

Professor: Dr. Melissa Spencer

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Office: RSB 231

Office Hours: 4-5 PM Tuesdays or by appointment Fridays

Course Description

The transformation of women's lives in the past century is among the most significant and far-reaching social and economic phenomenon, affecting not only women, but also their partners, their children, and society as a whole. In both developed and developing countries, women are acquiring more education, marrying later, having fewer children and spending a far greater fraction of their adult lives in the labor force. While women are catching up to men in many economic outcomes, persistent differences remain, particularly in occupational distributions and earnings.

This course will examine economic theories and empirical evidence relating to the role of gender in the economy, with a focus on women in the workforce, family formation (marriage and children), and current issues. In taking this course, students will learn to apply economic research methods to the study of gender and to engage with cutting-edge economic research on topics such as the Me-Too movement, LGBTQ economics, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's work, and women in political and corporate leadership.

Some of the theories and results discussed in class may be controversial, and you are expected to bring an open mind to the material and a respectful attitude to group discussions.

This course fulfills the following objectives as part of the Economics Department's learning goals:

- Learning Goal 1: Our graduates will be able to analyze and think critically to solve complex economic problems.
 - Objective 1.2 Students will identify core issues, and evaluate and apply evidence in support of a coherent position or recommendation.
- Learning Goal 2: Our graduates will be effective communicators.
 - Objective 2.1 Students will make a professional and effective oral presentation.
 - Objective 2.2 Students will write a cogent analysis of an economic situation.
- Learning Goal 4: Our graduates will demonstrate economic knowledge.
 - Objective 4.1 Students will demonstrate an understanding of economic theory and practical applications.

Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. I will post all required readings and materials in Blackboard. You are responsible for completing the assigned readings prior to class each day. Your notes on the readings as well as your class notes will also be a critical reference when studying for the midterms and working on your literature review project.

Expectations of Students

I have high expectations of students and set challenging goals for you. Students are expected to:

- Participate in class.
- Be on time for class and stay for the entire period.
- Be respectful of other students and the instructor.
- Complete readings and assignments prior to each class.
- Take handwritten notes during class. Laptop or cell phone use is not permitted in class or during exams, except when discussing assigned readings which you may access on your laptop. Multiple studies show that writing notes by hand improves learning. Please see me to request an exception to this policy.¹
- Ask questions (either in class, via e-mail, or during office hours) when clarification is needed and otherwise be active participants in the learning process.

Office Hours and Email

Office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. These hours are a time for you to ask questions, express concerns, get help with assignments or concepts, confirm your understanding, or explore topics further. You do not need to make an appointment for regularly scheduled office hours. I also encourage you to email me with questions, concerns, or ideas at any time. I will respond to your email within one business day.

Assignments and Grading Policies

Your grade in this course will be determined as follows:

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|--------------------------------|-------|
| • 5-Minute Paper Presentation | 5% |
| • Participation and Attendance | 5% |
| • Homework | 10% |
| • Midterm 1 | 17.5% |
| • Midterm 2 | 17.5% |
| • Literature Review Project | 45% |
| ○ Literature List | 5% |
| ○ Annotated Bibliography | 5% |
| ○ Outline | 5% |
| ○ Presentation | 10% |
| ○ Final Paper | 20% |

5-Minute Paper Presentation

Each of you will sign up for one class period to give a 5-minute paper presentation. You will have 5 minutes at the beginning of class to give a presentation on an assigned paper related to the previous lecture's topic. I am available to meet with you prior to your presentation to help you better understand the assigned paper.

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/research/for-better-learning-in-college-lectures-lay-down-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen/>

Participation and Attendance

Class participation, including responding to questions, raising your own questions, sharing insights, and actively participating in classroom discussion and activities are an important part of this course. You will be given a grade between 0 and 5 for class participation: 2 points earned in classes before midterm 1, 2 points earned in classes between midterms 1 and 2, and 1 point earned between midterm 2 and the end of the semester. I will update you after each midterm and at the end of the semester to let you know your current standing for the participation grade and how you can improve, including the option to submit an additional reflective writing assignment to raise your participation grade. In addition, one point will be lost for each unexcused absence and these points cannot be made up via additional assignments.

Homework

There will be assigned readings prior to each class. Your homework for each class will be submitted via Blackboard. Most homework assignments will consist of 2 multiple choice questions and one short answer question about the readings. Short answer questions will be graded rigorously on both content and writing quality. However, some homework assignments will be graded only on completion to balance out the more difficult assignments. At the end of the semester, I will also drop your lowest homework grade.

Midterms

You will have two midterms in this course. These midterms will take place during class.

Literature Review Project

Your final project will be a literature review on a topic of your choosing. In addition to your final paper and a final presentation, you will complete assignments throughout the semester as you work on the literature review.

Extra Credit

There are three additional assignments you can complete in any order throughout the semester for extra credit.

Extra Credit Assignment 1 (2 extra points on Midterm 1): Attend an event on campus related to the topics covered in class and write a brief 1-2 paragraph description and reflection of the event. I will provide a list of events as I hear of opportunities, but you are also welcome to suggest events.

Extra Credit Assignment 2 (2 extra points on Midterm 2): After completing either your Annotated Bibliography or your Paper Outline, create a personalized writing checklist based on feedback provided on previous writing assignments in this class. Edit your assignment using your checklist, and submit your original draft, your checklist, and the edited draft.

Extra Credit Assignment 3 (2 extra points on your Final Paper): Meet with this class's assigned writing consultant to discuss either your Annotated Bibliography, your Paper Outline, or your Final Paper. Submit a 1 paragraph summary of what you learned from the consultation.

Honor Code

Students are expected to abide by the University of Richmond Honor Code. Violations of the honor code include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices including artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Violations will result in a 0 on the assignment at a minimum.

Accommodations

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities can work with the Office of Disability Services to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. If you already have a Disability Accommodation Notice, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible so that I am aware of your accommodations. <https://disability.richmond.edu/>

Religious Observance Policy

Students needing to miss class because of religious observance should contact me within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss the absence. The University's full religious observance policy can be found here: <https://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/religious-observances.html>

Diversity and Inclusion

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

I welcome your feedback about the course at any time during the semester or after its completion. If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

Additional Resources

The University offers a variety of services that may be helpful to students taking Economics and/or in navigating the many personal, social, and academic challenges they may encounter in a university environment. See, for example, the links for the links below and other resources maintained at the following website: <http://commonground.richmond.edu/rst-gen/resources.html>.

Academic Skills Center (asc.richmond.edu): Academic coaches assist students in assessing and developing their academic and life-skills (e.g., critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, test preparation, time management, stress management, etc.). Peer tutors offer assistance in specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.) and will be available for appointments in-person and virtually. Peer tutors are listed on the ASC website. Email Roger Mancastropa (rmancast@richmond.edu) and Hope Walton (hwalton@richmond.edu) for coaching appointments in academic and life skills.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians: (library.richmond.edu/help/ask/ or 289-8876): Research librarians help students with all steps of their research, from identifying or narrowing a topic, to locating, accessing, evaluating, and citing information resources. Librarians support students in their classes across the curriculum and provide individual appointments, class library instruction, tutorials, and research guides (libguides.richmond.edu). Students can contact an individual librarian (library.richmond.edu/help/liaison-librarians.html) or ASK a librarian for help via email (library@richmond.edu), text (804-277-9ASK), or chat (library.richmond.edu/chat.html).

Career Services: (careerservices.richmond.edu or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.richmond.edu or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Disability Services (disability.richmond.edu) The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable students to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

Speech Center (speech.richmond.edu or 287-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations. Remote practice sessions can be arranged; we look forward to meeting your public speaking needs.

Writing Center (writing.richmond.edu or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

Tentative Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change.

Required materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Project Assignments Due
M 1/9	<i>Class Canceled</i>	
W 1/11	1 Why Gender Economics?	
M 1/16	<i>No Class – MLK Day</i>	
W 1/18	2 Microeconomic Analysis	
M 1/23	3 The History of Women's Labor Force Participation	
W 1/25	4 Current Issues: Women in the Workplace	
M 1/30	5 Gender and Educational Attainment	
W 2/1	6 Measuring the Gender Pay Gap	
M 2/6	7 Causes of the Gender Pay Gap	
W 2/8	8 Women in Corporate Leadership	2-3 Topic Ideas
M 2/13	9 Women in Political Leadership	
W 2/15	Midterm 1	
M 2/20	10 Marriage Markets	
W 2/22	11 Children	
M 2/27	12 Contraception and Unintended Pregnancy	Literature List
W 3/1	13 Abortion	
M 3/6	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	
W 3/8	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	
M 3/13	14 Family-Friendly Workplace Policies	
W 3/15	Guest Speakers – UVA Economics PhD Students	
M 3/20	15 Domestic Violence	Annotated Bibliography
W 3/22	16 Women in Developing Countries	
M 3/27	17 Women in Developing Countries	
W 3/29	Midterm 2	
M 4/3	18 LGBTQ Economics	
W 4/5	19 Data Bias and Gender	Paper Outline
M 4/10	20 Women in the Economics Profession	
W 4/12	TBD	
M 4/17	Student Project Presentations	Slides before class
W 4/19	Student Project Presentations	Slides before class

Final Papers and Extra Credit Assignments are due no later than Friday, April 28th at 11:59 PM.