View **previous revision** 

