

## Departments of Economics, Brown University

### EC 137: *Race and Inequality in the US*

#### Spring 2007 Course Syllabus

Professor: Glenn C. Loury, Robinson, 304b, x3-2606 [Off hrs: W. 9-12 and appt.] Course web page:

<http://www.econ.brown.edu/fac/Glenn%5FLoury/louryhomepage/>

**A. Description:** This course examines racial inequality in the United States from an economic, historical and sociological perspective. Issues include the economics of discrimination, concentrated urban poverty; race, crime and punishment; affirmative action; the impact of immigration on low-skilled blacks; the minority rights revolution; and the theory, history and practice of affirmative action.

**B. Requirements:** This is mainly a lecture course. Approximately 3/4 of class time will be given lectures, and 1/4 to discussion. *There is no midterm or final exam for this course.* Rather, grading will be based upon students' performance on a series of four short (2-3pp) papers, assigned on Thursday, due the next Tuesday, graded and returned by Tuesday of the week following at the latest. (Specifics for these four short paper assignments will be announced roughly at the points specified in the topic outline below.) In addition, a fifth, more demanding (6-8pp) paper will be assigned, on a theme of the student's choosing (in consultation with the professor), due on the last day of reading period. Lecture notes, writing assignments, optional readings and other course materials will be posted on a course web page (URL above, following the links to "Teaching" and then to "EC 137").

**C. Books:** Required readings (available at the bookstore and on reserve in the library) are:

1. Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton University Press: 1996)
2. Glenn C. Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality* (Harvard University Press: 2002)
3. Bruce Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America* (Russell Sage, 2006)
4. Benjamin Fluery-Steiner, *Jurors' Stories of Death* (Univ. Michigan Press, 2004)
5. Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Streets: Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of Inner Cities* (W.W. Norton: 1999)
6. Michael Lichter and Roger Waldinger, *How the Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social Organization of Labor* (University of California Press: 2002)
7. John Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press. 2004.)
8. Katznelson, Ira, *When Affirmative Action Was White* (New York, W.W. Norton, 2005.)

#### **D. Topic Outline with Associated Readings:**

- I. Introduction and Overview [1 class: posted speeches, A. Lincoln; L. Johnson; G. Loury]
- II. Can We Talk? The Perils of Political Correctness [1 class: Loury's essay]
- III. An Historical Case Study: Post-WWII Detroit [2 classes: Sugrue] [**\*\*short paper#1**]
- IV. Race and the Prison-Industrial Complex [3 classes: Western; Fluery-Steiner, plus...]
- V. Racial Inequality in the U.S.: Evidence and Theory
  - A. Some Basic Facts [1 class: Loury, 2002, Appendix, plus some posted references]
  - B. Theories of Racial Inequality [3 classes: Loury 2002, plus...] [**\*\*short paper#2**]

#### **Spring Break**

- VI. Measuring Discrimination [2 classes] [materials posted on course web page]
- VII. The Inner-City Context [2 classes: Anderson] [**\*\*short paper #3**]
- VIII. Race, Immigration and the American Future [2 classes: Lichter and Waldinger, plus...]
- IX. The Minority Rights Revolution [3 classes: Skrentny] [**\*\*short paper #4**]
- X. Affirmative Action [3 classes: essays posted on course web page]
- XI. A Historical Perspective: "When Affirmative Action Was White" [2 classes: Katznelson]

#### **Reading Period and Preparation of Final Term Paper**