

ECO408H1F
The Economics of Life—A Historical Perspective
University of Toronto, Department of Economics
Fall 2012

Professor Gillian Hamilton

150 St. George St:	room 310
Phone:	416-978-3070
Office hours:	Wednesday 1-3 or by appointment
Email:	gillian.hamilton@utoronto.ca
Web page:	http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/hamiltng
Class time and location:	Wednesday 10-1 SS1088

[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.

[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)

[Communication:](#)

The course outline as well as other handouts, links, announcements et cetera will be available through the Portal (Blackboard). Please check it often. 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:

[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 (ECO408). 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 \(weights & dates\):](#)

There will be an essay (with two graded stages prior to handing in the completed essay), one presentation, a peer assessment exercise, and a final exam. The weights & dates are as follows:

Essay – part 1	10	Oct 10
Essay – part 2	10	Oct 31
Presentation	5	Nov 14
Peer assessment	3	Nov 19
Essay – final product	22	Nov 28
Exam	50	TBD
Total	100	

[\(i\) 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.

A separate document (“essay guide”) provides more detail on the essay requirements. Note that each part of the essay will be uploaded to turnitin.com

[\(ii\) Presentation and peer assessment](#)

After the first two parts of the essay have been written and work on the third component have begun, students will give a brief presentation on their project with a short summary handout.

Peer assessment: Students will comment on (a subset of) the presentations – offering constructive criticism and suggestions as to how to improve the project.

[\(iii\) 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 prior to the exam.

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,

Essay: Extensions will only be granted in the event of protracted illnesses or other lengthy indisposition that occur 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 a paper copy of 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 3 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 Thursday, the reduction is 3%; Friday, -6%; the following Monday, -15% and Wednesday (one week after the due date), -21%. Any later: 100% penalty.

You are also expected to upload your essay to turnitin.com

Late penalties for the peer assessment and presentation: these deadlines are firm. No extensions will be granted (if the work is not turned in, or the presentation made on the appropriate date, a mark of zero will be assigned for that component). Note: students may have the option of presenting a week early.

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 important dates:

#	Date	Rough guide to lecture (10-12)	Tutorial (12-1)	Due date
1	Se 12	Clark ch 1 & 2; Weil ch4		
2	Se 19	Costa	Dataset	
3	Se 26	Goldin & Margo; Thomasson	Lit. search	
4	Oc 3	Cutler & Miller, TBA	STATA tut1	
5	Oc 10	HA ch3	STATA tut2	Essay part 1
6	Oc 17	HA ch3; Stevenson & Wolfers		
7	Oc 24	Goldin & Katz; AYK		
8	Oc 31	AYK; HA ch5	STATA tut3	Essay part 2
9	Nov 7	HA ch5		
10	Nov 14	presentations	presentations	presentations
11	Nov 21	Guinnane; David and Sundstrom		
12	Nov 28	David & Sundstrom; Review		Final essay

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

Topics & Reading:

(o) = provisionally 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”

De Bruwre, 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.

(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.

Mortality (& health)

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

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

(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) 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.

Troesken, Werner. "The Elasticity of Demand with respect to product failure: or Why the Market for Quack Medicine Flourished for more than 150 Years." NBER working paper, #15699, 2010.

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." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49:3, 2011: 589-614.

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.

Marital Property Rights

Gillian Hamilton, "Property Rights and Transaction Costs in Marriage: Evidence from Prenuptial Contracts", *Journal of Economic History* 59 (1) (1999), 68–103.

Geddes, Rick & Dean Lueck. "The Gains from Self-Ownership and the Expansion of Women's Rights." *American Economic Review*, vol. 92, no. 4, 2002, pp. 1079-92

Fernandez, R. "Women's Rights and Development" NBER Working paper, 2010.