

---

## ☞ Harvard University • Economics 980x Junior Seminar ☞

### PERSONAL ECONOMICS

Fall 2019 • Monday 12:45 to 2:45pm • Littauer M-15

Professor Claudia Goldin • [cgoldin@harvard.edu](mailto:cgoldin@harvard.edu)

TF Ayushi Narayan • [ayushi\\_narayan@g.harvard.edu](mailto:ayushi_narayan@g.harvard.edu)

---

## Syllabus and Readings

### Goals of the Course:

- To explore—empirically, historically, comparatively, and theoretically—the changing significance, timing, and meaning of work, career, dating, marriage, family, and other “personal” decisions.
- To involve students in the creative process of researching, writing, and presenting an original piece of work using a variety of primary sources (e.g., mainly large-scale cross-section data sets, but also smaller data sets on particular groups).
- To discuss and understand policy relevant issues concerning *Personal Economics* using current print and on-line media.

### Readings:

All readings are hyperlinked on the Syllabus and Readings. If a link does not work, bring it to the attention of one of the teaching staff. Many of the readings are also in *Files/Ec980x\_Readings*.

### Course Requirements:

1. Create a [Research Paper](#) (there is no page requirement but 20 to 25 pages is the usual length). The teaching staff will work closely with each of you to find a topic and provide direction. You will begin with a [Proposal](#). You will then formulate a [Prospectus](#), write a [Draft](#), deliver a [15-minute presentation](#) in class and then produce the final Research Paper. Also see [Great Paper Writing](#) as a general guide to writing research papers and [Data Sets](#) for an annotated list of the most-important large micro-data sets.
2. Short assignments: Write and post comments (about three pages) on two of the course readings (these will be assigned). About half of the weeks will have a starred (\*) reading for the prepared comments. There will also be posted questions on *Pages* for preparation but no submission. Written comments must be posted by 3pm the Sunday before class. All students will be responsible for reading the articles and the posted comments. The other weeks will have posted questions.
3. Post two *Topical Articles* (with pithy comments) to the *Discussion* page of the Ec980x website during the semester and provide comments on two of the *Topical Articles* posted by others. A few examples have been provided on the *Discussion* page.

### Grades:

Your grade will be approximately 65% research paper, 35% critical summaries and class discussions.

### Course Organization:

The course is organized as a lecture and discussion seminar.

## Syllabus and Readings (alphabetically by author)

- Sept. 9      1. Changes in the Family, Marriage, Career, and Women's Economic Status**
- A.J. Binder, and J. Bound. "[The Declining Labor Market Prospects of Less-Educated Men](#)," *JEP* 33 (Spring 2019), pp. 163-90.
  - F. Blau, and A. Winkler. "[Women, Work, and Family](#)," NBER WP no. 23644 (August 2017).
  - S. Lundberg, and R.A. Pollak. "[The American Family and Family Economics](#)," *JEP* 21 (Spring 2007), pp. 3-26.
  - S. Ruggles. "[Patriarchy, Power, and Pay: The Transformation of American Families, 1800-2015](#)," *Demography* 52 (2015), pp. 1797-823.
- Sept. 16      2. Work in the Home and Work in the Market**
- S. Bianchi, et al. "[Housework: Who Did, Does, or Will Do It and How Much Does It Matter?](#)" *Social Forces* 91 (Sept. 2012), pp. 55-63. Article updates the original.  
§ Original article is: S. Bianchi, et al. "[Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends in the Gender Division of Household Labor](#)," *Social Forces* 79 (Sept. 2000), pp. 191-219.
  - F. Blau, M. Ferber, and A. Winkler. *The Economics of Women, Men and Work*, [Appendix 3A, pp. 68-74](#). § Rest of [Chapter 3](#).
  - J. Guryan, E. Hurst, and M. Kearney. "[Parental Education and Parental Time with Children](#)," *JEP* 22 (Summer 2008), only pp. 23-39; § rest of article.
  - G. Ramey, and V. Ramey. "[The Rug Rat Race](#)," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, (Spring 2010) only pp. 129-62. § Rest of article.
- Sept. 23      3. Dating, Mating, Cohabiting, Marriage, Divorce. Part I.**  
Work on your proposal.
- S. Anderson. "[Human Capital Effects of Marriage Payments](#)," *IZA World of Labor* (2014), pp. 1-10. § "[The Economics of Dowry and Brideprice](#)," *JEP* 21 (Fall 2007), pp. 151-74.
  - G. Becker. *Treatise on the Family*, [chap. 4](#), read only pp. 108-119, "Assortative Mating in Marriage Markets."
  - \* • A. Isen, and B. Stevenson. "[Women's Education and Family Behavior: Trends in Marriage, Divorce, and Fertility](#)." In J. Shoven (ed), *Demography and the Economy* (2010).
  - S. Lundberg, and R.A. Pollak. "[Bargaining and Distribution in Marriage](#)," *JEP* 10 (Autumn 1996), pp. 139-58.
- Sept. 30      4. Dating, Mating, Cohabiting, Marriage, Divorce. Part II.**  
Proposal due by 9pm posted to the Ec980x website (see *Proposal and Research Paper*). Comments on proposals will be sent through Canvas and appointments can be made to discuss topics.
- \* • L. Edlund, and R. Pande. "[Why Have Women Become Left Wing? The Political Gender Gap and the Decline in Marriage](#)," *QJE* 117 (Aug. 2002), only pp. 917-40, 953-54; § rest of article.
  - \* • B. Stevenson. "[The Impact of Divorce Laws on Marriage-Specific Capital](#)," *Journal of Labor Economics* 25 (Jan. 2007), only pp. 75-81 (Sections I and II) and conclusion.
  - B. Stevenson, and J. Wolfers. "[Marriage and Divorce: Changes and Their Driving Forces](#)," *JEP* 21 (Spring 2007), pp. 27-52.
- Oct. 7      5. Economics of Fertility**
- \* • M.J. Bailey, B. Hershbein, and A.R. Miller. "[The Opt-In Revolution? Contraception and the Gender Gap in Wages](#)," *AEJ: Applied Economics* (July 2012), pp. 225-54.
  - G. Becker. *Treatise on the Family*, chap. 5: "[The Demand for Children](#)," pp. 135-44; 151-54; § pp. 145-50.
  - \* • F. Feyrer, B. Sacerdote, and A. Stern. "[Will the Stork Return to Europe and Japan? Understanding Fertility within Developed Countries](#)," *JEP* 22 (Summer 2008), pp. 3-22.
  - C. Goldin, and L. Katz. "[Career and Marriage in the Age of the Pill](#)," *AER P&P* 90 (May 2000), pp. 461-65.
- Oct. 14      Columbus Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day. No class**

**Oct. 21 6. Bifurcated Families**

- A.J. Cherlin. "[The Real Reason Richer People Marry](#)," *New York Times, Sunday Review*, Dec. 7, 2014, p. SR3.
- \* • S. Lundberg, R.A. Pollak, and J. Stearns. "[Family Inequality: Diverging Patterns in Marriage, Cohabitation, and Childbearing](#)," *JEP* 30 (Spring 2016), pp. 79-102.
- \* • S. McLanahan, and C. Jencks. "[Was Moynihan Right? What Happens to the Children of Unmarried Mothers?](#)" *Education Next* (Spring 2015), pp. 15-20.

**Oct. 28 7. An Evolving Economic Force**

Prospectus due by 9pm posted to the Ec980x website (see *Prospectus* and *Research Paper*)

- F. Blau, and L. Kahn. "[Female Labor Supply: Why Is the United States Falling Behind?](#)," *AER P&P* 103 (May 2013), pp. 251-56
- D. Costa. "[From Mill Town to Board Room: The Rise of Women's Paid Labor](#)," *JEP* 14 (Fall 2000), pp. 101-22.
- C. Goldin. "[The 'Quiet Revolution' That Transformed Women's Employment, Education and Family](#)," *AER* (Ely Lecture) 96 (May 2006), pp. 1-21.
- C. Goldin, and J. Mitchell. "[The New Lifecycle of Women's Employment: Disappearing Humps, Sagging Middles, Expanding Tops](#)," *JEP* (Winter 2017), pp. 161-82.

**Nov. 4 8. Gender Earnings Gaps. A Whodunit.**

Appointments will be scheduled to discuss your Prospectuses

- M. Bertrand. "[Coase Lecture: The Glass Ceiling](#)," *Economica* (2018), pp. 205-31.
- G. J. Borjas. *Labor Economics* (2005). Discrimination model only, pp. 356-77 in [chap. 10](#).
- C. Juhn, and K. McCue. "[Specialization Then and Now: Marriage, Children, and the Gender Earning Gap](#)," *JEP* (Winter 2017), pp. 183-204.

**Nov. 11 9. Family-Friendly Policies of Governments and Firms**

Work on your research papers.

- S. Bana, K. Bedard, and M. Rossin-Slater. "[Trends and Disparities in Leave Use under California's Paid Family Leave Program](#)," *AER P&P* (May 2018), pp. 388-91.
- L. Casio. "[Public Investments in Child Care](#)." In Hamilton Project, *51 Percent: Driving Growth through Women's Economics Participation* (2017), pp. 123-39.
- C. Olivetti, and B. Petrongolo. "[The Economic Consequences of Family Policies: A Century of Legislation across the OECD](#)," *JEP* (Winter 2017), pp. 205-30.
- C. Ruhm, "[A National Paid Parent Leave Policy for the United States](#)." In Hamilton Project, *51 Percent: Driving Growth through Women's Economics Participation* (2017), pp. 107-19.

**Nov. 18 10. Careers, Couples, and Kids**

Draft due by 9pm posted to the Ec980x website. See *Draft* and *Research Paper*.

- (a) How does the organization of work interact with family (and personal) choices to impact career and earnings?
- (b) What is the role of temporal flexibility in the choice of occupation?
- N. Angelov, P. Johansson, and E. Lindahl. "[Parenthood and the Gender Gap in Pay](#)," *Journal of Labor Economics* (July 2016), only pp. 545-562; § rest of article to p. 572.
- # • G. Azmat and R. Ferrer. "[Gender Gaps in Performance: Evidence from Young Lawyers](#)," *JPE* (Oct. 2017), pp. 1306-53.
- M. Bertrand, C. Goldin, and L. Katz. "[Dynamics of the Gender Gap for Young Professionals in the Financial and Corporate Sectors](#)," *AEJ: Applied Economics* 2 (July 2010), pp. 228-55.
- C. Goldin, "[A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter](#)," *AER* 104 (April 2014), pp. 1-21.

**Nov. 25 11. College Choice, Career Choice**

Work on your "15 Minutes of Fame" presentation

- C. Goldin, and L. Katz. "[Transitions: Career and Family Life Cycles of the Educational Elite](#)," *AER P&P* (May 2008), pp. 363-69.
- C. Goldin, and L. Katz. "[The Cost of Workplace Flexibility for High-Powered Professionals](#)," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2011), pp. 45-67.

- C. Goldin, L. Katz, and I. Kuziemko. “[The Homecoming of American College Women: The Reversal of the College Gender Gap](#),” *JEP* 20 (Fall 2006), pp. 133-56.
- M. Wiswall, and B. Zafar. “[Preference for the Workplace, Investment in Human Capital, and Gender](#),” *QJE* (February 2018), pp. 457-70; § rest of article.

**Dec. 2**

**12noon-2:45pm**    **12. Student Presentations in class (possible additional session the week of Dec. 2)**

Each student will have 15 minutes to present a research paper summary. See *15 Minutes of Fame*.

**Monday  
Dec. 16**

Research Paper due by 9pm posted to Ec980x website. No extensions allowed (except official ones). See *Research Paper*.

*Notes: All assigned readings (•) must be done before class.*

*\* Indicates a reading that will be assigned for student comments.*

*# Possible additional reading for student comments.*

*§ Additional material that will be reviewed in class or is relevant to another reading.*

Questions for class discussion will be posted on the website and may differ from those on this syllabus, which are meant to motivate the reading.

Readings are listed in alphabetical order by author (not by importance).

*AER = American Economic Review; P&P = Papers & Proceedings*

*JEP = Journal of Economic Perspectives*

*JPE = Journal of Political Economy*

*QJE = Quarterly Journal of Economics*