
∞ Harvard University • Economics 980x Junior Seminar ∞

THE ECONOMICS OF WORK AND FAMILY

Fall 2024 • Monday 12:45 to 2:45pm • Littauer M-room

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Syllabus and Readings

Goals of the Course:

- To explore—empirically, historically, comparatively, and theoretically—the changing significance, timing, and meaning of work, career, dating, cohabiting, marriage, family, and other personal economic decisions.
- To involve students in the creative process of researching, writing, and presenting original research using primary sources (often large-scale, cross-section data sets).
- To discuss and understand policy relevant issues concerning *The Economics of Work and Family* using media sources, especially concerning recent issues including the impact of COVID-19 on work and family.

Readings:

If a reading link does not work, bring it to the attention of the teaching staff. Some readings are also on Canvas in *Econ980x/Files/Ec980x_Readings*. Everyone in the class will get a copy of *Career & Family* (2021). It can also be accessed on the Ec980x syllabus as a PDF.

Course Requirements:

1. Create a [Research Paper](#) (there is no page requirement but 25 pages is the usual length including figures, tables, references, notes). The teaching staff will work closely with you to find a topic and provide direction. You will begin with a Proposal and then formulate a Prospectus, write a Draft, deliver a 15-minute presentation in class, and finally produce the Research Paper. We have also compiled a list of potential data sets for the project. The Proposal, Prospectus, Draft, and the Potential Data sets are each discussed in the Research Paper note.
2. Short Assignments (Comments), Readings, *Pages*: Write and post Comments (about 2-3 pages) on four course readings. Six weeks have a starred (*) reading or readings; you will pick four. Written comments must be posted by 3pm ET the Sunday before class to Canvas. Advice on writing the comments can be found [here](#). You must also check *Pages* each week for additional questions, occasional media coverage on the topic, and the presentation notes.
3. Post (at least) two *Topical Articles* to the *Discussion* page of the Ec980x website and provide comments on two of the *Topical Articles* posted by others. Examples have been provided on the *Discussion* page. Note that the article does not have to be on the topic for that week.

Grades:

Your grade will be 60-70% research papers, 30-40% critical summaries and class discussions.

Course Organization:

The course is organized as a lecture and discussion seminar.

Syllabus and Readings

- Sept. 9 1. Family, Marriage, Work, and Women's Economic Status**
- S. Albanesi, C. Olivetti, B. Petrongolo. "[Families, Labor Markets, and Policy](#)." NBER WP no. 30685 (2022) for *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of the Family* (forthcoming). Read pp. 1-29 (comparative trends); § pp. 33-58 (policy impacts).
 - F. Blau, and A. Winkler. "[Women, Work, and Family](#)." *The Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy* (2017).
 - C. Goldin, [Career & Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity](#) (2021), Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4.
- Sept. 16 2. Dating, Mating, Cohabiting, and Marriage**
- * • S. Anderson. "[The Economics of Dowry and Brideprice](#)," *JEP* 21 (Fall 2007), pp. 151-74.
 - G. Becker. *Treatise on the Family*, [chap. 4](#), read only pp. 108-119, "Assortative Mating in Marriage Markets." Watch the [video presentation](#) (20 minutes) on the positive assortative mating model. The video substitutes for the reading.
 - A. Isen, and B. Stevenson. "[Women's Education and Family Behavior: Trends in Marriage, Divorce, and Fertility](#)." In J. Shoven (ed), *Demography and the Economy* (2010).
 - P. Oyer, [What Online Dating Can Teach about Economics](#) (2014), 4 pages; plus video.
- Sept. 23 3. Economics of Fertility and Family**
- M. Doepke, A. Hannusch, F. Kindermann, and M. Tertilt. "[The Economics of Fertility: A New Era](#)." NBER WP no. 29948 (April 2022), pp. 1-47, 97-98. (Note: Read chapter for facts and ideas; models are not required.)
 - * • F. Feyrer, B. Sacerdote, and A. Stern. "[Will the Stork Return to Europe and Japan? Understanding Fertility within Developed Countries](#)," *JEP* 22 (Summer 2008), pp. 3-22.
 - C. Goldin, [Career & Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity](#) (2021), Chapters 5, 6, 7.
- Sept. 30 4. An Evolving Economic Force**
- Proposal due Th Oct. 3 by 9pm posted to the Ec980x website (see *Research Paper*). Comments on proposals will be sent through Canvas and appointments can be made to discuss topics.
- F. Blau, and L. Kahn. "[Female Labor Supply: Why Is the United States Falling Behind?](#)," *AER P&P* 103 (May 2013), pp. 251-56. Read with: J. Shambaugh, R. Nunn, and B. Portman, "[Lessons from the Rise of Women's Labor Force Participation in Japan](#)," The Hamilton Project (Nov. 2017), pp. 1-9.
 - C. Goldin. "[The 'Quiet Revolution' That Transformed Women's Employment, Education and Family](#)," *AER* (Ely Lecture) 96 (May 2006), pp. 1-21.
 - C. Goldin, and J. Mitchell. "[The New Lifecycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, Expanding Tops](#)," *JEP* (Winter 2017), pp. 161-82.
 - C. Goldin. "[Understanding the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#)," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (Spring 2022), pp. 65-105.
- Oct. 7 5. Careers, Couples, and Kids**
- N. Angelov, P. Johansson, and E. Lindahl. "[Parenthood and the Gender Gap in Pay](#)," *Journal of Labor Economics* (July 2016), only pp. 545-562; § rest of article to p. 572.
 - M. Bertrand, C. Goldin, and L. Katz. "[Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors](#)," *AEJ: Applied Economics* 2 (July 2010), pp. 228-55.
 - C. Goldin, [Career & Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity](#) (2021), Chapters 8, 9, 10, Epilogue.
- Oct. 14 Columbus Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day. No class**
- Oct. 21 6. Work Time, Family Time and the "New Normal" for Work and Family**
- * • M. Bailey, J. Currie, H. Schwandt, "[The COVID-19 Baby Bump in the United States](#)," *PNAS* vol. 120, no. 34, (2023).

- P. Levine and M. Kearney. [“The US COVID-19 Baby Bust and Rebound,”](#) NBER WP no. 30000 (2023). Comment is a comparison of these two papers.
- J. Barrero, N. Bloom, and S. Davis. [“The Evolution of Working from Home,”](#) Stanford Working Paper 23-19 (2023). Read with: N. Bloom, [“Hybrid Working is Here to Stay,”](#) *Financial Times* (Dec. 22, 2021).
 - J. Guryan, E. Hurst, and M. Kearney. [“Parental Education and Parental Time with Children,”](#) *JEP* 22 (Summer 2008), *only* pp. 23–39; § rest of article.
 - G. Ramey, and V. Ramey. [“The Rug Rat Race,”](#) *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, (Spring 2010) *only* pp. 129-62. § Rest of article.
- Oct. 28 7. Childcare Policies of Governments and Firms**
- Prospectus due on Th Oct. 31 by 9pm posted to the Ec980x website (see *Prospectus* and *Research Paper*)
- S. Bana, K. Bedard, and M. Rossin-Slater. [“Trends and Disparities in Leave Use Under California’s Paid Family Leave Program,”](#) *AER P&P* (May 2018), pp. 388-91.
 - L. Cascio. [“Public Investments in Child Care,”](#) In Hamilton Project, *51 Percent: Driving Growth through Women’s Economics Participation* (2017), pp. 123-39.
 - C. Olivetti, and B. Petrongolo. [“The Economic Consequences of Family Policies: A Century of Legislation across the OECD,”](#) *JEP* (Winter 2017), pp. 205-30.
- Nov. 4 8. The Political Gender Gap, Divorce, and Women’s Rights**
- * • L. Cascio, and N. Shenhav. [“A Century of the American Woman Voter,”](#) *JEP* 34 (Spring 2020), pp. 24-48.
 - L. Edlund, and R. Pande. [“Why Have Women Become Left Wing? The Political Gender Gap and the Decline in Marriage,”](#) *QJE* 117 (Aug. 2002), *only* pp. 917-40, 953-54; § rest of article.
 - B. Stevenson. [“The Impact of Divorce Laws on Marriage-Specific Capital,”](#) *Journal of Labor Economics* 25 (Jan. 2007), *only* pp. 75-81 (Sections I and II) and conclusion.
- Nov. 11 9. Gender Earnings Gaps. A Whodunnit**
- Draft due on Th Nov. 14 by 9pm posted to the Ec980x website. See *Draft* and *Research Paper*.
- M. Bertrand. [“Coase Lecture: The Glass Ceiling,”](#) *Economica* (2018), pp. 205-31.
 - Watch the [video presentation](#) (20 minutes) of the discrimination model, which is in G. Borjas. *Labor Economics* (2005), pp. 356-77 (*only*), [chap. 10](#). The video substitutes for the reading.
 - C. Goldin, [“A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter,”](#) *AER* 104 (April 2014), pp. 1-21.
 - C. Juhn, and K. McCue. [“Specialization Then and Now: Marriage, Children, and the Gender Earnings Gap,”](#) *JEP* (Winter 2017), pp. 183-204.
- Nov. 18 10. Education and Career Choice**
- * • S. Ceci, S. Kahn, and W. Williams, [“Exploring Gender Bias in Six Key Domains of Academic Science: An Adversarial Collaboration,”](#) *Psychological Science* 24(1) (2023), pp. 15-20, 54-61; entire article for comment.
 - C. Goldin, and L. Katz. [“Transitions: Career and Family Life Cycles of the Educational Elite,”](#) *AER P&P* (May 2008), pp. 363-69.
 - C. Goldin, L. Katz, and I. Kuziemko. [“The Homecoming of American College Women: The Reversal of the College Gender Gap,”](#) *JEP* 20 (Fall 2006), pp. 133-56.
 - C. Sloane, E. Hurst, and D. Black. [“College Majors, Occupations, and the Gender Wage Gap,”](#) *JEP* 35 (Fall 2021), pp. 223-248.
- Nov. 25 11. Bifurcated Families**
- A.J. Cherlin. [“The Real Reason Richer People Marry,”](#) *New York Times, Sunday Review*, Dec. 7, 2014, p. SR3.
 - * • M. Kearney, [“The ‘College Gap’ in Marriage and Children’s Family Structure,”](#) NBER Working Paper no. 30078 (May 2022).
 - S. Lundberg, R.A. Pollak, and J. Stearns. [“Family Inequality: Diverging Patterns in Marriage, Cohabitation, and Childbearing,”](#) *JEP* 30 (Spring 2016), pp. 79-102.
 - S. McLanahan, and C. Jencks. [“Was Moynihan Right? What Happens to the Children of Unmarried Mothers?”](#) *Education Next* (Spring 2015), pp. 15-20.

Dec. 2 12noon- 2:45pm	12. Student Presentations in class (plus 1.5 hours on Tuesday, Dec. 3, if needed) Each student will have 15 minutes to present a research paper summary. See <i>15 Minutes of Fame</i> for instructions.
Friday Dec. 13	Research Paper due by 9pm posted to Ec980x website. No extensions allowed (except medical ones).

Notes: All assigned readings (•) must be done before class.

§ Material you do not have to read but that may be discussed in class. Pages can be skimmed.

* = pick four of the six to write discussion comments.

Any additional discussion materials including questions for class discussion will be posted on *Pages* with the presentation notes for that class.

Readings are listed in alphabetical order by author (not by importance).

AER = American Economic Review; P&P = Papers & Proceedings

JEP = Journal of Economic Perspectives

NBER = National Bureau of Economic Research

PNAS = Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

QJE = Quarterly Journal of Economics