Black Workers in American Society
37:575:303:90
Online Course

Dr. Mary Gatta
Labor Studies and Employer Relations Department
Email—gatta@rci.rutgers.edu  If we need to set up a phone call, skype or google hangout to talk individually, I am happy to do that

Course Description

This online course will examine the evolving position of black workers in the U.S. economy: how it has changed at key points throughout U.S. history to the present day, and how access to opportunities in the labor market is informed by racial stratification in the larger society. We will discuss various dimensions of racial labor market stratification (wages, mobility, benefits, poverty, unemployment, underemployment) as a way to assess blacks’ economic position in the labor market. The goal of the course is to challenge common notions of how people succeed in the labor market and to explore how systemic patterns of exclusion limit opportunities for blacks. The course will focus on structural explanations for racial inequality in the labor market rather than purely individualistic ones. We will examine the social constructs of race and class to understand how blacks at all levels in the labor market face common challenges in navigating the labor market.

This Course’s SAS Learning Objectives:

Goal A: Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experiences of and perspectives on the world.
   In this class we will explore how racial categorization, created through the social construction of race, affects one’s position in the labor market and consequently produces racial labor market inequality. Through this approach we will examine the socioeconomic dimension of the claim that although race is not a scientifically “real” concept, it is real in its consequences.

Goal D: Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.
   You will develop an understanding of concepts such as hierarchy, power and hegemony to developing a working knowledge of social change, particularly one that uses a complex, nuanced analysis of a social problem to devise effective policies to end social and economic inequality.

Goal I: Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
   Through forum discussion and analysis of readings, we will take apart the author’s thesis, arguments and supporting evidence to critically evaluate the claims presented and compare them across other readings/authors drawing linkages and distinctions among different approaches and strategies for building arguments and supporting them.
Goal M: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

We will use the idea that the labor market, as well as society at large, is organized in such a way that it can be examined using a structural approach. Through this lens we can view blacks’ position in the U.S. economy as part of a racial structure fortified by mechanisms such as institutional discrimination, exclusion, and access. We will explore this idea through multiple media: films, class readings chosen to represent a variety of perspectives, class discussions, and group exercises exploring hypothetical situations designed to bring your own experiences and perspectives into the discussion.

Goal N: Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

We will approach issues such as the labor market consequences of persistent school segregation, resistance to integration, affirmative action, racial disparities in unemployment, the persistence of a racial wage gap amidst a shrinking education gap, using concepts such as social structure, social closure, hegemony, bias, and homophily.

Course Accessibility for Disabled Students

"Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form."

Course Materials

All reading, videos and assignments are located in our course website on Rutgers ecollege platform. You should make yourself familiar with the features of ecollege during the first week of class.

How will you learn in this online course?

Most weeks you will:

✓ Review material written by the professor on the page in the online shell. These are like lectures but much shorter, so you have more time for other learning activities.
✓ Throughout the material are questions to guide you. You want to be sure you can answer them—they may show up on exams!
✓ Read a variety of research based papers and articles.
✓ Answer questions regarding the readings and forums in exams.
✓ Participate in an online threaded discussion with other students, posting at least 3 times a week.
✓ Some weeks you will also have the opportunity to review a video or videos, or listen to an audio file. Some weeks you will take an exam (open book).
Keep current – avoid being late!

This is an interactive class – you need to keep current in the reading and forums so that you can interact with others in the class.

An online class is somewhat flexible with regard to your schedule but if you must be responsible for managing your time and for getting online each week no matter what else is going on in your life. **In general, you should sign into the class AT LEAST 3 times a week and check your email each day.**

You should inform the professor of serious personal emergencies that arise – for instance, hospitalization that makes it impossible to get online. A trip associated with your job is not such an emergency, nor is a problem with your personal computer. There are many ways to get online in hotels and in campus computing facilities.

**Assessment of online forums**

There will be forums EACH WEEK (except exam weeks) throughout the semester. A forum is an interactive threaded discussion. In addition, you will have an ICEBREAKER forum starting the FIRST day of class to help you get comfortable with the forum format and meet your fellow students. This first forum will give you an idea of how to use the discussion forum feature, and will be a graded "ice-breaker" forum to begin the day the class starts. This first forum can be found on the course home page tap, and the other forums are found with each of the units they are associated with. Each of the forums will start on Friday of the week (the day the week begins) and end on the following Thursday (the day the week ends). **There are specific dates and number of times within the week were you need to post for each forum. That information is explained in each forum.** Forums are the MAIN way I will evaluate how you understand the materials and applying them. Your contribution will be evaluated as follows:

- **How much you participated in a substantive way.** In general, you can think of this as 1 point per substantive post that adds to the discussion.
- **Was your participation ongoing and interactive?** You can interact with others by asking or answering questions, or by agreeing or disagreeing with them, but remember you must add to the discussion, not simply agree. HOWEVER SOME FORUMS WILL HAVE SPECIFIC DATES AND NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE WEEK YOU NEED TO POST BY IN ORDER TO KEEP THE DISCUSSION FLOWING. **BE SURE TO CHECK THIS IN THE FORUM.**
- **Were your comments thoughtful and based on the readings?** Did you understand the ideas correctly or did you make errors? Did you connect the ideas of readings to those of others? In other words, what was the quality of your comments?
- **Were your opinions backed by personal experience or other types of evidence?** Persuasive opinions are backed by a variety of types of evidence –from other academic sources, from current events, and from personal experience.
- **Were your comments expressed clearly and appropriately?** Please don’t “flame” in these forums. Informality is OK, but use standard written English of the sort that would be appropriate in a work setting.
Forum Groups--
You are assigned to a Forum group at the beginning of the semester. While there are often dozens of students enrolled in a course, you will only interact with your group. To identify your group letter, look to the left of the screen under any unit tab in the course. You will only be able to see your group – Example: Group J. At the beginning of the course, make sure you memorize your group letter. It may be referred to by the instructor in weekly messages when she wants to bring something from one group to all students in the class!

Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to “Turnitin.com” to insure that your answers are yours alone – not answers from another student, from the web, or another source. Be careful not to “copy” phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words!

Grade (1,000 points)
Exam 1: 125
Exam 2: 125
Exam 3: 150
Unit Forum Participation (10 total) 500
Summary of Interview (Included w/ Forum for Week 6) 50
Icebreaker Forum 25
Student Information Sheet 25

Class Schedule

Check the Course Home page a few days before the course starts. This gives you the background on the course and also access to the Icebreaker forum and student information sheets to upload.

Unit 1-- Understanding Race and the Labor Market (Weeks 1 – 3)

Week 1 (January 24 to January 30)
Let’s Start Talking About Race
Icebreaker

Assignments Due:
Student Information Sheet uploaded by Monday January 27 at 11:59pm
Participate in IceBreaker Forum by Thursday January 30 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 2: (January 31 to February 6)
Construction of Race Discrimination
Film “A Class Divided”

Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 2 Forum by Thursday February 6 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)
Week 3: (February 7 to February 13)
*Understanding Racial Economic Stratification in the U.S.*

Readings
Amer. Sociological Assoc., “Race, Ethnicity, and the American Labor Market: What’s at Work?”

Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 3 forum by Thursday, February 13 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 4: (February 14 to February 20)
Unit 1 Exam

Assignments Due:
Upload exam by Thursday February 20th at 11:59pm

Unit 2- Historical Understandings of Black Workers (Week 5-7)

Week 5: (February 21 to February 27)
*The Historical Formation of Race and Work in U.S. Economy: Slavery*

Film:
“Unchained Memories: Stories from Slave Narratives”

Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 5 Forum by Thursday February 27th at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 6: (February 28 to March 6)
*The Historical Formation of Race and Work in U.S. Economy: Post Emancipation*

Readings:
Steinberg, “The Reconstruction of Black Servitude After the Civil War”

Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 6 forum by Thursday, March 6th 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 7: (March 7 to March 13)
*Black Workers, Labor Unions and the Civil Rights Movement*

Readings:
Honey, “Labor and the Civil Rights Movement at the Crossroads: Martin Luther King, Black Workers and Memphis Sanitation Strike” and Film “At the River I Stand”

Assignments Due:
Conduct interview with person (62 or older) about Civil Rights era. Do so and post a summary by Monday March 10 at 11:59pm
Participate in Week 7 Forum Thursday, March 13 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

**Week 8 and 9 (March 14 to March 27)** note these are 2 weeks because it contains spring break

Unit 2 Exam

**Assignments Due:**
Exam uploaded by Thursday, March 27 at 11:59pm

**Unit 3—Current Labor Market and Black Workers (Week 10 – 15)**

**Week 10: (March 28 to April 3)**
*Understanding Institutional Discrimination and Mobility*

**Readings:**
Chima and Wharton, “African Americans and the Workplace: Overview of Persistent Discrimination”
Isaacs, “Economic Mobility of Black and White Families”

**Assignments Due:**
Participate in Week 10 forum by Thursday, April 3 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

**Week 11: (April 4 to April 10)**
*Access to Work*

**Readings:**
Bertand and Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment of Labor Market Discrimination”
Dickerson, “Black Employment, Segregation, and the Social Organization of Metropolitan Labor Markets” (read up until the “Data and Methods Section”)
Take the Project Implicit Assignment online

**Assignments Due:**
Participate in Week 11 Forum Post the results of your Project Implicit by Sunday April 6 at 11:59pm and then comment in the forum by Thursday April 10 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)
Week 12: (April 11 to April 17)
Black Women Workers
Readings:
Ortiz and Roscigno, Discrimination, Women, and Work: Processes and Variations by Race & Class”
National Women Law Center “Closing the Wage Gap in Especially Important for Women of Color in Difficult Times”
Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 12 Forum Thursday, April 17 at 11:59pm (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 13: (April 18 –April 24)
Black Young Workers
Readings:
EPI, “The Kids Aren’t Alright: A Labor Market Analysis of Young Workers”
Quane, Julius Wilson and Hwang, “The Urban Job Crisis”
Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 13 Forum by Thursday April 24 at 11:59pm. (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 14: (April 25 –May 1)
Black Workers, Education and Management Jobs
Readings:
Jones and Schmitt, “Has Education Paid off for Black Workers?”
Collins, “Black Mobility in White Corporations”
Assignments Due:
Participate in Week 14 Forum Thursday, May 1 at 11:59pm. (and check forum for specific date deadlines in the week to post)

Week 15
Unit 3 Exam
Assignments Due:
Exam uploaded by Thursday, May 8 at 11:59pm