Introduction
Concerns about fairness and equal treatment are at the heart of some of the world’s biggest economic issues, whether related to global climate change, racism, COVID responses, or income inequality—and whether global, national, or local. How do we address these issues in a way that expands opportunities and good economic outcomes? Can we become a more equal society while being attentive to other economic policy goals, such as efficiency and growth?

This Equity Lab course will draw on economic research and thinking to propose solutions to important social and economic equity problems, including inequality based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities. To design those interventions, we will also draw on ideas about fairness, as well as data analysis, communication strategies, and policy methods. The main projects for our Equity Lab this semester will include three modules: making more good jobs available for women and people of color in the building trades;
enhancing the economic power of LGBT people; and reparations for African Americans related to slavery and the racial wealth gap.

The course will operate very much as a lab. Some meetings will involve discussion of readings, but most will be taken up with actual work on projects in teams, with additional work taking place outside of class time. Part of the course will involve reflecting on your contributions and how you’d like to see future classes take them further.

“Deliverables” for each project will be the major part of your grade, including both individual writing projects and group projects.

**Learning goals:**
- Become more familiar with economic theories of distribution
- Develop both a theoretical and practical understanding of tensions between equity and efficiency
- Apply economic theories and other perspectives to create innovative equity interventions
- Improve your group working skills
- Use data analysis to answer real world questions
- Use generic tools for understanding interventions (logic models, design thinking) and debates (flow charts)
- Become better analytical and persuasive writers

**NOTE ABOUT COURSE MODE:** This course is being taught in person. It is not a hybrid online-in person course. If circumstances change as the COVID epidemic evolves, we will adapt. People who cannot attend a class for a medical or other good reason must get permission in advance to attend via Zoom. The presence of a zoom link on Moodle does NOT constitute an open invitation to attend via Zoom instead of the classroom.

**Evaluation**

90%: “Deliverables”: (30% each for 3 modules) You will have two group deliverables and two individual deliverables in the class:
- Module 1: You will produce one individual memo on a logic model (15%) and one group memo (4-6 pages; 15%).
- Module 2: You will produce one group report of 10-12 pages (25%) and a group presentation (5%).
- Module 3: You will produce one individual report of 10-12 pages (25%) and a presentation (5%).

10%: Handoff memo: Your final assignment will be to write a memo to a future student about one of the projects you worked on.
Each assignment will be discussed further in class.

“Wow points” (borrowed from Betsy Schmidt and Brenda Bushouse): From time to time, I might assign a point to someone making a particularly insightful point in class or contributing extra effort to a group project, for example.

Attendance & participation grade: As a basic matter, I expect each student to attend class and to participate fully in group projects. Therefore, attendance is absolutely essential for this course—if you can’t commit to attendance, don’t sign up for this class. If you need to miss a class for one of the excusable reasons covered by the University’s rules, including the pandemic (your health or your family’s health needs), religious observance, or other extenuating circumstances, I expect you to let me know why you missed the class. However, each unexcused absence will result in one point deducted from the grade total. If you know you will miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can find an alternative. Also, if it becomes apparent that someone is not meeting expectations in a group project, I might also deduct a point.

General notes on assignments

• Deadlines: You will turn all assignments in on Moodle. Assignments turned in late without my permission will have points deducted from the grade. Assignments more than 2 weeks late will not be accepted without prior approval.

• Formatting: All papers for this class should use a normal (not bolded or italicized) 12-point font, one-inch margins all around, and double-spaced formatting. Assignments that do not meet these requirements will not be accepted. Please turn in your assignment as a Microsoft Word document (or a document readable in Word). Please DO NOT turn in PDFs.

• Preferred citation style: You must use a consistent reference style for any materials you reference, including information from websites. I prefer that you use the Chicago style with an author-date reference in the text (Author, date), and a reference list at the end of the paper: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Grade determination

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Other important class policies

- **Preferred Gender Pronoun and Name:** Class rosters are provided to instructors with the student’s legal name (although you can now put in your preferred pronouns). Please let me know if you use a different name. In our introductions at the beginning of the semester, I will provide an opportunity to state preferred gender pronouns.

- **Disability Accommodations:** The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier-free campus. If you have a disability and require accommodations, please register with Disability Services to have an accommodation letter sent to your faculty. Information on services and materials for registering are also available on the [University of Massachusetts Amherst Disability Services page](http://www.umass.edu/disabilityservices).

- **Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. I will use Turnitin for papers and will report cases of academic dishonesty. Please read the [University of Massachusetts Amherst Academic Honesty Policy](http://www.umass.edu/disabilityservices).

- **Other resources:** The UMass Writing Center can provide consultations for writing assignments: [http://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter?_ga=2.269196786.2095617506.1597673063-117513784.1426453458](http://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter?_ga=2.269196786.2095617506.1597673063-117513784.1426453458)
Schedule & Required Readings

Jan. 25: Introductions to each other and to a new class

Jan. 27-Feb. 3: Foundations for analyzing equity: human rights, civil rights, capabilities


Feb. 8 - Mar. 1: MODULE 1: Race and gender equity in the building trades
[Note: No class on Feb. 22, which follows a Monday schedule]


Spreadsheet instructional materials

Policy Group on Tradeswomen’s Issues, “The PGTI Model: Integrating supply and demand for women in the construction industry.” 2020


March 1 - 3: Problem Solving (Eightfold Path Analysis) and Design Thinking


IDEO.org, *Field Guide to Human-Center Design*, 2015, pp. 9-25. [FYI—only about 13 pages of text]

Additional design thinking reading to come

Mar. 8 – Apr. 7: MODULE 2: LGBT Economic Empowerment
[Note: No classes Mar. 15 and 17 because of Spring Break]


Apr. 12 – May 3: MODULE 3: Reparations for slavery and racial wealth gap
[Note: May 3 class will be online.]


May 3: Handing off our projects