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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Addressing race in economics: Teaching to Transgress

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ABSTRACT

In economics, race is often used as an explanatory variable. However, context for observed correlations is not often discussed and when it is, the discussion truncates history to the 1960's and the era of the Civil Rights movement. The latter is consistent with the projection that regulation has limited or eliminated racial disparity and therefore, other factors, cultural and individual, account for observed economic status. However, the evidence to counter this is observable. For example, to the extent that the intergenerational impact of oppression is factored into economic analysis, and qualitative attributes such as anxiety and depression are incorporated into the explanation for the persistence of poverty, social norms rather than race are revealed to be the contributors to present period variations in economic outcomes. Inspired by bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* we address how the teaching of economics has contributed to the normalization of racialized discrimination. We then address how the economics curriculum can be used as a tool to facilitate racial equity. The discussion adds value to the discourse on race by addressing how the commoditization of teaching has eliminated classroom engagement and critical thinking and concludes with the value of transgression in addressing social justice in economics.

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Introduction

Even though a behavioral science, economics has been taught as though it is an optimization discipline, and that incentives like utility and profit maximization are immutable drivers of human behavior. Students are typically presented with a single perspective that reinforces the economic framework in operation. However, the teaching also bounds the rationality of the student to the extent that there is no critical assessment of the prevailing economic system, and no discussion of moral responsibility of fundamental purpose other than accumulation. As early as 1938 Beach stated,

It has been the policy of many teachers of economics that beginners in economic theory should be taught only one theoretical explanation of each phenomenon. These teachers feel that the acquaintance of the student with other explanations can be postponed until the student has become more familiar with economics in general and therefore has a better sense of judgment. The existence of other theoretical explanations can be mentioned, and

this, it is thought, should be sufficient to keep the student aware of the fact that there are other sides to the story.

The effectiveness of this policy might be questioned. Even if the existence of other theories is mentioned, the significance of this existence is very seldom appreciated. Elementary students look for definite answers to their problems, and, lacking the power of discernment, will accept the one theoretical explanation as sufficient. If the students do not continue in this subject, this one explanation will always be the explanation. If the students continue, they will tend to have a bias in respect to this one explanation.

Therefore, for those phenomena for which no one theoretical explanation is entirely satisfactory, instead of offering one theory, which may indeed be the best, would it not be better to develop the power of discernment of the student by suggesting more than one theory? Two explanations should be enough, and if they could be introduced by emphasizing certain contrasting features, the additional time need not be great, and the original explanation may be made clearer. Perhaps the most important job of the teacher in social sciences is to develop the students' power of discernment. The students must learn that one idea does not contain the whole truth; and when this is learned, the students' progress will be more rapid (p. 515).

In the present period, researchers have noted that the teaching of economics has not deviated much over the past 50 years highlighting that the profession of the teaching of economics has lagged with respect to alignment of content with contemporary issues (Allgood et al., 2015; Bowles & Carlin, 2020). This is a lost opportunity and a problem. The limited tangibility to real world issues in the classroom teaching of economics, and exclusion of discussion related to the application of economic theory, has promoted a perception of legitimacy of economic theory and eliminated critical engagement. Given that introductory economics is typically a requirement at most institutions, non-tangible and commoditized teaching does not allow the profession the opportunity to be relevant.

More broadly, a few courses in undergraduate economics, and perhaps only an introductory course, are often the only interaction that the college graduates of tomorrow will have with the economics profession. Because they are the only opportunities that academic economists will have to educate the citizens and voters of tomorrow, they deserve our best efforts (W. E. Becker, 2000, p. 117).

This paper provides evidence of the need for transgression in the teaching of economics as a means to stimulate critical thinking and engagement specific to the concept of race. Starting with the reality that the economic system dominates cultural norms, the discussion highlights, as addressed in bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress*, that the student-teacher relationship 'is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of [our] students' (Hooks, 1994, p. 13). In the sections that follow, a discussion of the present state of teaching introductory economics is provided, highlighting the commoditization of introductory economics courses, and fostered racialized perceptions. An overview of the concept of discrimination in economics and how this has affected racial justice then highlights the rationale for critical engagement in the discipline; the necessity to 'teach without reinforcing existing systems of domination' (Hooks, 1994, p. 18). Finally, the significance of understanding race in context is provided. The discussion concludes with student outcomes related to Teaching to Transgress in the teaching of the economics of race.

Teaching economics

In most colleges and universities, students are required to take introductory economics. This is usually comprised of a two-semester sequence of what is generally referred to as Principles of Macroeconomics and Principles of Microeconomics. Though there are standard elements in all Principles courses (e.g. supply/demand, elasticity, externalities), the manner in which these subjects are discussed and the practical connection that is constructed between the classroom experience and the real economy are at the discretion of the instructor, as is, to a significant extent, the choice of textbook required for the course. Often, the textbook is the primary learning vehicle. As bell hooks noted in her introduction to *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), the default to facts rather than engagement reduces economics to memorization, limiting the student's understanding of the subjects influence on them and their capacity to affect the operationalization of the discipline.

Five textbooks dominate the Principles of Economics market, and these texts provide instructor materials that integrate with standard in-use electronic teaching platforms (i.e. Blackboard, Canvas). The materials include PowerPoint lecture presentations, study problems, online learning modules, and test banks, streamlining the instructor's preparation and automatizing the learning process. However, this assembly-line style of education not only promotes a linearity to the education process but also a false perception that the present economic system, which is based on and credits only market activities, represents an evolved state of the economic framework. This results in the discrediting of non-market economies, and countries where unpaid or subsistence work may have a significant role in economic activity. The latter is evidenced in the characterization of these countries as 'developing' or 'underdeveloped.' Interestingly, these are often countries that for some period in their history were subject to colonial rule and whose peoples are distinguishable by the social construction of race (Bruhn & Gallego, 2012; Mizuno & Okazawa, 2009), highlighting the significance of omission in economic instruction, an understanding of the direct relationship between development and exploitation (Rodney, 2018; Zinn, 1990).

Given the focus on equations and graphs, in standard introductory economics courses (i.e. Principles), students are provided a very rigid perspective of the economy, with little room for questioning or divergent thinking. In fact, much of what they are taught aligns with the present functioning of the economy and supports the theoretical framework of behavior of the consumer and produced, leading to the perception that self-gratifying consumption and accumulation-centered growth are goals, arguably, indoctrinating students into a limited perception of their actions and purpose, while normalizing the same.

When viewing economics curriculum from the perspective of its real-world application, it is readily understood that what students learn affects their perception of the structure and interactions within the economic system in which they will operate for the entirety of their lifetime. Economics is after all a course that has direct real world application and has similarly an opportunity foster tangible understanding of the context related to present period conditions.

It is highly likely that for the majority of students, perhaps one introductory course in economics may be the only interaction they will have with the concepts of economics (W. E. Becker, 2000, p. 117). While omission of context and discussion of the social

construction of the operating framework of economics will affect all students, and for a large majority for whom computer-based commodity economics is the sole experience will likely lead to a disconnect between the discipline and the framework of their operating reality. They will not leave the course realizing that the course had the potential of providing them with insights on social norms and institutional behavior. As noted by Fullbrook (2003, i), 'economics as taught in universities neither explains contemporary economic reality nor provides a framework for the critical debate of economic issues in democratic societies.' For those majoring or specializing in economics, though they may have greater cognizance of the application of the discipline, the omission of critical engagement may have more overt outcomes.

In a study published in 2010, Flynn and Quinn note, When adjusting for size of the pool of graduates, those with undergraduate degrees in Economics are shown to have had a greater likelihood of becoming an S&P 500 CEO than any other major. That is, the share of graduates who were Economics majors who were CEOs in 2004 was greater than that for any other major, including Business Administration and Engineering (58). Additionally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projection for the occupation is for employment of economists to grow 13% from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). What these statistics provide is the significance of critical engagement in the study of economics as a catalyzing tool for social change, where the want of the same may be attributed to the discipline. The following section provides a direct relationship between economics and the legitimacy conferred to discrimination and highlights an example of hooks' embracing change (Hooks, 1994, p. 36). The explanation addresses the need for the instructor to take risks in addressing standardized curriculum and encourage critical thinking both on the part of students and themselves.

Economics of discrimination

G. S. Becker (1957/1971) was an economist and academic entrepreneur who was successfully able to legitimize the use of utility theory as an explanatory tool for social issues, specifically racial variations in compensation. In his text *The Economics of Discrimination*, he highlighted the still used method of evaluating income variations between races. In the equation below wages are set equivalent to marginal productivity of labor (MP^*_L), in other words a wage (w^*) is equivalent to the amount produced for a specific time interval.

The normal assumption that workers will be paid

$$MP^*_L = w^*$$

Responding to observable differences in wages for whites and blacks Becker refined the equation to include a discrimination coefficient (d) such that d would be the additional sum that a white worker would need to be paid to have to work with a black worker. In this manner, d was a qualitative cost to the white worker that was quantitatively being compensated.

Adjusting the above equation to attribute to white workers (W), the equation is now

$$MP^*_L = w^*_W$$

Incorporating black workers (B) the equation highlights that black workers are paid less than their marginal product of labor.

$$MP*_L = w*_B(1 + d)$$

If both black and white workers are equally productive, and $d > 0$, white wages are higher than black wages. The variation in wages also conveys that for the employer the cost of black workers is lower than their white counterparts. An opportunity to profit from the asymmetry.

On the surface the model may appear benign. However, in critically engaging with the normalizing impact of the modeling of observation, what may surface is the normalization of discrimination and exploitation and its acceptance as a social norm through the legitimacy provided by economic equations. Along with this is the veiling of hate that the use of 'discrimination' allows. Fundamentally, as noted by economist Kenneth Arrow (1998) discrimination is a moral issue that cannot be corrected by market depictions or actions; it can instead be obscured by them.

Arguably, modeling of a discrimination coefficient is inconsistent with the purposeful segregation of blacks. The model does not account for occupational representation, just racial wage equality within and occupation. But

[d]iscrimination mainly took the form of limiting the range of jobs in which blacks were hired at all. The form which racial discrimination took was the same as in residential segregation. It was not that blacks were charged higher rents for the same residence but that they were excluded from certain (most) areas

(Arrow, 1998, p. 93). From this perspective a focus on discrimination addresses equality of wages but not equity (Mount & Bennett, 1975). If the only employment available is a dishwasher, the equality of pay for the class of workers will be the focus of discrimination rather than the disproportionate representation of a black or white worker in the occupational class. To the extent that wage statistics are compiled and assessed by racial classification, such data without this context normalizes expectations of lower wage attainment for black workers, leading to seemingly objectively created expectations of racially-based outcomes. This latter characteristic in turn leads to policy that may address the wrong issue, such as promoting vocational training rather than college opportunities, ultimately furthering negative stereotypes (Butrymowicz et al., 2020; Starks, 2018)

In using observation without context, the reality of the MP_L is also misunderstood. As thoroughly presented in *Slavery's Capitalism* (Beckert & Rockman, 2016), the concept of marginal product itself was a construction of slavery that was increased through the violence of the whip. So, what is being measured is a statistic whose context was established to extract the most output at the lowest cost; it does not include the concept of 'fairness' of the wage, since there was no wage paid but instead is measured against the profit returned from maximizing output while minimizing living expenses. This highlights the issues of minimum wages, as well as other, arguably non-CEO pay. Wages are not based on compensating the worker but on maximizing the return to the owner, firm, or corporation. If the worker is tied to their income, they remain on the weaker side of the negotiation. This presents an entirely different perspective of income and perhaps highlights the significance of Thoreau's (1948) perspective on simplicity. Spending less and saving more allows for long-term independence from a modern form of servitude. However, it is inconsistent with another prevailing economic assumption that has become endogenized as a social norm, consumerism. Given that consumption spending is the largest component of what we measure – gross domestic product (GDP) and the

determinant of economic growth – in understanding the connections, not only is an individual in an economy potentially empowering their independence, through fostering sustainable living they are also in opposition of the economic model.

Another aspect of observation-based modeling is that it does not consider the qualitative impacts that may be captured in the outcomes. As noted by Stiglitz (1973), 'There is another set of explanations for wage differences between incomes of groups: groups may differ in some characteristic which is economically important' (p. 292). Segregation and discrimination have both been linked with qualitative well-being degeneration, leading to anxiety, depression, stress, and trauma as well as other mental illness (Carter & Pieterse, 2020). These in turn affect not only the well-being of the individual but their family, extended community, but also stereotypes that can impose an additional challenge related to societal expectations, promoting a negative vicious cycle (Paradies et al., 2015). Being extremely racist, interestingly, has also been addressed as a mental illness (Poussaint, 2002). This characterization has created an opportunity to critically address how normalizing discrimination (i.e. hate) has been a contributing factor. However, the discussion remains limited as the legacy of Becker's perspective remains dominant in addressing policy and in analysis.

Significant in this example is the vulnerability of the instructor in challenging the existing evaluation of race in economics. This ties with what Hooks (1994) references as a 'Revolution of Values.' In addressing race in a manner inconsistent with prevailing theoretical acceptance, the instructor does encounter scrutiny from students and may depending on their employment status (i.e. pre-tenure, contract) feel pressure to suppress, or even backtrack from the discussion. The benefit from challenging accepted perceptions may be limited by the cost; as a result, teaching suffers and arguably society as well. It is what we know that bounds our thoughts and to this extent increases, decreases, or limits societal norms and beliefs, which in turn form our culture.

Race in economic context

A bibliometric study of economics publications from JSTOR, Scopus, and the Web of Science over the 1960–2020 period noted that since the 1970s, less than 2% of economics articles addressed race, discrimination, African American and other terms related to racial attributes. Additionally, the proportion remained steady over the assessment period. When compared to political science and sociology, economics was far below the two disciplines, with political science publications twice as high and sociology at six times as high. The study also evaluated economists' perception of the inclusion of race in research. Using a random selection of economists in academics and the public sector the results revealed that economists were aware that race and race related subjects were limited but had a false perception of the present period, assuming instead that there was an increase in the topic in the current period. However, the research also highlighted that 'almost 80% of economists think that the Top Five [economics] journals are less likely to publish race-related research' (Advani et al., 2021).

In looking at the economics literature over the sixty-year interval assessed by Advani et al. (2021), there is commonality with respect to the use of race as an explanatory variable. Context is not explored, rather assessments are conducted, and the results are provided as an explanation. Looking at the start of the period, for example, in a 1960 study

on race and labor market mobility, black men were found to be most mobile, but the rationale was not explored (Bunting, 1960). Similarly, quantitative research often includes race as an independent variable and addresses the correlation between race, education, and income and attributes causation of race to negative correlations to education and income without assessing historical context or even present period context (Lassiter, 1965). Education for this reason is often highlighted as the remedy or cause of racial disparity, instead of the context of educational inequality attributable to historical occupational segregation, discrimination, and property-tax funded public schooling (Wright, 1967).

Going forward to the present period, the pattern of data driven assessment continues and remains dependent on quantifiable metrics that capture only the outcomes with little attention devoted to context. The findings of the 60's and 70's in this manner become the expectations of the 80's to the present period, endogenizing and promoting a stereotype of low educational attainment, poor occupational selection, and low income for blacks, specifically black men. Quantitative analysis is the primary contributing aspect, legitimizing the results, simply because math masks the subjectivity of the analysis with the objectivity conferred to the sciences. However, the equation and relationships are subjectively determined and are a product of normalized rather than overtly normative social expectations. This directly highlights the need for critical engagement and affirms the rationale for Teaching to Transgress in economics, especially in light of the fact that the discipline has only become more quantitatively focused since the 1960's (Desrosières, 2016).

Outcomes of Teaching to Transgress

As highlighted, economics as a discipline has not devoted much research space to the discussion of racial disparities. Additionally, the discipline may have contributed to inequity by normalizing it with the adoption of discrimination as an explanatory condition for racial disparities. Given these two attributes, a course, Economics of Race (see [Appendix A](#)) was designed in 2017 to provide an interdisciplinary curriculum that critically engaged students with the context of racial disparity. Themes in the course included the following:

Topic 1: What is race?

Topic 2: Racial identity and group dynamics

Topic 3: Rationalizing discrimination

Topic 4: Racial discrimination and identity

Topic 5: Racial inequality in America

Topic 6: Explanations of racial inequality

Topic 7: Multi-dimensions of institutional racism

Topic 8: Racial subgroups

Indigenous American

Mexican and Puerto Ricans Americans

Chinese and Japanese Americans

East Indian

At the conclusion of the course students provided responses to a feedback survey designed to assess if the learning objectives for the course had been met (see [Appendix B](#)). Question 5 specifically asked, 'Are you better able to apply economics to social issues as a result of this course? Please explain your answer.' Below are selected representative responses from the 2022 summer course.

... learning about the economic impacts of social issues and how they are aggravated through legislation and societal values, has helped me identify the systematic structures that these issues stem from. Learning about the history of capitalism and reading in depth analyses of racialization and social construction of race has also helped me be able to critically analyze social issues and structures I see around me.

The study of economics that I learned in my other classes is widely different from the one I learned in this class. In terms of this class' definition of economics, I definitely can apply economics to social issues as a result of this class. I think now I learned to take into consideration not just math and regression analysis but also the humanity of a person and well-being. This brings a very different perspective to the table because instead of assigning numbers to someone, I am able to sympathize with their situation and speak on what is best for them as opposed to what's best for the 'economy'- which feeds into capitalism.

I am definitely better equipped to apply economics to social issues as a result of this course. The whole reason I majored in economics was to apply the discipline to various social and policy issues of the day, and I have specifically tailored my classes to meet that desire. Economics should be focused on broad wellbeing, not narrow measures of income. I think that understanding economics through a cultural, behavioral, philosophical, and racial lens allows me to better tackle and understand current issues and apply what I've learned in those contexts. I think the most significant aspect of this course was the multidisciplinary approach that it took. I have taken a few economics courses where the professors are very much econ-brained and steeped into neoclassical textbooks and methods. This class was valuable because it applied economics to current issues in a very tangible way. That is what economics should be about, and I really appreciated that about this class.

Prior to this course I had a difficult time defining economics and being able to apply it to real-life, social issues beyond those taught in our required courses. I've been able to engage with applied economic theory in a way that is still slightly new to me. I've found the importance of the economic perspective in understanding social issues because it is so intertwined with the politics, history, etc. that shape social issues.

The student responses highlight the significance of engagement and opportunity for critical thinking, especially in economics, which whether or not accessible from a course

curriculum is directly tied from a disciplinary perspective to the framework that shapes our daily actions. The achievement of these outcomes was not limited to the execution of the syllabus or learning objectives through formal lecture but rather through the development of interactive mutually respectful community facilitated with the first day by the instructor. This included learning students' names, engaging students through eye contact and promotion of in class discussion as part of daily assignments, creation of group exercises to promote student relationship development, and validation of student opinions and comments (i.e. listening). In this manner the foundation for the course aligned with Hooks (1994):

excitement about ideas [was] is not sufficient to create an exciting learning process. As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence. Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices. To begin, the professor must genuinely value everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources (p. 8).

Next steps

The discussion in this paper highlights both the shortcomings within the educational process as well as to society at large when critical engagement in the classroom is substituted with passive learning specific to the discipline of economics. Only one area of focus was examined, race, and though the evaluation of race in terms of social justice and persistence of inequality is compelling it is not sufficient with respect to the application of collaborative, critical engagement between the teacher and students of economics. Social justice themes are embedded in less overt ways and even implicit with the economics framework. For this reason, recommended next steps are for critical assessment and engagement across the discipline and especially with respect to the foundational Principles courses. Further, the relationship between the present focus on economic growth given climate change, not only will exacerbate social justice issues but also climate justice issues (Banzhaf et al., 2019). This is connected to the economic exploitation of the same countries whose citizens have been challenged by racial discrimination, highlighting yet another engagement with the prevailing economic framework at a time when momentum is increasing for a change in measurement, focus, and purpose of how we assess well-being.

The present period offers a unique opportunity to promote critical engagement and community. Both social and environmental justice issues are increasingly at the fore but there is also increasing understanding of the need for behavioral change and the role of the economy in facilitating the present speed of climate change. For these reasons what may start as critical thinking aligned to disciplinary transgression may become a wider social norm. For economics the challenge rests with the conservative nature of the discipline and its practitioners but the ubiquitous application of the discipline offers significant impact once traction is attained.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Appendix A: Economics of Race Selected Syllabus Content

Course Learning Objectives

Following the successful completion of this course, a student will:

- Be familiar with the historical context of racial and ethnically based economic differences from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Understand the significance of social values to economic outcomes.
- Have developed their critical analysis, communication, and research skills.
- Be able to apply economics to social issues.

Learning Process

There are three modes of learning in this course: reading assignments, classroom discussion, and classroom lecture. The classroom lecture will highlight and facilitate interest in the weekly topics, focusing on the economic theory and the multidisciplinary linkages of the weekly topic to anthropology, sociology, political science, and history. The in-class discussions will enable understanding of personal viewpoints and the views of others. The quality of our classroom discussions will be dependent on students' having independently read the assigned materials for the week. Individual reading is essential to engaging participation as well as students' understanding and successfully attaining the course learning objectives.

Course Schedule

The first class meeting will consist of introductions, discussion of the syllabus and course expectations. The following schedule reflects subsequent course meetings.

Course Outline: The course outline provides an expected time schedule of course topics and dates, where topics coincide with chapter numbers as provided. Students are expected to adjust reading assignments to be consistent with class pace.

Topic 1: What is race?

We will explore the basis of race and answer: what determines race and why race was given importance

Reading assignments:

Anderson, K. & Perrin, C. (2009). *Thinking with the head, Race, craniometry and humanism. Journal of Cultural Economy*, 1(1–2), 83–98.

Jahoda, G. (2009). Intra-European racism in nineteenth century Anthropology. *History and Anthropology*, 20 (1), 37–56.

Martin, C. E. (1996). Educating to combat racism: The civic role of Anthropology. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 27(2), 253–269.

Video:

Adelman, L. (Producer & Director). (2003). *Race the Power of an Illusion*. (Motion picture). United States: California Newsreel. Video 2.

Topic 2: Racial identity and group dynamics

We will look at how race impacted society and specifically address how economics has evaluated racial discrimination

Reading assignments:

Becker, G. S. (1971). Employer discrimination. *The Economics of discrimination*. (39–54). Chicago: U of Chicago.

Becker, G. S. (1971). Employee discrimination. *The Economics of discrimination*. (54–74). Chicago: U of Chicago.

Video:

Discrimination, prejudice & racism: At the office and workplace. (28 December 2008 28 December 2008). Rosary Films. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chwgmIS9Qqk&list=PLWunYFT_mbBv46N1bZziT BkwxgbYOYoQm&index=3

Topic 3: Rationalizing discrimination

We will evaluate how economics through its positive analytical lens (versus a normative or value-driven perspective) may have contributed to the acceptance of racial discrimination.

Reading assignments:

Akerlof, G. & Kranton, R. E. (2000). Economics and identity. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115 (3), 715–753.

Rutland, A., Killen, M. & Abrams, D. (2010). A new social-cognitive developmental perspective on prejudice: The interplay between morality and group identity. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(3), 279–291.

Ostrom, E. (2000). Collective action and the evolution of social norms. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(3), 137–158.

Video:

Racism in America: Small Town 1950s Case Study Documentary Film. (10 June 2012 10 June 2012). Way Back Films. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCiYPCYAf7s>

Topic 4: *Racial discrimination and identity*

We will evaluate how discrimination impacts the identity of the groups/individuals being discriminated against and how this influences the perpetuation of discrimination

Reading assignments:

Sellers, R. M. & Shelton, J. N. (2003). The role of racial identity in perceived racial discrimination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(5), 1079–1092.

Major, B., Quinton, W. J. & McCoy, S. K. (2002). Antecedents and consequences of attributions to discrimination: Theoretical and empirical advances. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 34, 251–330.

Topic 5: *Racial inequality in America*

We will assess how racial inequality is assessed in the United States. The readings for this week provide a significant foundation in how data is compiled and used to convey racial discrimination and we will review how the use of data has influenced the perception of racial disparity.

Reading assignments:

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2002). The inheritance of inequality. *The Journal of the Economic Perspectives*, 16(3), 3–30.

Bonacich, E. (1972). A theory of ethnic antagonism: The split labor market. *American Sociological Review*, 37, 547–550.

Darity, W. (1998). Intergroup disparity: Economic theory and social science evidence. *Southern Economic Journal*, 64(4), 805–826.

Fryer, R. (2010). Racial inequality in the 21st Century: The declining significance of discrimination. NBER Working Paper No.16256.

Goldsmith, A., Hamilton, D.& Darity, W. (2007). From dark to light: Skin color and wages among African Americans. *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(4), 701–738

Topic 6: *Explanations of racial inequality*

We will explore the role of culture and social values with respect to the persistence of racial inequality

Reading assignments:

Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American Sociological Review*, 62(3), 465–480.

Cherry, R. (1995). The culture-of-poverty thesis and African Americans: The work of Gunnar Myrdal and other Institutionalists. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 29(4), 1119–32.

Darity, W. & Williams, R. (1985). Peddlers forever? Culture, competition, and discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 75(2), 256–261.

Ports, A.& Fernandez-Kelly, P. (2008). No margin for error: Educational and occupational achievement among disadvantaged children of immigrants. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 620, 12–36.

Wilson, W. J. (2010). Why both social structure and culture matter in a holistic analysis of inner-city poverty. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 629, 200–219.

Topic 7: Multi-dimensions of institutional racism

We will address the impact of racism and the perpetuation of racism by evaluating the concept of institutionalized racism and assessing the root cause of institutional behavior.

Reading assignments:

Baratz, S. & Baratz, J. (1970). Early childhood intervention: The social science base of institutional racism. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40(1), 29–50.

Jones, C. P. (2000). Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale.

American Journal of Public Health, 90(8), 1212–1215.

Lea, J. (2002). The Macpherson Report and the question of institutional racism, *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39(3).

Video:

National Endowment for the Humanities. Freedom Summer. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://create.dequal.neh.gov>

Topic 8:

Racial subgroups

We will address the specific attributes of racial disparity specific to Indigenous Americans, Mexican and Puerto Rican Americans, Chinese and Japanese Americans, and East Indian Americans

Indigenous Americans

Reading assignments:

Fixico, D. (2014). From Tribal to Indian: American Indian Identity in the Twentieth Century. In Smithers & Newman B. (Eds.), *Native Diasporas: Indigenous Identities and Settler Colonialism in the Americas* (pp. 473–496). Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press.

Harmon, A., O'Neill, C., & Rosier, P. (2011). Interwoven Economic Histories: American Indians in a Capitalist America. *The Journal of American History*, 98(3), 698–722.

Iceland, J. (2017). American Indians. In *Race and Ethnicity in America* (pp. 92–108). Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Rosen, D. (2007). Indians and Racial Discrimination. In *American Indians and State Law: Sovereignty, Race, and Citizenship, 1790–1880* (pp. 102–127). Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press.

Williams, R. (2005). *Rehnquist's Language of Racism in Oliphant*. In *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America* (pp. 97–114). University of Minnesota Press.

Video:

Davey, R. & Woman, Y. T. (Producers & Directors). (2006). The Canary Effect (Links to an external site.). (Motion picture). United States: Bastard Fairy Films. [Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R9pZmAjp0>]

Mexican and Puerto Ricans Americans

Reading assignments:

Currie, J. (2010). Inequality at birth: Some causes and consequences. *The American Economic Review*, 101(3), 1–22.

Finch, B., Kolody, B., & Vega, W. (2000). Perceived Discrimination and Depression among Mexican-Origin Adults in California. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41(3), 295–313.

Stamps, K. & Bohon, S. (2006). Educational attainment in New and established Latino metropolitan destinations. *Social Science Quarterly*, 87, 1225–40.

Yzaguirre, R., Arce, L., & Kamasaki, C. (1999). The Fair Housing Act: A Latino Perspective. *Cityscape*, 4(3), 161–170.

Chinese and Japanese Americans

Reading assignments:

Ancheta, A. (2006). *Legacies of Discrimination. In Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience: Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience*, second edition (pp. 19–41). New Brunswick, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press.

Benner, A., Kim, S., & Murry, V. (2009). Intergenerational Experiences of Discrimination in Chinese American Families: Influences of Socialization and Stress. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(4), 862–877.

Cherny, R. W. (1994). Patterns of toleration and discrimination in San Francisco: The Civil War to World War I. *California History*, 73(2), 130–141.

Wong, M. G. (1980). Changes in socioeconomic status of the Chinese male population in the United States from 1960 to 1970. *International Migration Review*, 14(4), 511–524.

Wong, M. G. (1982). The cost of being Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino in the United States 1960, 1970, 1976. *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 25(1), 59–78.

Video:

The Chinese Exclusion Act: <https://www.pbs.org/video/the-chinese-exclusion-act-eixnlw/> (Links to an external site.)

Teachable moment in fight against anti-Asian, anti-Black racism: <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/2020-teachable-moment-fight-against-anti-asian-anti-black-racism>

East Indian Americans

Reading assignments:

Assisi, F. C. (16 May 2007 16 May 2007). Indian slaves in colonial America. Retrieved from <https://indiacurrents.com/indian-slaves-in-colonial-america>

Hess, G. R. (1974). The forgotten Asian Americans: The East Indian community in the United States, *Pacific Historical Review*, 43(4), 576–596.

Schachter, A. (2014). Finding Common Ground? Indian Immigrants and Asian American Panethnicity. *Social Forces*, 92(4), 1487–1512.

Supplement: Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (6 May 2015 6 May 2015). Indian immigrants in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019>

Video:

Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul2iNPfVsYQ> Indians React To American Pop Culture Stereotypes. (22 May 2015T 22 May 2015).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZkphjQUvzc>

Appendix B: Course Feedback Survey

Please reflect on the course materials in answering the following questions.

- (1) As a result of this course, do you view race differently? Why? Please explain your answer.
- (2) From taking this course, are you more familiar with the historical context of racial and ethnically based economic differences from a multidisciplinary perspective? Please explain your answer.
- (3) As a result of taking this course, do you have a better understanding of the significance of social values with respect to economic outcomes? Please explain your answer.
- (4) Has this course assisted in the development of your critical analysis and communication skills (written and or oral) as well as your research capabilities? Please explain your answer.
- (5) Are you better able to apply economics to social issues as a result of this course? Please explain your answer.
- (6) What was the most significant aspect of the course to you?
- (7) How could the course be improved?

Thank you for your comments!