

# ECON 383: Economics of Discrimination

Oregon State University

Spring 2020

## Instructor

Michael Jerman

- Remote office hours: MW 12:00pm-1:00pm, or by appointment
- Email: michael.jerman@oregonstate.edu
- Zoom Personal Meeting ID: 297-626-2177

## Course Structure

Due to current quarantine restrictions, this course will be 100% online. The scheduled meeting time (MW 4:00pm–5:50am) will be used for live-streamed lectures and online group activities.

Live-streamed lectures will utilize YouTube (or similar streaming platform). Links to each class's lecture will be provided on Canvas before the start of class.

Course discussion will occur on Slack. Questions during the lecture can be posted to the relevant Slack channel and will be visible to the instructor during the live stream.

## Course Description

An economic analysis of discrimination, focusing on labor market inequities for women and minorities. Historical and current trends in pay, education, and employment disparities, economic explanations for such disparities, and econometric evidence for wage and employment discrimination.

## Course Summary

This class analyzes historical and current trends by gender and race regarding wages, occupational patterns, and unemployment rates using the tools of economics. We will discuss the explanations offered by economists and examine the writings of well-known authors with differing views. We will survey and critically evaluate the empirical evidence and analyze public policies that may be utilized to combat discrimination.

## OSU Baccalaureate Core Difference, Power, and Discrimination

Students in Difference, Power and Discrimination courses shall:

- Explain how difference is socially constructed
- Using historical and contemporary examples, describe how perceived differences, combined with unequal distribution of power across economic, social, and political institutions, result in discrimination
- Analyze ways in which the interactions of social categories, such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and age, are related to difference, power, and discrimination in the United States.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Report historical and current trends by gender and race regarding pay, occupational patterns, labor force participation, and unemployment rates.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative economic explanations for gender and racial disparities in the labor market.
- Assess the reliability of different types of empirical evidence.
- Synthesize and weigh the evidence as a whole.
- Analyze alternative public policies in light of the evidence.

## Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course are ECON 201.

## Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course.

## Canvas

All assignments and grades will be posted on Canvas ([canvas.oregonstate.edu](https://canvas.oregonstate.edu)). This is the official website for the course, and you will be responsible for any and all information that is posted there. Therefore if you have any difficulties accessing Canvas it is imperative that you resolve them as quickly as possible by contacting the Canvas support at [canvas@oregonstate.edu](mailto:canvas@oregonstate.edu).

## Slack

Questions regarding the course material or general questions about the course should be posted on the Slack workspace for this course ([osu-econ383](#)). Slack allows for messages on public channels and direct messages to other users. I encourage most questions to be posted publicly so everyone in the course can benefit from the answers.

Instructions for installing and signing up for Slack are provided on the Canvas homepage.

## Attendance

Participation in periodic in-class exercises will be recorded and may account for up to 10% extra credit.

## Homework

There will be weekly homework assignments throughout the term, assigned and submitted on Canvas. No late assignments will be accepted. You are encouraged to work together in groups, but each person must submit their own assignment.

## Exams

There will be one midterm examination and one comprehensive final examination, both assigned and submitted on Canvas. There will be no time limit on the exams, but they will need to be submitted before the due date and time. No makeup exams will be given. If the midterm is not submitted due to a *documented* emergency, the weight of the exam will be placed on final. A documented emergency that causes the final to not be submitted will result in an incomplete for the course. Failure to submit any exam for a reason other than a documented emergency will result in a score of zero.

## Grades

Your grade will be calculated based on the following weights:

- Homework: 50%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final: 30%

The *minimum* letter grade that you will receive based on your weighted total of points earned is given below:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
93	90	87	83	80	77	73	70	67	63	60

## Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

## Student Conduct

You are expected to adhere to the university's Code of Student Conduct

At a minimum, any incidence of academic misconduct (as defined by the above code) will result in a grade of "F" for the course.