

Economics of Discrimination ECO 180.252
Johns Hopkins University Spring 2016
M, W 1:30 – 2:45 Hodson 305
Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Morgan

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Office Hours: Wyman Park 522

Mon. 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Nicholas Johnson

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Office Hours: Greenhouse Annex

Tues. 12 noon – 1 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description:

This course examines labor market discrimination by gender, race and ethnicity in the United States. There are several objectives: to apply economic theory to the labor market; to examine empirical evidence on earnings and employment outcomes, and to evaluate supply-side explanations for these outcomes; to assess the validity of alternative economic theories of discrimination; to understand the key methodologies used by social scientists and lawyers to detect labor market discrimination; and to assess the impact of public policy. The course will also reinforce skills relevant to all fields of applied economics, including critical evaluation of the theoretical and empirical literature, and the reasoned application of statistical techniques. The course is **writing-intensive**. Prerequisite is Elements of Microeconomics (180.102) or equivalent.

Text:

Francine D. Blau, Marianne A. Ferber and Anne E. Winkler, *The Economics of Women, Men and Work*, 7th Edition (2014), Pearson Prentice Hall (denoted BFW below).

Required supplementary readings are on electronic reserve at the Milton S. Eisenhower library, along with Chapters 2 and 12 of Ehrenberg and Smith, *Labor Economics*, 11th Edition (denoted E-S below).

Website:

This course has a Blackboard website blackboard.jhu.edu which you should consult frequently for announcements. Blackboard will also be used as a forum for online discussions.

Grading:

Responses (8)	20%
Critique (1)	5%
Class Participation	20%
Problem Sets	30%
Final Paper	25%

The format of the class is lecture and discussion. For each discussion class (usually Wednesday), please post a one-paragraph response (around 250 words) to the main issues raised in the asterisked (*) readings on the discussion section of Blackboard. The response should summarize and critically evaluate the assigned reading. It can also include comments or questions about other student responses, class lecture or other issues related to the course. Posts are due by **11 a.m. on discussion day**. Each discussion class, a group of 3-4 students will formally present a critique of the assigned article(s), putting it in context, and using it as a springboard for discussion. We will cover each assigned article in a fair amount of depth, so please bring a copy of the article to class and be prepared to discuss it.

You will also participate in one debate towards the end of the semester. Preparation for the debate will involve meeting once or twice in a small group setting. Your class participation grade will depend on the quality of your contribution to discussion classes and on your debate presentation. Problem Sets, due in class on **February 29, March 21, and April 18**, will help reinforce analytical concepts, and should be your own work. Guidelines for the paper are listed separately below.

Final Paper:

Submit a 6-8 page paper (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font) on a topic related to the economics of discrimination. Although papers will vary considerably in their approach and organization, you should include an Introduction (stating the central question), several paragraphs dealing with the central question, Conclusion (summarizing the paper and its findings) and Bibliography (aim for 5-10 sources). You need to cite and discuss relevant literature in the field, although this need not take the form of a separate literature review.

The most important part of a project like this is that you pose an interesting and very specific question. You should relate the topic you select to other literature in the field, and to the theoretical and empirical work we have covered in class. Ideas for a paper may be obtained from the textbook and readings, or from current affairs journals and newspapers. Also, check out government websites such as the Department of Labor and U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission, think-tanks such as the Brookings Institution, the Urban Institute, the Economic Policy Institute and the Institute for Women's Policy Research and the websites of consulting or law firms (e.g. www.bendickegan.com).

Once you have decided on a question, you need to locate specific papers on the topic. Search the literature using EconLit and peruse relatively accessible economics journals such as the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* and the *American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings* (May) and *AER: Applied Economics*; more specialized labor journals include the *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, the *Journal of Human Resources*, the *Journal of Labor Economics* and the *Monthly Labor Review*. Since some research questions are difficult to pursue for a variety of reasons, you should have a backup question. Any student who wishes to incorporate statistical analysis in the paper and extend their skills in this regard is encouraged to do so (this is not obligatory). Using Excel, you can calculate a difference in means or do simple regression analysis if you have the right kind of data. Support from the library, the TA and myself is available if you choose to go this route.

Some examples of paper topics might be the effect of discrimination on different ethnic groups (Asian, Native American); discrimination based on age, religion, or sexual orientation; labor market discrimination in particular occupations or industries; discrimination in areas other than the labor market (housing, education or sport); current controversies in anti-discrimination policy; class action lawsuits related to discrimination; or affirmative action in college admissions or employment.

Submit a short (one-page) proposal by email by **Wednesday, March 9th** so that I may approve your topic. It should include at least three academic references you have consulted. If you have weak writing skills I encourage you to use the excellent resources available at the Johns Hopkins Writing Center located in Gilman 230. Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss the topic you have chosen or to solicit advice regarding sources in the literature. The final paper should have a clear writing style, correct spelling, grammar and punctuation, and be well-organized. It is due by email on **Friday, May 6th**. Late papers will not be accepted, so please plan accordingly. This paper is not an op-ed piece that can be dashed off in a few days, but a quality piece of work that uses academic sources and requires careful work.

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating hurts our community by undermining academic integrity, creating mistrust and fostering unfair competition. The university will punish cheaters with failure on an assignment, failure in a course, permanent transcript notation and/or expulsion.

Violations can include cheating on exams and homeworks, plagiarism, reuse of assignments without permission, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorised collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery, falsification and lying.

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Course Outline and Reading List

Date:

- 1/27 Introduction and Overview of the Labor Market**
BFW Appendix 1A, pp. 9-13. E-S Chapter 2.
- 2/1 Labor Market Outcomes by Gender - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 5, Chapter 6 pp. 122-128, Chapter 7 pp. 146-160.
- 2/3 Labor Market Outcomes by Race - Lecture**
BFW references as for 1/29 paying particular attention to differences by race and ethnicity.
- 2/8 NO CLASS – I am on Jury Duty for Baltimore City – please use this opportunity to meet with the TA if need be.**
- 2/10 Labor Market Outcomes by Gender and Race – Discussion**
*Neal, Derek, “Black-White Labour Market Inequality in the United States,” in Steven Dulauf and Lawrence Blume, eds. *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2nd edition (2008), Macmillan.
*Smith, James P. and Michael Ward, “Women in the Labor Market and in the Family,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3(1) Winter 1989, 9-23.
- 2/15 SNOW**
- 2/17 Labor Supply - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 6 pp. 91-122.
- 2/22 Human Capital Theory - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 8, Chapter 9 pp. 196-205.
- 2/24 Labor Supply/Human Capital - Discussion**
*Holzer, Harry J, Paul Offner and Elain Sorenson, “Declining Employment among Young Black Less-Educated Men: the Role of Incarceration and Child Support,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 24 (2) Spring 2005, 329-350.
* Goldin, Claudia, Lawrence F. Katz, Ilyana Kuziemko. 2006. “The Homecoming of American College Women: The Reversal of the College Gender Gap,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20(4) Fall 2006, 133-156.
- 2/29 Immigrants in the Labor Market – Lecture**
Borjas, George, *Labor Economics*, 6th Edition (2013), Chapter 8 pp.331-343.
PROBLEM SET #1 DUE (in class)
- 3/2 Immigrants in the Labor Market – Discussion**
*Smith, James P. 2006. “Immigrants and the Labor Market.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 24 (2), 203-234.
- 3/7 Econometric Estimation of Discrimination - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 10 pp. 221-237 and Appendix 10A, pp. 247-251.
- 3/9 Econometric Estimation of Discrimination – Discussion**
*Hersch, Joni, “Profiling the New Immigrant Worker: The Effects of Skin Color and Height,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 26 (2) April 2008, 345-386.
PAPER PROPOSAL DUE (by email, midnight)

- 3/21 The Market and Discrimination - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 11 pp. 253-264, E-S Chapter 12 pp. 411-425.
- 3/23 The Market and Discrimination – Discussion**
Black, Sandra E. and Elizabeth Brainard, 2004. “Importing Equality? The Impact of Globalization on Gender Discrimination,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 57 (4) 540-559.
PROBLEM SET #2 DUE (in class)
- 3/28 Occupational Segregation - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 7 pp. 135-146, Chapter 9 pp. 205-219, Chapter 10 pp. 238-247, Chapter 11 pp. 264-269.
- 3/30 Occupational Segregation - Discussion**
*Bergmann, R. Barbara, *The Economic Emergence of Women*, 2nd Edition (2005) Palgrave, Chapter 5 and 6 and Appendix A.1.
- 4/6 Experimental Methodologies – Lecture**
No additional reading!
- 4/8 Experimental Methodologies - Discussion**
*Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullanaithan. 2004. “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakeesha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination,” *American Economic Review* 94 (4) 991-1013.
*Fawcett, Millicent “Equal Pay for Equal Work,” *Economic Journal* 28 (109) March 1918, page 1 only.
- 4/11 Affirmative Action - Lecture**
BFW Chapter 12, E-S Chapter 12 pp. 425-435.
- 4/13 Lawsuits – Lecture and Discussion**
*Watkins, Steve “*The Black O: Racism and Redemption in an American Corporate Empire*,” University of Georgia Press (1997), 1-38, 211-227. (presenters read the whole book, I will give you a copy).
*Greenhouse, Steven “Going for the Look, but Risking Discrimination,” *New York Times* 13 July 2003.
- 4/18 Guest Speaker, Caroline Laguerre-Brown J.D., Vice-Provost for Institutional Equity, Johns Hopkins University. Please be sure to attend this presentation.**
Reading TBA (no response needed).
PROBLEM SET #3 DUE (in class)
- 4/20 Debate: Why Are There so Few Women on Wall Street?**
- 4/25 Debate: Affirmative Action in University Admissions: Pro or Con?**
- 4/27 Debate: In 2016 is Labor Market Discrimination by Race/Ethnicity Still a Big Problem?**

FINAL PAPER DUE: FRIDAY, MAY 6th - 12 noon (by email)