

DSC 101Q: 'Til Death Do Us Part? The Economics of Marriage & Divorce

Oxford College of Emory University

M/W/F 11:00-11:50 a.m.
Faculty Technology Development Center
Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Romano
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Office Hours: T 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
W 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
or by appointment

Course Overview

Economic methods are increasingly being applied to settings outside the traditional confines of the discipline. This course introduces and applies the tools of economics in order to gain insight into marriage, divorce, and family decisions. We will look at both the interactions between husbands and wives and the effects of the changing economic context on the modern family.

We will begin by evaluating what is meant by the “economic approach” to the family before turning to topics such as why and whom people marry, and how families make labor supply and fertility decisions (among others). The theory of family formation that we have developed will then be applied to divorce and understanding the decline in traditional family structures. We will ask why divorce rates are rising so rapidly, and explore a few of the prominent hypotheses. Throughout the course we will focus on how we might extend or apply the ideas from the current literature and what implications they might have for public policy. The goal of this course is to develop your skills as an economist and social science scholar through the examination of family formation and dissolution.

Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class. The majority of readings can be found through the library’s online resources; those that are not available online will be posted to the Canvas course site (denoted on the schedule with a “*”). I will provide links to the first few readings on Canvas, however after our first library day (September 10th) you will be expected to locate the required readings independently, as one of the goals of this course is to be able to effectively utilize library resources.

Class Attendance

Class attendance is particularly important for this course because of the emphasis on in-class work and discussion. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining class notes, handouts, announcements, etc.

- You are allowed two absences for any reason, without penalty. There are no “excused” absences for medical reasons unless someone from the Office of Academic Services and/or the Access, Disability Services and Resources (ADSR) office contacts me directly about your particular situation. If you realize you will be missing multiple classes for a medical reason, please contact Lauren Braun in Academic Services ASAP so she can notify all of your professors.
- Please note that it is impossible to receive credit for class participation if you are absent, and your participation grade will be adversely affected by more than two absences. In addition, excessive unexcused absences may result in failure of the course.
- As soon as possible, please inform me of any religious holidays or approved Oxford athletic or other commitments that might require you to miss class so that alternative arrangements for completing work can be made at the earliest opportunity.
- Please be on time. If you come to class more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as absent.

Evaluation

Evaluation of your performance in this course will be based on various tests, papers, and other assignments. Each component is described in greater detail below.

Final course grades will be based on a +/- system. Letter course grades are as follows:

A = 100-94	A- = 93-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-84	B- = 83-80	C+ = 79-77
C = 76-74	C- = 73-70	D+ = 69-67	D = 66-60	F = 59-0	

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Date Due
Test 1	20%	October 15
Test 2	20%	November 19
Response Papers	20%	Various
Final Project		
Annotated Bibliography	5%	November 12
Research Proposal Paper	20%	December 10
Research Proposal Presentation	5%	December 18
Class participation	10%	Every day

Tests

There will be two tests over the course of the semester. The first test will be taken in class on **October 15**, and the second test will be taken in class on **November 19**. The tests are not cumulative. Tests will consist primarily of short answer and essay questions. Questions will be drawn both from your readings and from material covered in class and will emphasize the synthesis and application of your knowledge rather than recitation of memorized material. Only under extraordinary circumstances will a make-up test be administered. If you miss an exam, only absences due to medical or family emergencies are valid. You will need to present written evidence of your illness or family emergency. It is your responsibility to make all arrangements for the make-up test BEFORE the start of the regularly scheduled test.

Readings Responses

We will be reading both popular press and scholarly articles in this class. Each of these readings is the basis for our in-class discussions and activities. At several points throughout the semester you will submit a reading response via Canvas by 10pm on the evening before class. There will be specific questions to help you engage with the material and prepare you for the following day's work. This is also a space for you to raise questions you want to discuss in class, possible discussion points, synthesis, critiques, and thoughts about extensions or possible future work to be done in this area. Rubrics for the reading responses will be posted on Canvas and you are asked to bring your reading responses (either printed or on your laptop or tablet) to class. An excused absence from class does not exempt you from submitting a reading response. Reading responses are designed to get your individual response to the readings and facilitate class discussion. As such, late reading responses will NOT be accepted.

Final Project

Throughout the semester, we will be talking extensively about how to study marriage, fertility, and divorce. This assignment allows you to think more deeply about a research question in a particular content area related to our course. Over the course of the semester, you will develop and refine a research question about some aspect of the course, review the related literature, create an annotated bibliography, develop a hypothesis, and propose a methodology to test those hypotheses. You will receive more information about this assignment early in the semester. The annotated bibliography is due in class on **November 12** and the research proposal is due in class on **December 10**. In addition, you will present your proposal to your colleagues during our scheduled final exam time on **December 18**. All assignments associated with the final project will be penalized one full letter grade (e.g., A- to B-, C to D) for each part or whole day the assignment is late.

Participation

The success of this class depends on the assigned readings be completed before the date they will be covered in class along with thoroughly and thoughtfully completing any corresponding assignments. I expect you to be thoroughly engaged with the material, your colleagues, and me for the full 50 minutes of each class

session. Your contribution to the class discussion is viewed as an essential component of your own learning process in this course as well as that of your classmates. Thus, 10% of your grade in the course is based on participation in class discussions. *Everyone* is expected to participate in discussion at *every* class meeting. You are expected to bring the day's assigned articles (printed out or on your laptop- NOT your phone) to class. If you are hesitant about speaking up in class, talk to me about it without delay, and I will help you get started. Remember that the *quality* of your contributions is more important than the *quantity*. A more detailed rubric for grading participation will be generated by the class during the first week and posted on Canvas.

College & Course Policies

Honor Code

We are a community of scholars and therefore academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Your name on any submitted work shall indicate you have neither given nor received unauthorized information or assistance, nor have you condoned the giving or receiving of unauthorized information or assistance by others. As a student at Oxford College of Emory University you have agreed to abide by the honor pledge and uphold the Honor Code. For additional information please see: <http://oxford.emory.edu/catalog/regulations/honor-code.html>.

The usual penalty for violations of the honor code is an F in this course.

Communication Policy

You are responsible for any announcements or assignments made in class. Any updates to the course schedule will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. You are expected to check both your Emory email and the Canvas course site regularly.

Students with Accommodations

The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, students must contact OAS and complete the registration process. Faculty may not provide disability accommodations until an accommodation letter has been processed; accommodations are not retroactive. Students registered with OAS who receive a letter outlining specific academic accommodations are strongly encouraged to coordinate a meeting time with me via email (teresa.romano@emory.edu) to discuss a protocol to implement the accommodations as needed throughout the semester. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as possible. Contact OAS for more information at (770) 784-4690 or oas_oxford@emory.edu. Additional information is available at the OAS website at <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html>

Student Athletes & Religious Holidays

If you will miss class due to athletic commitments or for a religious holiday, please let me know within the first two weeks of the semester; waiting longer may compromise my ability to extend satisfactory arrangements. If you need guidance negotiating your needs related to a religious holiday, the College Chaplain, Rev. Lyn Pace, ppace@emory.edu, Candler Hall 202, is willing and available to help.

***Please be aware that Rev. Pace is not tasked with excusing students from classes or writing excuses for students to take to their professors.*

Emory's official list of religious holidays may be found at http://www.religiouslife.emory.edu/faith_traditions/holidays.html

Classroom Conduct

The manner in which we interact with each other is critical to cultivating and maintaining a meaningful and effective intellectual environment. To this end, please be respectful of your classmates and professor, honest in your work, and prepared for every class session. I respect each of you as individuals and as students and make every effort to be fair and equitable in any decision that impacts you. If you ever have a problem or concern about the course, please come talk with me.

You are asked not to use laptops or tablets except when indicated by the instructor, or due to a documented accommodation. Phones are not necessary in this class and are a distraction to you and your classmates; you are asked not to use them.

Additional Resources

There are numerous resources available to you on campus. Below I've listed a few that might be helpful to you. If you do not see a relevant resource below, please see me, and I will do my best to help connect you to the right person/place.

Advising Support Center (ASC)

The Advising Support Center is a great first stop for students who have general academic questions or concerns. The ASC can help you access all of the appropriate resources on campus. Stop by the first floor of Seney Hall or email oxadvising@emory.edu for more information. "Just ASC!"

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is committed to helping all Oxford students succeed as clear, effective communicators. Peer writing consultants can help you refine your writing by reviewing a paper's focus, development, organization, clarity, grammar, source integration, or other aspects. For more information, visit <http://oxford.emory.edu/academics/centers-institutes-programs/writing-center/> or schedule an appointment online at <https://oxford.mywconline.com>.

Counseling Center

Many students visit the Counseling Center at some point during their Oxford careers. Counselors are available to talk with you about any difficulties that might be limiting your intellectual, emotional, or social development. Their services are confidential and highly professional. See <http://oxford.emory.edu/life-at-oxford/counseling-and-career-services/> for more information. You can schedule an appointment by calling 770-784-8394.

Access, Disability Services and Resources

This office is helpful to students with particular learning needs who may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability. For more information, contact ADSR at 770-784-4690 or adsroxford@emory.edu or see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html>.

Career Services

It's never too early to start thinking about and preparing for your time after Emory! The Career Services Center is available to help you explore opportunities during your time at Oxford (e.g., internships) as well as to help you think about the future. See <http://www.oxford.emory.edu/life-at-oxford/counseling-and-career-services/career-services/>

Class Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC / ASSIGNMENT DUE	READING
1	W 8/29	Welcome and orientation to course	
	F 8/31	Introduction: Why marry?	
2	M 9/3	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	
	W 9/5	<i>End of add/drop/swap (last day to withdraw without "W")</i>	
	W 9/5	The Economic Approach to the Family Response Paper #1 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becker, Gary S. 1993. "Nobel Lecture: The Economic Way of Looking at Behavior." <i>Journal of Political Economy</i>. 101 (3): 385-409. Read sections one, five and six.
	F 9/7	Criticizing the Economic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woolley, Frances. 1996. "Getting the Better of Becker" <i>Feminist Economics</i>, 2 (1): 114-120. [*]McCloskey, Donald (Deirdre). 1993. "Some Consequences of a Conjective Economics." In <i>Beyond Economic Man</i>, 69-93.
3	M 9/10	Library Day- How to find and evaluate sources/websites	
		MARRIAGE	
	W 9/12	Facts and Trends in Family Formation and Dissolution Reading Response #2 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waite, Linda J. (1995) "Does Marriage Matter" <i>Demography</i>, 32 (4): 483-507. Read up through (and including) The Institutions of Marriage (page 498)
	F 9/14	Correlation vs. Causation, Omitted Variables, Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA
4	M 9/17	The Neoclassical Theory of Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [*]Blau, Francine D., Marianne A. Ferber, and Anne E. Winkler. 1998. <i>The Economics of Women, Men, and Work</i>. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Chapter 1 (up to and including Individuals, Families, and Households) & 3 (through Case 2)
	W 9/19	The Neoclassical Theory of Marriage, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [*]Blau, Francine D., Marianne A. Ferber, and Anne E. Winkler. 1998. <i>The Economics of Women, Men, and Work</i>. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Chapter 3
	F 9/21	How to read an academic article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBA
5	M 9/24	Regression; How to read tables & graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas Handout
	W 9/26	Bargaining Power Response Paper #3 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lundberg, Shelly J., Robert A. Pollak, and Terence J. Wales. 1997. "Do Husband and Wives Pool Their Resources? Evidence from the U.K. Child Benefit" <i>Journal of Human Resources</i> 32 (3): 463-80.
	F 9/28	Who Marries Whom?	
6	M 10/1	The Rise of Two-Earner Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pencavel, John. 1998. "Assortative Mating by Schooling and Work Behavior of Wives and Husbands," <i>The American Economic Review</i> 88 (2): 326-29. Matthaei, Julie A. 1980. "Consequences of the Rise of the Two-Earner Family: The Breakdown of the Sexual Division of Labor" <i>The American Economic Review</i> 70 (2): 198-202.
	W 10/3	The College Dating Scene Response Paper #4 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Williams, Alex. "The New Math on Campus," <i>The New York Times</i>, February 5, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/fashion/07campus.html

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [*]Adshade, Marina. 2013. <i>Dollars and Sex: How Economics Influences Sex and Love</i>. San Francisco: Chronical Books. Read Chapter 2: Hooking Up in College
	F 10/5	Regression, continued	
7	M 10/8	FALL BREAK	
	W 10/10	Male Incarceration Rates and Marriage Response Paper #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles, Kerwin Kofi and Ming Ching Luoh. 2010. "Male Incarceration, the Marriage Market, and Female Outcomes." <i>The Review of Economics and Statistics</i>, 92 (3): 614-627.
	F 10/12	Catch Up	
8	M 10/15	Exam 1: Marriage	
	W 10/17	Cohabitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lundberg, Shelly, and Robert Pollak. 2013. "Cohabitation and the Uneven Retreat from Marriage in the U.S., 1950-2010." w19413. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
	F 10/19	<i>Normal drop deadline</i>	
	F 10/19	Fertility: Trends/Facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth: (610122007-001)." 2006. American Psychological Association. • [*]Hoffman, Saul D., and Susan Averett. 2005. <i>Women and the Economy: Family, Work, and Pay</i>. Boston: Pearson Addison Wesley. Chapter 5, Section: Fertility Facts and Trends
9	M 10/22	Fertility Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [*]Hoffman, Saul D., and Susan Averett. 2005. <i>Women and the Economy: Family, Work, and Pay</i>. Boston: Pearson Addison Wesley. Remainder of Chapter 5: The Economics of Fertility
	W 10/24	Library Day- Citations and Annotated Bibliographies	
	F 10/26	Fertility Model, continued	
10	M 10/29	Reproductive Technology Reading Response #6 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence F. Katz. 2002. "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions", <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> 110 (4): 730-70.
	W 10/31	Teen fertility/out of wedlock childbearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kearney, Melissa S., and Phillip B. Levine. 2012. "Why is the Teen Birth Rate So High in the United States and Why Does It Matter?" <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 26 (2): 141-166.
	F 11/2	Teen fertility/out of wedlock childbearing Response Paper #7 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kearney, Melissa S., and Phillip B. Levine. 2015. "Media Influences on Social Outcomes: The Impact of MTV's '16 and Pregnant' on Teen Childbearing." <i>The American Economic Review</i> 105 (12): 3597-3632.
11	M 11/5	Project Work Day	
	M 11/5	<i>Beginning of registration for spring semester</i>	
	W 11/7	Divorce: Facts/Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waite, Linda J. (1995) "Does Marriage Matter" <i>Demography</i>, 32 (4): 483-507. Read remainder of paper (page 498 to end)
	F 11/9	Theory of Divorce Response Paper #8 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becker, Gary S., Elisabeth M. Landes, and Robert T. Michael. 1977. "An Economic Analysis of Marital Instability," <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> 85(6) 1141-87. Read sections one to six
12	M 11/12	Theory of Divorce, continued Annotated Bibliography Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA

	W 11/14	The Rise in the Welfare State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoynes, Hilary Williamson. 1996. "Work Welfare and Family Structure: What Have We Learned?" w5644. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
	F 11/16	Catch Up	
	F 11/16	One-time first-year student drop deadline	
13	M 11/19	Exam 2: Fertility/Divorce (Theory)	
	W 11/21	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
	F 11/23	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
14	M 11/26	Rising Female Labor Force Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [*]Cherlin, Andrew J. 1992. <i>Marriage Divorce Remarriage</i>. Revised Edition, Harvard University Press. Read Introduction and Chapter Two
	W 11/28	Gender Preference and the Likelihood of Divorce Response Paper #9 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dahl, Gordon B. and Enrico Moretti. 2008. "The Demand for Sons," <i>Review of Economics Studies</i>, 75 (4): 1085-1120.. • Leonhardt, David. 2003. "It's A Girl! (Will the Economy Suffer?)." The New York Times, October 26, 2003, sec. Business Day. https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/26/business/it-s-a-girl-will-the-economy-suffer.html.
	F 11/30	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA
	M 12/3	No Fault Divorce Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedberg, Leora. 1998. "Did Unilateral Divorce Raise Divorce Rates? Evidence From Panel Data", <i>The American Economic Review</i>, 83 (3): 608-27.
15	W 12/5	Divorce Laws and Family Distress Response Paper #10 due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stevenson, Betsey, and Justin Wolfers. 2006. "Bargaining in the Shadow of the Law: Divorce Laws and Family Distress." <i>The Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> 121 (1): 267-88.
	F 12/7	Consequences of Divorce for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [*]Furstenberg, Frank F. and Andrew J. Cherlin. 1991. <i>Divided Families</i>. Harvard University Press. Read p. 45-95
16	M 12/10	Wrap up Research Proposals due in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willis, Robert J. 1987 "What Have We Learned from the Economics of the Family? <i>American Economic Review</i>. Vol. 77 (2): 68-81.
17	T 12/18	2:00-5:00 p.m. Research Proposal Presentations	

Note: The course schedule is tentative. Changes might include, but are not restricted to, addition or deletion of readings, assignments, and changes in the schedule. All changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.