

ECO408H1F  
The Economics of Life—A Historical Perspective  
University of Toronto  
2014

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**Time and location** W10-1 • LA248  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 1-3.

Lectures are typically two hours per week. The third hour will be used on occasion for presentations, tutorials et cetera.

**Teaching assistant** Juan Sebastian Morales

**Course 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** Prerequisite: ECO200Y1/ECO204Y1/ECO206Y1;  
ECO202Y1/ECO208Y1/ECO209Y1;  
ECO220Y1/ECO227Y1/(STA220H1,STA255H1)/(STA257H1,STA261H1);  
At least one FCE in ECO at the 300 level or higher.

**Exclusions** Exclusion: ECO308H1

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 any time if you do not meet all requirements set by the Department of Economics. For further information you can consult the 2014-2015 Academic Course Calendar.

**Academic misconduct** Students should note that copying, plagiarizing, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. As a student it is your responsibility to ensure the integrity of your work and to understand what constitutes an

academic offence. If you have any concerns that you may be crossing the line, always ask your instructor. Your instructor can explain, for example, the nuances of plagiarism and how to use secondary sources appropriately; he or she will also tell you what kinds of aids -- calculators, dictionaries, etc. -- are permitted in a test or exam. **Ignorance of the rules does not excuse cheating or plagiarism.** Any student caught engaging in such activities will be subject to academic discipline ranging from a mark of zero on the term paper, test or examination to dismissal from the university as outlined in the academic calendar. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.

In order to help deter and detect plagiarism, students will upload their essays to [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com). Turnitin is a resource used to detect plagiarism. As per university policy, please note the following:

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) service are described on the [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) web site”.

## Communication

Lecture handouts, links to readings, announcements and marks will be available on blackboard. You are expected to consult it regularly.

I will endeavor to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays. Please consult the course outline & course webpage before submitting your email inquiry. Include the course code in the subject of your message (ECO408) and use your utoronto email address. These practices will help ensure that your message does not get stuck in my spam filter and subsequently deleted. If I do not respond within 48 hours please re-send the message or contact me in class or office hours.

## Readings and software

There is no required textbook. Articles will be assigned; links to the articles will be available on blackboard.

You are required to purchase STATA for the empirical work in your essay. You can purchase a site license for STATA from the library: see the Licence Software Office website on the Library website:

<http://sites.utoronto.ca/ic/software/detail/stata.html>

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

For our purposes, STATA/IC 13 (STATA for moderate-sized datasets) is sufficient (Note: Small STATA is not big enough – do not buy it). There are different options, the six-month version is fine if you don't need it

for another course next term; its cost is \$69.

Older versions of STATA (stata 12 or 11) should be fine if you already have one of those versions.

<b>Evaluation</b>	Literature survey	10
	Preliminary statistical overview	5
	Presentation	5
	Final Essay	35
	Final examination	45
	<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100

### Important dates

Week	Date	Due dates
1	September 10	
2	September 17	
3	September 24	
4	October 1	Declare topic
5	October 8	
6	October 15	Literature survey
7	October 22	
8	October 29	Stat overview
9	November 5	
10	November 12	Presentations
11	November 19	Presentations
12	November 26	Presentations/essay due

### Elements of evaluation: description and rules

#### 1. Essay

The basis for the essay is an empirical project that revolves around a particular dataset (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). Full description and guidelines are available in a separate document (“essay guide” on blackboard).

Students will have several opportunities during the term to make substantive progress and get feedback on their essay before the final due date. For instance, prior to handing in the final version of their essay, they must (a) get approval for their topic choice, (b) hand in a literature survey, (c) produce a brief statistical overview and (d) present their research to the class (see dates above). All of these elements help to produce a polished paper.

Note that I expect the final version of the essay to be different from the components (lit review; statistical overview) handed in earlier in the term. It should incorporate feedback received during the term and your topic may evolve as you work on it. You may also discover better sources, better and more relevant graphs, et cetera. In some cases the final version may be quite different from the earlier versions, which is okay.

**(a) Declare topic**

Email me with your chosen essay topic. Topics must be approved.

**(b) Literature survey**

The survey must include a minimum of five academic sources (journal articles or books). It should be no longer than 5 pages of double-spaced text, bibliography appended. See the essay guide for details and guidance.

Logistics: upload your literature review to blackboard. Hand in a paper copy during class. If you miss class, bring it to the department. Ensure that it is date-stamped (see front reception) and either give it to the receptionist or place it in my mailbox (basement). It will not be late if it is received prior to the office closing on the due date.

**(c) Statistical overview**

The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that you are familiar with STATA well in advance of the essay deadline. The statistical overview should include graphs and tables relevant to your topic. You should strive to produce a variety of graphs (scatter; histograms et cetera, as relevant). Aim for a minimum of 5 graphs and a few tables.

Logistics: same as above for literature review.

**(d) Presentation**

Students will have the opportunity to present the research they have done for their essay project. The purpose of the presentation is three-fold: to ensure that students have made progress on the empirical content of their essay, share their findings and seek feedback from their peers. The presentation should last roughly 15 minutes. It should consist of the main elements of their essay – topic, background/literature, statistical overview (graphs, tables), preliminary regressions, and conclusion.

Students should construct their presentation in powerpoint and email it to me at least one day before the presentation date.

As there are different possible presentation days, students will sign up for the presentations on-line (on blackboard) – slots per class will be limited. The date and time for sign up will be announced.

## **5. Final Examination**

The exam will cover material from the entire term. It is 3 hours in length and held during the exam period.

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, extensions and penalties:**

As per 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.

Literature review, statistical overview and essay: extensions will only be granted in the event of protracted illnesses or other lengthy indisposition that occur well in advance of a deadline. 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 a due date by ensuring that you have a draft ready the week before an assignment is due. If you have a protracted illness or have an on-going issue please inform me well before the due date.

The penalty for lateness for the literature review, statistical overview and the essay is 2 percent per day (weekend included). The date a document is uploaded to blackboard is recorded by blackboard. Literature review, statistical overviews and essay received more than 1 week after the due date will receive a mark of zero. Hence if the essay is one week late, the penalty is 14 percent; any later, the penalty is 100 percent.

Presentations: Students that are unable to do their presentation on their assigned day for a legitimate reason may request an extension. Students should be able to verify the reason for their request (e.g., provide a University of Toronto medical note if they were sick). Students granted an extension may end up presenting their work the week the essay is due if there is no other (earlier) option (Nov 26). If they miss this date, they will receive a mark of zero on the presentation. If a student has not been granted an extension on their presentation, they will receive a mark of zero on the presentation.

Note: students may have the option of presenting a week early if they are concerned about missing the deadline.

## Topics & Readings:

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

### Big picture

Weil, David. Economic Growth, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### Birthweight

Costa, D. "Unequal at Birth: A Long-term Comparison of Income and Birth weight." *Journal of Economic History*, 58, no. 4 (1998): 987-1009.

Goldin and Margo. "The Poor at Birth: Birth Weights and Infant Mortality at Philadelphia's Almshouse Hospital, 1848-1873." *Explorations in Economic History* 26 (1989): 360-79.

(o) Morley, R. and J. McCalman and J. Carlin. "Trends in birthweight between 1857 and 1883, in Melbourne Australia." *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology* 2003 17 236-43.

### Maternal mortality

Thomasson, M. and J. Treber. "From Home to Hospital: Evolution of Childbirth in the US, 1928-40" *Explorations in Economic History* 45 no.1 76-99.

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.

(o) McCalman, J & 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" *Quantitative Economics* Volume 5, Issue 2, pages 225–269, July 2014.

### Infant mortality

Thomasson, M and C Moehling. "Saving Babies: The contribution of Sheppard-Towner to the Decline in Infant Mortality in the 1920." NBER Working Paper, 2012.

(o) Thomasson, M and C. Moehling. "The Political Economy of Saving Mothers and Babies: The Politics of State Participation in the Sheppard-Towner Program." *Journal of Economic History*, 72 (1), March 2012, 75-103.

## **Mortality**

Cutler & Miller. "The Role of Public Health Improvements in Health Advances: the 20<sup>th</sup> century United States." *Demography* 42.1 (2005) 1-22.

Ferrie J. and W. Troesken. "Water and Chicago's mortality transition, 1850-1925." *Explorations in Economic History* 45 (2008): 1-16

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.

## **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 (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2001): 12-21.

Goldin and Katz. "Power of the Pill" *Journal of Political Economy* 2002 Vol 110 no 4 pp.730-70.

Bailey, Martha. "Momma's Got the Pill: How Anthony Comstock and Griswold v. Connecticut Shaped US Childbearing Author" *American Economic Review* Vol. 100, No. 1 (March 2010), pp. 98-129

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.

## **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.

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.

Clark and Hamilton. "Wealth and Fertility in New France." Working paper, 2012.

Dribe et al. "Socioeconomic status and fertility: Insights from historical transitions in Europe and North America." Working Paper, 2013.

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

(0) 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" *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 19 (1), 03/2014, p. 37-80

### **Women and the Plough**

Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn "On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough" *QJE* 128, no2 2013: 469-530.

Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn "Fertilty and the Plough" *American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings* 2011 101:3, 499-503.

(o) Voigtlander and Voth. "How the West 'invented' Fertility Restriction, *American Economic Review*, Vol. 103 no 6 (2013): 2227-64.