ECON 138: The Economics of Discrimination

All times are in PDT. I reserve the right to make any changes to the syllabus as the quarter progresses. You are responsible for checking Canvas regularly for updates and announcements.

Course content overview: This course will investigate differences in economic outcomes by race, gender, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics. We will study economic theories of discrimination, empirical work testing those theories, and policies aimed at alleviating group-level differences in economic outcomes. This course is also designed to teach students how to discuss controversial topics in a respectful, informed, and inclusive manner. Thanks to Professors Kate Antonovics and Prashant Bharadwaj for the original design of this course.

Teaching Staff:
Instructor: Professor Alyssa Brown
– Office hour: Wednesdays 4:00pm-5:00pm, https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/92498347800
– Email: aab005@ucsd.edu
– About Professor Brown: I’m a 5th year PhD candidate in the Department of Economics. My research focuses on topics related to discrimination within public institutions, children’s issues, and food insecurity. This is my second time teaching Econ 138 as an instructor. I have also taught this class as a TA four times (twice as Head TA) and was an instructor previously for Econ 5. Prior to coming to UCSD, I graduated from the College of William and Mary with a double major in economics and math. I love teaching economics, and I am so excited to provide a “liberal arts”-style class for you this quarter.

Teaching Assistant: Emily Fallick
– Emily is here to help with grading quizzes and to keep the Zoom room open if my WiFi briefly goes down. Please do not email her or send her chat messages during lecture; if you have a grading concern, please contact me directly.

Class time: Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:30pm-4:50pm
- https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/98862518787
- Zoom link opens at 3:25pm and closes at 4:55pm to allow for quick questions before and after lecture
**Course elements:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course element</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing assignments</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 writing assignments</td>
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<td>- Due April 16 (15%), May 7 (15%), and May 28 (15%)</td>
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<td>- Open Wednesday at 5pm PDT</td>
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<td>- Due Friday at 5pm PDT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (9 quizzes, lowest quiz dropped, 5% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Quizzes posted on Mondays at 12pm PDT, due Tuesdays at 12pm PDT, during Weeks 2-10.</td>
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<td>Final exam: 15-minute oral final exam given during finals week. I will schedule your oral exam during Week 5.</td>
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**Lecture:** Lectures will consist of about one hour of traditional lecture, and then 20 minutes of class discussion. Lecture will present theory/evidence and go over the papers on your reading list. The class discussion will be about a short reading or video that you must complete prior to lecture (the starred resources in your reading list). I’ll post these discussion questions on the discussion board at least 24 hours prior to lecture; you’re encouraged to discuss them on the discussion board with your peers, and then I will ask for volunteers in class to answer them.

**Discussion Board:** We have a discussion board for you to ask and answer questions related to course content. Please use this discussion board rather than emailing me unless you need to discuss a private matter. I will answer questions on the discussion board and via email within 24 hours.

**In-class Participation:** UCSD policy is that instructors are not allowed to give participation credit during the COVID-19 crisis. However, you will have a much easier time with the oral final exam if you participate in class. You can participate in-class by raising your hand on Zoom or asking questions on chat. If you cannot attend class, please be an active participant on the discussion board.

**Quizzes:** There will be weekly timed quizzes in Weeks 2-10 based on the lecture, readings, and in-class discussions from the previous week. Once you start a quiz you will only have an hour to do it. You cannot take quizzes multiple times. Quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice and free response. Quizzes are designed to make sure you are keeping up with the material for the week.
**Written Assignments:** Writing extensions ask you to apply class content to readings and topics that we haven’t directly covered in class. All written assignments must be submitted via Canvas. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

You will be given 48 hours to complete each writing assignment. PLEASE ALLOW EXTRA TIME FOR THE FIRST SUBMISSION. We do not accept email submissions.

If you need an extension on a writing assignment because of a family/health crisis, please email me ASAP. It’s much easier for me to give you an extension when you let me know prior to the deadline.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be a 15-minute oral exam scheduled during finals week. The oral exam will be similar in style to discussions we have in class; I’ll ask you a few questions and you’ll respond using evidence and economic reasoning from the quarter. This exam should be much easier than a written final for students who attend class and participate. If you cannot attend lecture, I strongly recommend asking and answering questions on the discussion board so you can practice “speaking” intelligently about economics. You will need to have your video and microphone on during this oral exam, and I will record our meeting.

**Administrative issues:**
1. If you have a documented disability and desire accommodation, please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities. They will contact me directly with all the information I need to make this a fair classroom.
2. UCSD has automated waitlists. If you have any questions regarding adding the class, please contact the undergraduate advisors in Economics.

**Cheating:** If you normally rely on tutoring services or forms of cheating to excel in your coursework, please do not take this class. You will not find these services useful and I will fail you if I find evidence of cheating. I expect you to work hard and earn a grade that’s fair to you and your peers.

Students are expected to do their own work, as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Coordinator. In addition to the penalties imposed by the Academic Integrity Review Board, we also reserve the right to fail students found guilty of academic misconduct.

The following are a few examples of academic dishonesty in this class:
- Having someone else complete an assignment for you or give you answers to specific questions (including the Econ Tutor or other tutoring services).
- Having someone else take your exam for you.
- Lying about having taken an exam or completed an assignment.
- Copying sentences from a website without citing it and using quotations.

You are expected to know and understand UCSD rules regarding plagiarism. Please visit this website and go through all the scenarios: https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/faq/index.html

If you have a question about whether something might be considered as plagiarism, please ask me.

**Class Schedule and Readings:**

Readings and videos with a * must be done before lecture and will be discussed during the in-class discussion. I encourage you to do all other readings prior to lecture as well. All readings are posted on Canvas. You are only responsible for the introductions and conclusions of journal articles; the exact pages are listed in the paper citation.

March 30: Class Introduction / Econometrics Catch-Up
- Syllabus
- Egap, “10 things to know about reading a regression table”: topics 1-4
- Evans, “How to interpret regression coefficients”

April 1: How Economists Think About Discrimination
- * “How disadvantaged neighborhoods amplify racial inequality”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lySc7ONotfQ
- Daly et al. “Disappointing Facts about the Black-White Wage Gap” FRBSF Economic Letters
- Chetty et al. Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States – Executive Summary

April 6: Oaxaca Decomposition / Profit Maximization Review
- * Exercise 1 – try to fill out missing boxes before class using Econ 1 knowledge!
- “Measuring Discrimination Oaxaca decomp”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgA8OAlCag
- “Maximizing Profit Practice” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQvtnjWZoig

April 8: Preference-Based Discrimination: Theory
- * “Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBJyqfoLM

April 13: Preference-Based Discrimination: Evidence

April 15: Statistical Discrimination I
- “Exposing Housing Discrimination”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rP7WBIqg8Dk

April 20: Statistical Discrimination II

April 22: Race and Employment: Observational Studies
- “The Bell Curve Controversy” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=De_PIq3RsHU

April 27: Race and Employment: Audit Studies
- Lopez, “Study: anti-Black Hiring Discrimination is as prevalent today as it was in 1989.” Vox, September 2017.

April 29: Discrimination against Asian Americans
May 4: Police Use of Force: Evidence
- * California’s new police use-of-force law, explained: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeI5PPdW_vM

May 6: Racial Profiling: Evidence

May 11: Racial Profiling, Crime, and Incarceration: Policy Solutions

May 13: Health Disparities

May 18: Concordance in Medical Treatment
- * “A doctor’s memoir shows race matters in the hospital room.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TJa3_FoLdw
- “Does physician diversity matter for health outcomes?” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnboQYiDv8I

May 20: LGB Discrimination
- * "Why Supreme Court’s LGBTQ employment discrimination ruling marks a ‘milestone’." [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fxh_epZ3d60](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fxh_epZ3d60)

May 25: Affirmative Action: Theory and Overview

May 27: Affirmative Action: At UC

June 1: Gender Wage Gap: Theory and Overview
- * “Gender Discrimination in the Labor Market: Cecilia Rouse.” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3Nwi1VsF3o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3Nwi1VsF3o)
- “A stunning chart shows the true cause of the gender wage gap.” Vox, 2018.

June 3: Gender Wage Gap: Evidence
- * “Are men and women evaluated differently in the labor market?” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2LcjoU6aA0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2LcjoU6aA0)