THE ECONOMICS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this seminar is to enhance understanding of the link between race and ethnicity, and economic outcomes. Seminar participants will explore a number of topics through assigned reading and classroom discussion. Topics to be examined include: what are race and ethnicity, economic theories of discrimination, social-psychological insight about stereotyping, legacy impacts on social-economic status, affirmative action, wealth disparities between racial/ethnic groups, the role of communities in shaping economic and social well-being, concepts of identity, the connection between skin shade and economic outcomes, the contribution of assimilation and English language proficiency to the economic outcomes of immigrant Latino workers, and the racial/ethnic composition of schools and academic achievement. The course will foster the development and use of critical thinking, effective writing, and oral presentation skills. Student evaluation will be based on classroom participation, an examination of concepts discussed, and a paper project.

INSTRUCTOR: Art Goldsmith, Jackson T. Stephens Professor of Economics

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CLASS TIMES: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00-12:00 (B, C, and D hours)

CLASS LOCATION: Williams School, Room 235

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-4:00 or by appointment. To make an appointment please see me before or after class,
leave a message on my door, call my office at 458-8970, or send an e-mail message.

REQUIRED READING AND PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Course Reading Pac (to be purchased from Professor, check only--make check to Washington and Lee University)

Class discussion will be based on the Reading listed for that day, unless otherwise noted!

It is imperative that members of the seminar read the assigned readings in a timely (i.e., by the time class meets) and a professional or thorough fashion, since seminars only work when students are prepared. Members of the seminar will be asked to fill out an Overview Paper Form for each assigned reading prior to attending class (the form is provided by the instructor). The “Form” asks students to: identify the questions examined in the paper, describe the economic model presented in the paper (if one is used), set out the key findings of the paper, identify shortcomings of the analysis conducted in the paper, and to reflect on how the analysis might be extended. Completion of the Overview Paper Form is a student’s ticket to attend class. This requirement of the course is aimed at ensuring lively and insightful discussion during meetings of the seminar.

PROBLEM AND POLICY PAPER

Seminar participants are required to produce a “Problem and Policy Paper” over the course of the term. Students must start by identifying a question they intend to explore and they are expected to obtain approval for the topic from the instructor. Students are expected to read a few professional (i.e., journal) articles on their topic as well as material available in the media or off the web. Given this background students are to prepare a 5-8 page Problem and Policy Paper that must follow the following structure:

I. Introduction
   This section must identify the problem to be examined--the question to be explored--and must make the case for why this is a problem to solve or question to answer.
II. Literature Review

This section describes what is known about this problem in the professional literature and through journalistic (i.e., news media and web) sources. Evidence on the question(s) you are examining and related questions should be cited along with a brief description of the data used in these studies and the type of analysis conducted.

III. Analysis of the Problem

This section must contain a discussion of the likely impact of one or more changes or developments on the problem under examination. This analysis should be guided by insights from one or more disciplines. This section is where you offer further insights about the cause and consequences of the problem you have chosen to examine. It would be ideal if an economic model were used to explore the question being investigated so that your question becomes a ceteris paribus violation. You should draw some conclusions based on your inquiry.

IV. Policy Recommendation(s)

This section should set out one or more policy recommendations to address (i.e., reduce and possibly eliminate) the problem examined in the paper.

The Problem and Policy Paper is due at 5:00 p.m. Thursday May 26th, 2005--no exceptions!! Students are expected to provide the instructor with an update on the status of their paper throughout the--SHORT--term (of course students are welcome to discuss their work with the instructor during normal office hours, or during an appointment, as often as they like). It is essential that students complete each component of the paper project in a timely fashion.

GRADING

Final grades are based on a weighted average of final exam (25%), research paper (25%), class participation (25%) and Overview Paper Form performance (25%).
COURSE SCHEDULE

THE CONCEPT AND MEASUREMENT OF RACE

Class #1: Tuesday April 19, 2005.

Reading


Film (shown during class, 1 hour)

Race: The Power of an Illusion (Three Part Series from PBS)
Part I: The Difference Between Us

Class #2: Thursday April 21, 2005.

Reading


Film (shown during class, 1 hour)
Race: The Power of an Illusion (Three Part Series from PBS)
Part II: The Story We Tell

RACE, COLOR AND IDENTITY:
LATINOS AND LATINAS IN THE USA

Class #3: Tuesday April 26, 2005.

Reading


Class #4: Thursday April 28, 2005.

Reading


Presentation


Reading--for class #5

**RACE, ETHNICITY AND EDUCATIONAL DISPARITY IN THE USA**

Class #5: Tuesday May 3, 2005.

**Reading (in addition to Orfield and Lee)**


**Presentation**

_Catherine Eckel, Professor of Economics, Virginia Tech._

“Conditional Trust: Sex, Race and Facial Expressions in a Trust Game”

**Reading (to be discussed after the Eckel presentation)**

Class #7: **Special Meeting Time and Place**  
Monday May 9, 2005; 4:00--6:00 pm. Room 345 Elrod Commons.

Presentation

Diane Whitmore, Professor, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago.

"**Chipping away at the Black-White Achievement Gap**"

Presentation

For the Shepherd Poverty Program (Optional for Economics 297A)  
Monday May 9, 2005; 12 noon. Room 345 Elrod Commons.  
{Lunch Provided, sign up if you wish to attend}

Diane Whitmore, Professor, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago.

“**How Do the Poor Spend Their Food Stamps?**”

**RACIAL WAGE DISPARITY IN THE USA**

Class #8: Thursday May 12, 2005.

Reading


Presentation

Art Goldsmith, Department of Economics, Washington and Lee University.

“**From Dark to Light: Skin Color and Wages Among African-Americans**” (paper by Art Goldsmith, Darrick Hamilton, and William Darity, Jr.)
WEALTH DISPARITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Class #9: Tuesday May 17, 2005.

Reading


Film (shown during class, 1 hour)

Race: The Power of an Illusion (Three Part Series from PBS)  
Part III: The House We Live In

Class #10: Thursday May 19, 2005.

Presentation

Darrick Hamilton, Professor, Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy, New School University.

"Black-White Wealth Disparity: The Role of Family Connections"

Reading

**Presentation**

For the Shepherd Poverty Program (Optional for Economics 297A)
Thursday May 19, 2005; 12 noon. Room 345 Elrod Commons.
{Lunch Provided, sign up if you wish to attend}

Darrick Hamilton, Professor, Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy, New School University.

“Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Wealth: Causes and Consequences”

Class #11: Tuesday May 24, 2005.

**Presentation**

Art Goldsmith, Department of Economics, Washington and Lee University.

“Does a Foot-in-the-Door Matter?: White-Nonwhite Differences in the Wage Return to Tenure and Prior Workplace Experience”
(paper by Art Goldsmith, Darrick Hamilton, and William Darity, Jr.)

**Reading**


Class #12: Thursday May 26, 2005.

**Presentation**

Art Goldsmith, Department of Economics, Washington and Lee University.

of Worker Interaction.” (by Art Goldsmith, Darrick Hamilton, and William Darity, Jr.)