
George Mason University • Economics 496/695/895 • Special Topics in Economics

GENDER ECONOMICS

Fall 2023 • Mondays 7.20-10pm • Horizon Hall 5001

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

Office hours by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: William Hickman (whickma@gmu.edu)

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. In addition, we will 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 and A. Winkler, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, 9th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2021).

All other readings will be made available electronically.

Course requirements

The course grade will be determined using the following weights:

- Attendance and class participation: 10%
- Reaction papers: 30%.
- Mid-term exam: 30%.
- Final presentation (and questions/comments on classmate's presentations): 30%.

Reaction papers

One 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 by 3pm on the day of class (i.e. you write the reaction papers *ahead* of the lecture). The first is due on August 28 and should cover the readings for both Lecture 1 and Lecture 2.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam covers the material that we go through until (and including) Sep 25. 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, especially of technical details of the material. The midterm exam will take place on Monday October 2 during class time.

Student presentations

In lieu of a final exam, students will give short (approximately 20-25 minutes) presentation on topics assigned by me (further details about the format will be provided on Oct 23, and topics will be communicate on Oct 23 and Oct 30). The presentations will be held in class on November 27 and December 4.

Missing Class

If possible, please let me know in advance, via email, if you need to miss class. I can then direct you to the resources needed to make up for the missed class.

Schedule

August 21	<u>Lecture 1</u> : Overview and logistics. Gender as an evolving economic force. The economics of career, marriage, and family: Introduction.
August 28	<u>Lecture 2</u> : The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 1: Work in the home and in the market.
September 4	<i>Labor day – no class.</i>
September 11	<u>Lecture 3</u> : The economics of career, marriage, and family, part 2: Marriage and family formation.
September 18	<u>Lecture 4</u> : Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 1: Overview and international perspective.
September 25	<u>Lecture 5</u> : Gender differences in occupations and earnings, part 2: Human capital. Discrimination.
October 2	<u>Examination</u> : <i>Midterm exam.</i>
October 10 (Tues!)	<u>Lecture 6</u> : The political gender gap. Norms, Culture and Reform
October 16	<u>Lecture 7</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 1: Exposure and leadership
October 23	<u>Lecture 8</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 2: Preferences and stereotypes.
October 30	<u>Lecture 9</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 3: Competitiveness and bargaining.
November 6	<u>Workshop</u> : Generating research ideas in gender economics (and other fields)
November 13	<u>Lecture 10</u> : Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 4: Neuroeconomic approaches. Summary of the course.
November 20	<i>Thanksgiving week – no class.</i>
November 27	<u>Examination</u> : Final student presentations, part 1
December 4	<u>Examination</u> : Final student presentations, part 2

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: Overview and logistics. Gender as an evolving economic force. The economics of career, marriage, and family: Introduction. (Aug 21)

- 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 28).

- 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 Economic Review*, 81(4): 741-756.
- Keller, W. and Utar, H. (2020) *Globalization, Gender and the Family*. NBER 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 11)

- BW: Chap. 13-14.
- Doepke, M. (2015) *Gary Becker on the Quantity and Quality of Children*. *Journal of Demographic Economics*, 81: 59-66.
- Goldin, C. and Katz, L. (2000) “Career and Marriage in the Age of the Pill” *American Economic Review*, 90(2): 461-465.
- Donohue, 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 Economic 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 18).

- 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. Discrimination. (Sep 25)

- 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 3.1-3.9)
- BW: Chap. 8 (all), 9 (until the start of “Gender Differences in Psychological Attributes”), 10-12.
- Goldin, C. and Katz, L. (2008) “Transitions: Career and Family Life Cycles of the Education Elite.” *American Economic Review*, 98(2): 363-369.
- Goldin, C. and Rouse, C. (2000) “Orchestrating Impartiality.” *American Economic Review*, 90(4), 715-741. (pp. 715-724, pp. 737-738).
- Joy, L. (2000) “Do Colleges Shortchange Women? Gender Differences in the Transition from College to Work.” *American Economic Review*, 90(2): 471-475.
- Sarsons, H. (2020) *Interpreting Signals in the Labor Market: Evidence from Medical Referrals*. Working paper.

Lecture 6: The political gender gap: Norms, Cultures, Reform. (Oct 16)

- 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.
- 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 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 7: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 1: Exposure and leadership (Oct 23)

- *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.**
- *Dahl, G. Kotsadam, A., D. Rooth, "Does Integration Change Gender Attitudes? The Effect of Randomly Assigning Women to Traditionally Male Teams." Quarterly Journal of Economics (forthcoming).*

Lecture 8: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 2: Preferences and stereotypes (Oct 30)

- *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.**
- **Exley, C., Hauser, O., Moore, M., Pezzuto, J. (2022) "Beliefs about gender differences in social preferences." NBER Working Paper.**
- **Niederle, M. (2016). "Gender." In Handbook of Experimental Economics (eds. J. Kagel and A. Roth).**

Workshop: Generating research ideas in gender economics (and other fields) (Nov 6)

- Readings will be announced later in the semester.

Lecture 9: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 3: Competitiveness and bargaining (Nov 13)

- 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. (2022). “The Gender Gap in Self-Promotion.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 137(3): 1345-1381.
- 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 10: Experimental and behavioral gender economics, part 4: Neuroeconomic approaches

- 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.
- Buser, T., Dreber, A., Mollerstrom, J. (2017) “The Impact of Stress on Tournament Entry.” *Experimental Economics*, 20(2): 506-530.
- 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.

Final presentations (Nov 27)

- Topics will be communicated to the respective presenters on October 23

Final presentations (Dec 4)

- Topics will be communicated to the respective presenters on October 23

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, Chat GPT, or similar, 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 or source without giving the person or source 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 ask me.

Research Integrity Policy and Procedures

All members of the George Mason University community are expected to pursue their research and scholarly activities in a manner that is consistent with the highest standards of ethical, scientific, and scholarly practice. All research with human subjects must be reviewed prior to a project's initiation. Ethical review of projects will either be conducted by Mason's Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA) or the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The primary goal of this review is to assure that the rights and welfare of human research subjects in activities conducted at and/or under the auspices of George Mason University are adequately protected. All researchers must receive written approval from ORIA prior to conducting a research project involving human subjects. Failure to receive this written approval will be considered noncompliance.

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.