
George Mason University • Economics 496/895 • Special Topics in Economics

GENDER ECONOMICS

Fall 2020 • Asynchronous Online

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Group office hours on Zoom, Mondays at 9-10pm. • Individual 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. One class will be dedicated to the research that is developing to help us understand the gender economics of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Readings

You will need one book for the class:

- F. Blau and A. Winkler, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, 8th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2018).

All other readings will be made available electronically.

Course requirements

The course grade will be determined using the following weights:

- Reaction papers: 33.3%.
- Mid-term exam: 33.3%.
- Final presentation (and questions/comments on classmate's presentations): 33.3%.

Lectures

The lectures will be asynchronous, i.e. you will not have to be online on a certain day/time. I will post the lectures on **Mondays at 7.20pm Eastern Time** (this is the time when we would have had the class, if it would have been in person).

Office hours

After having posted the lectures on Mondays at 7.20pm, I will be on **Zoom between 9pm and 10pm**. You certainly do not have to join, but I encourage you to do so if there are materials from the lectures, or logistical matters that you would like to discuss further. To join please use this link: <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/97258076333?pwd=VkYxTGtOQzN0eHQvL0E2ajdob1NYdz09> (meeting

id: 972 5807 6333, password: genderecon). If you want to schedule individual office hours (which will also be held on Zoom) at other times, please send me an email.

Reaction papers

The reaction papers are 1 page commentaries on the readings for each week. They 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 at the latest by 7pm each Monday. The first is due on August 31 and should cover the readings for the lecture that will be posted on that day (i.e. you write the reaction papers *ahead* of the lecture). I will drop the reaction paper with the lowest grade when setting final course grades.

Midterm exam

There is one exam: the midterm. The midterm exam covers the material that we go through until (and including) Oct 5. Some questions on the exams may 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. **The midterm exam will take place on October 13** (please note that this is a Tuesday!). I will post the exam on Blackboard (and email it to you) at 7.20pm and you will need to return it to me by email at the very latest at 10pm. You can use your books and notes when completing the exam, but please note that the exam is individual and you are not allowed to work together.

Student presentation

In lieu of a final exam, each student will record a short individual (10-15 minute) presentation on a topic that is assigned by me (topics will be communicated on November 9, further details about the format will also be provided then). **The presentations are due on November 30 at 7.20pm**. I will make the presentations available to all of you on December 1, and you will have until December 3 at 7.20pm to watch the presentations of your classmates, and write 1-2 questions for each presenter. The questions will be compiled and sent to the respective presenter on December 4. You will then have until December 7 at 7.20pm to provide written answers to the questions on your presentation.

Lecture schedule

August 24	<u>Lecture 1</u> : Overview and logistics of the course. Gender as an evolving economic force – historical and recent trends.
August 31	<u>Lecture 2</u> : The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 1: Work in the home and in the market.
September 7	<i>Labor day – no class.</i>
September 14	<u>Lecture 3</u> : The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 2: Marriage and family formation.
September 21	<u>Lecture 4</u> : Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 1: Overview and international perspective.
September 28	<u>Lecture 5</u> : Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 2: Human capital.
October 5	<u>Lecture 6</u> : Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 3: Discrimination.
October 13 (Tues!)	<i>Midterm exam.</i>
October 19	<u>Lecture 7</u> : The political gender gap: Norms, Culture and Reform
October 26	<u>Lecture 8</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 1: Exposure and leadership
November 2	<u>Lecture 9</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 2: Preferences and stereotypes.
November 9	<u>Lecture 10</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 3: Competitiveness and bargaining.
November 16	<u>Lecture 11</u> : The Gender Economics of the COVID-19 Pandemic
November 23	<i>Thanksgiving week – no class.</i>
November 30	<u>Lecture 12</u> : Student presentations due

Readings

Abbreviation: BW = Blau and Winkler, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*

You are 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.

Lecture 1: Gender as an evolving economic force – historical and recent trends (Aug 24)

- **Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2017) “The Gender Wage Gap – Extent, Trends and Explanations.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(3): section 3.1-3.4.**
- **BW: 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.*

Lecture 2: The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 1: Work in the home and in the market (Aug 31).

- **Becker, G. (1974) “On the Relevance of the New Economics of the Family.” *American Economic Review*, 64(2): 317-319.**
- **BW: Chap. 3-4, 6.**
- *Goldin, C. (1991) “The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women’s Employment.” *American Economics Review*, 81(4): 741-756.*
- *Keller, W. and Utar, H. (2020) *Globalization, Gender and the Family. Working Paper.**
- *Mammen, K. and Paxson, C. (2000) “Women’s Work and Economic Development.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(4): 141-164.*

Lecture 3: The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 2: Marriage and family formation (Sep 14)

- **BW: Chap. 13-14.**
- **Goldin, C. and Katz, L. (2000) “Career and Marriage in the Age of the Pill” *American Economic Review*, 90(2): 461-465.**
- *Donobue, and Levitt, S. (2001) “The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, CXVI (2): 379-420.*
- *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.*

Lecture 4: Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 1: Overview and international perspective (Sep 21).

- *Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2003). "Understanding International Differences in the Gender Pay Gap." Journal of Labor Economics 21(1): 106-144.*
- **BW: Chap. 7, 17-18**
- **Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2017) "The Gender Wage Gap – Extent, Trends and Explanations." Journal of Economic Literature, 55(3): 789-865.**
- *Goldin, C. (2014) "A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter." American Economic Review, 104(4): 1091-1119.*

Lecture 5: Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 2: Human capital (Sep 28)

- *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.*
- **Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2017) "The Gender Wage Gap – Extent, Trends and Explanations." Journal of Economic Literature, 55(3): 789-865. (especially section 3.1-3.7)**
- **BW: Chap. 8 (all), 9 (until p. 243).**
- **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.*

Lecture 6: Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 3: Discrimination (Oct 5)

- **Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2017) "The Gender Wage Gap – Extent, Trends and Explanations." Journal of Economic Literature, 55(3): 789-865. (especially section 3.8-3.9)**
- **BW: Chap. 10-12.**
- *Goldin, C. and Rouse, C. (2000) "Orchestrating Impartiality." American Economic Review, 90(4), 715-741. (pp. 715-724, pp. 737-738).*
- *Sarsons, H. (2020) Interpreting Signals in the Labor Market: Evidence from Medical Referrals. Working paper.*

Lecture 7: The political gender gap: Norms, Cultures, Reform. (Oct 19)

- **Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2017) "The Gender Wage Gap – Extent, Trends and Explanations." Journal of Economic Literature, 55(3): 789-865. (especially section 5-6)**
- **BW: Chap. 15-16.**

- Eklund, 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 Childcare 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.

Lecture 8: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 1: Exposure and leadership (Oct 26)

- 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.
- Blau, F. and Kahn, L. (2017) “The Gender Wage Gap – Extent, Trends and Explanations.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(3): 789-865. (especially section 4-6)
- 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.

Lecture 9: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 2: Preferences and stereotypes (Nov 2)

- 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.
- 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*.
- 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.
- Niederle, M. (2016). “Gender.” In *Handbook of Experimental Economics* (eds. J. Kagel and A. Roth).

Lecture 10: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 3: Competitiveness and bargaining (Nov 9)

- 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.

- **Gneezy, U., Niederle, M. and Rustichini, A. (2003) “Performance in Competitive Environments: Gender Differences.” Quarterly Journal of Economics, 118(3): 1049-1074.**
- *Exeley, C., Niederle, M. and Vesterlund, L. (2020) “Knowing when to ask – the cost of leaning in.” Journal of Political Economy, 128(3): 816-854.*
- *Exeley, C., and Kessler, J. (2020) The Gender Gap in Self-Promotion. 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.**

Lecture 11: The Gender Economics of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Nov 16)

- As this research is developing rapidly, readings will be posted in the beginning of November.

Lecture 12: Student presentations (Week of November 30)

- Topics will be communicated to presenters on November 9.

Academic Integrity

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Disability Accommodation

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.