

The School of Public Policy at UMBC

Special Topics Courses for Spring 2019

PUBL 610-01 Special Topic: Race, Segregation and Social Inequality

Thursdays, 7:10-9:40 pm

(This course counts as a replacement for SOCY 606 which will not be taught spring 2019.)

Instructor: Dr. Pamela Bennett, Associate Professor, School of Public Policy (pbennett@umbc.edu)

This course provides an in-depth study of racial residential segregation and its role in the production and perpetuation of social inequality. Through various theoretical perspectives, students will explore the history of segregation in the United States, as well as its patterns and causes. In doing so, students will gain insight into racial inequality across several social, economic, and demographic domains, and come to understand why segregation is widely described as the “structural linchpin of racial stratification.”

PUBL 610-02 Special Topic: Race and Education in Urban America

Mondays, 4:30-7:00 pm

Instructor: Dr. Pamela Bennett, Associate Professor, School of Public Policy (pbennett@umbc.edu)

This course uses multiple disciplinary frameworks to explore issues of race and ethnicity in American education. We will interrogate the concepts of race and ethnicity, and analyze how they have been used to create and justify unequal educational opportunities for oppressed racial groups despite the country’s rhetoric of “the American Dream.” The course also examines how the turn to neoliberal urban policy shapes our thinking about how contemporary racial disparities in education should be addressed.

PUBL 610-03 Special Topic: Conducting Systematic Reviews

Tuesdays, 6:00-8:30 pm

Instructor: Dr. Nancy Miller, Professor, School of Public Policy (nanmille@umbc.edu)

The purpose of this course is to develop students’ skills in conducting a systematic review, including skills in searching the literature, evaluating the literature, and organizing and presenting the literature. Students will read and discuss systematic reviews from the Campbell Collaborative, as well as selected reviews from peer reviewed journals such as Medical Care Research and Review. Students will develop and present a publishable systematic review on a topic of their choosing.

PUBL 610-04 Special Topic: Metrics and Methods for Measuring Health Disparities

Wednesdays, 7:10-9:40 pm

Instructor: Dr. Zoe McLaren, Associate Professor, School of Public Policy (zmclaren@umbc.edu)

Despite significant improvements in health status worldwide, large disparities in morbidity and mortality remain between vulnerable sub-populations and the population as a whole. This course will examine conceptual, technical and methodological issues related to detecting and measuring disparities in health status, health care access and health care quality. Lectures will focus on identifying key disparity measures that are used to inform public policy and mastering the analytical methods required to calculate them. Students will learn how to assess the appropriateness of various measures of disparity in life expectancy, maternal mortality, uninsured rate, health-related quality of life, environmental toxin exposure and quality of care among others. Class discussions will examine the challenges faced in measuring health disparities, the strengths and limitations of different health disparity measures, and the effectiveness of strategies to communicate findings relevant for public policy. Student competency will be assessed through a combination of class discussion, presentations, quizzes and short papers.

PUBL 610-05 Special Topic: Law and Public Policy

Tuesdays, 7:10-9:40 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Susan Sterett, Director, School of Public Policy (ssterett@umbc.edu)

Law and courts seem to exert significant pull in governance around the world, even if law and courts don't try to solve every problem. Yet we often treat law as something mysterious, outside of politics, or we cite off-repeated stories about a lawsuit as a way of saying people in the US litigate all the time. In this course, we will together think through how we might describe law and its significance in multiple for a, from reasoning in upper level appellate courts, including claims in international courses, to domestic law that aims to structure administrative decision-making. We will try to recreate ways of analyzing law's significance by working with some primary documents, and assessing what questions we would want to ask.