Overview

Demographic trends, changes in social norms, technological innovations, and public policies influence family formation and dissolution as well as the division of labor within a household, the intra-household allocation of resources, and other economic outcomes. While mainstream economic models tend to treat the individual as an autonomous decision-making agent, this course introduces students to models of decision making within families. In particular, we will discuss common preference and bargaining models, apply these models to real-world situations, and think critically about the underlying assumptions of these models. As such, our discussion will encompass mainstream economic models as well as feminist perspectives.

In addition, following the substantial increase in female labor force participation over the second half of the 20th century and the growing acceptance of and legal protections for sexual minorities, we will examine earnings gaps by gender and sexual orientation.

Finally, using the tools developed in this course, we will analyze the implications of actual and proposed public policies.
Learning Objectives and Outcomes

This course will enhance students’ understanding of

- the role of gender in the family and in the labor market
- the role of sexual orientation in the family and in the labor market
- the connection between family structure and economic outcomes
- connections between demographic trends, social norms, technological innovations, and economic outcomes
- the role of public policy
- feminist economics

In addition, this course will enhance students’ abilities to

- apply economic theory to real-world situations
- distinguish between correlation and causation
- identify and think critically about assumptions underlying economic models
- analyze the effects of proposed or actual public policies
- write clearly and effectively

Readings and Discussions

This course includes a substantial amount of reading.

Assigned readings include:


Articles from the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Feminist Economics*, and other publications. Links to assigned articles are available on Canvas.

Each Canvas module will indicate the readings assigned for the next class session. For some assigned readings, discussion questions will be provided. Participation in class and online discussions of assigned readings is an important part of this course. In addition, the midterm and final exams will include discussion questions covered in class and online discussions.
**Policy Analysis**

The course includes a policy analysis and two sets of peer reviews. While the readings focus primarily on the United States and other developed nations, the policy analysis provides students with an opportunity to examine a public policy issue facing any part of the world.

**Exams**

The course includes a midterm and a final exam. These exams will include applications of the theory and models covered in class, discussion questions related to the assigned readings, and other questions that require students to think critically about economic models or findings.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
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Resources and Policies

Academic Honesty

In keeping with the mission of the school and university, students are expected and required to conform to the norms of academic honesty. Academic misconduct will be dealt with harshly. Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) using written or electronic materials on an exam, copying another student’s exam or allowing another student to copy yours, and passing off someone else’s writing or ideas as your own in writing assignments. Possible consequences for academic misconduct range from zero credit on an assignment to failing the class.

Special Accommodations

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an ‘invisible disability’ such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through the Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

Institutional Equity

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. This prohibition includes sexual misconduct, which encompasses sexual harassment and sexual violence. Seattle U remains committed to providing a safe and equitable learning, living, and working environment. Seattle U offers emergency, medical, and other support resources, as well as assistance with safety and support measures, to community members who have experienced or been impacted by sexual misconduct.

Seattle U requires all faculty and staff to notify the University’s Title IX Coordinator if they become aware of any incident of sexual misconduct experienced by a student.

For more information, please visit https://www.seattleu.edu/equity/. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also directly contact the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity (email: oie@seattleu.edu; phone: 206.296.2824).
Use of Technology

Laptops, tablets, and similar forms of technology may be used in this class for note taking and for viewing course materials as long as their use does not interfere with your participation or engagement in class discussions. Surfing the web, checking email, texting, and similar activities are distracting to students and to me and ultimately detrimental to the learning environment. Please do not use any of these forms of technology during a guest lecture. A violation of this policy may result in appropriate grade sanctions.

Deadlines

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated below. At a minimum, late submissions will be penalized; in certain circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted at all (e.g., a student will receive no credit for a peer review that is submitted too late to benefit the author). Exams can only be rescheduled in the case of an emergency or for some other compelling reason; in order to reschedule an exam, you must notify me of the circumstances and obtain my approval prior to the start of the exam.

Attendance

Attendance is expected. Participation in class discussions constitutes a nontrivial portion of the overall course grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain handouts from Canvas and notes from a classmate.
Course Outline

Course Overview
Theory of Individual Labor Supply
Division of Labor within the Household
Decision-Making within Families
Marriage and Divorce
Feminism and Economics
Economics of Child Care
Gender Earnings Gap
Earnings Differences by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
Marriage Premiums or Penalties and the Price of Motherhood
Family Policy

Important Dates and Deadlines

Tentative Research Question and Sources | April 9
University Mission Day | No Morning Classes | April 11
Revised Research Question and Sources | April 18
Proposal | April 25
First Round of Peer Reviews | April 30
Exam 1 | May 7
Revised Proposal | May 9
Complete Draft | May 21
Second Round of Peer Reviews | May 28
Final Paper and Response to Peer Reviews | June 6
Presentations | June 4 and 6
Exam 2 | June 12 (10:00-11:50 a.m.)