

ECON 314: ECONOMICS OF DISCRIMINATION  
SPRING 2022

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Office Hours via Zoom

Drop-In Hours: Drop-in hours will be posted on blackboard.  
My office hours are held via Zoom until further notice. Links are available on Blackboard.

Additional Assistance

Ahra Wu, Data Science Librarian, Office Hours by Appointment  
The QSR Center also provides one-on-one tutoring via Zoom.

Textbook: None – We will be using a articles and other media posted on Blackboard

**Course Overview**

This course studies the topic of discrimination and how it relates to various aspects of the economy: labor market, education, housing market, etc. Not all difference results from discrimination and not all discrimination results in observable differences, so a central goal will be to help students understand how economists use econometrics to find evidence of discrimination in different markets. Using recent literature from the economics field, we will assess how and to what extent we see discrimination impacting select markets. Additionally, this course will also spend time discussing some policies aimed at assuaging discrimination and assessing how well they seem to work, giving students the skills to think critically about proposed policies and any potential spillover effects they may have.

Important to this class is the development of discussion and presentation skills. While some time will be spent on teaching and developing skills specifically related to presenting economics research, students will also be expected to develop discussion skills and be expected lead the class in discussions of current events and how they relate to the course material.

**Goals:**

- Understanding of theories surrounding why discrimination happens and its definition.
- Develop understanding of approaches and tools to evaluate if discrimination is occurring
- Build on critical thinking and policy evaluation skills.
- Develop communication skills to present and respectfully discuss sensitive and sometimes contentious topics and issues.

How the Class Will be Run

This is an in-person class. If you need to miss class due to illness or another personal matter, please get notes from a classmate and feel free to come to office hours to discuss any material you'd like extra help with. If you need to go into isolation for an extended period of time, please

reach out to me so that we can make alternative arrangements.

It is critical for the health and safety of our community that while in class, you follow our community protocols. In particular:

1. You must wear a surgical or KN95 mask that covers your nose and your mouth the entire time you are in the class. If you do not have a mask that properly fits, do not come to class.
2. You may not eat or drink anything while you are in the classroom.
3. Take care of all your personal needs before you enter the classroom. You may not leave your seat during class unless you are having an emergency.
4. Do not come to class if you are not feeling well or have been told to isolate. Email me so that we can come up with an appropriate plan if you must be gone for an extended period.

I do plan to enforce these protocols in class for the sake of everybody's health and well-being. I want everybody to come to class without the stress of worrying that they may get ill because their classmates are not following these rules.

### Assignments & Grading

The grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Final Project Proposal	10%
Final Project Proposal Presentation (individual)	20%
Oral Midterm Exam	30%
Engagement/Participation	10%
Homework/Assignments	10%
Journal Article Presentation (pairs)	15%
Current Event Presentation (individual)	5%

### *Engagement/Participation*

I love being an economist and am excited to share that perspective with you. My goal for you is to become truly engaged in this material, and I will give you credit for steps you take to demonstrate your engagement. The most important factors in determining your engagement grade will be the quality of 1) your participation in class discussions and 2) work that you submit as part of class "pre-work." I will also give you credit for other outside-of-class demonstrations of engagement in course material that you make at your own initiative.

### *Presentations*

Over the course of the semester, you will complete several presentations of different lengths and topics. You will be given more specific rubrics on the criteria being evaluated for each of the presentations, but for each you will be expected to have a well-practiced presentation with appropriate visual aids (PowerPoint).

- Current Event Presentation: This will be a short presentation 3-4 minutes that you will do

individually. The purpose will be to relate a recent news even to topics being discussed in this class and to generate some thoughtful discussion.

- **Journal Article Presentation:** This presentation will be done with a classmate. You will present an article to the class, using the format that economists use when presenting their research. This should be a professional presentation, and you will be expected to answer questions from the class at the end. You should plan on meeting with me about one week in advance to discuss any technical parts of the paper that you'd like clarification on, and you and your partner should schedule an appointment with the Oral Communication Center in advance of giving your presentation.
- **Project Proposal Presentation:** This capstone assignment will give you the opportunity to present on an area of interest to you. You must schedule an appointment with the Oral Communication Center in advance of giving your presentation.

### *Homework/Assignments*

You will complete an array of assignments of varying forms throughout the semester, these could include anything from pre-class quizzes on material to data exercises to group worksheets. Expectations for assignments and due dates will be shared for each assignment. If you miss class, it is up to you to confirm that you did not miss any assignments.

### Late Work Policy

Over the course of the semester, you will turn in several assignments. Each student is allowed ***two*** two-day grace periods to be used over the course of the semester when circumstances make it difficult to turn in an assignment on time. You will need to email me if you would like to apply one of your two-day grace periods to an assignment. ***Once you have exercised this option twice, you will receive no credit for late assignments. This option cannot be exercised on exams, presentations, or the final project proposal.***

### Staying in Touch

Please check your e-mail and Blackboard notifications frequently. Over the course of the semester, I will frequently send you e-mails or send Blackboard notifications on assignments or other class updates. In addition, course assignments are posted on the course's Blackboard page. Should you miss a class ***for any reason***, you are responsible for checking this page for any new assignments posted and turning in that assignment on the scheduled due date.

### Preliminary Course Outline

This course has multiple objectives that are not all covered in a single text. We will be using a variety of sources to learn about Economics of Discrimination.

- **Module 1: Discrimination in the Labor Force** (1/24-2/21)
- **Module 2: Housing Market Discrimination** (2/23-3/28\*)
- **Module 3: Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System** (3/28\*- 4/11\*)

- **Module 4: TBD**

Important Notes:

1. No make-up or early exams will be given unless preapproval is obtained from me. Students who have scheduling conflicts with exam times must arrange for alternate exam dates no later than Wednesday, February 2.
2. Hamilton College will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation(s) and would like to make a formal request for this course, please discuss it with me during the first two weeks of class. You will need to provide Allen Harrison, Assistant Dean of Students (aharriso@hamilton.edu) with appropriate documentation of your disability.
3. Exams in this class will be given in accordance with the Honor Code.