

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME - LONDON**  
**Department of Economics**  
**Spring 2016**

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Class Meeting Time: T/R 12:45-2:00  
Classroom: Fischer Hall G.04  
Office Hours: Wednesday 9:30-11:30  
and by appointment

**ECON 34550: Economics of the Family**

**This class is cross-listed with Gender Studies and counts toward the Poverty Studies Interdisciplinary Minor.**

This is a writing-intensive seminar course, in which we will use tools from economics (modeling, data analysis) to study the family. Topics will include economic models of the household; the determinants of marriage and fertility; how marriage, fertility, and family structure are related to other outcomes (including education, wages, and health); and public policies that affect the family and family formation. Students will learn to read and evaluate empirical economic research.

The course will have two main components. First, we will be reading academic journal articles in the area of the economics of the family. The goal is to learn what economists currently know and think about issues of family, with an emphasis on empirical work. We will discuss the methods and findings of the papers, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Second, you will develop your ability to engage in important conversations about the family and public policy. The emphasis will be on oral and written communication skills. Students will lead and participate in in-class discussions, and will write persuasive or informative essays that are supported by academic research.

On successful completion of this course you should be knowledgeable about issues of family economics, and be a thoughtful consumer of economic research. You will also improve your ability to communicate your ideas in writing to a variety of audiences.

**Required Text:**

Angrist, Joshua and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2015. Mastering Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect. 4th ed.

**Optional Supplemental Text:**

Hoffman, Saul and Susan Averett. 2004. Women and the Economy. 2nd. Ed.

**Website:**

[http://www.nd.edu/~kbuckles/ec43550\\_spring16.html](http://www.nd.edu/~kbuckles/ec43550_spring16.html). The website has links to all the papers we will be discussing in class, as well as handouts, class notes, assignment information, and more. It should be very useful to you.

## Requirements (and grading weight):

### A. Participation (10%)

Everyone is expected to participate in class discussions. Quality is valued over quantity. It is difficult to participate effectively if you do not attend and prepare for class. I may ask your peers to evaluate your class participation on occasion. I will give you a midterm participation grade to let you know how you are doing, and I will let you know if your participation is not meeting minimum standards.

### B. Reaction Papers and In-Class Writing Assignments (10%)

By **9:30 a.m.** on most class days, you will submit a one-page paper summarizing your thoughts on the required reading and identifying any questions you have or items you would like to discuss with the class. You will submit these papers via Sakai. I will also assign brief in-class writing exercises. Each of these assignments will be graded accordingly: 0 for missing/incomplete, 1 for complete but did not engage with the material, 2 for complete and shows sufficient engagement with the material.

### C. In-Class Presentations (10%)

You will have two in-class presentations. One will be a presentation of an empirical paper to the class, and the other will be a debate on a public policy issue. I will provide more details on these assignments as they get closer.

### D. Papers (12.5% each)

I will assign four 3-5 page papers throughout the semester. I will distribute a handout with more details about each assignment. Each paper is due in class on the date indicated on the syllabus. Submissions that are one day late will be lowered one letter grade; papers will not be accepted if they are two or more days late. You must choose one of the first three papers to revise after my initial grading and then resubmit for a new grade. Revisions are due one week after the initial due date. Plagiarism on any assignment will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment and will initiate an Honor Code inquiry.

### E. Final Exam (20%)

A final exam will be given in class on **April XX**. Attendance is *mandatory*. Only university-approved absences will be allowed (death in the immediate family, sickness resulting in hospitalization), and I will require *extensive* verification. Unexcused absences will earn you a zero on the exam. In short, you will create a tremendous amount of trouble for yourself if you miss the exam under any circumstances, so I strongly advise against it.

**Conference:** I will host a one-day conference on the Economics of the Family on Thursday, March 31. You will be expected to attend at least two of the four sessions and the lunch, unless you have a class conflict.

**Attendance:** Under the policies of the London Undergraduate Studies Program, attendance is required and will be recorded. Absences may be excused due to illness, family emergency, or other extenuating circumstances, provided you inform the LUP Office prior to or during the class you are missing. Unexcused absences will result in lowering your participation grade by ten points (out of 100).

## Honor Code Information

In signing the university's honor code, you agreed not to participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty. I expect you to adhere to this strictly, and any violations will be reported to the Associate Provost. I will let you know if it is acceptable to work in groups on assignments.

### Schedule (subject to change)

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic for Readings and Lectures</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Jan. 12	Introduction, a look at the family	
Jan. 14 & 19	<b>Economic Models of Marriage</b> Read: Stevenson and Wolfers 2007	
Jan. 21, 26, 28	<b>Marriage and Divorce, and An Introduction to Causal Inference</b> Read: Ribar 2004, Angrist & Pischke Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5.	
Feb. 2 & 4	<b>Marriage and Inequality</b> , Popular Press Articles	
Feb. 9	<b>Economic Models of Fertility</b>	Paper 1 Due
Feb. 11, 16, 18	<b>Empirical studies of fertility and family structure</b> Read: Kearney and Levine 2014; Albanesi & Olivetti 2009; Berman, Iannoccone, and Ragusa 2012. Popular press articles.	
Feb. 23, 25	<b>Family Structure: Birth Order, Family Size, and Spacing</b> Read: Black, Devereux, and Salvanes 2005; Buckles and Munnich 2012, Price 2008.	
March 1	Paper 2 Activity	
March 3	<b>Nature v. Nurture, Intergenerational Transmission</b> Read: Sacerdote 2007.	Paper 2 Due, Midterm Participation Grades Given
<b>Spring Break</b>		
March 15, 17, 22	<b>Family and Women's Work</b> Read: Goldin 2004, Belkin 2003.  <b>No class March 17.</b>	

March 24	<b>Maternity Leave</b> Read: Waldfogel 1998b	In-Class Presentations March 24
March 29, 31	3/29: In-class preparation for conference 3/31: Conference on Economics of the Family	
April 5, 7, 12	<b>Public Policies: Child Care, Contraception, Abortion</b> Read: Cortes and Tessada 2011, Gelbach 2002, Bailey 2010, Gruber, Levine, and Staiger 1999. Popular press articles.	Paper 3 Due April 5
April 14, 19	<b>4/14:</b> Paper Round-up, in-class discussions <b>4/19:</b> In-class paper discussions	In-class presentation April 14
April 21	<b>More Public Policy: Unintended Consequences</b> Readings will be assigned to groups.	Paper 4 Due April 20
April XX	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

**Reading List (papers listed in schedule above are required)**

**A. Economic Models of Marriage**

Stevenson, Betsey and Justin Wolfers. 2007. "Marriage and Divorce: Changes and Their Driving Forces." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2).

Stevenson, Betsey and Justin Wolfers. 2008. "Marriage and the Market." *Cato Unbound*. Accessed June 24, 2011.

Becker, Gary. 1981. *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Bergstrom, Theodore C. 1997. "A Survey of Theories of the Family." In *Handbook of Population and Family Economics*. Edited by M. R. Rosenzweig and O. Stark. Elsevier. Vol. 1A, pp. 21-79

**B. Marriage and Divorce**

McKinnish, Terra. 2007. "Sexually Integrated Workplaces and Divorce: Another Form of On-the-Job Search." *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(2), pp. 331-352.

Ribar, David. 2004. "What Do Social Scientists Know About the Benefits of Marriage? A Review of Quantitative Methodologies." IZA Discussion Paper No. 998.

Waite, Linda. 1995. "Does Marriage Matter?" *Demography*, 32(14), pp. 438-508.

Finlay, Keith and David Neumark. 2010. "Is Marriage Always Good for Children?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(4), 1046.

Korenman, Sanders and David Neumark. 1991. "Does Marriage Really Make Men More Productive?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 26(2) 282-307.

Gray, Jeffrey S. 1997. "The Fall in Men's Return to Marriage: Declining Productivity Effects or Changing Selection?" *The Journal of Human Resources*, 32(3), 481-504.

Dahl, Gordon. 2010. "Early Teen Marriage and Future Poverty." *Demography*, 47(3), 689-718.

Gruber, Jonathan. 2004. "Is Making Divorce Easier Bad for Children? The Long-Run Implications of Unilateral Divorce." *Journal of Labor Economics*, 22(4): 799-833.

### **C. Fertility**

Becker, Gary. 1960. "An Economic Analysis of Fertility," in *Demographic and Economic Change in Developed Countries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960.

Becker, Gary and H. Gregg Lewis. 1973. "On the Interaction between the Quantity and Quality of Children." *Journal of Political Economy*, 81(2): S279-88.

Kearney, M. S., & Levine, P. B. (2012). *Why is the teen birth rate in the United States so high and why does it matter?* (No. w17965). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Kearney, M. S., & Levine, P. B. 2014. "Media Influences on Social Outcomes: The Impact of MTV's 16 and Pregnant on Teen Childbearing" (No. w19795). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Angrist, Joshua, Victor Lavy, and Analia Scholoser. 2010. "Multiple Experiments for the Causal Link Between the Quantity and Quality of Children," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 28(4): 773-823.

Lindo, Jason. 2010. "Are Children Really Inferior Goods?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(2): 301.

Chandra, Amitabh and Stacy Dickert-Conlin. 1999. "Taxes & the Timing of Births." *Journal of Political Economy*, 107(1).

Buckles, Kasey and Daniel Hungerman. 2013. "Season of Birth: Old Questions, New Answers." *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 95(3): 711-724. July 2013.

Albanesi, Stefania and Claudia Olivetti. 2009. "Gender Roles and Medical Progress." NBER WP#14873.

Berman, Eli, Laurence Iannaccone, and Giuseppe Ragusa. 2012. "From Empty Pews to Empty Cradles: Fertility Decline Among European Catholics." *NBER Working Paper #18350*.

Buckles, Kasey and Dan Hungerman. 2015. "The Incidental Fertility Effects of School Condom Distribution Programs." Working Paper.

#### **D. Family Structure**

Black, Sandra, Paul Devereux, and Kjell Salvanes. 2005. "The More the Merrier? The Effect of Family Size and Birth Order on Children's Education." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120(2): 669.

Black, Sandra, Paul Devereux, and Kjell Salvanes. 2010. "Small Family, Smart Family? Family Size and the IQ Scores of Young Men." *Journal of Human Resources* 45(1): 33-58.

Buckles, Kasey and Elizabeth Munnich. 2012. "Birth Spacing and Child Outcomes." *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(3): 613-642.

Price, Joseph. 2008. "Parent-Child Quality Time: Does Birth Order Matter?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 43(1): 240.

Kaestner, Robert. 1997. "Are Brothers Really Better? Sibling Sex Composition and Educational Achievement." *Journal of Human Resources*, 32(2): 250-284.

Sacerdote, Bruce. 2007. "How Large are the Effects from Changes in Family Environment? A Study of Korean American Adoptees." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(1): 119.

Björklund, A., Lindahl, M., & Plug, E. 2006. "The origins of intergenerational associations: Lessons from Swedish adoption data." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(3), 999-1028.

#### **E. Family and Women's Labor Force Outcomes**

Goldin, Claudia. 2004. "The Long Road to the Fast Track: Career and Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 596: 20-35.

Belkin, Lisa. 2003. "The Opt Out Revolution." *The New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 26.

Boushey, Heather. 2005. "Are Women Opting Out? Debunking the Myth." *Center for Economic and Policy Research, Briefing Paper*.

Cohany, Sharon and Emy Sok. 2007. "Trends in Labor Force Participation of Married Mothers with Infants." *Monthly Labor Review*, 130(2): 9-16.

Percheski, Christine. 2008. "Opting out? Cohort differences in professional women's employment rates from 1960 to 2005." *American Sociological Review*, 73(3): 497-517.

Cortes, P., and Tessada, J. 2011. "Low-skilled immigration and the labor supply of highly skilled women." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 88-123.

Angrist, Joshua and William N. Evans. 1998. "Children and Their Parents' Labor Supply: Evidence from Exogenous Variation in Family Size," *American Economic Review*, 88: 450-77.

Waldfogel, J. 1998a. "Understanding the 'Family Gap' in Pay for Women with Children," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12: 137-156.

Hotz, Joseph, Susan McElroy, and Seth Sanders. 2005. "Teenage Childbearing and Its Life Cycle Consequences: Exploiting a Natural Experiment," *The Journal of Human Resources* 40(3): 682-715.

Herr, Jane and Catherine Wolfram. 2009. "Work Environment and "Opt-Out" Rates at Motherhood Across High-Education Career Paths." *NBER Working Paper #14717*.

Waldfogel, J. 1998b. "The Family Gap for Young Women in the United States and Britain: Can Maternity Leave Make a Difference?," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 16(3): 505-545.

Greenwood, Jeremy, Ananth Seshadri and Mehmet Yorukoglu. 2005. "Engines of Liberation," *Review of Economic Studies* 72: 109-133.

## **F. Public Policy and the Family**

Bailey, Martha. 2010. "'Momma's Got the Pill': How Comstock and *Griswold v. Connecticut* Shaped U.S. Childbearing," *American Economic Review*, 100(1): 98-129.

Gruber, Jonathan, Phillip Levine, and Douglas Staiger. 1999. "Abortion Legalization and Child Living Circumstances: Who is the 'Marginal Child'?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 114(1): 263-291.

Buckles, Kasey, Melanie Guldi and Joseph Price. 2010. "Changing the Price of Marriage: Evidence from Blood Test Requirements." *Journal of Human Resources*, 46(3): 539.

Meyer, Bruce and Dan Rosenbaum. 2001. "Welfare, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the Labor Supply of Single Mothers," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 116: 1063-1114.

Gelbach, Jonah. 2002. "Public Schooling for Young Children and Maternal Labor Supply," *American Economic Review*, 92(1): 307.

Lalive, Rafael and Josef Zweimuller. 2009. "How does parental leave affect fertility and return to work? Evidence from two natural experiments," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124(3): 1363-1402.

Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence Katz. 2002. "The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions." *Journal of Political Economy*, 110(4).

Baughman, Reagan and Stacy Dickert-Conlin. 2003. "Did Expanding the EITC Promote Motherhood?" *The American Economic Review* 93(2): 247.

Brien, Michael, Stacy Dickert-Conlin and David Weaver. 2004. "Widows Waiting to Wed? (Re)Marriage and Economic Incentives in Social Security Widow Benefits." *The Journal of Human Resources*, 39(3): 585-623.

Belfield, Clive and Inas Kelly. "The Benefits of Breastfeeding Across the Early Years of Childhood." NBER WP 16496, Oct. 2010.

Chen, A., Oster, E., & Williams, H. (2014). *Why is Infant Mortality Higher in the US than in Europe?* (No. w20525). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Lindo, J. M., Schaller, J., & Hansen, B. (2013). *Economic conditions and child abuse* (No. w18994). National Bureau of Economic Research.