 Course Description:
This course will lead students into critical thinking about important concepts related to poverty and discrimination. We will engage in open and critical discussion about questions such as:

- "Who is Poor?"
- "Are anti-poverty policies working?"
- "Does racial inequality imply racial prejudice?"
- "How do we statistically detect racial prejudice?"
- "Racial profiling: how should we approach it?"
- "What are the impacts of affirmative actions?"

This course will feature a blending of economic reasoning from theoretical and empirical perspectives, which I hope will become part of the students' toolkit in their further endeavors. The students will come out of the course becoming a critical and intelligent participants in public policy debates, learn to form their own policy recommendations based on their own analysis.

The syllabus below will provide details about what to cover in each topic. For each topic, the plan is as follows. First, I will provide the background for the topic, go over a couple of key papers (a combination of theory and empirical analysis). Second, students will pick from a list of additional papers (included in the reading list below) for class presentation. We will then engage in open discussion on what is known in the topic, is it sufficient for policy making, and any other out-of-box ideas.

All students, not just the presenters, are expected to read the papers we will discuss.

Presentation Guidelines:
- What is the main issue? Why is it interesting?
- What are the main weaknesses of previous studies? What is new that this paper attempts to bring to the topic? Is it a new method? Or is it a new data set? Or is it a new way to examine the question?
- What are the main results? What are the key assumptions necessary for the results? Are these assumptions testable? Do you have issues with these assumptions?
- What are the implications of the results?
- Do you have any critical comments about the paper?
Course Requirement and Grading:

A term paper will be due at the end of the course (due date: April 17, 2008) In the paper the student is required to summarize how his/her views about poverty, poverty alleviation, inequality, discrimination have been affected by this course; and also propose any new ideas and thoughts about these topics.

The grade for the course will be based on the students’ presentations/class participation (40%) and on their paper (60%).

Textbooks:

We will use a combination of textbooks and academic journal articles. The textbooks are:


Class Schedule

**January 10: Introduction to Poverty**

- Background/Introduction
- Poverty: Definition, Measurement, Trends
  Readings:
  - LANG, Chapter 2, Chapter 4

**January 17: Anti-poverty policies**

Readings:
- LANG, Chapter 3, Chapter 5

- Welfare: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
  Readings:
  - LANG, Chapter 3, Section 2; Chapter 9

• **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**
  
  **Readings:**
  
  • LANG, Chapter 3, Section 3
  
  

• **Job Training Programs**
  
  **Readings:**
  
  • LANG, Chapter 5, Section 4
  
  

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**January 24: Student Presentations.**

**January 31: Racial and Gender Inequality**

• **Measures of Inequality: Gini Index**

• **Black-White Wage Inequality**
  
  **Readings:**
  
  
  

• **Black-White Test Score Gaps**
  
  **Readings:**
  
  
  
• Gender Inequality

Readings:

February 7: Educational Policies to Reduce Inequality
Readings:
• HECKMAN/KRUEGER

February 14: Student Presentations

February 21: Student Presentations

February 28: Discrimination: Theory, Empirical Methods and Evidence

Readings:
• LOURY BOOK
• Lecture Notes.
March 6: Discrimination in Consumer Markets


March 13 (Spring Recess): ENJOY YOUR BREAK!

March 20: Discrimination in Law Enforcement


March 27: Discrimination in Labor Market


April 3: Residential Segregation and Affirmative Action
• Jesse Rothstein and Albert Yoon. Mismatch in Law School, with Albert Yoon (updated: October 2007), Princeton University.

April 10: Student Presentations

Last Meeting: April 17: Student Presentations, Summary and Open Discussions

************** CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NOW AN EXPERT**************
***************ON POVERTY AND DISCRIMINATION! ******************