

Econ 2444: Women and Minorities in the Labor Market

Spring 2021

Synchronous Online Course using WebEx (See link in HuskyCT)

Basic Information:

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Course Description:

Are gender and racial earnings gaps explained mostly by differences in qualifications or is it mostly about discrimination? If women and minorities are less likely to get the training and other credentials necessary for successful careers, what generates these differences? If it is instead mostly about discrimination, how does this discrimination work and is it sustainable in the long run? Are there public policies we might enact to decrease gaps in human capital and wages? Could they have unintended negative consequences for the very people they are meant to help? Might they lead to benefits to society that go beyond just decreasing wage gaps? In this course, students use economic theory along with empirical investigation to explore these questions and more. 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 can arrive at very different conclusions.

Synchronous Online Course:

We will be using WebEx for our classes. You can click on the link in our HuskyCT course to attend class. All classes will be recorded, but this is a synchronous online course. This means I expect you to be “in class” for lectures. Please turn on your camera. I’d love to see all of you, and I think it would be good for you to see each other. Set a fun background if you like. As you all know by now, mute your microphone unless you’re speaking. I encourage you to use the Raise Your Hand feature to discuss anything. Use the chat to post anything that crosses your mind during the class — well, using good judgment.

Office Hours:

I will be holding virtual office hours using WebEx this semester. I will be sure to leave Tuesdays and Wednesdays (1:30-2:30) open for appointments with you but feel free to arrange appointments at other times. During office hours, I am happy to answer questions about the class material, provide guidance (hints) for completing the homework, and just discuss any difficulties you may be having. You can click on my personal WebEx room link below to attend my office hours.

Personal WebEx Room: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/meet/DeliaFurtado>

Prerequisite:

ECON 1202 & ECON 1201 or ECON 1200. It is assumed that students understand basic microeconomic principles, are capable of some basic algebra, and should be comfortable with graphical analyses.

Textbooks:

The Economics of Women, Men and Work by Francine Blau and Anne Winkler. The 8th edition is the most current and includes fully updated data and research on the consequences of recent developments in the labor market. These developments include the declining gender wage gap, rising wage inequality, and the growing divide in labor market and family outcomes by educational attainment. However, the 8th edition is also the most expensive. You will be able to save money on the textbook if you instead purchase an older edition online. Note: some of the older editions have an additional author, but it is the same book. I will

discuss all new data and research developments in class. You might also be able to borrow the physical textbook from the UConn library (there are two copies available).

The Economics of Race in the United States by Brendan O’Flaherty. This is a very comprehensive book showing how the tools of economic analysis can provide insight on many issues surrounding race in the United States. Sadly, we will not be able to cover all of the issues in this book, but I hope that after taking this class, you will be intrigued enough to read the entire thing cover to cover—not for a grade, but for your general understanding. You can buy the physical book online or you can download it for free from the UConn library: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/10.4159/9780674286658>. There is also a physical copy of the book available for you to borrow at the library.

Supplementary course materials will be provided on the course website which can be accessed using HuskyCT.

Grading: The course grade will be based on a midterm exam (30%), a final exam (40%), and problem sets (30%). The final exam will be cumulative. I will assign four problem sets. These homework assignments must be submitted on HuskyCT by the class time on the due date. Only under extreme circumstances (such as medical emergencies with a doctor's note) will assignments be accepted after the due date.

Homework assignments will allow students to practice answering problems, solidify key concepts, and extend the basic theory discussed in class. While these are homework assignments, they will be graded very similarly to the way exams are graded. As such, I expect answers to be well thought out, complete, and well written. I understand that certain circumstances often make it difficult for you to do well on assignments (computers break, you have a stomach bug, family illness, etc.). For this reason, only your top three assignments will count towards your final grade. Keep in mind, however, that an excellent way to prepare for the cumulative final exam is to work hard on *each* of the problem sets. No extra credit will be available for this course.

It may be the case that an error occurs during the grading process. If a student believes that an error was made during the grading process, the student will have one week from my handing back the graded assignment to the class to appeal his/her grade.

How to do well in this course: 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. There will be numerous times when the discussion in class will not come from the textbook. I often use news articles or other supplemental material gathered from other sources. Students are responsible for all material covered in class, and I will not “re-lecture” during office hours for missed classes. That said, I am always more than happy to go over any difficult concepts during my office hours. *Hint: The best way to prepare for the problem sets and the exams is to take very careful notes during lectures.*

Important Dates (subject to change):

- Problem Sets - February 8, February 24, March 31, April 26
- Midterm - March 10
- Final Exam - Final Exam week

Exams:

The exams will be open-book, open-internet, but they will be timed, and so you will need to really know the material in order to do well on the exams. I expect you to take the exam during the normal class time if possible, but if you are in a different time zone or have other difficulties with taking the exam during the normal class time, please let me know, and we can work to arrange a different time. Final exam week for

Spring 2021 takes place from May 3 to May 8. Students are required to be available for their exam during the stated time. Please note that misreading the exam schedule and over-sleeping are not viable excuses for missing a final exam. If you think that your situation warrants permission to reschedule, please contact the Dean of Students Office with any questions.

Grading Scale:

Grade	Letter Grade	GPA
93-100	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
67-69	D+	1.3
63-66	D	1.0
60-62	D-	0.7
<60	F	0.0

Communication: Most communication will take place during the online class, but I reserve the right to make important announcements via your UConn email. If you do not use your UConn account, please have your UConn emails sent to your preferred account. Also, please check your email at least once a day. Email is also the best way to reach me in case you have questions regarding class material or you'd like to make an appointment to meet with me in person.

Weekly Time Commitment

You should expect to dedicate 9 to 12 hours a week to this course. This expectation is based on the various course activities, assignments, and assessments and the [University of Connecticut's policy regarding credit hours](#). More information related to hours per week per credit can be accessed at the [Online Student website](#). My guess is that you will spend more than the 9-12 hours in weeks with a problem set or an exam given but less than that in other weeks.

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 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.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

Resources for Students Experiencing Distress

The University of Connecticut is committed to supporting students in their mental health, their psychological and social well-being, and their connection to their academic experience and overall wellness. The university aims to make access to mental health attainable while fostering a community reflecting equity and diversity and understands that good mental health may lead to personal and professional growth, greater self-awareness, increased social engagement, enhanced academic success, and campus and community involvement. Students who feel they may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional can find support and resources through the [Student Health and Wellness-Mental Health](#) (SHaW-MH) office. Through SHaW-MH, students can make an appointment with a mental health professional and engage in confidential conversations or seek recommendations or referrals for any mental health or psychological concern.

Accommodations for Illness or Extended Absences

If illness prevents you from participating in the class, it is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible. You do not need to disclose the nature of your illness, but we will need to work together to determine how you will complete coursework during your absence. If life circumstances are affecting your ability to focus on courses and your UConn experience, students can email the Dean of Students at dos@uconn.edu to request support.

Course Outline:

*WMW refers to the *Economics of Women, Men, and Work* textbook (8th edition) and R refers to the *Economics of Race in the United States* textbook.

1. Introduction

- General introduction to the course, coverage; methodology
- What is gender? Race? (WMW 9-10; R 23-45)
- The facts: Occupational and earnings differences by gender and race (WMW 157-187; R 95-99)

2. The Family as an Economic Unit

- How do families decide how to spend their time? (WMW 43-44; 59-65)
- Advantages and disadvantages of specialization within the family (WMW 48-50)
- Reasons for marriage (WMW 51-53)

3. Labor Supply Decisions

- How do individuals make work decisions? (WMW 109-142)
- Income and substitution effects using indifference curve analysis (WMW 153-154)
- Trends in labor force participation by gender over time (WMW 143-151)
- Race/Ethnicity differences in participation rates (R 96)

4. Human Capital Model

- What is human capital? (WMW 193)
- Gender and racial differences in educational attainment; college major choices; occupation choices (WMW 194-203; R 169-173)
- Education investment decisions (WMW 203-228)
- Education policies (R 186-208)
- On-the-job training (WMW 232-261)

5. Regression Analysis

- Basics (WMW 296-299)

How much of the gender/race wage gaps can be explained by differences in qualifications?
(WMW 300; R: 100-106; R 174-186)

6. Labor Market Discrimination

Models of labor market discrimination: Tastes for discrimination and statistical discrimination
(WMW 301-314; R 117-132)

Other demand side issues: Over-crowding models, institutional models (WMW 314-320)

Evidence of labor market discrimination (WMW 265-277; R 106-117)

Public policy: Antidiscrimination laws; affirmative action policies (WMW 323-344; R 132-145)

7. Policies Affecting Paid Work and Family (if time allows)

Welfare policies (WMW 399-413)

Taxation, family and work (WMW 413-418)

8. Bonus Material (if time allows)

Immigration (R 150-168)

Health (R 46-94)

Crime (R 330-378)