

Seminar in Discrimination
ECON 338 – Spring 2021
Hegeman 308 - Wednesdays: 2:00-4:20 pm

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Social scientists have long observed differences in economic outcomes for different groups of society. While a large debate surrounds the source of these differential economic outcomes, many believe that discrimination is a primary cause. In this course we will explore the process through which differences in earnings manifest as well as the impact of these differences on wealth and well-being. We pay particular attention to the role of discrimination in generating unequal outcomes in labor markets. We will study the theoretical and empirical approaches to understanding discrimination with standard neo-classical approaches as well as through the analytical approaches of various schools of political economy including feminist, institutionalist, and Marxist. We will discuss equality of economic opportunity and economic outcomes, with particular attention to relevant public policies for race, class, gender, sex and sexual orientation. We will leverage the tools developed in these areas of inquiry to prepare to students for independent intellectual engagement in an area of personal interest.

I am very open to discussions on any topic that is of interest to you. *Do not* be bashful in asking questions or suggesting topics for discussion. *Do* see me if you are having trouble with course material. *Do* see me if you want to discuss any aspect of the course. *Do not* hesitate to contact me. The best way to contact me is to stop by my office or to email me. I will generally respond to emails quickly (less than 24 hours, except for occasional week-ends), though I do not check my email in the late evening or very early morning.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

It is my intent that you will enhance your skill set and knowledge base in four areas:

- Understanding of economic theory, institutions, and policy making
- Applying the economic way of thinking in a variety of situations
- Communicating ideas effectively
- Analyzing and interpreting economic data

During the semester I will assess the extent to which you are acquiring skills and knowledge in these areas through your satisfaction of the following learning outcomes:

Area 1: Understand economic theory, institutions, and policy making

Learning Outcome: You will be able to explain how neo-classical economic decision-making utilizes marginal benefit-marginal cost analysis

Learning Outcome: You will articulate how institutions can constrain economic behavior and affect economic inequality.

Learning Outcome: You will articulate objections to neo-classical economic theories of labor markets and employment relationships.

Area 2: Apply the economic way to thinking in a variety of situations

Learning Outcome: You will evaluate and analyze public policy options in a variety of social and economic issues

Learning Outcome: You will analyze differential economic outcomes in a variety of situations.

Area 3: Communicate ideas effectively

Learning Outcome: You will present logical arguments grounded in economic theory.

Learning Outcome: You will communicate clearly, confidently and persuasively in written and oral form.

Area 4: Analyzing and interpreting economic data

Learning Outcome: You will motivate and articulate testable empirical hypotheses.

Learning Outcome: You will locate and interpret empirical data on economic outcomes.

Learning Outcome: You will evaluate and criticize the application of empirical data trends to support economic theories.

COURSE MATERIALS

While we will utilize many sources throughout the semester, there is only one required text for this course. This text will be:

Rodgers II, William M. *Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination*.
(Massachusetts: Edward Elgar, 2009)

The rest of the required readings are listed with full bibliographic information in the course schedule. These will be made available throughout the semester, often through the course brightspace website.

COURSE POLICIES

The following apply to the course for the entire semester and are set in stone.

- Treat each member of this class with dignity, respect and appreciation for individuality and difference.
- Complete required readings **before** the class meeting listed. Completing required readings before class will significantly improve your ability to master course material and earn a good grade.
- Only assignments submitted on-time will receive credit.
- You may not reschedule exams without a verified emergency.
- Academic integrity must be upheld on all work.
- Do not use your cell phone in class (unless it explicitly furthers course objectives, i.e. calculator)

- Do not allow technology to interfere with your (or your peers’) learning environment. You may use a laptop to take notes, but **not** for checking emails, social media, etc. (This policy is subject to revision if laptops interfere with course objectives.)

INCLUSION

We are fortunate to have students in our class from a wide variety of viewpoints, backgrounds and learning styles. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. The diversity in our community provides an exciting avenue through which mutual respect of styles, viewpoints and backgrounds will promote personal and intellectual growth. I intend to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. I expect all members of our class to engage in class activities and discussions as well as communicate in a manner that respects others, so that we can build a learning community that fosters intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm.

I have designed the course to include different styles of assessment and instruction to mirror the diversity of learning styles that we have. I expect all of you to engage with these different styles. They may feel unfamiliar at first, but you may discover the joys of new ways of learning and engaging with material. Please let me know of ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements.

GRADING

The following table provides the breakdown of final grades for the course. I will round your grade if necessary.

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	Above 92%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89.9%
B	82.1-87.9%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79.9%
C	72-77.9%
C-	70-71.9%
D	60-69.9%
F	Below 60%

Your course grade will be based upon your performance on the following components of this course:

- Active in-class participation 20%
- Make it Relevant Presentation 5%

- Reading Presentations 15%
- Debate 20%
- Course Paper 25%
- Article Report 15%

Participation As this is an advanced seminar, learning is communal and relies upon robust, thoughtful and respectful in-class discussions. This portion of your grade is determined by your intellectual engagement with class. I expect you to carefully read *all* the required readings before class, participate in class discussions by asking and answering questions in each meeting, and provide your thoughtful perspective. To assist your preparation to actively participate in class, you will occasionally be assigned work to complete and submit before class. These deliverables will also contribute to the participation component of your final grade.

Make it Relevant Presentation Each class will include a brief presentation to relate the theories, research, and methodologies we discuss in class to contemporary issues, incidences, and movements occurring around us. You will brief the class, via a short informal presentation, on an issue that materially relates to the course. Examples of presentation topics include, but are not limited to, discrimination and unequal access to health resources during the pandemic, complaints/court cases at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, racial disparities in policing and violence, policies or initiatives to combat discrimination (e.g. ban the box initiatives), and organizations working to combat discrimination and its effects (e.g. initiatives from the NAACP, HRC, UFW, etc.) I am happy to discuss topics with you should you desire further guidance.

Reading Presentations Each class (except for those with debates or student paper presentations) will begin with a presentation of an assigned reading usually by groups of two. The groups and papers will be assigned by me. Your presentations will critically summarize the reading and conclude with a discussion based upon thoughtful questions you will pose to the class based upon your reading. Along with your presentations, you will submit a concise article summary to me that will be made available to the rest of your peers after the class. Each reading presentation you complete contributes equally to this component of your final grade.

Debate As we will discover in class, the literature on discrimination is rife with competing theories and debates. You will each participate in at least one in-class debate (logistical details to be distributed in class). By preparing for and participating in the debate, you will heighten your knowledge of the economics of discrimination by formulating an argument, supporting the argument with evidence and considering relevant counterarguments. Debates will be followed with an in-class discussion. Each debate you complete contributes equally to this component of your final grade.

Article Report You can think of your article report as a mid-term comprised of a written analysis and oral presentation. The analysis and presentation are intended to guide and develop your skills in economic research as well as heighten your knowledge of discrimination. You will prepare a report on an article assigned by me. In your report, you will

- identify the thesis of the article,

- explain how the thesis and findings of the article create knowledge (i.e. build on an existing literature)
 - explicitly identify the articles and authors to which the article most directly relates,
- summarize the economic intuition supporting the thesis,
- critically summarize the evidence marshaled in support of the thesis highlighting strengths and weaknesses,
- articulate the theoretical and policy implications of the article's findings,
- identify three citations to the article and explain how these citations build on the findings of the article.

Course Paper The most substantial deliverable for this semester will be your course paper. The course paper serves several goals. It is intended to build your knowledge in an aspect of discrimination of personal interest, build your skills in research, build your skills in writing and argumentation, and prepare you for your senior project. Specific details regarding the course paper will be delivered under separate cover in class. The paper will take one of the following forms:

- The paper will use data to update and/or replicate the findings of an existing empirical paper (graduate students interested in this approach must seek approval from me in advance).
- The paper will comprise a complete research proposal articulating a specific testable hypothesis and clearly describing the methods/data/evidence to test the hypothesis.
- The paper will develop an original theory (not necessarily mathematical) to explain a phenomenon that is perceived to be discrimination.

Portions of your paper will be delivered throughout the semester to allow you multiple occasions for feedback.

ATTENDANCE

Please do not attend class if you are sick, feel ill, know you may have been exposed to coronavirus, or have any of the symptoms listed on Involvio, the College daily health screen app. You are expected to complete the daily health screening using the College Involvio App before showing up to class; a green pass will give you access to academic buildings. Please note that you will not be penalized for absences. Participation in this course will include online activities that can be completed outside of class.

DAILY CHECK-IN:

Each morning, for the entire fall semester, you should complete the Daily Check-In Health Pass in Involvio to make sure you are good to go for the day, or to learn if you should seek further medical support. This pass will be used to get access to the shuttle, dining services, classes and events. It is **vital** that you complete your check-in every morning. The pass is located at the top of your home screen on the Involvio app, [on the web](#), or as a paper/pdf copy available by request (email to covidcheckin@bard.edu).

Passes must be green to attend class. You will need to physically show me a printed paper copy of your pass or one on an electronic device when you come to class.

NAVIGATING THE CLASSROOM:

We will need to sanitize our hands as we are entering the classroom, and wipe down tables and chairs using materials in the sanitization station. We will do the same when we are leaving class: wipe down tables and chairs, then sanitize hands.

In class we will remain physically distant (>6 feet) and will wear masks at all times. If you forget a mask, you may retrieve one in the nearest mask dispenser. We can't eat or drink in the classroom and building, due to masking. Please feel free to bring your own water bottle for mask respite breaks.

CAMPUS LIFE:

Across campus, distancing and masking should happen at all times, even in dorms, Kline, on campus paths. The more we all adhere to these safety measures, the safer we will be! In this unusual semester, as we all work as students, faculty, staff in a time of COVID, community responsibility will become an even bigger part of our daily lives. To this end, we all have a role to play in helping to keep others as safe as possible. We know that no choices are risk free, but we can make choices that reduce risk for ourselves and others. To this end, there are a few additional rules and behaviors that we will all need to abide by this semester, in general, and in this class specifically.

Outside of class time, we may see instances of individuals forgetting to wear a mask, perhaps after eating, or walking and sitting too closely. If you find yourself observing situations that make you uncomfortable, using language such as, "I need to walk by, could you please put on your mask?" may be enough to remind others about their role in community safety.

The Bard Cares Team is a community resource composed of students, staff, and faculty. The Cares team works to assure compliance through restorative justice practices.

If you see something that you are not comfortable addressing in the moment, you can use the anonymous [Cares Team COVID Report form](#) or communicate with the Bard Cares Team directly: caresteam@bard.edu.

STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS

Students entitled to accommodations on the basis of a disability documented with the college should communicate the nature of their accommodations to me as soon as possible. If you are entitled to accommodations for exams, quizzes and tests, please contact me at least one week prior to the test so that we can arrange an appropriate location and time period to administer the assessment.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is a fundamental principle to college activities and learning in general. At a minimum, you will receive no credit for the assignment (test, quiz, paper, etc) for which you cheated if you are caught cheating or plagiarizing. For more severe transgressions, I reserve the right to adjust your course grade (i.e. assign a failing course grade) in addition to receiving no credit for the assignment on which cheating/plagiarism occurred.

I expect you will read, understand and adhere to the college guidelines concerning academic dishonesty and plagiarism (available online: <http://www.bard.edu/dosa/handbook/index.php?aid=1201&sid=705>). Academic dishonesty applies to exams, homework, papers, or any other assignments. Should you, at any point, have questions or concerns regarding academic honesty, do not hesitate to contact me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is the tentative course schedule for the semester. Students are to read assigned readings *before* the class meeting for which they are listed. I will occasionally distribute guide questions to focus your reading and prepare you for class. I expect you to formulate responses to these guide questions before class.

Please note that I reserve the right to modify the course schedule according to course needs. We will not sacrifice a breadth of topics for a depth of understanding. Further, it may be necessary to modify the course schedule to accommodate moderation boards. Classes may be cancelled during moderation boards, in which case these meetings could be rescheduled into completion days.

Full bibliographic information for readings below (in chronological order). * Indicates reading is from course text (listed above)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>DELIVERABLE</u>
2/3/21	COURSE LOGISTICS & EXPECTATIONS; PRIMER TO ADVANCED ECONOMIC RESEARCH	SYLLABUS	
2/10/21	TASTE BASED DISCRIMINATION	Becker (1971), Figart and Mutari (2005), Charles and Guryan (2008)	
2/17/21	STATISTICAL DISCRIMINATION	Phelps (1972), Cain (1986), England and Lewin (1989); of interest: Craigie (2020).	
2/24/21	POLITICAL ECONOMY & INSTITUTIONS	Reich (1978), Goldsmith, Hamilton and Darity (2007), Bergmann (1971), Kim (1989); Library Resource Workshop	*Paper Topic and Working Thesis Statement Due 3:10 - 4:20 Library Research Workshop; *Set up Zotero or citation management package before class.
3/3/21	EMPIRICAL METHODS / RESULTS	Van der Meulen Rodgers (2006)*, Spriggs (2020), Tilcsik (2011), Rich (2014); of interest: Moss and Tilly (2006)*; Tilcsik (2011); Anderson et al.. (2006)*; Jones (2008)	
3/10/21	DEBATE 1	Darity and Mason (1998), Holzer and Neumark (2006)*	
3/17/21	ARTICLE REPORT PRESENTATIONS		*Article Report Due
3/24/21	RESPITE DAY	NO CLASS	
3/31/21	RACE	Arrow (1998), Lang and Lehman (2012) <u>of interest: Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004)</u>	
4/7/21	GENDER	Blau and Kahn (2016), Bergmann (1981), Schilt and Wiswall (2008); of interest: Budig and England (2001); Goldin and Katz (2002)	*Paper sections 1 -3 Due; Individual Librarian Meeting Due.

4/14/21	DEBATE 2	TBD	
4/21/21	SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY	Badgett (2006)*, Black et al. (2007), Carpenter et al. (2020), Drydakis and Zimmerman (2020); of interest: Klawitter (2015)	
4/28/21	DEBATE 3	Burn and Martell (2020)	
5/5/21	Peer Review Workshop	TBD	*Full Draft of Paper Due
5/12/21	TBD PER STUDENT INTEREST OR DISCRIMINATION IN NON-LABOR MARKETS	TBD	
5/19/21	COMPLETION DAYS – PAPER PRESENTATIONS		*Final Paper Due
5/26/18	NO CLASS		

Required Readings (in order of appearance)

Becker, Gary (1971) "The Economics of discrimination" Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-18; 39-63 (skim 55-63); 75-83

Figart, Deb and Ellen Mutari (2005) "Rereading Becker: Contextualizing the Development of Discrimination Theory" *Journal of Economic Issues*. 39(2): 475-483.

Charles, Kerwin Kofi and Jonathan Guryan (2008) "Prejudice and Wages: An Empirical Assessment of Becker's *The Economics of Discrimination*" *Journal of Political Economy*. 116(5): 773-809

Phelps, Edmund S. (1972) "The Statistical Theory of Racism and Sexism" *The American Economic Review*. 62(4): 659-661

Cain, Glen G. (1986) "The Economic Analysis of Labor Market Discrimination: A Survey" in *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Volume 1. Eds. O. Ashenfelter and R. Layard. Elsevier pp. 693-785 available at:
[http://unionstats.gsu.edu/9220/Cain\(1986\) The%20Economic%20Analysis%20of%20Labor%20Market%20Discrimination.pdf](http://unionstats.gsu.edu/9220/Cain(1986) The%20Economic%20Analysis%20of%20Labor%20Market%20Discrimination.pdf)

England, Paula and Peter Lewin (1989) "Economic and Sociological Views of Discrimination in Labor Markets: Persistence or Demise?" *Sociological Spectrum*, 9, 239-257

Reich, Michael (1978) "Who Benefits from Racism? The Distribution among Whites of Gains and Losses from Racial Inequality?" *The Journal of Human Resources*. 13(4): 524-544

Goldsmith, Arthur, Hamilton, Darrick and William Darity, Jr. (2007) "From Dark to Light: Skin Color and Wages among African-Americans" *The Journal of Human Resources*. 42(4): 701-738.

Bergmann, Barbara (1971) "The Effect of White Incomes of Discrimination in Employment" *Journal of Political Economy* 79(2): 294-313.

Kim, Marlene (1989) "Gender Bias in Compensation Structures: A Case Study of Its Historical Basis and Persistence" *Journal of Social Issues*. 45(4): 39-49.

Van der Meulen Rodgers, Yana (2006) "A primer on Wage Gap Decompositions in the analysis of Labor Market Discrimination" in Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination" William Rodgers, Ed. Great Britain: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 11-28.

Spriggs, Bill (2020) "Is now a teachable moment for economists?" *Minneapolis Federal Reserve*. https://www.minneapolisfed.org/~media/assets/people/william-spriggs/spriggs-letter_0609_b.pdf Last Accessed January 22, 2021.

Rich, Judy What do Field Experiments of Discrimination in Markets Tell Us? A Meta Analysis of Studies Conducted Since 2000."

Darity Jr, William and Patrick Mason (1998) "Evidence of Discrimination in Employment: codes of color, Codes of Gender" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12(2): 63-90.

Holzer and Neumark (2006) "Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action" in Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination William Rodgers, Ed. Great Britain: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 260-287.

Arrow, Kenneth. (1998) "What has Economics to Say about Racial Discrimination?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12(2): 91-100

Lang, Kevin and Lehman, Jee-Yeon (2012) "Racial Discrimination in the Labor Market: Theory and Empirics" *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(4): 1-48.

Blau, Francine and Lawrence Kahn (2016) "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Expectations" NBER Working Paper No. 21913

Bergmann, Barbara (1981) "The Economic Risks of Being a Housewife" *American Economic Review*. 71(2): 81-86

Schilt, Kristen and Matthew Wiswall (2008) "Before and After: Gender Transitions, Human Capital, and Workplace Experiences" *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy*, 8(1): Article 39

Badgett, Lee (2006) "Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation: A Review of the Literature in Economics and Beyond" in Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination William Rodgers, Ed. Great Britain: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 161-186.

Black, Dan, Sanders, Seth and Lowell Taylor (2007) "The Economics of Lesbian and Gay Families." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2): 53-70.

Carpenter, C. S., Eppink, S. T., & Gonzales, G. (2020). Transgender status, gender identity, and socioeconomic outcomes in the United States. *ILR Review*, 73(3), 573-599.

Drydakis, Nick and Klaus Zimmerman (2020) "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and labor Market Outcomes: New Patterns and Insights" *International Journal of Manpower* 41(6): 621-627.

Burn, Ian and Michael E Martell (2020) "The role of work values and characteristics in the human capital investment of gays and lesbians" *Education Economics* 28(4): 351-369.

Readings of Interest (in order of appearance)

Craigie, Terry-Ann (2020) "Ban the Box, Convictions, and Public Employment" *Economic Inquiry*. 58(1): 425-445

Moss, Phillip and Chris Tilly (2006) "Learning About Discrimination by Talking to Employers" in Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination William Rodgers, Ed. Great Britain: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 61-96.

Tilcsik, András. "Pride and prejudice: Employment discrimination against openly gay men in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 117, no. 2 (2011): 586-626.

Anderson et al. (2006) "Discrimination: Experimental Evidence from Psychology and Economics" in Handbook on the Economics of Discrimination William Rodgers, Ed. Great Britain: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 97-118.

Jones, Melanie K. "Disability and the labour market: a review of the empirical evidence." *Journal of Economic Studies*(2008).

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004) "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination" *American Economic Review*, 94(4): 991-1013.

Budig, Michelle and Paula England. (2001) "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood" *American Sociological Review* 66(2): 204-225

Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence Katz (2002) "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions" *Journal of Political Economy*, 110(4): 730-770.

Klawitter, Marieka (2015) "Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Sexual Orientation on Earnings" *Industrial Relations*,54(1): 4-32.