ECONOMICS 419/519
ECONOMICS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY
COURSE OUTLINE

Department of Economics – Portland State University
Spring 2015
Version as of March 25th, 2015
Jamein P. Cunningham

Class Meeting: T-R 10:00 – 11:50pm
Class Location: 220 Ondine Residence Hall
Office: 241-R Cramer Hall
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Email: jamein.cunningham@pdx.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 1- 3pm & Thursdays 12:00 – 1:00pm or by Appointment

Course description

This course surveys economists’ analyses of the experiences of underrepresented race and ethnic groups in the U.S., both as individuals and in communities. The course examines theoretical material related to wage determination, labor market discrimination and marriage and transitions in family structure. We will also make a detailed empirical examination of changes in family structure and wellbeing, labor market inequality by race and ethnicity, educational attainment and achievement, and household values and behavior. If time permits, we will examine various public policy issues and proposals.

The readings in this course focuses on African Americans, reflecting the much larger body of economic research on this group relative to other racial and ethnic groups, but we will also study the experiences of Latinos and Asian Americans.

Prerequisites

The pre-requisite for this course is ECON 201. This course assumes background knowledge of basic microeconomic theory. In addition to economic theory, some knowledge of mathematics and statistics is recommended but not required.

Textbooks


Handouts and Outside Reading

There will be required readings as well as PowerPoint handouts available on Desire2Learn. I recommend completing the readings before class as well as bring handouts to class.
Grades

Grades for the course are based on performance on the problem sets, midterm exam, and a take home final exam. The distribution of points in the grading scheme is as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Homework Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take Home Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Exams

The Midterm exam will be held on April 28th from 10:00 PM to 11:50PM. The Final Take Home Exam will be **due in my mailbox by 10:15am on June 9th**. There is no make-up exam for the Midterm or Final Exam.

Problem sets

Each problem set will be distributed in class the week before it is due and is to be handed in at the **BEGINNING OF CLASS A WEEK LATER**. No problem set will be accepted after class begins, no exceptions, no excuses, no kidding.

Graduate Students

Graduate students will complete the same work as undergraduates, however, graduate students are also responsible for a presentation on special topics covered (or not covered) in the course. These presentations will be held during the last week of the course and should be approximately be 45 minutes to a 1 hour long. A preliminary version of the presentations is due by **11:59pm on May 31st**. Graduate students are also required to submit a literature review for the particular topic presented in class. The literature review will be due on **June 9th by 11:59pm**. This is worth an additional 150 points. **Undergraduate and graduate students are responsible for the information presented by graduate students for the final exam.**

Students with disabilities

Students with documented learning disabilities or special needs, must contact me at least a week in advance of scheduled exams if use of the Testing Center’s facilities is required. **It is the student’s responsibility to arrange for accommodations through the Testing Center and provide me with the appropriate documentation in the beginning of the quarter.** Also see http://www.pdx.edu/drc for more information.

Academic misconduct
The Student Conduct Code, which applies to all students, prohibits all forms of academic cheating, fraud, and dishonesty. These acts include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, buying and selling of course assignments and research papers, performing academic assignment (including text and examinations) for other persons, unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information, and other practices commonly understood to academically dishonor. The code of conduct also describes standards of behavior for all student members of the campus community. Violation of the SCC may lead to disciplinary action. Students may obtain copies of the Student Conduct Code by contacting the campus judicial officer at 503-725-4422, or by visiting room 433 Smith Memorial Student Union.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- Thinking About Race Week 1
- Statistical Overview or Race & Inequality Week 1
- Review of Statistical Testing Week 1
- Neoclassical Approach Week 2
- Work, Wage Determination, & Discrimination Week 2
- Identity & Economics Week 3
- Work & Wages, & Discrimination in Political Economy Week 3
- Measuring Discrimination Week 4
- Midterm Review Week 4
- Midterm Exam Week 5
- Experimental Econ & Discrimination Week 5
- Racial Difference in the Labor Market Week 6
- Human Capital & Discrimination Week 6
- Explaining Difference in Employment & Occupation Week 7
- No Class on May 14th Week 8
- Pre-Market Activity Week 8
- Anti-Discrimination Laws & Public Policy Week 8
- Housing Discrimination & Segregation Week 9
- Crime & Incarceration Week 9
- Discrimination in the Credit Markets Week 10
- Race and Riots Week 10
- Take Home Final Due by 10:15 a.m. in my mailbox in the Economics Department on June 9th

This Outline is Tentative. Dates, Subject Matter, Readings, and Topics may change during the quarter.