

2nd take-home exam/paper

DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 7

ABOUT 800-1100 words

[Lateness penalties: .2 for 2 days late, .3 for every 2 days after that]

In the article, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?” M. Bertrand and S. Mullainathan report on an ingenious experiment that they carried out, intended to test for the existence of racial discrimination in the labor market.

Very briefly, explain the set-up of this experiment, and the basic findings or results of the experiment, as they bear on the issue of racial discrimination. Then, again briefly, look at one alternative explanation—i.e. an attempt to explain the results of the experiment as showing something *other than* race discrimination—and explain why the authors reject that explanation.

Write a mini-essay on the question, “Why is racial discrimination morally wrong?” using the resumé experiment as one focus. (*In answering this question, be sure to say what “racial discrimination” is!*) Explain and back up your answer. In doing so, explain whether racial discrimination is morally wrong for the same reason(s) that other kinds of discrimination are wrong—for example (to take the case we discussed in class), discrimination based on the applicant’s having attended a rival high school.

In class, we generated some possible reasons that different forms of discrimination might be morally wrong. That discussion should inform your answer. And this issue is discussed in Blum, chapter 4: “Racial Discrimination and Color Blindness.” (The issue is not really discussed directly by Bertrand and Mullainathan, but I want you to use their experiment to focus your discussion of the moral wrongness issue.) Keep in mind that different forms of discrimination can be wrong for both *different* and *the same* reasons, and one form can be wrong for more than one distinct reason.

The Oliver/Shapiro reading (from Black Wealth/White Wealth) might also be useful in answering this, as might National Research Council, “Cumulative Disadvantage and Racial Discrimination,” an article that was only recommended but not required. Neither of these is required for the paper, but you may find them helpful.

As part of your mini-essay, I would like you to consider a hypothetical situation in which the findings of the resumé experiment are *reversed*—that is, the “white” resúmes are called back at the same rate as the “black” resúmes are in the actual experiment and vice versa. In other words, there is discrimination against the white applicants. Considering that hypothetical situation will help you to work out your answer to the question why racial discrimination is wrong.