
George Mason University • Economics 496/695 • Special Topics in Economics

GENDER ECONOMICS

Fall 2015 • Wednesday 7.20-10.00pm • Innovation Hall 316

Prof. Johanna Mollerstrom • Contact: jmollers@gmu.edu

Office hours by appointment.

Course Description

The course draws on empirical and theoretical insights from multiple fields within economics. The objective is to understand the role of gender in economic decision making, and the changing significance, timing, and meaning of work, career, and family. We will also consider the interplay between culture, norms and gender, and the impact on economic decision making and outcomes. The course focuses mostly on the developed world, but we will occasionally contrast this with a global perspective.

Readings

You will need one book for the class:

- F. Blau, M. Ferber, and A. Winkler, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, 7th ed. (Prentice Hall, 2013).

All other readings will be made available electronically.

Course requirements

The course grade will be determined using the following weights:

- Attendance and class participation: 25%.
- Reaction papers: 25%.
- Mid-term exam: 25%.
- Final exam: 25%.

Reaction papers

1-2 page commentaries on the readings for that week. Can focus on, for example, a personal reflection, questions for discussion, comparisons between the readings, or new research or policy ideas related to the readings (for graduate students the reaction paper *must* discuss either a research or a policy idea). These papers should be submitted to me via e-mail by 5pm on the day of class. The first is due on September 9 and should cover the readings for that day. I will drop the reaction paper with the lowest grade when setting final course grades.

Exams

There are two exams. The mid-term exam covers the material that we go through until (and including) Oct 14. The final exam focuses on material covered after the mid-term.

Some questions on the exams will be different for graduate and undergraduate students. In general, graduate students are expected to show a more in-depth understanding of especially technical details of the material.

You do not have to bring blue books to the exams.

Missing class?

If you need to miss a class you will be required to write an overview of the readings for that week (in addition to the reaction paper) and submit to me no later than 6 days after the missed class. The overview must be at least 4 pages.

Schedule

September 2	Overview of course. Gender as an evolving economic force – historical and recent trends.
September 9	The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 1: Work in the home and in the market.
September 16	The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 2: Marriage and family formation.
September 23	Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 1: Overview and international perspective.
September 30	Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 2: Human capital.
October 7	<i>Guest lecture</i>
October 14	Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 3: Discrimination.
October 21	<i>Midterm exam.</i>
October 28	Norms, culture and reform, part 1: Exposure and leadership.
November 4	Norms, culture and reform, part 2: The role of policy.
November 11	Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 1: Preferences and stereotypes.
November 18	Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 2: Competitiveness and bargaining.
November 25	<i>Day before Thanksgiving – no class.</i>
December 2	Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 3: Neuroeconomics.
December 9	<i>Final exam.</i>

Readings

Abbreviations: BFW = Blau, Ferber, and Winkler, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*; Treatise = Becker, *A Treatise on the Family*.

You will be required to read some of the chapters/papers for each week in-dept. Others can be skimmed and you can focus on abstract/introduction/conclusions. I will tell you which readings to focus on for the next week at the end of class.

Gender as an evolving economic force – historical and recent trends (Sep 2)

- BFW: Chap. 1-2, 5.
- Goldin, C. (2006) “The ‘Quiet Revolution’ that Transformed Women’s Employment, Education, and Family.” *American Economic Review*, 96(2): 1-21.
- Lundberg, S. and Pollak, R. (2007) “The American Family and Family Economics.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2): 3-26.

The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 1: Work in the home and in the market (Sep 9)

- BFW: Chap. 3-4, 6.
- Becker, G. (1974) “On the Relevance of the New Economics of the Family.” *American Economic Review*, 64(2): 317-319.
- Goldin, C. (1991) “The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women’s Employment.” *American Economics Review*, 81(4): 741-756.
- Mammen, K. and Paxson, C. (2000) “Women’s Work and Economic Development.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(4): 141-164.
- Strober, M. (1994) “Rethinking Economics Through a Feminist Lens.” *American Economic Review*, 84(2): 143-147.

The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 2: Marriage and family formation (Sep 16)

- BFW: Chap. 13.
- Goldin, C. and Katz, L. (2000) “Career and Marriage in the Age of the Pill” *American Economic Review*, 90(2): 461-465.
- Jayachandran, S. and Kuziemko, I. (2009) ”Why do Mothers Breastfeed Girls Less than Boys? Evidence and Implications for Child Health in India.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(3): 1485-1538.
- Lundberg, S. and Pollak, R. (1996) “Bargaining and Distribution in Marriage.” *Journal of Economics Perspectives*, 10(4): 139-158.
- Stevenson, B. and Wolfers, J. (2007) “Marriage and Divorce: Changes and Their Driving Forces.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2): 27-52.

Differences in occupations and earnings, part 1: Overview and international perspective (Sep 23)

- BFW: Chap. 7, 17-18.
- Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2003). "Understanding International Differences in the Gender Pay Gap." *Journal of Labor Economics* 21(1): 106-144.
- Goldin, C. (2014) "A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter." *American Economic Review*, 104(4): 1091-1119.

Differences in occupations and earnings, part 2: Human capital (Sep 30)

- BFW: Chap. 8.
- Bertrand, M., Goldin, C. and Katz, L. (2010) "Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2(3): 228-255.
- Goldin, C. and Katz, L. (2008) "Transitions: Career and Family Life Cycles of the Education Elite." *American Economic Review*, 98(2): 363-369.
- Joy, L. (2000) "Do Colleges Shortchange Women? Gender Differences in the Transition from College to Work." *American Economic Review*, 90(2): 471-475.

Guest Lecture (Oct 7)

- Details to be announced later in the semester.

Differences in occupations and earnings, part 3: Discrimination (Oct 14)

- BFW: Chap. 10-12.
- Bertrand, M., Chugh, D. and Mullainathan, S. (2005) "Implicit Discrimination." *American Economics Review*, 95(2): 94-98.
- Blau, F. and Ferber, M. "Discrimination: Empirical Evidence from the United States." *American Economic Review*, 77(2): 316-320.
- Goldin, C. and Rouse, C. (2000) "Orchestrating Impartiality." *American Economic Review*, 90(4), 715-741. (Only pp. 715-724, pp. 737-738).

Norms, culture and reform, part 1: Exposure and Leadership (Oct 28)

- Andersen, S., Bulte, E., Gneezy, U. and List, J. (2008) "Do Women Supply More Public Goods than Men?" *American Economic Review*, 98(2): 376-381.
- Beaman, L., Chattopadhyay, R., Duflo, E., Pande, R. and Topalova, P. (2009) "Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(4): 1497-1540.
- Carrell, S., Page, M. and West, J. (2010) "Sex and Science: How Professor Gender Perpetuates the Gender Gap." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 125(3): 1101-1144.
- Chattopadhyay, R. and Duflo, E. (2004) "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India." *Econometrica*, 72(5): 1409-1443.

- Jensen, R. and Oster, E. (2009) “The Power of TV: Cable Television and Women’s Status in India.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(3): 1057-1094.

Norms, culture and reform, part 2: The role of policy (Nov 4)

- BFW: Chap. 15-16.
- Edlund, L. and Pande, R. (2002) “Why have Women Become Left-Wing? The Political Gender Gap and the Decline in Marriage.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(3): 917-961.
- Lefebvre, P., Merrigan, P., Verstraete, M. (2009) “Dynamic Labour Supply Effect of Child-care Subsidies: Evidence from a Canadian Natural Experiment on Low-fee Universal Child Care.” *Labour Economics*, 16, 490-502.
- Lott, J. and Kenny, L. (1999) “Did Women’s Suffrage Change the Size and Scope of Government?” *Journal of Political Economy*, 107(6): 1163-1198.

Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 1: Preferences and Stereotypes (Nov 11)

- Aguiar, F., Branas-Garza, P., Cobo-Reyes, R., Jimenez, N. and Miller, L. (2009) “Are Women Expected to be More Generous?” *Experimental Economics*, 12(1), 93-98.
- Andreoni, J. and Vesterlund, L. (2001). “Which is the Fair Sex? Gender Differences in Altruism.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 116(1): 293-312.
- Coffman, K. (2014) “Evidence on Self-Stereotyping and the Contribution of Ideas.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Croson, R. and Gneezy, U. (2009). “Gender Differences in Preferences.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 47(2): 448-474.
- Eckel, C. and Grossman, P. (2008). “Differences in the Economic Decisions of Men and Women: Experimental Evidence.” In *Handbook of Experimental Economics Results* (eds. C. Plott and V. Smith), chapter 57.

Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 2: Competitiveness and Bargaining (Nov 18)

- Babcock, L., Laschever, S., Gelfand, M. and Small, D. (2003) “Nice Girls Don’t Ask.” *Harvard Business Review*, 81(10): 14-16.
- Baldiga, K. (2014) “Gender Differences in Willingness to Guess.” *Management Science*, 60(2): 434-448.
- Buser, T., Niederle, M., Oosterbeek, H. (2013) “Gender, Competitiveness and Career Choices.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, forthcoming.
- Exeley, C., Niederle, M. and Vesterlund, L. (2014) “Should All Women Ask? Exploiting the Power of Lab Experiments.” Working paper.
- Niederle, M. and Vesterlund, L. (2007) “Do Women Shy Away From Competition? Do Men Compete Too Much?” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3): 1067-1101.

Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 3: Neuroeconomics (Dec 2)

- Apicella, C., Dreber, A., Campbell, B., Gray, P., Hoffman, M. and Little, A. (2008) "Testosterone and Financial Risk Preferences." *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 29(6): 384-390.
- Buser, T. (2012a) "Digit Ratios, the Menstrual Cycle and Social Preferences." *Games and Economic Behavior*, 76: 457-470.
- Buser, T. (2012b) "The Impact of the Menstrual Cycle and Hormonal Contraceptives on Competitiveness." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 83: 1-10.
- Sapienza, P., Zingales, L., Maestripieri, D. (2009) "Gender Differences in Financial Risk Aversion and Career Choices are Affected by Testosterone." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106(36): 15268-15273.