ECON 397SE: Stratification Economics

Instructor: Luis Monroy-Gómez-Franco

Spring 2023

E-mail: lmonroygomez@umass.edu
Office Hours: Friday: 11:00-12:00 drop-in or appointment  Lecture Hours: TuTh 16:00-17:15
Class Room: Dickinson Hall room 112
Office: Crotty Hall 320

1 About the Instructor

Dr. Monroy-Gómez-Franco is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He earned his Ph.D. in Economics at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York in 2022 and joined the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in the Spring Semester of 2023. Information about his research and interests is available on this website: www.monroygomezfranco.com

2 Course Description

This course will examine the economics of socially constructed groups and the inequalities in income, wealth, and power between them. The course will include, as a central feature, an examination of inequalities based on race and ethnicity. However, the course will also explore economic dynamics and disparities between a range of socially constructed groups, including those based on gender, caste, nationality/citizenship, different concepts of class, and sexuality. This course will introduce students to key concepts and analytical approaches in stratification economics and the economics of identity.

3 Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students who pass the class will be capable of

1. Understand the core concepts of stratification economics

2. Be able to use those concepts when discussing the distributive arrangements of different societies.

3. Appreciate the role played by institutions in the persistence of distributive arrangements throughout history.
4. Comprehend the different conceptualizations of race in the United States and Mexico.

5. Become familiar with the main characteristics of the American and Mexican stratification regimes.

4 Prerequisites

To fruitfully participate in this course, students should have successfully completed

- One of the following: ECON 103 or RES-ECON 102

and

- ECON 104

5 Course Contents

1. What is Stratification Economics?


Optional readings


2. Core concepts I: Relative Concerns.


Optional readings


3. Core concepts II: Institutions.

**Optional readings**


4. **Core concepts III: Group Identity.**

(a) **February 28 and March 2**: Li, Sherry Xin (2020). “Group Identity, Ingroup Favoritism, and Discrimination.” in Klaus Zimmermann. (ed) *Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics*. Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57365-6_123-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57365-6_123-1)

**Optional readings**


5. **Axes of stratification I: Race and Skin Tone**

(a) **March 7 and March 9**: Wendy D. Roth (2016) "The multiple dimensions of race", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(8): 1310-1338

**First brief response essay is due on March 7**

**Optional readings**


6. **Axes of stratification II: Gender**

Optional readings


7. **Midterm (March 28)**

8. **Axes of stratification III: Resources of origin/Class March 30**

Optional readings


**Case Studies**

9. **United States of America**

   (a) **April 4 and April 6**: Buder, Iris; David Fields; Gwyneth Donahue and Maria Ramirez (2022) “Stratification Economics and Occupational Prestige: A Theoretical and Empirical Approach”, *Review of Political Economy*, DOI: 10.1080/09538259.2022.2142464 *Second brief response essay is due on April 6*


   (c) **April 20**: Akee, Randall; Sue K. Stockly; William Darity Jr; Darrick Hamilton and Paul Ong (2017) "The role of race, ethnicity and tribal enrolment on asset accumulation: an examination of American Indian tribal nations", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(11):1939-1960

Optional readings


10. **Mexico**
*Third brief response essay is due on April 25*

(b) **May 2 and May 4**: Villagómez-Ornelas, Paloma and Luis Monroy-Gómez-Franco (Forthcoming) “Stratification Economics in the Land of Persistent Inequalities” mimeo

(c) **May 9 and May 11**: Monroy-Gómez-Franco, Luis (Forthcoming) “Shades of social mobility: Colorism, ethnic origin, and intergenerational social mobility.” *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.qref.2022.10.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.qref.2022.10.004)

**Optional readings**


11. **Last class and wrap-up session (May 16)**
   
   *Fourth brief response essay is due on May 16*

6  **Course Structure**

**Quizzes**

Each Friday, students will see a Moodle message posted in the corresponding week of the course with two guiding questions about the readings for the next week, to be answered by the students and submitted through email before the beginning of Tuesday’s class. The answers should not be longer than five lines (one paragraph for each question).

**Brief response essays**

There will be four response essays throughout the course. Two before the midterm and two after the midterm. The essays will be based on a question posed by the instructor, which the students will then answer on one page based on the readings so far in the course. The motivating questions will be posted on Moodle at least two weeks from the deadline. These response essays will serve as a practice before each one of the tests, so it is recommended to put effort into writing them.

**Paper report**

Instead of a final essay, you will submit a report on one of the papers indicated at the end of the syllabus. The report should not be more than five papers long and identify the research
question, hypothesis, and main results of the paper you selected. Crucially, you need to include a discussion of the paper results based on the discussions that occur during the lectures in the classroom.

Before spring break, you need to submit a list of three possible options for the paper report from the list at the end of the syllabus. It would be best if you ranked the options according to your preference. First place for the paper that you prefer the most, and third, for the paper you prefer less. Based on that ranking, I will assign each student’s paper for the report.

Exams

There will be two essay-based exams. In each exam, you will receive a set of questions from which you can choose one or two to answer during the examination. As the exams are written, I expect clear handwriting and concise essays.

Grading Policy

- **10%** of your grade will be determined by weekly quizzes.
- **20%** of your grade will be determined by brief response essays
- **20%** of your grade will be determined by a paper report
- **25%** of your grade will be determined by the midterm.
- **25%** of your grade will be determined by the final exam.

The letter grade distribution will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>95.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.99-91.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.99-88.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.99-85.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.99-82.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81.99-80.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.99-77.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76.99-73.00</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>72.99-70.00</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>69.99-60.00</td>
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<td>F</td>
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7 Course Policies

During Class

- Although very useful, electronic devices tend to provide plentiful distractions during class. For that reason use of phones is prohibited through the duration of the class and use of
laptops or tablets is restricted to those sited in the front row of the classroom. Please refrain from using computers for anything but activities related to the class.

Attendance Policy

- Attendance is expected and is considered an integral part of the course.
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee’s responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

Policies on Exams and Assignments

- Exams are closed book, closed notes.
- No makeup exams will be given.
- Discussion among students is encouraged, but when in doubt, direct your questions to the TA or professor.

8 Late Assignments

All assignments must be received by their due date. If there is a compelling reason why you cannot hand in your assignment on time—illness, personal or family emergency, varsity athletic commitment—please be in touch with the Professor as soon as possible. PLEASE BE PROACTIVE in asking for accommodation. Don’t suffer in silence—I sincerely want you to succeed in this course. Assignments will be penalized one grade level for each day late. Thus, an “A” paper becomes an “A-” if it is turned in within a day of the deadline; it becomes a “B+” if turned in within 2 days of the deadline.

9 Statement Regarding Pronouns

There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name you prefer and gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity. Please advise me of your name’s proper pronunciation, and any name or pronouns not reflected by the record in Spire early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records.

10 Academic honesty

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. 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. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

11 Accommodations for disability

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. For further information, please visit Disability Services (https://www.umass.edu/disability/)

12 Contingency Plan

Class may be canceled when the University closes based on inclement weather. Policy here: https://www.umass.edu/newsoffice/article/emergency-closing-and-snow-related-5
Classes may experience disruptions to the normal operations of class for a variety of reasons including changes in policy, your course instructor having difficulties, the university experiencing technology issues with campus technology, or national or world-wide technology outages related to our communication tools including Zoom. In addition to official UMass announcements, whenever possible, the instructor will use class announcements and/or email to notify students of any emergency changes or adjustments to the course.

13 Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, providing protection against sexual harassment and violence, bullying, and pregnancy and parenting discrimination. While we encourage you to report incidents or concerns to Title IX staff, there are a number of other offices you may choose to contact. Here you will find a list of both confidential and non-confidential organizations, along with contact information and details on how they can help. Your professor is not a Mandatory reporter for Title IX incidents.

14 Other Resources


• W.E.B Du Bois Library: The Learning Commons is a space on the lower level of that brings together academic, technology, and library support. The Writing Center provides one-on-one consultations to students on their writing projects, providing feedback and strategies at any stage of the writing process. https://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter

• For tutoring, visit the Learning Resource Center (LRC) https://www.umass.edu/lrc/

• UMass Center for Counseling and Psychological Health: https://www.umass.edu/counseling/

• For information on resources relating to food access, housing, legal services, etc. see: https://www.umass.edu/studentlife/single-stop.

• For information on resources relating to advocacy, inclusion, and support: https://www.umass.edu/studentlife/advocacy-inclusion-support
Report papers

USA


- Dehingia, Nabamallika; Jeni Klugman; Elena Ortiz and Anita Raj (2022) "Race/Ethnicity and Sex Differences in Attitudes Toward Policies for Gender Equality in the United States", *Feminist Economics*, DOI:10.1080/13545701.2022.2128199


- Davis, Jonathan and Bhashkar Mazumder (2018) “Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Geography of Intergenerational Mobility” Available at SSRN: http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3138979


Mexico


