

**BUSINESS 3171-001**  
**CLASS, RACE, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM**

Summer 2012  
SFEBB 5130  
MW 1:00–4:00 p.m.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

This course explores how economic and racial inequality is produced and reproduced in the United States. We will examine the institutional patterns, structural arrangements, and cultural ideologies that generate and legitimate disparities in the distribution of income, wealth, social status, and economic opportunities across racial and class lines. Our primary focus will be on the complex ways that class and race intersect to inhibit access to the “American Dream” for large groups of people.

Main themes for the course include inter-ethnic competition for jobs; barriers to minority entrepreneurship; efforts to diversify the modern workplace; the outcomes, both positive and negative, of workplace diversification; and the successes and failures of government efforts to ameliorate race-based inequalities. Throughout the course we will critically examine the ideology of meritocracy—the notion that success depends exclusively on hard work, intelligence, and talent—that pervades American culture.

As a result of this course, you will gain an understanding of (1) the ways that class and race combine to produce inequality in the United States throughout history; (2) the changing nature of class- and race-based inequalities over time; (3) classical and contemporary theories of inequality, and how they apply to concrete empirical contexts; (4) the outcomes of efforts to level the playing field for disadvantaged groups; and, more generally, (5) the ways in which personal biographies and social structures are linked.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

The following books are available in the bookstore:

- Loewen, James W. 1988. *The Mississippi Chinese*, 2nd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1980. *The Declining Significance of Race*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional selections, marked with an asterisk (\*) in the schedule of readings, are available via Canvas. Given the condensed nature of short-term summer courses, the reading load for this course is intensive. Please plan accordingly and have readings completed prior to coming to class.

## **PROCEDURAL ISSUES**

### **Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom, according to the Student Code (<http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>). Students have specific rights as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code and know that they are responsible for its content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is faculty members' responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Misrepresentation, plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification are particularly egregious academic offenses. These offenses are defined in Section I(B)(2) of the Student Code. The sanction for these forms of academic misconduct "may include, but is not limited to . . . a grade reduction, a failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from a program or the University, or revocation of a student's degree or certificate."

In addition to the student responsibilities outlined in the Student Code, please take note of the following requirements and expectations for this class:

- Reading assignments must be completed before class. Come prepared to discuss or ask questions about the readings.
- No extra credit.
- Make-up exams are given only under exceptional circumstances or for participation in relevant university-sanctioned activities. Both cases require a written explanation and, whenever possible, advanced notice.
- The use of cell phones or similar devices in class is prohibited. Please silence ringers.
- If you wish to dispute a grade you must do so in writing, explaining why you believe it should be adjusted. I will ignore e-mail requests for grade changes; please submit grade change requests to me in person during office hours.
- There are no make-ups for in-class quizzes and assignments, nor do I provide notes for students who were absent.
- I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade for class disruptions.

### **Accommodations Policy**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and me to make arrangements for accommodations.

Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

In-class exam	100 points
Take-home exam	100 points
Final paper	100 points
Participation	50 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>350 points</b>

A	350–328	C	258–267
A–	314–327	C–	244–257
B+	303–313	D+	233–243
B	293–302	D	223–232
B–	279–292	D–	209–222
C+	268–278	F	0–208

**Exam:** There is one in-class exam worth 100 points that will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions, and one take-home essay exam worth another 100 points. The in-class exam will be administered on **Monday, June 11**. The take-home exam will be distributed in class on the day of the midterm and will be due, in hard copy, at the start of class on **Monday, June 18**.

**Final Paper:** The only other assignment for this course consists of a final paper. You only have six weeks to work on this paper, so I suggest that you start thinking about it immediately. This means that as you complete the assigned readings, think about how they might relate to the paper topic, which is as follows:

Imagine that you are a policy advisor to President Obama, and that he has asked you to recommend whether affirmative action in university admissions, hiring decisions, and/or workplace promotions should be based on race or class. Using any of the readings, lectures, and films you deem appropriate, make a recommendation to the president by drafting a position paper. In addition to course materials, you must gather additional quantitative evidence—“data”—to support your position. This evidence must come from *reputable* sources, which may include:

- A book published by a university press (see me if you are unsure);
- A major daily newspaper of record (e.g., *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*);
- Other high-quality periodicals (e.g., *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*);
- The Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov));
- The National Center for Education Statistics ([nces.ed.gov](http://nces.ed.gov));
- University of Texas Inequality Project ([utip.gov.utexas.edu/data.html](http://utip.gov.utexas.edu/data.html));
- University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty ([www.irp.wisc.edu/home.htm](http://www.irp.wisc.edu/home.htm));
- State-Level Data on Income Inequality (<http://www.inequalitydata.org>);
- Other government- or university-based data collection enterprises.

As an initial task, you will need to define affirmative action, with an emphasis on *facts* over *opinions*. This task will require a bit of additional research. I strongly urge you to consult impartial sources (scholarly books or peer-reviewed journal articles, for example, or websites in the .edu or .gov domain; you may also consult with a reference librarian for assistance). What does affirmative action do? What strategies does it encompass? What kinds of practices—such as quotas—*aren't* allowed? You are encouraged to locate important court cases that pertain to the use of affirmative action, all of which can be found online. Cases might include the following:

- *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978)
- *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003)
- *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003)
- *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* (2007)
- *Griggs v. Duke Power* (1971)
- *Washington v. Davis* (1976)
- *Atonio v. Ward Cove Packing Co.* (1989)

Obviously, as an advisor to the president, you will need to take such cases into account when formulating your position. However, you need not be bound by these judicial decisions. If you think the textual and quantitative evidence warrants a position that conflicts with existing jurisprudence, argue your case! (Dissenting opinions can be useful for this sort of thing.)

For this paper, you may *not* argue that affirmative action is unnecessary; that is, you must argue for *either* race- or class-based affirmative action. Even if you don't personally agree with affirmative action, it is a useful skill to present and defend a balanced, unbiased argument. On a related point, these papers should *not* contain personal opinions (e.g., "I think/believe that . . ."). Papers that include personal opinions will have points deducted from the final grade. Rather, you are to use textual and quantitative evidence to support your recommendation. You should also defend your position against the opposing view. For example, if you propose race-based affirmative action, you should justify why it is a more reasonable option than class-based affirmative action.

Final papers must be *5 to 6 double-spaced pages in 12-point font with one-inch margins*. **Papers are due Wednesday, June 20 at the start of class.** Late papers will not be accepted.

**Participation:** Vibrant courses depend on active student engagement, and I expect students to participate in class. In addition to in-class participation and discussions, participation points can also reflect in-class activities, assignments, and quizzes, which I use in part to "take attendance," as well as and the use of office hours when needed.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

The following schedule is tentative; I reserve the right to modify it over the course of the semester. Entries marked with an asterisk (\*) are available on Canvas.

### WEEK 1

**M, 5/14**    **Thinking Sociologically about Inequality**

First day of class.

\*Weber, Max. 1946. "Class, Status, and Party." Pp. 180-195 in *From Max Weber*, edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.  
Film: *A Class Divided* (approx. 47 min.)

**W, 5/16**    **Market Niches for Minority Groups**

\*Bonacich, Edna. 1973. "A Theory of Middleman Minorities." *American Sociological Review* 38: 583-594.  
Loewen, *Mississippi Chinese*, Introduction, chs. 1-3 (pp. 1-72)

### WEEK 2

**M, 5/21**    **Translating Economic Mobility into Social Status (and Vice Versa)**

Loewen, *Mississippi Chinese*, chs. 4-7, and Afterword (pp. 73-202)

\*Fairlie, Robert W., and Alicia M. Robb. 2007. "Why Are Black-Owned Businesses Less Successful than White-Owned Businesses? The Role of Families, Inheritances, and Business Human Capital." *Journal of Labor Economics* 25(2): 289-323.

**W, 5/23**    **Class Conflict Meets Racial Antagonism**

\*Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 473-491 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton.

\*Bonacich, Edna. 1972. "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market." *American Sociological Review* 37: 547-559.

### WEEK 3

**M, 5/28**    **No class: Memorial Day**

**W, 5/30**    **The American Economy under Slavery and Segregation**

Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race*, chs. 1-3 (pp. 1-61)

### WEEK 4

**M, 6/4**    **From Caste Subjugation to Class Subordination**

Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race*, chs. 4 and 5 (pp. 62-121)

**W, 6/6**    **The Illusion of Integration**

Film: *The Two Nations of Black America* (approx. 60 min.)

Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race*, chs. 6-8 (pp. 122-182)

### WEEK 5

**M, 6/11**    **\*\*\* Exam**

**\*\*\* Take-home exam, distributed in class, due on Monday, June 18**

**W, 6/13**    **The Racial Glass Ceiling and Workplace Diversification**

\*Stainback, Kevin, Corre L. Robinson, and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey. 2005. "Race and Workplace Integration: A Political Mediated Process?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 48(9): 1200-1228.

- \*Kim, Changhwan, and Christopher R. Tamborini. 2006. "The Continuing Significance of Race in the Occupational Attainment of Whites and Blacks: A Segmented Labor Market Analysis." *Sociological Inquiry* 76(1): 23-51.
- \*Herring, Cedric. 2009. "Does Diversity Pay? Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity." *American Sociological Review* 74: 208-224.

### **WEEK 6**

**M, 6/18**

#### **Reproducing Inequality**

- \*Alexander, Karl, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson. 2007. "Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap." *American Sociological Review* 72: 167-180.
- \*Lamont, Michele and Annette Lareau. 1988. "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments." *Sociological Theory* 6: 153-168.
- \*Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review* 67(5): 747-776.

**W, 6/20**

#### **The End**

**\*\*\* Final papers due and discussed in class**