

Syllabus

Overview

This course applies economic analysis to the family. Topics covered include the economics of marriage and divorce, bargaining within the household, household production, and the economics of fertility. The specific questions addressed by the course fall into two categories. On the one hand, the course uses economics to understand the family, such as who marries whom, and how many children (if any) people choose to have. On the other hand, the course also considers the wider implications for family decisions for the economy at large, such as the repercussions of assortative mating in marriage for inequality in a society, and the relevance of family decisions for long-run economic development.

Teaching and Assessment

There will be 17 lectures, to be held Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. in Technological Institute Lecture Room 5. Discussion sections will be held Fridays at the same time and place.

There will be problem sets that focus on questions that prepare you for the exams, and class projects that involve empirical work and the writing of short research reports.

There will be an in-class midterm on Monday, May 2nd. There will be a single final examination for the course. For students who score higher on the midterm than on the final, the midterm will make up 20 percent of the grade, problem sets and class projects will account for another 50 percent total, and the final makes up 30 percent. For students who score higher on the final than on the midterm, the midterm grade will be discarded: the final will make up 50 percent of the grade, and assignments/projects 50 percent.

Contact Information

The easiest way to get in contact with me if you have any questions is via e-mail. My address is:

doepke@northwestern.edu

My office hours are Wednesdays from 5 to 6:15 p.m. in Andersen Hall 316. A web site for this course will be maintained on Canvas.

Readings

Readings will be assigned throughout the class, and selected articles and lectures notes which will be posted on the course web site.

Topics

The following is a preliminary list of topics for the course.

1. The gains from marriage and cohabitation; household production; specialization in the household.
2. The marriage market; assortative mating.
3. Household bargaining; divorce.
4. Fertility choice.
5. The economics of parenting.
6. Household labor supply.
7. Family economics and macroeconomic outcomes.
8. Family economics and economic growth.