

**Economics of Gender**  
Econ 323, Spring 2010  
MTh 1:00-4:00, 170 Dennison

**Instructor:** Dr. Adam Stevenson  
[adamstev@umich.edu](mailto:adamstev@umich.edu) - this is in general the easiest way to get in touch with me, and I do my best to respond to all messages within 48 hours (hopefully much quicker). If a class-administrative question is answered on CTools, the syllabus, or has been discussed numerous times in class, I reserve the right to ignore it.

**Office Hours:** Lorch Hall, room M106, MW 11am – 12pm and other times by appointment; I will generally be around and available, but it's always best to check ahead of time.

**Course Summary**

In this class, I use economic analysis as a lens to investigate and explain the many ways in which men and women are similar, and those ways in which they differ. We explore the extent to which a “rational actors” model can explain both the existence of gender roles within society, and the large inequalities that exist as a result of these gender roles. We consider market outcomes like educational attainment, participation in the labor force, and the income generated by that participation. The course also discusses a number of more "nonmarket" outcomes like marriage and divorce, child-rearing, and housework. Throughout, we discuss the facts of the matter, describing recent trends and statistics of gender equality and inequality. We also analyze a number of potential policy responses to the observed inequalities.

By the end of the class, you will have a solid grasp of the ways that the economic well-being of men and women differ, and you will be able to use and understand (both the strengths and weaknesses of) the most commonly-used analytical tools applied by economists to approach the topic of gender inequality.

**Prerequisites:**

You must have taken Econ 101 (Micro) in order to take the class. While I will provide some review, in general I will assume you are familiar with all the topics of that class. Experience in at least one course in statistics will be very helpful, as well, though it is not required. Please speak with me ASAP if you have any doubts about your preparation to beneficially take this class.

**Course Readings:**

The required textbook for this class is

*The Economics of Gender, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed*, by Joyce Jacobsen

I strongly recommend the third edition. The second is a decade older, and many of the tables have been updated in important ways. There are also a number of supplementary required articles, described below. I will provide them on CTools, and all should be available through the University Library's electronic collections. I expect you to complete all required reading before the relevant class session.

I will post my lecture notes and powerpoint slides containing figures and tables prior to each class – please bring them with you to class.

On occasion, I draw material from two other textbooks. These are not required, and I do not necessarily recommend that you purchase them unless you find them very cheap, if you are struggling, or if you will do further work in the area. They are *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, by Blau, Ferber and Winkler, and *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*, by Ehrenberg and Smith. Both are very helpful resources that cover many of the same topics that I cover in this class. They are both, along with the Jacobsen textbook, available on reserve at the undergraduate library.

**Attendance:** I will not take attendance, and I do not assign participation points. I do, however, reserve the right to present “new” material in class and expect knowledge of that material on exams. Further, since the material of the class has broad interdisciplinary interest, hearing the perspectives of your classmates is an important part of the learning process. This is all to say: attendance is both non-mandatory and very important. Allocate your time and effort accordingly.

**Evaluation structure:** I will follow the Department of Economics convention/tradition in grading. This means assigning approximately 25% of the class some form of an A, and 1/3rd of the Bs (including, in each case, the “plus” and “minus” version). I add a further safeguard (for you) that an A will never be harder to get than a 90%, a B 80%, etc. Your grade in this course will be evaluated on the basis of the following components (with relative weights in parenthesis). There will be no extra credit or additional projects, either during the class or after final grades have been assigned.

**Reading Response**

(5% x 4 = 20%)

Four times over the course of the semester you will submit a **short** report on the reading for the class session. Summarize and assess the arguments and methods of the article by filling out the form at the end of the syllabus, which asks the following question:

- 1) In **one sentence**, what is the central question of the paper?
- 2) In three or four sentences, explain why this issue is important
- 3) In a paragraph, what are the **main results** or conclusions of the paper?
- 4) Describe one specific weakness of the paper (this could be either a sin of commission or omission!). “Too boring”, “too long”, etc are neither specific nor thoughtful comments.
- 5) What further academic/research work could be done in this area? (That is, how would you “academically” respond to the paper? What could you do to investigate similar issues? How would you research items that were speculated upon or not sufficiently supported in the paper? If you dislike the paper, what sort of investigation would you conduct to refute or counter the arguments provided? If you had complete control over people’s lives, what “experiment” could you run to test some theory or relationship?)

The goal is to produce the shortest critical report on this paper that you can. I will not read any writing beyond two pages (in a 1.5-line spaced document with 12 point font), and I encourage you to try to stick to a page. Be direct, and be concise. Responses must be submitted in physical form (as opposed to electronically) except by prior arrangement.

**Midterm exam**

(35%)

**Final Exam** (cumulative)

(45%)

By default, assignments will be weighted as indicated above. For students who show substantial improvement, I will re-weight the exams scores so that the final exam is worth 64%, and the midterm is worth 16%. “Substantial improvement” is defined as earning *ten percentage points* higher on the final than on the midterm exam. Grade cutoffs will be set according to PRE-reweight scores, so that if the whole class improves, the improvements will not be “curved away”.

**Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism**

If I find evidence of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty in any of your work, I will submit your name to the Dean of Student Affairs for any appropriate disciplinary action. While I very much encourage student to study and prepare for class together, I expect that all students will submit work that is their own for graded assignments.

**Misc. Rules:**

**Electronic Devices:** Silence your cell phones, pagers, and whatever else you have that makes noise. It's disrespectful and distracting.

**Calculators:** There will be numerical questions on the exams. Calculators are allowed, but only those that are *non-programmable*. This includes graphing calculators – the graphing functions will never be useful, and the incentive to use them to cheat is too great. Phone or PDA calculators are NOT allowed.

**E-etiquette:** I will delete, without responding, any email that does not include at least a salutation, an indication of who is writing, and some semblance of the proper format (a rubric that includes reasonable attempts at spelling and the proper use of the shift and caps lock keys). In the real world, people do not take this kind of communication seriously, and I certainly do not, so please refrain. I will also ignore any course-administrative questions if their answers are available on the syllabus, CTools, or have been announced numerous times in class (unless you have a good excuse for missing ALL these classes).

### **Course Outline**

Below is a rough outline for the course. It details the order of materials to be covered, and the dates of graded assignments. The exact timing of when we cover each topic may be adjusted over the course of the semester as the pace of the course dictates. In general, each meeting of class will have two halves, with a 5-10 minute break in the middle.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
May 6	Chapter 1: What do economists have to say about gender?  Chapter 1 appendix: Microeconomics review	
May 10	Claudia Goldin, "The Quiet Revolution that Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family," <i>American Economic Review</i> 96(2), 2006  Chapter 2: The "facts" of gender differences	
May 13	Ch. 2, cont & Ch. 15: Race, ethnicity, and gender differences  Ch. 3 + appendix: Household formation	
May 17	Chapter 3: Household bargaining Shelley Lundberg and Robert Pollack, "Bargaining and Distribution in Marriage," <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 10(4), 1996, pp. 139-158.  Ch. 4: the "facts" of LM participation	Response to Lundberg & Pollack
May 20	Ch. 4: Labor Force participation	

May 24	Chapter 5: Family structure Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, “Marriage and Divorce: Changes and their Driving Forces,” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 21(2), 2007, pp. 27-52.	Response to Stevenson and Wolfers
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Date	Readings	Assignments
May 27	MIDTERM EXAM	<b>Midterm</b>
	Ch. 6: The data of gender segregation	
June 3 (no class May 31)	Ch. 6: Occupational sorting and the “Summers debate” Summers speech to NBER (esp around “The second thing...”), <a href="http://www.president.harvard.edu/speeches/summers_2005/nber.php">http://www.president.harvard.edu/speeches/summers_2005/nber.php</a> Corbett, Hill, Rose (AAUW), “Where the Girls are: facts about gender education,” 2008 (esp pp. 13-50) Much more response: <a href="http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/archives/summers.php">http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/archives/summers.php</a>	
	Ch. 7 appendix: Regression analysis Appendix 1A of Ehrenberg and Smith (on CTools)	
June 7	Ch. 7: Human Capital (see also Ch. 6 of Blau, Ferber and Winkler) Goldin, Katz, Kuziemko “The Homecoming of American College Women: The Reversal of the College Gender Gap,” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 20(4), 2006, pp. 133-156.	Response to Goldin, Katz, & Kuziemko
June 10	Chapter 8: Compensating Differentials Chapter 8 of Ehrenberg and Smith, pages 242-258 (on CTools) Croson, Gneezy “Gender Differences in Preferences,” <i>Journal of Economic Literature</i> 47(2), 2009, pp. 448-474.	
June 14	Chapter 9: Discrimination	
June 17	Off-book topic: Gender roles: sexual orientation and labor outcomes Black, Sanders, Taylor, “Economics of Lesbian and Gay Families,” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 21(2), 2007, pp. 53-70 Blandford “Sexual Orientation and Gender in the Determination of Earnings,” <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</i> 56(4), 2003, pp. 622-642.	Response to Black, Sanders, Taylor
June 21	Ch. 16: Policy proposals  Julie Nelson, “Feminism and Economics,” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 9(2), 1995, pp. 131-148.	
Fri, June 25 <sup>th</sup>	Final Exam, 8-10am	<b>Final</b>



**Econ 323 Article Response**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Article title:

Article source and date:

Economic question/issue:

Why is this issue important?

Main results/conclusions

One weakness of the paper:

Further academic/research work possible: