

Economics 5140/6140: Discrimination in Labor Markets

Fall 2007

M W 1:25 – 2:45 FAMB 204

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30-11:00, Wednesday 3:00-4:30, other times by appointment

This class examines the issue of discrimination in US labor markets from both a theoretical perspective and an empirical perspective. The focus is on racial discrimination (especially discrimination against African Americans) and gender discrimination. However, we will have the opportunity to examine the experiences of other ethnic groups, as well as discrimination along age, religion, or other lines, through additional readings and research projects.

Our class time will be spent primarily on discussion and critical analysis of the readings and of other recent research. Students must be committed to reading and thinking about the material before coming to class.

There is a coursepack available for purchase at the bookstore. In addition, everyone should purchase Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (also available at the bookstore). We will use the Sugrue book as a kind of “case study” of issues relating to racial inequality. Some additional journal articles will also be assigned. These will be made available through WebCT. A few are listed on the course schedule below. Others may be added depending on time and interest. I will also present a good deal of material from other sources. It will therefore be important to attend class regularly in order to stay on top of this material.

Assignments and Grading

1. Exams: There will be two mid-term exams and a final exam. The exams will be a combination of short answer and essay questions. The first exam will be held on Monday, September 24. The second exam will be held on Monday, November 5. The final exam is scheduled for Friday, December 14, at 1:00 pm. The two mid-terms are each worth 20% of your grade. The final is worth 25%.
2. Essay on the Sugrue book: Each student will write a brief (five to seven page, typed, double-spaced) essay on the Sugrue book. More details will be provided later. This essay is due on Wednesday, November 28. This essay is worth 15 percent of your final grade.
3. Research project: Each student will conduct independent research on a topic related to discrimination in labor markets. We will collectively choose five or six general topics during the first week of class. Each student will then identify and pursue one portion of each of these general topics. The result will be a brief (five to seven page, typed, double-spaced) essay designed to introduce the class to the student's topic. Each student will give a brief presentation on their topic, designed to promote class discussion. Due dates will vary depending on the topic, but they will be determined during the first two weeks of the semester, once we have chosen the

topics. Additional details will follow. The written portion of this project is worth 15 percent of your final grade.

For both of the writing assignments, grades will be based on content as well as form - clarity of argument, grammar, spelling, citation, etc. Guidelines for citation will be provided.

4. Class participation: This grade will be determined primarily by the “presentation” portion of the research assignment. To make these presentations effective, it will be necessary to communicate ahead of time with the other students working on your general topic area (as well as with the instructor). It will also be necessary to turn in your essay on time and to prepare ahead of time a summary handout to be distributed to the class on the day we discuss your topic. Finally, it will be necessary to be prepared to answer questions and lead discussion on the day we discuss your topic. Performance in these areas accounts for 5 percent of the final grade.

Students who are taking this class for graduate credit need to meet with me to discuss additional requirements.

Notice for students with disabilities: The University of Utah Department of Economics seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, <http://disability.utah.edu/>, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-2020 to make arrangements for accommodations.

Semester Schedule

This schedule is tentative, with the exception of the exam dates and the due date for the Sugrue essay. Due dates and presentation dates for the research projects will be determined later (but early enough to give you adequate notice). Additional readings, changes in the schedule, and other announcements will be posted on WebCT.

Introduction:

M 8/20: Introduction, choosing of research topics

W 8/22: Preliminary evidence on economic inequality and discrimination

- READ Hyclack, Johnes, and Thornton, coursepack pages 1-16.

M 8/27: More Preliminary Evidence

Wage Determination and Theories of Discrimination:

W 8/29: Basic review of labor markets, introduction to models of discrimination

- READ Hyclack, Johnes, and Thornton, coursepack pages 16-27.

M 9/3: HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

W 9/5: Continue with models of discrimination

M 9/10: Continue with models of discrimination

W 9/12: Introduction to racial inequality in Detroit

- READ Sugrue Introduction, ch. 1

M 9/17: Continue with models of discrimination

- READ Kirschenman and Neckerman, "'We'd Love to Hire Them, But...': The Meaning of Race for Employers," in Jencks and Peterson, eds., The Urban Underclass (Brookings 1991), coursepack pages 55-70.

Human Capital and Labor Market Inequality

W 9/19: Measuring human capital and discrimination as sources of labor market inequality

- READ Hyclack, Johnes, and Thornton, coursepack pages 27-42

M 9/24: FIRST MID-TERM EXAM

W 9/26: Continue with measurement of sources of labor market inequality

M 10/1: Continue measurement of sources of labor market inequality

- READ Neumark, Blank, and Van Nort, "Sex Discrimination in Restaurant Hiring: An Audit Study," Quarterly Journal of Economics 111:3 (August 1996), p. 915-41, on WebCT.

W 10/3: Race and residence in Detroit in the 1940s

- READ Sugrue chapters 2 and 3

M 10/8 and W 10/10 – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

M 10/15: Continue with measurement of sources of labor market inequality

W 10/17: Continue with measurement of sources of labor market inequality

- READ King, "Human Capital and Black Women's Occupational Mobility," Industrial Relations 34:2 (April 1995), p. 282-298, on WebCT.

M 10/22: Continue with measurement of sources of labor market inequality

- READ Steele and Aronson, "Stereotype Threat and the Test Performance of Academically Successful African Americans," in Jencks and Phelps, The Black-White Test Score Gap (Brookings 1998), coursepack pages 71-98.

W 10/24: Race and labor markets in Detroit

- READ Sugrue chapter 4

Anti-Discrimination Policy

M 10/29: Basics of anti-discrimination policy

- READ Hyclack, Johnes, and Thornton, coursepack pages 42-52

W 10/31: Continue with anti-discrimination policy

M 11/5: SECOND MID-TERM EXAM

W 11/7: The politics and economics of labor market inequality in Detroit

- READ Sugrue, chapters 5 and 6

M 11/12: Continue with anti-discrimination policy

W 11/14: Continue with anti-discrimination policy

- READ Schmidt, "Affirmative Action Survives, and So Does Debate," Chronicle of Higher Education July 4, 2003, p. S1-S4, and "In Reactions to the Michigan Rulings, Diversity Abounds," Chronicle of Higher Education July 4, 2003, p. B10-B12, on WebCT.
- READ Bowen and Bok, The Shape of the River chapters 1 and 2, coursepack pages 99-152.

M 11/19: Residential stratification within Detroit's African American community

- READ Sugrue, chapters 7 and 8

Race and Urban Poverty

W 11/21: Race and urban poverty

- READ Kasarda, "Urban Industrial Transition and the Underclass," in Wilson, ed., The Ghetto Underclass: Social Science Perspectives (Sage 1993), coursepack pages 153-174.

M 11/26: Race and urban poverty in Detroit

- READ Sugrue, chapter 9 and conclusion

W 11/28: Continue with race and urban poverty

- SUGRUE ESSAY DUE

Recent Trends and Additional Topics

M 12/3: What does the future hold for racial inequality in the US?

- READ Klinkner and Smith, The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Inequality in America, "Conclusion: Shall We Overcome?," coursepack pages 175-210.

W 12/5: Review for Final

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1:00 PM: FINAL EXAM