



**ILROB 3230
Advancing Racial Equity in Organizations
Spring 2021**

Professor Courtney L. McCluney

Office: 397 Ives Hall

Class Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:25am – 12:40pm EST

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Office hours: Thursdays, 3pm – 5pm EST
and by appointment

Overview

The purpose of this course is to identify and understand the role of workplaces in advancing racial equity. We are witnessing a drastic shift in organizations' actions, statements, and approaches to the topic of race and racism in the U.S. Protests against racial injustice across the nation have spurred business leaders to pledge support for antiracism efforts, Black-owned businesses, and historically Black colleges and universities. At the same time, the federal government issued an executive order to end diversity and inclusion training that "perpetuates racial stereotyping or division" for federal employees and their contractors. By centering the experiences Black people and other people of color in the U.S. workplace, we will nuance how intersecting systems of inequality affect multiple groups (e.g., women of color, queer people of color, etc.), and examine how organizational processes affect racial progress in the U.S. Students will demonstrate their learning through writing personal reflections, analyzing case studies, and participating in virtual simulations and experiential activities.

Learning Objectives

- Adopt a racial equity lens to understand organizational practices, norms, and processes.
- Deepen our understanding of race and relevant concepts in organizational behavior.
- Examine how historical practices and events generated systemic racism in workplaces.
- Assess barriers and solutions to advancing racial diversity, equity, and inclusion at work.
- Apply a racial equity framework to contemporary workplace practices and future of work issues.

Teaching Philosophy

It is my goal to create a brave space so that we can engage in meaningful, well-informed dialogue. The course materials and activities will address difficult, uncomfortable, and complex topics. I hope that I have structured the course in a way that makes you comfortable, but also challenges you to expand your thinking by being active participants in your own learning. Some of us may have more experience than others with class material, thus we need to keep all of our knowledge sources in mind during our interactions. Ultimately your learning is tied to that of others in the classroom, so it is important to come to class prepared and receptive to other viewpoints to foster learning across our differences.

Guidelines

Please treat your classmates and me with respect. We will work together to develop guidelines for discussion during our first meeting as a class. Additionally, the material presented in this course is highly personal and tied to social and marginalized identities. Therefore, it is important that our interactions are respectful and seeks to understand others' perspectives.



Course Readings

Assigned readings will be posted on Canvas. Readings will consist of research articles (primarily organizational behavior and management journals), web articles, and some book chapters. You should complete the readings before class to prepare for discussion. I will attempt to keep outside class readings to less than 3 hours a week.

Recommended Readings: Students may refer to the following texts to enhance their understanding of course concepts beyond course readings.

Ella Bell Smith & Stella Nkomo, [*Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women in the Struggle for Professional Identity*](#).

Jonathan Metzler, [*Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland*](#).

Laura Morgan Roberts, Anthony J. Mayo, & David A. Thomas, [*Race, Work and Leadership: New Perspectives on the Black Experience*](#)

Communication and Office Hours

I will use email and Canvas extensively to communicate with you and to post and receive assignments and documents for class. Please let me know if internet access will be a problem for you during the course. Weekly readings, handouts, etc. will be posted to Canvas prior to class. It is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly. If you need assistance with Canvas at any point, please contact the Canvas help team.

I encourage you to join office hours to introduce yourself and/or clarify any course-related matters. If you are unable to meet during office hours, please contact me for an appointment at another time.

Class Expectations

1. Online classroom needs.

We will strive to begin and end class on time. Internet connections and broadband issues are common; thus, I ask that you join the class in a way that is feasible, realistic, and safe.

Dedicating a quiet space for class is not always possible, but I ask that we all strive to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of engagement. This includes those of you who may be involved in caregiving and have to bring others into your virtual classroom space. I hope that you feel comfortable disclosing your caretaker status to me so that I can help adjust any assignments or work in the course.

2. Prepare and participate.

This course asks that you prepare for class and review content on a weekly basis. I will guide your learning and facilitate discussion. Group work in class and individual assignments are additional opportunities to practice applying what you know.

To succeed in this class, you must be focused and involved, offering your comments, questions, feedback, and answers. Your participation grade will be derived from in-class activities.

3. Act with integrity.

All students are expected to abide by Cornell University's Code of Academic Integrity, available at <https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/academic-integrity/>. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work that has never previously been submitted for a different course. This includes in-person exams, virtual quizzes



delivered through Canvas, and written submissions. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. As defined by the university policy, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, collaborating with students on individual assignments, copying another student's exam answers, seeking out any form of unauthorized information relevant to an exam, and aiding another student in any of the above activities. For written assignments, all sources must be clearly identified in a bibliography and any direct quotations must be explicitly referenced using quotation marks and appropriate attribution.

4. Absences.

If you know in advance that you will be absent, please contact me as soon as possible so we can make sure you are caught up with the material and make any arrangements with your groups. We will miss you and your contributions, so you are encouraged to email me with discussion questions, topics, and/or examples prior to the class you miss to earn participation for the day. If your absence is unexpected, you are responsible for reviewing the lecture and make sure that you understand the material. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss the material and any questions you may have during office hours.

5. Late assignments.

To prevent the need for a late penalty/policy, I will provide a 48 hour submission window for assignments, and I will grade assignments in the order in which I receive them. Please contact me as soon as possible i.e., preferably *before* the assignment deadline) if you know/anticipate that your work will be late – we can probably work something out.

Student Resources

Cornell University (as an institution) and I (as a human being and instructor of this course) am committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to persons with temporary and permanent disabilities, students with DACA or undocumented status, students facing mental health or other personal challenges, and students with other kinds of learning challenges. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class. Some resources that might be of use include:

Undocumented/DACA Student support: <https://dos.cornell.edu/undocumented-daca-support/undergraduate-admissions-financial-aid>

Resources for underrepresented students: [Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives](#)

Office of Student Disability Services: <https://sds.cornell.edu>

Cornell Health CAPS (Counseling & Psychological Services):

<https://health.cornell.edu/services/counseling-psychiatry>

Learning and writing support: [Learning Strategies Center](#), [Knight Writing Institute](#)



EVALUATION CRITERIA

Assignment	Brief Description	Percentage of Grade
Participation	Contribute to class discussions, polls, and experiential activities	15%
Journal Entries	Weekly memos to reflect and deepen understanding of course materials	20%
Critical Evaluation of DEI practices	Identify, interrogate, and innovate two DEI practices through a racial equity lens	30%
Building an Antiracist Workplace	Create and design an antiracist organization based on learning in course	35%

Participation – 15%

There are several ways for you to participate in class including but not limited to: providing real-world examples of topics, recap main points of a discussion, ask questions, answer questions posed by the instructor or your classmates, participate in polls, introduce new related topics for discussion, serve as a scribe or reporter for activities, and volunteer for demonstrations. At the end of each class, I will assign each of you a participation grade for the day. Contact me at any point if you want to discuss opportunities for you to increase your participation.

Journal Entries – 20%

This assignment invites you to write one weekly reflection in response to a set of questions beginning Week 2 (February 16) through Week 13 (May 6) for a total of 12 entries. This assignment will demonstrate your ongoing learning and understanding of course concepts in real time, and allow you to reflect on your progress in the course. I will randomly select and grade 10 out of the 12 entries. You will be evaluated on the thoughtfulness of your responses, answering the questions set forth, and clarity of writing. Additional evaluation criteria are posted on Canvas.

Critical Evaluation of DEI Practices – 30%

This assignment creates an opportunity to apply your learning to real organizations. First, you will *identify* one DEI practice in an organization that is not directly related to advancing racial equity (**Due:** March 12). Second, you will *interrogate* how this DEI practice may challenge racial equity at work (**Due:** April 12). Third, you will propose an *innovative* solution to this DEI practice that considers and advances racial equity (**Due:** May 3). Additional evaluation criteria are posted on Canvas.

Building an Antiracist Workplace – 35%

The culminating assignment for this course includes a brief 10 minutes presentation and 7-10 pages description of an antiracist organization. You will work in groups of 3 or 4 to design an organization that actively seeks to dismantle systemic racism in and outside of the workplace. You will use feedback from your presentation to complete the written portion of the assignment. This organization will be evaluated on its internal DEI practices (e.g., recruitment strategy), external impact (e.g., connection to marginalized communities), acknowledgment of historical injustices, and considerations of future workforce challenges (e.g., gig workers). Additional evaluation criteria are posted on Canvas.



Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Defining Racial Equity in Organizations			
2/9 – 2/11	Introduction, Syllabus and Goal-setting	<p>Course syllabus and Canvas site</p> <p>Exec. Order No. 13985 (2021, January 21) Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.</p> <p>Roberts, L. M., & Mayo, A. J. (2019, November) Toward a racially just workplace. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p>	
2/16 – 2/18	Contemporary Racial Equity Issues	<p>“Call it what it is: Anti-Blackness.” <i>The New York Times</i>.</p> <p>“House passes measure condemning anti-Asian discrimination amid the COVID-19 pandemic.” <i>USA Today</i>.</p> <p>“Farmworkers, mostly undocumented, become ‘essential’ during pandemic.” <i>The New York Times</i>.</p> <p>Pham, M. H. T. (2020). “How to Make a Mask”: Quarantine feminism and global supply chains. <i>Feminist Studies</i>, 46(2), 316-326.</p> <p>Optional Material: McKinsey (2020, August 14). COVID-19: Investing in Black lives and livelihoods.</p> <p>Roberts, L. M., & Washington, E. F. (2020, June 1). U.S. Businesses must take meaningful action against racism. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #1 due February 19
2/23 – 2/25	Defining key terms	<p>Avery, D. R., Volpone, S. D., & Holmes, O. IV. (2018). <i>Racial discrimination in organizations</i>. In A. J. Colella & E. B. King (Eds.), <i>The Oxford handbook of workplace discrimination</i> (p. 89–109). Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Chrobot-Mason, D., Campbell, K., & Vason, T. (2020). Whiteness in organizations: From White supremacy to allyship. In <i>Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #2 due February 26



		<p>Kendi, I. (2019). <i>How to be an antiracist</i> (p. 13-23). Random House: New York, NY.</p> <p>Optional Material: Bonilla-Silva, E. (2001). What is racism? In <i>White supremacy and racism in the post-Civil Rights era</i> (pg. 21-58).</p> <p>McCluney, C. L. & Rabelo, V. C. (2019). Conditions of visibility: An intersectional examination of Black women’s belongingness and distinctiveness at work. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>, 113, p. 143-152.</p>	
History of Racial (In)Equity in Organizations			
3/2 – 3/4	Plantations and Segregation	<p>African American Inequality in the United States (HBS Case)</p> <p>HBR Ideacast (2018, November 13). Why management history needs to reckon with slavery.</p> <p>McTague, T., Stainback, K., & Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (2009). An organizational approach to understanding sex and race segregation in US workplaces. <i>Social Forces</i>, 87(3), 1499-1527.</p> <p>Optional Material: Stainback, K., Robinson, C. L., & Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (2005). Race and workplace integration: A politically mediated process?. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, 48(9), 1200-1228</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #3 due March 5
3/11* *no class meeting on March 9	Affirmative Action and Lawsuits	<p>Best, R. K., Edelman, L. B., Krieger, L. H., & Eliason, S. R. (2011). Multiple disadvantages: An empirical test of intersectionality theory in EEO litigation. <i>Law & Society Review</i>, 45(4), 991-1025.</p> <p>Cassino, D., & Besen-Cassino, Y. (2019). Race, threat and workplace sexual harassment: The dynamics of harassment in the United States, 1997–2016. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 26(9), 1221-1240.</p> <p>Hirsh, E. (2019, November 14). Do lawsuits improve gender and racial equality at work? <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify DEI practices due March 12 • Journal Entry #4 due March 12



		<p>Optional Material: James, E. H., & Wooten, L. P. (2006). Diversity crises: How firms manage discrimination lawsuits. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 49(6), 1103-1118.</p> <p>Smith, P. (2020). Wells Fargo to pay \$7.8 million to settle hiring bias claims. <i>Bloomberg Law</i>.</p>	
3/16 – 3/18	From Labor Unions to ERGs	<p>Ferguson, J. P. (2016). Racial diversity and union organizing in the United States, 1999–2008. <i>ILR Review</i>, 69(1), 53-83.</p> <p>Rosenfeld, J., & Kleykamp, M. (2012). Organized labor and racial wage inequality in the United States. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 117(5), 1460-1502.</p> <p>“Tech companies are asking their Black employee groups to fix Silicon Valley’s race problem — often for free.” <i>The Washington Post</i>.</p> <p>Welbourne, T. M., Rolf, S., & Schlachter, S. (2017). The case for employee resource groups. <i>Personnel Review</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #5 due March 19 • Building an Antiracist Workplace: Planning and Preparation Meeting due March 19
Barriers and Solutions for Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion			
3/23 – 3/25	<p>Diversity: Recruitment and Promotion</p> <p>Guest speakers: Rebecca Rabelo (BS '16) Ariana Almas Kevin Ileka</p>	<p>Kang, S. K., DeCelles, K. A., Tilcsik, A., & Jun, S. (2016). Whitened résumés: Race and self-presentation in the labor market. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 61(3), 469-502.</p> <p>Volpone, S. D., Tonidandel, S., Avery, D. R., & Castel, S. (2015). Exploring the use of credit scores in selection processes: Beware of adverse impact. <i>Journal of Business and Psychology</i>, 30(2), 357-372.</p> <p>Yu, H. H. (2020). Revisiting the bamboo ceiling: Perceptions from Asian Americans on experiencing workplace discrimination. <i>Asian American Journal of Psychology</i>, 11(3), 158–167.</p> <p>Optional Material: James, E. H. (2000). Race-related differences in promotions and support:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #6 due March 26



		Underlying effects of human and social capital. <i>Organization Science</i> , 11(5), 493-508.	
3/30 – 4/1	Inclusion: Belonging and Safety	<p>Combs, G. M., & Milosevic, I. (2016). Workplace discrimination and the wellbeing of minority women: Overview, prospects, and implications. In <i>Handbook on well-being of working women</i> (pp. 17-31). Springer, Dordrecht.</p> <p>Grandey, A. A., Houston III, L., & Avery, D. R. (2019). Fake it to make it? Emotional labor reduces the racial disparity in service performance judgments. <i>Journal of Management</i>, 45(5), 2163-2192.</p> <p>Wingfield, A. H., & Chavez, K. (2020). Getting in, getting hired, getting sideways looks: Organizational hierarchy and perceptions of racial discrimination. <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 85(1), 31-57.</p> <p>Optional Material: McCluney, C. L., Robotham, K., Lee, S., Smith, R., & Durkee, M. (2019, November 15). The costs of codeswitching. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p> <p>“This is what racism sounds like in the banking industry.” <i>The New York Times</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #7 due April 2
4/6 – 4/8	Equity: Pipelines and Disconnections	<p>“Linking arms with the Black community in the fight to end systemic inequality.” <i>LTSE Blog</i>.</p> <p>Kraus, M. W., Onyeador, I. N., Daumeyer, N. M., Rucker, J. M., & Richeson, J. A. (2019). The misperception of racial economic inequality. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i>, 14(6), 899-921.</p> <p>Livingston, R. (2020). How to promote racial equity in the workplace. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 98(5), 64-72.</p> <p>Ray, V. (2019, November 19). Why so many organizations stay White. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #8 due April 9 • Interrogate DEI practice due April 12
Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Organizations			
4/13 – 4/15	Corporate activism	<p>“Ben & Jerry’s showed America what real corporate activism looks like.” <i>Huffington Post</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #9 due April 16



	<p>Guest speaker – Tim Wentworth (ILR '82)</p>	<p>Chatterji, A. K., & Toffel, M. W. (2018). The new CEO activists. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p> <p>Hamilton, A. M., (2020). What’s missing from corporate statements on racial injustice? The real cause of racism. <i>MIT Technology Review</i>.</p> <p>Zheng, L. (2020). We’re entering the age of corporate social justice. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p>	
4/20 – 4/22	<p>Entrepreneurship Guest speaker – Lawrence Bancroft (ILR '97)</p>	<p>Younkin, P., & Kuppaswamy, V. (2018). The colorblind crowd? Founder race and performance in crowdfunding. <i>Management Science</i>, 64(7), 3269-3287.</p> <p>Wingfield, A. H., & Taylor, T. (2016). Race, gender, and class in entrepreneurship: Intersectional counterframes and Black business owners. <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>, 39(9), 1676-1696.</p> <p>Optional Material: Neville, F., Forrester, J. K., O'Toole, J., & Riding, A. (2018). 'Why even bother trying?' Examining discouragement among racial-minority entrepreneurs. <i>Journal of Management Studies</i>, 55(3), 424-456.</p> <p>ProjectDiane (2020). <i>The State of Black women during COVID-19</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #10 due April 23
4/27 – 4/29	<p>Philanthropy and nonprofits</p>	<p>Building Movement Project (2019). Nonprofit Executives and the Racial Leadership Gap: A Race to Lead Brief. <i>Research Report</i>.</p> <p>Burton, D. O., & Barnes, B. C. B. (2017). Shifting philanthropy from charity to justice. <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review</i>.</p> <p>Dorsey, C., Kim, P., Daniels, C., Sakaue, L., & Savage, B. (2020). Overcoming the racial bias in philanthropic funding. <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #11 due April 30 • Innovate DEI practice due May 3
5/4 – 5/6	<p>Precarious and Gig Work for the Future</p>	<p>Ajunwa, I. (2020). Race, labor, and the future of work. In E. Hough, K. Bridges, & D. Carbado (Eds.) <i>Oxford Handbook of Race and Law</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry #12 due May 7



		<p>Obermeyer, Z., Powers, B., Vogeli, C., & Mullainathan, S. (2019). Dissecting racial bias in an algorithm used to manage the health of populations. <i>Science</i>, 366(6464), 447-453.</p> <p>Renski, H., Smith-Doerr, L., Wilkerson, T., Roberts, S. C., Zilberstein, S., & Branch, E. H. (2020). Racial Equity and the Future of Work. <i>Technology Architecture+ Design</i>, 4(1), 17-22.</p> <p>Optional Material: Berry, D., & Bell, M. P. (2018). Worker cooperatives: alternative governance for caring and precarious work. <i>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal</i>, 37(4), 376-391.</p> <p>Ozkazanc-Pan, B. (2019). Diversity and future of work: Inequality abound or opportunities for all?. <i>Management Decision</i>.</p>	
Module 5: Presentations			
5/11 – 5/13	Building an Antiracist Organization	<p>COVID-19 Dispatch: Laura Morgan Roberts. HBS Managing the Future of Work podcast.</p> <p>Walker, D. (2020, August 4). If corporations really want to address racial inequality, here are 9 things that actually make a difference. <i>TIME</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building an Antiracist Workplace: Group Presentations due May 13
Building an Antiracist Workplace: Written Description Due: May 20 on Canvas			