
PSC 248

Discrimination

Fall 2025
12:30-13:45 TR
Goergen 109

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PURPOSE

An examination of discrimination from a social scientific perspective. Topics covered include defining discrimination, types of discrimination under the law, testing for discrimination, discrimination experiments, and a survey of what social scientists have discovered about discrimination in the areas of policing, bail, retail sales, automobile sales, and home mortgages. Although there is considerable time devoted to lecture, students are encouraged to participate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Evaluation is based on three exams (25% each), and a 3500-word paper (25%). The exams are given as scheduled and are not given early—please make any travel plans accordingly. You must take all three exams and submit a passing paper to pass the course. The paper is due during the course's university-scheduled final period. The course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. The course meets twice weekly for 3 hours per week and includes challenging independent reading for 1 hour per week.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Be familiar with the University's [policies](#) on academic integrity and disciplinary action. Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer, and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

Remember that the same technology that has made plagiarism easier to accomplish has also made it easier to detect. If you do not cite a source, it is plagiarism. If you do cite it, it is scholarship.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Find the readings online by clicking on the blue links.

August 26: Welcome

- None (first day of class).

August 28-September 2: Race; Inequality in the U.S.

- Yanow (2003). [Chapters 1 and 2](#).

September 4-9: Theories and models 1

- Rubinstein (2006). [Dilemmas of An Economic Theorist](#).
- Becker (1957). [Chapters 1 and 2](#).

September 11: APSA Conference (no class)

September 16-18: Theories and models 2

- Phelps (1972). [The Statistical Theory of Racism and Sexism](#).
- Aigner and Cain (1977). [Statistical Theories of Discrimination in Labor Markets](#).
- Bergmann (1974). [Occupational Segregation, Wages and Profits When Employers Discriminate by Race or Sex](#).

September 23-25: Detecting discrimination

- Darity Jr. and Mason (1998). [Evidence on Discrimination in Employment: Codes of Color, Codes of Gender](#).
- Heckman (1998). [Detecting Discrimination](#).
- Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004). [Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination](#).
- Levitt (2004). [Testing Theories of Discrimination: Evidence from *Weakest Link*](#).

September 30: Social

- None.

October 2: Exam 1

- None.

October 7-9: Employment; Retail

- Altonji and Pierret (2001). [Employer Learning and Statistical Discrimination](#).
- Goldin and Rouse (2000). [Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of “Blind” Auditions on Female Musicians](#).
- Ayres and Siegelman (1995). [Race and Gender Discrimination in Bargaining for a New Car](#).
- Harless and Hoffer (2002). [Do Women Pay More for New Vehicles? Evidence from Transaction Price Data](#).

October 14: Fall break

- None.

October 16-21: Lending; Segregation

- Pope and Sydnor (2011). [What’s in a Picture? Evidence of Discrimination from Prosper.com](#).
- Clarke and Rothenberg (2017). [Mortgage Pricing and Race: Evidence from the Northeast](#).
- Card, Mas, and Rothstein (2008). [Tipping and the Dynamics of Segregation](#).
- Bayer, Fang, and McMillan (2014). [Separate when equal? Racial inequality and residential segregation](#).

October 23-28: Education; Affirmative Action

- Heckman (1995). [Lessons from the Bell Curve](#).
- Fairlie, Hoffmann, and Oreopoulos (2014). [A Community College Instructor Like Me: Race and Ethnicity Interactions in the Classroom](#).
- Coate and Loury (1993). [Will Affirmative-Action Policies Eliminate Negative Stereotypes?](#)
- Rothstein and Yoon (2008). [Mismatch in Law School](#).

October 30-November 4: Policing

- Knowles et al. (2001). [Racial Bias in Motor Vehicle Searches: Theory and Evidence](#).
- Anwar and Fang (2006). [An Alternative Test of Racial Prejudice in Motor Vehicle Searches: Theory and Evidence](#).
- Antonovics and Knight (2009). [A New Look at Racial Profiling: Evidence from the Boston Police Department](#).

November 6: Exam 2

- None.

November 11-13: Looks; Sports

- Persico, Postlewaite, and Silverman (2004). [The Effect of Adolescent Experience on Labor Market Outcomes: The Case of Height](#).
- Mobius and Rosenblat (2006). [Why Beauty Matters](#).
- Price and Wolfers (2010). [Racial Discrimination among NBA Referees](#).
- Parsons, Sulaeman, Yates, and Hamermesh (2011). [Strike Three: Discrimination, Incentives, and Evaluation](#).

November 18-20: Health and wealth

- Chandra and Staiger (2014). [Identifying provider prejudice in health care.](#)
- Green et al. (2007). [Implicit bias among physicians and its prediction of thrombolysis decisions for black and white patients..](#)
- Bleakley and Ferrie (2013). [Shocking Behavior: Random Wealth in Antebellum Georgia.](#)
- Altonji and Doraszelski (2005). [The Role of Permanent Income and Demographics in Black/White Differences in Wealth .](#)

November 25-27: Thanksgiving

- None.

December 2: Summary

- Arrow (1998). [What has economics to say about racial discrimination?](#)
- Figart and Mutari (2005). [Rereading Becker: Contextualizing the Development of Discrimination Theory.](#)

December 4: Exam 3

- None.

December 14: Noon

- Papers due.