This course provides a critical examination of the dynamics of race and social inequality in the U.S. in the post civil rights era. Social scientists have long sought to describe and explain the changing material fortunes of African Americans, spanning studies of specific metropolitan areas such as DuBois’s, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), and Drake and Cayton’s, *Black Metropolis*, to national assessments such as Myrdal’s, *An American Dilemma* and the National Research Council’s, *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society* (1989). Recent scholarship has centered on analyses of the “urban underclass” or “new ghetto poor.” While much of our attention will also share this focus the course seeks to develop a broader gauge framework. We will be concerned with the dynamics of modern racial inequality, across the class spectrum and in the light of the growing diversity of urban communities in terms of the interplay of: (1) the labor market and economic opportunity; (2) the housing market and processes of residential segregation; (3) the racialized character of American culture and politics; and (4) immigration and rapid population change. We will engage these large questions in a multilevel manner. First and foremost, the course emphasizes empirical and policy-oriented social research. On the basis of this work the course aims to develop a new multicausal analysis of the forces that sustain, or may ameliorate, race-linked social inequality. Second, the course emphasizes open discussion and critical reflection on the issues raised by empirical social research.

The empirical research material for the course is organized around eight books. Each book is multi-layered, with a somewhat different balance of original research, critique of social science’s role in understanding the circumstances of the African American community, and suggestions for social policy. Yet each book articulates a distinctive strong or central argument about the problems facing Black communities and the nation as a whole where the matter of race is concerned. The challenge of the course is to use these materials to develop a deeper and more complete analysis of modern racial inequality. These books, in alphabetical order by first author are:


There will also be a short course-pack of articles. These will be available through Gnomon Copies. All materials, including the books, will also be available on reserve at Lamont.

Work for the course will consist of four components: (1) regular short reaction papers (25% of final grade); (2) mid-term examination (33% of final grade); (3) final examination (33% of final grade; and (4) class participation (10% of final grade). There will be 10 2-to-3-page reaction papers. These are intended primarily as ways to facilitate discussion and will always be due at the beginning of class. Each paper should be type-written, develop a personal reflection and commentary on the assigned readings for the day. Papers will not be accepted more than one class meeting late.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS**

**January 30th**

**Introduction: Thinking about the Changing Status of African Americans**

Wilson, The Declining Significance of Race, chapters 1-3, pp. 1-61.

**February 6th**

**From Slavery and Jim Crow to Urban Poverty**

Wilson, The Declining Significance of Race, chapters 4-8, pp. 62-217. Wilson, When Work Disappears, chapters 1-2, pp. 3-50.

**Short reaction paper #1 due**

**February 13th**

**Urban Poverty, Jobs, and Work**

Wilson, When Work Disappears, chapters 3-5, pp. 51-148.


**Short reaction paper #2 due**

**February 20th**

**Urban Poverty and Racial Segregation**

Wilson, When Work Disappears, chapters 6-8, pp. 147-231.

Massey & Denton, American Apartheid, chapters 1-3, pp. 1-82.


**Short reaction paper #3 due**

**February 27th**

**Racial Segregation, Group Culture, and Public Policy**

Massey & Denton, American Apartheid, chapters 4-6, pp. 83-185.

*Short reaction paper # 4 due*

March 6th

Racial Segregation, Crime, and the American Public


*Short reaction paper #5 due*

** Take Home Mid-Term Distributed **

March 13th

** Mid-Term Examinations Due (No Class Meeting) **


March 20th

Social Capital and Poor Communities


*Short reaction paper #6 due*

March 27th

SPRING RECESS

April 3rd

Immigration and the New Urban Labor Market

Waldinger, *Still the Promised City*, chapters 3-7.

*Short reaction paper #7 due*

April 10th

African Americans and the New Labor Market

**Short reaction paper #8 due**

April 17th

**Race and the Wealth Gap: American Chasm**

Oliver & Shapiro, Black Wealth/White Wealth, chapters 1-4, pp. 1-90.

**Short reaction paper #9 due**

April 24th

**Assessing Race and Inequality: A Durable Divide?**


**Short reaction paper #10 due**

May 1st

**Assessing Race and Inequality: Reparations?**


**TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED**

DUE MAY 20th by 5:00 pm—William James Hall Rm. 1368 (or 6th floor mailbox of William James Hall).