

Econ 2444: Women and Minorities in the Labor Market

Fall 2011

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9-9:50

Room: Monteith 233

Instructor Information:

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12-1

Course Description:

This course focuses on the economics of labor markets with a particular emphasis on the experiences of women. Using economic theory along with empirical investigation, we will study issues such as employment decisions, earnings determination, occupational choice, discrimination, and the formation of families. Particular questions we will consider include: Why do people get married? How does female employment affect the division of housework within the family? Why is there so much disagreement concerning the extent of discrimination in the labor market? As we examine each topic, we will take a critical look at the data and methods that economists use and explore why economists studying the same issue, whether it is labor market discrimination or time spent in non-market production, can arrive at very different conclusions. Although the course focuses on women, many of the issues women face in the labor market are shared by ethnic and racial minorities, and we will discuss how their experiences compare. Emphasis will be placed on public policies related to the labor market experiences of women and minorities.

Prerequisite: ECON 1202 (111) & ECON 1201 (112) or ECON 1200 (102):

Required Text: *The Economics of Women, Men and Work* by Blau, Ferber and Winkler. Supplementary course materials will be provided on the course website which can be accessed using Vista (HuskyCT).

Grading:

The course grade will be based on a midterm exam, a final exam, and problem sets. The midterm will count for 30% and the final exam will count for 40% of the final grade. The final exam will be cumulative. Taken together, the three problem sets will be worth 30%. Classroom participation is a very important part of this course. Participation involves classroom attendance as well as asking and answering questions related to the readings. Another way to participate in class is to collect articles on the topics discussed in class. If during the course of the semester, I sense that students are not contributing to class discussions, I will start giving in-class quizzes. The weights on the different components of the course grade will be adjusted accordingly.

Late problem sets will not be accepted. No make-up or early exams will be given, except in the case of a family emergency or medical absence confirmed with a signed doctor's note or a letter from the Dean. If you require special accommodations for exams, please see me within the first two weeks of classes.

Important Dates:

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| Problem Sets Due | - | September 19, October 12, November 18 |
| Midterm | - | October 24 |
| Final Exam | - | December 14 (according to preliminary schedule) |

Students must visit the Dean of Students (DOS) Office if they cannot make their exam. The DOS will give the student his or her instructions thereafter.

Please note: vacations, previously purchased tickets or reservations, weddings (unless part of the wedding party), and other large or small scale social events, are not viable excuses for missing a final exam. Please contact the Dean of Students office with any questions. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic Misconduct in any form is in violation of the University of Connecticut *Student Code* and will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to: copying or sharing answers on tests, plagiarism, and having someone

else do your academic work. Depending on the act, a student could receive an F grade on the test/assignment, F grade for the course, and could be suspended or expelled from the University. Please see the Student Code at <http://www.dosa.uconn.edu/code2.html> for more details and a full explanation of the Academic Misconduct policies. With respect to problem sets and reviewing for exams, working in a small group can be very helpful in terms of the learning process. However, each person is still responsible for handing in their own (unique) work.

Outline:

1. Introduction- Chapter 1 and 2

- (a) General introduction to the course, coverage; methodology
- (b) Basic Economics—opportunity cost, supply and demand, equilibrium
- (c) Women and men in the economy—the facts

2. The Family as an Economic Unit- Chapter 3

- (a) Reasons for marriage: Specialization and exchange, economies of scale, joint consumption of public goods, risk pooling, and consumption externalities
- (b) Simple economics of the family: Advantages and disadvantages of specialization within the family
- (c) Transaction cost and bargaining approaches to family
- (d) Non-market work
- (e) The American family

3. Household Time Allocation – Chapter 4

- (a) Labor force and labor force participation
- (b) Labor supply decision and participation decision; value of market and non-market time; income and substitution effects using indifference curve analysis
- (c) Explaining trends in labor force participation; racial differences in participation rates

4. Differences in Earnings and Occupations- Chapters 5 and 6

- (a) Racial and male-female occupational differences; occupational segregation
- (b) Racial and male-female earning differences
- (c) Human capital model; human capital and earnings; gender differences in human capital investments; discrimination, sexism in education and hence labor markets.
- (d) Explaining occupational choice and segregation; experience and earnings, etc.

5. Labor Market Discrimination- Chapter 7

- (a) Models of labor market discrimination: Tastes for discrimination, statistical discrimination, societal discrimination
- (b) Evidence of labor market discrimination
- (c) Public policy

6. Recent Developments in the Labor Market- Chapter 8

- (a) Trends in female-male wage gap; explanations for declining gap; returns to education
- (b) Restructuring and labor market effects
- (c) Nonstandard work force: self-employment, contract work, part-time work
- (d) Labor unions and labor market outcomes; labor union membership

7. Changing Work Roles and the Family- Chapter 9

- (a) Family economics: marriage and divorce, cohabitation, and fertility
- (b) Family structure, earnings and outcomes

8. Policies Affecting Paid Work and Family- Chapter 10

- (a) Welfare, child support and work
- (b) Taxation, family and work
- (c) Family friendly policies