

ECO308H1S
The Economics of Life—A Historical Perspective
University of Toronto, Department of Economics
Winter 2012

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Class time and location:	Wednesday 11-2 UC140

[Course Description and objectives:](#)

This course will focus on demographic economic history. The first objective of the course is to better understanding changes over time in marriage markets, fertility, and mortality. To guide and inform our understanding of these topics, we will apply economic theory and learn how to evaluate empirical evidence. These skills will help you evaluate not only past events, but current ones as well. The second objective is to improve your ability to think critically. The final objective is to improve your written communication skills and your ability to formulate coherent, logical arguments.

Class discussion is an important aspect of the course. I expect you to be prepared for class, and to participate in class discussion.

While reading the assigned material is, of course, critical to your success in this class, you must also attend classes. The lectures tend to cover particular (often the difficult) aspects of the readings and include information outside of the readings. You are responsible for this material. The tests reflect the material covered in the lectures, in addition to the material in the readings, hence attendance is a key to success. Outlines of the lectures slides will be posted prior to class. You should print them out and bring them to class to guide your note taking.

[Prerequisites:](#)

Prerequisites are strictly checked and enforced and must be completed before taking a course. By taking this course you acknowledge that you will be removed from the course at anytime if you do not meet all requirements set by the Department of Economics. For further information you can consult the Course Calendar, available on the department web page.

Prerequisites: ECO200Y1/ECO204Y1/ECO206Y1;
ECO220Y1/ECO227Y1/(STA247H1,STA248H1)/(STA250H1,STA255H1)/(STA257H1,STA261H1)

[Web management:](#)

This course is managed by the university's learning management system: Blackboard. You can access it via a link from my web page (listed above) or through <http://portal.utoronto.ca/>. You will need a UTORID in order to access the course page. Information can be found at the portal help page: <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/>. Click on "Student" and follow the directions. Students that enroll in a course via ROSI will automatically be enrolled in all of their courses that use Blackboard.

The course outline as well as other handouts, links, announcements et cetera will be available through the Portal (Blackboard). Please check it weekly. At times I may also e-mail the class. To that end, you are responsible for ensuring that your UofT email address is set up and properly entered into the ROSI system. You can do that by using the following instructions:

To submit the information to activate your UTORid and password (see above), you will need to click the "Validate" button. Follow the instructions on the subsequent screens to receive your utoronto.ca address. Once you have your UofT email address, go to the ROSI system (www.rosi.utoronto.ca), log in and update the system with your new UofT email address.

[Contacting Me:](#)

Feel free to come and talk to me during office hours or class time. If you would prefer another time, it is best to make an appointment.

[E-mail policy:](#)

I respond to e-mails quite quickly, but I may not be able to respond immediately if you are messaging me on the weekend or in the evening. Please ensure that you consult the course outline & course webpage before submitting your email inquiry!

Please include the course code in the subject of your message (ECO308). It is also helpful to ensure that your userid or the name that appears as the sender is your actual name and not a nickname. These practices will help ensure that your message does not get stuck in my spam filter and subsequently deleted. To this end it is also best to use your UofT account (e.g. utor). If I do not respond within 48 hours please re-send the message or leave a phone message—your original message may not have been received.

[Academic Misconduct:](#)

Students should note that copying, plagiarizing or other forms of academic misconduct **will not be tolerated**. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be subject to academic discipline ranging from a mark of zero on the assignment, test or examination to dismissal

from the university as outlined in the academic handbook. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.

[Evaluation:](#)

There will be an essay (with two graded stages prior to handing in the completed essay), one homework assignment, a midterm and a final exam. Part one of the essay is worth 15 percent, part two of the essay is worth 15 percent and the final product is worth an additional 15 percent; the homework assignment is worth 5 percent, the midterm is worth 20 percent and the final exam is worth 30 percent.

[\(i\) Midterm:](#)

The midterm will be conducted in class. It will address the content of the course and favour testing of your understanding of the economic models and interpretation of empirical work discussed in class.

[\(ii\) Essay:](#)

The essay is an empirical project that revolves around a particular dataset (which can be found on blackboard). Ultimately it will look like a shortened, simplified version of a journal article (similar in style to those commonly found in the Journal of Economic History). It is broken into three parts so that you gain feedback and guidance on the components of your essay as well as a chance to revise and improve your essay.

A short description is included here; a longer description can be found in the “essay guide” (posted on blackboard).

Part 1: This part of your essay consists of a description of the question you will address and the literature review.

Part 2: The second part of your essay consists of a description of the data as it relates to your topic. You will present tables and graphs, as well as a description of those tables and graphs, which summarize the basic relationship you are studying. This section will conclude with a statement of the regression equation you plan to estimate.

You must hand in the original marked first component of your essay with the second part.

Part 3: The third graded component of your essay consists of the entire essay. In addition to a revised literature review and empirical section (which address any comments raised in the marking of your first 2 parts of the essay), it will include an expanded introduction (with motivation), the regression analysis and conclusion.

You must hand in the original marked components from parts 1 and 2 with your final essay.

Note that each part of the essay will be uploaded to turnitin.com

[\(iii\) Homework:](#)

The class will be divided up for this – you will be randomly assigned to a topic.

The purpose of the homework is to facilitate discussion and to increase our breadth of understanding of a given topic.

The homework assignment will consist of locating, reading, printing and discussing in class a piece of contemporary writing (written in the past, e.g., prior to a specified date such as 1920) related to the topic we are covering. The print out should be roughly 10 pages long. It can be an excerpt from a book or several smaller pamphlets or articles. You must send me the link to your chosen piece of work (or pdf of the relevant section) prior to class and you must bring the print out to class (prepared to discuss it) and hand it in at the end of class. Source: You can use the advanced search options of google books to restrict the search to books written in the desired historic time period.

<http://books.google.ca/>

Your homework assignments will be marked on a 4-point scale:

1 = unacceptable; 2 = fair; 3 = good to very good; 4 = excellent.

Picking the first or most common source that appears in your search is not necessarily good. Exhibiting effort in choosing the piece of work and thoughtful discussion of that work will earn you an excellent mark.

There will be no extensions – if you do not send the link prior to class and bring the reading to class, you will receive a grade of zero. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

[\(iv\) Exam:](#)

The exam will cover material from the entire term.

The exam will consist of short (and longer) answer essay questions, as well as questions on specific economic (or mathematic) models. In essay answers a number of factors affect your grade: the logic of your answer, readability and coherency. For example, your mark will be lower if you (1) contradict yourself, or (2) if your answer is logically incomplete. Your mark will be higher if your arguments are well presented.

Previous test/exam questions will be circulated.

Illness:

University policy: Students who have been absent from class for medical or other unavoidable reasons AND require an accommodation for missed or late [tests or] term work must record their absence using the ROSI Absence Declaration. In addition,

Midterm: If you miss the midterm, for any reason, you will receive a grade of zero on it. If, however, you e-mail me on the day of the test & provide me with a University of Toronto medical note from a qualified medical doctor (OHIP registration number included) documenting that you were unable to attend class the day of the test, and I receive that note within one week of missing the test, you will be eligible to write a make-up. The make-up will occur in the second last week of classes at a mutually convenient time.

Essay: Extensions will only be granted in the event of protracted illnesses or other lengthy indisposition that occurs well in advance of the essay deadlines. Illnesses that crop up the weekend before a due date will not qualify for an extension or reduction in the late penalties. You can make sure you are not affected by an illness caught the weekend before the essay by ensuring that you have a draft ready the week before the assignment is due. If you have a protracted illness or have an on-going issue please inform me well before the due date.

Handing in your essays: logistics and late penalties

Please hand in your essay(s) during class. If you do not hand it in to me during class you should hand it in to front reception at the economics department: Max Gluskin House (150 St. George St.). It should be date-stamped. It will not be considered late if you hand it in to reception on the due date prior to the close of the office.

The penalty for lateness is 2 percent per day (weekend included). Late essays will be accepted for 1 week following the due date. Essays received after 1 week will receive a mark of zero. Hence if the essay is received (prior to the office closing) on Tuesday, the reduction is 2%; Wednesday, -4%; Thursday, -6%; Friday -8% and the following Monday (one week after the due date), -14%. Any later: 100% penalty.

Required readings:

Most of the reading material for the course is in the form of journal articles that are available on the web (through the library website; links will be provided on the course e-blackboard).

I will use a couple of chapters from Hoffman & Averett. Women and the Economy: Family, Work and Pay. It can be found in the library. I cannot place it on reserve due to the small class size. The other text reading, Weil, is on reserve (another larger class has placed it on reserve).

Required software:

For the empirical work for your essay, I strongly encourage you to use STATA. If you are unfamiliar with STATA, learning this language will be very useful for you in other aspects of your academic and possibly your future professional life. It is the software used in higher-level econometric courses as well as other applied courses in economics. You can purchase a site license for STATA from the library. See the Licence Software Office website on the Library website:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/ic/software/>

and (for a list of software):

<http://www.utoronto.ca/ic/software/alphalist.html>

If you follow those links to the STATA website, you will see the options for STATA plans.

<http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/cgpcampus-order.html>

For our purposes, the 6 month STATA/IC 12 (STATA for moderate-sized datasets) is sufficient (small stata is not big enough). The cost is \$75.

Calendar with due dates:

#	Date	Due date	Rough guide to lecture material (11-1)	Tutorial (1-2)
1	Jan 11		Clark ch 1 & 2; Weil ch4	
2	Jan 18		Costa	Dataset
3	Jan 25	Homework 1	Goldin & Margo; Thomasson	Lit. search
4	Fe 1		Cutler & Miller	STATA tut. 1
5	Fe 8	Essay part 1	HA ch3	STATA tut. 2
6	Fe 15	Homework 2	HA ch3; Stevenson & Wolfers ---Reading break---	Home 2
7	Fe 29	Midterm	Goldin & Katz	Midterm
8	Mar 7	Homework 3	AYK; HA ch5	Home 3
9	Mar 14	Essay part 2	HA ch5	HA ch5
10	Mar 21		No lecture; TA will lead a tutorial on regressions	
11	Mar 28	Homework 4 Make-up test	Guinnane; David and Sundstrom	Home 4
12	Apr 4	Final essay	David & Sundstrom; Review	

Notes: tut. = tutorial; HA = Hoffman & Averett; AYK = Akerlof, Yellen & Katz

Topics & Reading:

(o) = optional. I reserve the right to change the readings. If so, you will be notified in advance.

Big picture

Weil, David. Economic Growth, 2nd edition. chapter 4: “Population and Economic Growth” (to page 94).

Clark, Gregory. A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World, 2007. Ch. 1 & 2.

Childbirth

Costa, D. “Unequal at Birth: A Long-term Comparison of Income and Birth weight.” *Journal of Economic History*, 58, no. 4 (1998):

Goldin and Margo. “The Poor at Birth: Birth Weights and Infant Mortality at Philadelphia’s Almshouse Hospital, 1848-1873.” *EEH* 26 (1989): 360-79.

Thomasson, M. “From Home to Hospital: Evolution of Childbirth in the US, 1928-40”

(o) McCalman, Janet & R. Morley “Mothers’ Health and Babies’ Weights: The Biology of Poverty at the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital, 1857-83.” *Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 16 no 1 (2003): 39-56

(o) Albanesi & Olivetti “Maternal Health and the Baby Boom” working paper 2011.

(o) De Bruwere, Vincent. “The Comparative Study of Maternal Mortality over Time: The Role of Professionalisation of Childbirth.” *Social History of Medicine* 20 no.3 (2007): 541-62.

Mortality

Cutler & Miller. “The Role of Public Health Improvements in Health Advances: the 20th century United States.” NBER working paper # 10511, 2004.

(o) Troesken, Werner. “The Limits of Jim Crow: Race and the Provision of Water and Sewerage Services in American Cities, 1880-1925.” *Journal of Economic History* 62, no. 3 (Sept., 2002): 734-772.

(o) Ferrie & Troesken. “Water and Chicago’s mortality transition, 1850-1925.” *Explorations in Economic History* 45 (2008): 1-16

(o) Watson, Tara. "Public Health Investments and the Infant Mortality Gap: Evidence from Federal sanitation interventions on U.S. Indian Reservations." *Journal of Public Economics* 90 (2006): 1537-1560.

Marriage

Hoffman and Averett, ch 3

Stevenson, Betsey and Justin Wolfers. "Marriage and Divorce: Changes and their Driving Forces" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 27-52.

Goldin, Claudia and Larry Katz. "On the Pill: Changing the Course of Women's Education." *Milken Institute Review* vol 3 (2nd quarter, 2001): 12-21.

Akerlof, Yellen and Katz (1996). "An Analysis of Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing in the United States." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 111, No. 2 (May, 1996): 277-317.

(o) Alesina & Giuliano. "Divorce, fertility and the value of marriage." Harvard working paper, 2007.

(o) Voigtlander and Voth. "How the West 'invented' Fertility Restriction, NBER working paper # 17314, Aug 2011.

Fertility: Pre and Post Transition

Hoffman and Averett, ch 5.

Guinnane, T. "The Historical Fertility Transition: A guide for economists." Yale University Working paper (forthcoming, *Journal of Economic Literature*), 2010.

David and Sundstrom. "Old-Age Security Motives, Labor Markets, and Farm Family Fertility in Antebellum America." *Explorations in Economic History* 25 no.2, (1988): 64-97.

(o) Clark, Gregory and Neil Cummins. "The Origins of Modern Growth: Fertility and Human Capital in England, 1500-1914" Working Paper, 2009.

(o) Clark, Gregory & Gillian Hamilton. "Survival of the Richest: The Malthusian Method in England, 1585 – 1638." *Journal of Economic History* , 66, no.3 (2006): 707-736.

(o) Haines, Michael and J David Hacker. "Antebellum Fertility Decline in the United States: New Evidence and Reconsideration." NBER Working Paper #12571, October 2006.

Plagiarism

[the following note on plagiarism was adapted from other UofT course outlines]

Plagiarism is an academic offence with a severe penalty.

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. In essence, it is the theft of the thoughts or words of others, without giving proper credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words. Plagiarism is unacceptable.

The University of Toronto provides a process that faculty members must initiate when they suspect a case of plagiarism. In the Economics Department, suspected evidence of plagiarism must be reported to the Chair. A faculty member may not mark an assignment or assess a penalty if he or she finds evidence of plagiarism – the matter must be reported. The Chair, or Dean, will assess the penalty.

The following are some examples of plagiarism:

1. Submitting as your own an assignment written by someone else.
2. Quoting an author without indicating the source of the words.
3. Using words, sentences, or paragraphs written by someone else and failing to place quotation marks around the material and reference the source and author. **Using either quotation marks or reference alone is not sufficient. Both must be used!**
4. Adapting an author's ideas or theme and using it as your own without referencing the original source.
5. Seeking assistance from a friend or family member in respect to work you claim as your own.

If you are not sure whether you have committed plagiarism, it is better to ask a faculty member than risk discovery and face an academic penalty.

Plagiarism is **cheating**. It is considered a **serious offence** against intellectual honesty and intellectual property. Penalties for an undergraduate can be **severe**. At a minimum, a student is likely to receive a zero for the assignment or test in question. A further penalty is often assessed, such as a further reduction from the course mark and placing a permanent notation of the incident on an academic record.

Note that arguing that you did not realize the infraction was plagiarism is not an excuse. If you plagiarized – knowingly or not, you will be penalized. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand plagiarism and avoid it.

Some website listed below on avoiding plagiarism:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Other Advisory Material available at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/home>