

# The Economics of the Family

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Spring 2016

**Title:** The Economics of the Family

**Term:** Spring

**Day and Time:** Wednesdays, 3.30-5.20pm

**Brief Description:** This course covers how and why economists model family behaviour, and will explore — empirically and theoretically — the changes in family structure, marriage, and labour supply that have occurred in Western democracies since the 1940s, with a particular focus on the economic role of women.

**Expanded Description:** The Economics of the Family is an active research area in economics, both amongst theorists and applied researchers. This course will introduce students to the core theoretical underpinnings of the literature, will help students to engage critically with the quantitative analysis in research papers, and will assist them in building the skills necessary to implement quantitative techniques.

After providing an overview of the literature and the main ‘stylised facts’ in the first week, we will cover the theory of static and dynamic models of the family, and of matching models that are used to analyse marriage and divorce patterns. We will then move on to a series of more applied topics, including fertility and contraceptive choices, gender discrimination in the labour market, and higher education choices.

Each week, one or more students will prepare short presentations in response to a set of discussion questions, with their arguments based on the readings for that week. A mid-term problem set will require students to analyse the data from a recent applied paper to answer some simple questions about the variation in key economic variables and the authors’ identification strategy. The rest of the course grades are allocated to the development (and perhaps partial execution) of a research proposal.

**Readings per Week:** Students will be required to read three sources each week, each of approximately 20 pages.

**Midterm Exam/Paper:** Students will be required to submit answers to a short empirical problem set, which will account for 25% of their overall mark.

**Midterm Research Paper:** Students will submit a midterm paper of 5-7 pages, which will account for 20% of their overall mark.

**Final Exam/Paper:** Students will submit a final paper of ~15 pages, which will account for 40% of their overall mark.

**Academic Integrity:** Over the course of term, we will review what plagiarism is, how to identify it, and how to avoid plagiarizing in our own research. We will look at examples of direct and more subtle forms of plagiarism and stress the importance of integrity in academic research). (For more suggestions visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.yale.edu/bass/faculty/index.html>)