

Discrimination: The Economics and Politics of Race and Gender

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Office: Whitby 101

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 3 to 4 pm (or by appointment!)

Description:

In this course, we will investigate an important set of questions in public policy: Why do average earnings vary dramatically by race and sex in the United States? What policies worsen or alleviate these disparities?

The course balances theory with real world public policy examples. The course also develops students' Excel skills to prepare them to conduct basic data work in government, advocacy, business, and industry settings.

Course objectives:

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- Understand and describe the disparities in earnings (and wealth) based on race and gender in the U.S.
- Describe and explain theoretical explanation for earnings disparities
- Evaluate empirical evidence and analyze if this supports or refutes theoretical approaches
- Use Excel to calculate key statistics and create visuals that communicate estimates of inequality
- Critically interpret analysis presented in news articles and academic articles

Grading

Weekly reading analysis worksheets: 25%

Reading synthesis: 25%

Final project & presentation: 20%

Attendance and participation: 20%

Event reaction: 10%

Weekly reading analyses

An important skill you will learn in this course is how to read and evaluate articles on controversial topics like race and gender inequality. We will likely read some articles you disagree with and others you agree with. As a young scholar, you will practice how to understand and evaluate these different arguments.

Most weeks will be organized around a key article (Denoted with a KEY READING* in the syllabus). Before a KEY READING class, you will turn in a reading analysis worksheet on D2L where you identify the main idea, evidence, and strengths and weaknesses of the article. You can then use this worksheet in class discussion and it will also help you write the reading syntheses, where you bring together a group of articles on one topic.

These are graded out of 5 points:

- 5 points for doing a thorough analysis of the article
- 4 points for making an effort
- 3 point if you turned something in
- 0 if you didn't turn it in

The lowest score will be dropped! Because life happens sometimes.

Reading syntheses

In this course, we will be reading a number of empirical articles. You will write four short analyses of the readings – often these will involve examining opposing views or using theory & evidence from the articles to discuss a pressing policy issue.

Short prompts will be given out prior to the reading for each assignment. Each reading analysis should be around 2 double spaced pages. These assignments allow you to more deeply engage with the readings and practice your writing skills.

These analyses are graded based on the rubric on D2L.

Participation

Because of the nature of this class, attendance and active participation in in-class activities is essential. To reflect its importance, participation comprises 20% of your grade. A detailed rubric for participation is on D2L.

You may miss two classes during the semester for any reason without penalty. Excused absences for religious holidays, illness, and family emergencies are always allowed. You are responsible for learning anything covered in class.

Event reaction

The topics we discuss in this class have incredibly important implications outside the walls of the classroom. Over the course of the semester, each student will attend an event (seminar, presentation, discussion) that focuses on analysis of race and/or gender and public policy in the United States. After attending, write up a one page summary and reaction to the event! Please include some “proof” of attendance (selfies are perfect).

Three suggestions:

1. Monday, February 5 12:15 to 1:15:

Dr. Samuel Myers Jr. will present work on the racial disparities in drowning rates. Minnesota Population Center (West Bank on the UMN campus). (I am co-author on this project)

2. Wednesday, April 18 noon to 1:30:

Dr. Marina Mileo Gorsuch (hey, that’s me!) will present work on the impact of the 2016 election on discrimination in the labor market. Department of Applied Economics (St. Paul campus of UMN).

I will have limited spots in my cars for transportation to events 1 & 2. Carpooling among students is also encouraged!

3. Thursday, February 22 7 pm to 9 pm

Simone Campbell, Executive Director of NETWORK A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby in conversation with Me’Lea Connelly, Director of the Association for Black Economic Power on addressing the racial wealth gap locally and nationally.

Final project:

Over the course of the semester, you will have built up a number of summaries of different arguments about the causes of inequality and policies to alleviate inequality. Your final project will use these to answer a deceptively simple question:

If you could implement one policy to alleviate inequality based on race and/or sex, what would it be? Why?

The final project should be concise (4 pages (not counting Works Cited) double spaced) and based on evidence from the course (and outside material from reputable sources). Due on the final day.

Data days:

Using data is an essential skill in policy analysis. In this course, some days will be “Data days” where we work with data in Excel to illustrate particular points. On these days, please bring a laptop with Excel. If you don’t, you will have to look on with a partner.

Laptops & discussion:

Ample research shows that students (without accommodations) who use laptops in class learn less and detract from their peers learning^{1,2,3}. Also, reading on paper instead of a screen increases retention and understanding of content⁴. To avoid the use of laptops in class and to be able to engage deeply with the texts we are reading, I will print off copies of the key articles for everyone in the class. ***On discussion days, laptops should be closed*** (unless you have an accommodation).

Cell phones: The use of electronic or other devices that may disrupt class, such as cell phones (including texting), is not permitted.

Communication: The best way to reach me outside of class and office hours is via email (mmgorsuch952@stkate.edu). I check email regularly and will respond to all emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours on weekends. In between classes I will communicate any updates to students both via email and on the class D2L page. Please make sure to check your email regularly.

Note - I have another course immediately after this class, so I cannot stay after class to discuss lengthy issues.

Students with Disabilities: Saint Catherine University is committed to equal access for all and recognizes that disability is an aspect of diversity. The University’s goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to the learning environment, accurate assessment or your achievement, please contact the Resources for Disabilities office as soon as possible. Access Consultants can be reached in the O’Neill Center at **651-690-6563** to discuss academic adjustments or accommodations.

¹ Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard,” *Psychological Science*, Vol 25, Issue 6, pp. 1159 - 1168. First published date: April-23-2014. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797614524581>

² Faria Sana, Tina Weston, Nicholas J. Cepeda, “Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers,” *Computers & Education*, Volume 62, 2013, Pages 24-31. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254?via%3Dihub>

³ Susan Payne Carter, Kyle Greenberg, Michael S. Walker, “The Impact of Computer Usage on Academic Performance: Evidence from a Randomized Trial at the United States Military Academy,” *Economics of Education Review*, Volume 56, 2017, Pages 118-132, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272775716303454>.

⁴ Wästlund, Erik, Henrik Reinikka, Torsten Norlander, and Trevor Archer, “Effects of VDT and paper presentation on consumption and production of information: Psychological and physiological factors” *Computers in Human Behavior* Vol 21, Issue 2, pp. 377-394. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563204000202>

Respect and Inclusion: You may have heard the phrase “Never discuss politics or religion at the dinner table.” In this class, we will discuss both as well as many other controversial topics! Public policy addresses many important, but sometimes divisive, issues. We will likely discuss topics that directly affect you, your family, or other students this class. I request students use respectful language and think about creating an inclusive classroom. In terms of respect, I ask that people be sensitive to not use language that intentionally demeans or is otherwise hurtful to individuals or groups. I realize one is not always aware of what language is and is not hurtful. Our class will explore and respect diverse ideas, experiences, values, and communication styles. All comments deserve respectful hearings. You are not pressured to agree with everything others say, but you are expected to respectfully listen to others’ views and experiences and make changes accordingly. Also realize that intent does not equal impact. We can offend each other without intending to. Should that happen, I trust appropriate apologies will be offered.

You will be safe in this classroom, but you may feel uncomfortable at times. You may find your ideas challenged. This is good! Being challenged and made uncomfortable is an important part of the learning process.

Course timeline

Below you will find a detailed course outline. These are my hopes and dreams for the semester, but reality may interfere. I will update this syllabus as needed. The readings should be done to be discussed in class on the date listed.

A reading marked with a KEY READING* is a key reading, and you need to turn in a reading analysis worksheet on D2L before class.

| Date | Topic | Reading | Assignments, activities, etc |
|--|---|---|--|
| 29-Jan | Welcome! | | |
| The current state of inequality | | | |
| 31-Jan | Review of labor market basics & basic political structure | “Making sense of government and politics” “Introduction” from the Economics of Women, Men, and Work “Introduction” from Labor Economics | |
| 2-Feb | Data day! | “An Introduction to Regression Analysis” from Labor Economics | Bring a laptop with Excel! |
| | | | |
| Discrimination | | | |
| 5-Feb | NO CLASS | | Event at MPC on drowning disparities based on race and sex |
| 7-Feb | Taste for discrimination | Becker: Pages 39-50,55-63, 75-83 | |
| 9-Feb | KEY READING* | Bertrand, Marianne and Mullainathan, Sendhil. (2004). "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." The American Economic Review, Vol. 94, No. 4, pp. 991-1013. | |
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| 12-Feb | KEY READING* | Tilcsik, A. 2011. “Pride and Prejudice: Employment Discrimination against Openly Gay Men in the United States.” American Journal of Sociology, 117(2): 586-626. | |
| 14-Feb | Data day! | Use data from an experiment on how people evaluate resumes | |
| 16-Feb | GUEST SPEAKER | Familiarize yourself with the Center for Indian Country Development: https://www.minneapolisfed.org/indiancountry/about | |

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| 19-Feb | Statistical discrimination | Arrow, Kenneth. 1973. "The Theory of Discrimination," pp. 3–33 in O. A. Ashenfelter and A. Rees, eds., <i>Discrimination in Labor Markets</i> . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. | |
| 21-Feb | Methods day | Difference in difference | |
| 23-Feb | KEY READING* | Dávila, Alberto and Marie T. Mora. 2005. "Changes in the Earnings of Arab Men in the US between 2000 and 2002." <i>Journal of Population Economics</i> , 18 (4), 587-601. | |
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| 26-Feb | | GUEST SPEAKER FROM ACLU | |
| 28-Feb | Implicit bias | | |
| 2-Mar | KEY READING* | Sheila D. Ards, Samuel L. Myers, Jr., Allan Malkis. <i>Racial Disproportionality in Reported and Substantiated Child Abuse and Neglect: An Examination of Systematic Bias</i> . <i>Children and Youth Service review</i> 25(5–6): 375–92. | |
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| Human capital | | | |
| 5-Mar | Family & Human capital | "Gender Pay Gap... Going, but not Gone" Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn | READING SYNTHESIS 1 due |
| 7-Mar | | "Human Capital" from Labor Economics "Marriage, Children, and Employment: What Do We Know?" Cohen and Bianchi | |
| 9-Mar | KEY READING* | Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty? Authors: Shelley Correll Stephan Benard In Paik | |
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| 12-Mar | KEY READING* | Newsome, Yvonne D. and F. Nii-Amoo Doodoo. 2002. "Reversal of Fortune: Explaining the Decline in Black Women's Earnings." <i>Gender & Society</i> 16:442–64 | |

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| 14-Mar | | “Towards Gender Equality: Progress and Bottlenecks” Paula England | |
| 16-Mar | Data day! | Time use data | |
| 19-Mar | | “Residential Segregation and ‘White Flight’” Clotfelter https://mic.com/articles/101804/this-is-what-modern-day-discrimination-against-native-americans-looks-like#.ENvtg1j6e | |
| 21-Mar | KEY READING* | Neal, Derek A. and William R. Johnson (1996). “The Role of Premarket Factors in Black-White Wage Differences,” <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> 104 (5), pp. 869-895. | |
| 23-Mar | | John Oliver episode & discussion/debate | Mid term grades |
| 26-Mar | BREAK | | |
| 28-Mar | BREAK | | |
| 30-Mar | BREAK | | |
| Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Ban the Box | | | |
| 2-April | | Loury, Glenn. (1981). "Is Equal Opportunity Enough?" in <i>American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings</i> , pp. 122–125. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Civil Rights Act of 1991, http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/cra-1991.cfm U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm | SYNTHESIS 2 DUE |

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| | | <p>U.S. Department of Justice, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevi.php</p> <p>Federal Trade Commission, Facts for Consumers, Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre15.shtm</p> | |
| 4-April | KEY READING* | Ban the Box, Convictions, and Public Sector Employment 2018 Terry-Ann Craigie | |
| 6-April | KEY READING* | <p>Does "Ban the Box" Help or Hurt Low-Skilled Workers? Statistical Discrimination and Employment Outcomes When Criminal Histories are Hidden</p> <p>Jennifer L. Doleac, Benjamin Hansen</p> | |
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| 9-April | | Will Affirmative-Action Policies Eliminate Negative Stereotypes? Stephen Coate; Glenn C. Loury <i>The American Economic Review</i> , Vol. 83, No. 5. (Dec., 1993), pp. 1220-1240. | |
| 11-April | KEY READING* | Arcidiacono, Peter; Lovenheim, Michael (March 2016). "Affirmative Action and the Quality-Fit Tradeoff". <i>Journal of Economic Literature</i> . 54 (1) | |
| 13-April | KEY READING* | Harry Holzer and David Neumark "What Does Affirmative Action Do?" <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</i> 53:2 January 2000 pp.240-271. | |
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| 16-April | KEY READING* | Kalev, A., Frank Dobbin, and Erin Kelly. (2006, August). Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . 71-4. pp. 589-617. | |
| 18-April | NO CLASS | | Event: Applied Econ |
| 20-April | | Gorsuch and Rho working paper | SYNTHESIS 3 DUE |

| Income or wealth? | | | |
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| 23-April | | D. Hamilton and W.A. Darity Jr. "Race, Wealth and Intergenerational Poverty: There Will Never Be a Post-Racial America if the Wealth Gap Persists"." <i>The American Prospect</i> 20.7 (September, 2009): A10-A12 "The Cost of Being Black and the Advantage of Being White" from <i>The Hidden Cost of Being African American</i> by Thomas Shapiro | |
| 25-April | KEY READING* | The Color of Wealth in Boston - By Ana Patricia Muñoz, Marlene Kim, Mariko Chang, Regine O. Jackson, Darrick Hamilton, and William A. Darity Jr. March 25, 2015 | |
| 27-April | Data day | | |
| 30-April | | Hamilton, Darrick, and William Darity, Jr. 2010. "Can 'Baby Bonds' Eliminate the Racial Wealth Gap in Putative Post-Racial America?" <i>Review of Black Political Economy</i> , 37(3,4):207-216. | |
| 2-May | KEY READING* | Helen F. Ladd. "Evidence on Discrimination in Mortgage Lending." <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 12(2)(Spring): 41- 62. | |
| 4-May | Data day | . | |
| 7-May | Present your final project to class – 8 minutes + 2 minutes discussion | | |
| 9-May | Present your final project to class – 8 minutes + 2 minutes discussion | | |
| 11-May | Present your final project to class – 8 minutes + 2 minutes discussion | | SYNTHESIS 4 DUE |
| | | | Final project due on finals day! |