

Econ 353: Gender and Economics
Indiana State University
T TH 2-3:15 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Debra Israel
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Office Hours: T TH 1-1:50 p.m. and W 9-11 a.m. or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course will focus on the economic aspects of issues related to gender, such as gender wage gaps, labor force discrimination, the valuation of unpaid household work, and the differential impact of public policies. To look at these issues from an economic perspective, students will review and expand their understanding of economic theory. The importance of gender in economic theories of household behavior will also be examined.

In this course I expect students to:

- \$ improve analytical skills in order to apply economic theory to gender-related issues
- \$ develop their abilities to apply economic theory using words, mathematical expressions, and graphs
- \$ develop their abilities to clearly articulate different perspectives on gender-related issues
- \$ learn to apply material from this course to situations in the news and in their own lives
- \$ demonstrate oral communication skills through class discussions and research presentations
- \$ improve written communication skills through research and written analysis
- \$ improve library research skills, particularly finding articles through computer databases
- \$ learn to interpret results from empirical statistical models
- \$ learn where to obtain relevant economic statistics and how to interpret them

Required Textbook

Blau, Francine D., Marianne A. Ferber, and Anne E. Winkler. 2006. *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*. 5th edition. Pearson Prentice Hall: New Jersey. (Referred to as BFW in outline)

General Class Procedures

I expect you to complete the assigned readings before class and to come prepared for discussion. The calendar gives a general outline of the timing of the textbook readings. The textbook will be supplemented with additional readings that will be placed on reserve in the library or be readily available online. In addition, I may occasionally assign articles or require students to find articles to read on specific topics. In order to understand economic theory and be able to apply it to different gender-related issues, you will need to practice solving problems yourself. The assigned problem sets will give you the opportunity to do this. If you have any difficulties or questions during the course, please contact me about them sooner rather than later.

Attendance

Although you will not be graded specifically for class attendance, attendance at all class meetings is very important. If you do not attend class you will not be able to participate and actively learn about the topics under study. If you do miss or come late to class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed.

Grading

Midterm Exam	(15%)
Final Take-home Exam	(20%)
Problem Sets (4 out of 5)	(15%)
Research Paper	(15%)
Research Presentation	(10%)
Panel Organization and Presentation	(10%)
Participation (field trip/speaker/teaching)	(15%)

Exams (35%)

There will be **one midterm exam** during the semester (15%) and a **cumulative final take-home exam** (20%). **Make-up exams will only be allowed in clear cases of emergency or unavoidable absences.** If at all possible, I must be notified of an absence **before** the exam. Exams will be based on material from the textbook and additional readings, material covered in class, and homework assignments. Exams will be a combination of short answer and essay questions, requiring both written answers and use of mathematical analysis and graphs.

Problem Sets (15%)

Problem sets will generally consist of problems and analysis of gender-related issues. At times, they may also include short projects, such as interviewing other students about specific issues. You will have at least one week to complete each problem set. While I encourage you to work on the problems in study groups with your fellow students, you must turn in your own individual work. There will be five problem sets over the course of the semester and your problem set grade will be based on your four best scores (in other words, the lowest grade will be dropped). Late problem sets will **not** be accepted except in cases of documented emergencies.

Research Paper (15%)

The research paper will provide you a way of applying the analysis we learn in class to a gender-related topic of your choosing (from a list of topics provided by the instructor). You will be expected to analyze your issue from a local perspective and compare that to a broader perspective (for example, you may make comparisons with different states or countries). The paper will be double-spaced, word-processed, and 8-10 pages long (not counting title and reference pages). You may find it necessary to obtain information through interlibrary loan, so please be sure to leave enough time for that process. You must have at least one local contact as a reference. You may **not** use only internet websites as sources. Further detail and guidance on sources will be given and part of the paper grade will depend on the appropriateness of the research done. There are two due dates for your paper. If you submit your paper by the first due date, it will be graded and returned to you with comments. Then, if you would like to improve your grade, you will have the chance to rewrite the paper based on my comments and resubmit the revised paper by the second due date. You will submit the revised paper along with the first version of your paper with my comments. If you choose to submit your paper at the second due date, then you will not have the opportunity to rewrite the paper for an improved grade.

Research Presentation (10%)

The research presentations will be based on the research you do for your research paper. A bibliography and an outline of your presentation will be handed in prior to the presentation. Presentation grades will reflect content (including economic analysis), understanding, presentation, and preparation. You will present your research at the Gender and Social Justice Colloquium, either in a traditional presentation or in a multi-media format. The research will have an active-learning component. You will be required to make contacts with local or statewide agencies or organizations that deal with the issue.

Gender and Social Justice Colloquium Panel Discussion on Work and Family (10%)

Students will organize a panel discussion on combining work and family. You will be involved in contacting people from campus and community to share their experiences on the panel, as well as doing background research on the topic, and developing questions for the panelists. Hearing first-hand experiences will be an important way to learn about this topic and will give you useful organizing experience.

Participation (15%)

You will participate in the statewide "Raise Your Voice" trip to the Indianapolis State Capitol on February 19. The Raise Your Voice day at the state capitol is a very useful way for students to connect what they are learning with what happens in Indiana. A speaker will come to campus to speak about prostitution. You will also teach about the economics of discrimination to small groups of introductory economics students. Participation in the Gender and Social Justice Colloquium will also be part of the participation grade. After each component you will be required to submit a 1-2 page reflective essay on the event or experience. During class you will be asked to bring in articles and/or reflect on the reading in written form, which will also contribute to your participation grade.

Calendar

Jan. 8-12

Introduction to Course
Brief Review of Economic Concepts
Historical Overview
BFW, Ch. 1 and 2

Jan. 15-19 (No class Mon. Jan. 15 for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Labor Force Participation: Economic Theory and Trends
BFW, Ch. 4

Jan. 22-26

Continue Labor Force Participation
Valuation of unpaid work
BFW, Ch. 4

Jan. 29-Feb. 2

Gender Wage Gaps: Occupational differences, labor market discrimination, human capital model
BFW, Ch. 5-8; Ch. 28 in *Issues in Economics Today* by Robert C. Guell; selected articles from the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.

Choose Research Topics

Feb. 5-9

Continue with Gender Wage Gaps

Feb. 12-16

Continue with Gender Wage Gaps

Feb. 19-23

Mon. Feb. 19 Field Trip for Raise Your Voice Day at State Capitol in Indianapolis

Gender and Modelling Household Decisionmaking
Readings: BFW, Ch. 3

Feb. 26-Mar. 2

Continue Gender and Modelling Household Decisionmaking
Teaching Economics of Discrimination to Introductory Economics students (sign up for time and day)

Tues. Feb. 26 Outline of Research Paper/Presentation Due

Thurs. Mar. 1 Midterm Exam

Mar. 5-9 **No Classes Spring Break**

Mar. 12-16

Economic Modelling of Marriage and Fertility
BFW, Ch. 9
Economics of Prostitution

Mar. 19-23

Differential Impact of Public Policies
BFW, Ch. 10

Mar. 26-30

Continue with Public Policies
Wed. Mar. 30 First Due Date for Research Paper

Apr. 2-6

International Comparison
BFW, Ch. 11

Apr. 9-13

Apr. 16-20

Thurs. Apr. 19 Final Due Date for Research Paper

Choice of topics (readings to be announced):
Economic analysis of abortion; engagement/wedding ring markets; gender and advertising
What is Feminist Economics?

Apr. 23-Apr. 27: Recap, Discussion, and Review

Apr. 30-May 4: **Final Exam Due Thurs. May 3 from 3 p.m.-5 p.m.**