GENDER INEQUALITY AROUND THE WORLD
Economics 970, Harvard University
Spring 2021

Instructor: Dev Patel
Course Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00-10:15 a.m. Eastern Time
Email: devpatel@g.harvard.edu

Course Description
Why do women earn less than men, and why is the pay gap so much larger among college graduates than those without a college degree? Why do so many girls in Bangladesh marry before they turn 18, but so few in Florida? What causes domestic violence, and how can we prevent it? Why do mothers in poorer nations breastfeed girls less than boys? How can harassment of women on public transportation be reduced? Why don’t women get credit for group work?

This tutorial will wrestle with these and related questions through the examination of gender inequality around the world. Along the way, students will learn tools and methods from a variety of types of economic research—including lab experiments, large-scale randomized control trials, major policy reforms, and quantitative analysis of historical events.

In Part I of the course, we will examine the roots of the gender pay gap, studying the wage penalty from motherhood, the value of flexible work arrangements, and the role of gender identities in the workplace. In Part II, we turn to social norms and women’s work, studying husband attitudes, gender stereotypes, and discrimination. The course ends with Part III focusing on gender inequality outside of the workplace, covering topics including health, domestic violence, child marriage, political representation, and public safety.

Prerequisites
Courses in intermediate microeconomics (1010a or 1011a) and introductory statistics (Ec 20, Stat 104, or Stat 110) is required. The only other prerequisite is enthusiasm for the topic!

The remainder of this syllabus includes the course readings and requirements.
COURSE SCHEDULE

For each class, you must write a reading response on one of the starred readings. You should read that paper very carefully and in depth. You should skim the other starred paper(s). The non-starred papers are available for your reference. You will also occasionally be required to read portions of the economics writing guide. All readings are available on the course website.

Individual meetings with Dev to be scheduled before the first class

Before 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on January 25, please submit on canvas three potential explanations for why women typically earn less than men.

Class 1, Jan. 26: Introduction to the Economics of Gender Inequality and Causal Identification
Please read the syllabus.

Before 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on January 27, please submit our preferences for the class presentation slots.

PART I: THE GENDER PAY GAP

Class 2, Jan. 28: The Child Penalty

Feb. 2 by 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time—Gender Pay Gap Problem Set Part #1 Due

Class 3, Feb. 2: The Value of Flexibility

Class 4, Feb. 4: Contraception
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

Feb. 9 by 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time—Gender Pay Gap Problem Set Part #2 Due
Class 5, Feb. 9: Gender Quotas

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


Class 6, Feb. 11: Women’s Empowerment and Employment

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


Feb. 12th: Stata/R Problem Set #1 Due

Class 7, Feb. 16: Leaning In

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


Class 8, Feb. 18: Reversal of the Gender Gap?

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully. For the writing response for this class, please find a recent news article discussing a policy proposal to reduce the gender pay gap and analyze it through an economist’s perspective, reflecting on recent literature including but not limited to the papers we discuss in class. Please cite at least five different economics papers in your analysis.


Feb. 19th: Please read the file “Final Research Paper Guidelines” and submit three research ideas (see the course website for details). Please also read pages 1-4 and 10-11 of the Writing Economics guide available on the course website.

Individual meetings with Dev this week to discuss research paper.

Class 9, Feb. 23: Gender and Education
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

PART II: GENDER NORMS AND WOMEN’S WORK

Class 10, Feb. 25: Gender Issues in the Economics Profession
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

Feb. 26th: Stata/R Problem Set #2 Due

Class 11, Mar. 2: Gender Identities and the Pay Gap
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

Class 12, Mar. 4: Gender Stereotypes
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

March 5th: Stata/R Problem Set #3 Due

Class 13, Mar. 9: The Role of Husbands’ Attitudes in Women’s Labor Supply
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


Class 14, Mar. 11: Intra-Household Allocation
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


March 12th: Stata/R Problem Set #4 Due

March 16th: no class (wellness day)

Class 15, Mar. 18: Theory of Discrimination
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

March 19th: Research Paper Prospectus Due. Please also read pages 7-9 of the Writing Economics guide available on the course website.

Class 16, Mar. 23: Empirics of Discrimination
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:

PART III: GENDER INEQUALITY OUTSIDE OF THE WORKPLACE

Class 17, Mar. 25: Historical Origins of Gender Inequality
Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


**March 26th: Short Paper on the Gender Pay Gap Due at midnight Eastern Time. See the assignment on canvas for more details.**

**Class 18, Mar. 30: Son Preference and Siblings in South Asia**

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


**Class 19, Apr. 1: Child Marriage**

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


**April 2: Research Paper Preliminary Data Analysis Due**

**Class 20, Apr. 6: Missing Women**

Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:


**Class 21, Apr. 8: Domestic Violence, Part I**

**Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:**


**Class 22, Apr. 13: Domestic Violence, Part II**

**Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:**


**April 15: No class (wellness day)**

**April 16: Research Paper Draft Due at midnight, Eastern Time. Please also read pages 21-29 of the Writing Economics guide available on the course website.**

**Class 23, Apr. 20: Gender and Public Safety**

**Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully. For the writing response for this class, please pick a topic about gender inequality of your choosing and discuss how it differs between developed and developing countries. This short paper should be between 2 and 4 pages long and should include citations of at least five different economics papers covering at least three different countries (but ideally more):**


**Class 24, Apr. 22: Women as Policymakers**

**Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:**


**Class 25, Apr. 27: Women as Voters**

**Choose one of the following two papers to read carefully and write a response:**


May 3rd: Final Paper Due at midnight, Eastern Time. Please also read pages 14-15 of the Writing Economics guide available on the course website.
Course Requirements

Class Participation (10%): Active participation in each course meeting is a critical component of this course. You will be expected to be an active discussant, and you will be expected to make comments or questions in every class. This will be an important part of your grade. You must attend each Zoom class with your video on, but please be in touch with me if this is an issue for you. Virtual backgrounds are of course welcome. You are permitted one unexcused absence over the course of the semester.

Paper Presentations (15%): For most starred papers on the syllabus, a student will be assigned to help present that paper to the rest of the class. During these oral presentations, you are the expert on that paper and will prepare five to eight slides to present for up to eight minutes. You will present the main findings during this time and then help lead a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the paper in the discussion that follows. You will have the chance to submit preferences about your presentation dates and topics at the start of the semester.

Reading Assignments (15%): Before most classes, you must do the required reading and submit a reading response. Many of the readings were/are to be published in top economic journals. You are not expected to be able to follow and reproduce all the mathematical arguments. You are expected to be able to answer in words the following questions for each paper (and indeed, these questions should heavily inform your reaction papers): what was the author’s question/hypothesis? How does he/she test this hypothesis/try to answer this question? What are his/her findings? How believable are they? Or where did I get lost in this article? What confused me?

Reading responses are due at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time the day before class. For each class, there will be one or two major readings which you should read carefully and choose one to write a response about. There may be other shorter readings which you may skim. All reading assignments are posted on the course website in the Files/Reading Assignments folder. Please see the “Reading Response Guidelines” file on the course website for more information.

Short Papers (10%)
For some classes, instead of these reading response guidelines, there will be different types of writing assignments, some of which will be longer length. Prior to the first class, please submit three brief explanations you have for why women typically earn less than men. In one assignment, students will search for a recent news article discussing a policy proposal to reduce the gender pay gap and analyze it through an economics perspective, reflecting on recent literature including but not limited to the papers we discuss in class. This will be turned into a three to five page short paper to be turned in halfway through the semester in which students will give their explanation for why a gender gap persists in the United States and what should be done about it. In another assignment, you will be asked to pick a topic about gender inequality of your choosing and discuss how it differs between developed and developing countries.

Gender Pay Gap Problem Set (5%): There will be one quantitative problem set in R/Stata studying the gender pay gap. The problem set will have two parts. In part one, you will learn to download the CPS, which is the main government labor data for the United States, and calculate the standard measure of the gender pay gap. In part two, you will have the chance to devise your
own measure and defend its construction. Please see the file “Gender Pay Gap Problem Set” on
the course website for more information.

*R/Stata Problem Sets (10%):* An important and hugely valuable skill in modern economics is
data analysis. To help you develop these abilities, the department offers modules on R/Stata. As
part of the requirements of this course, you must complete and turn in the four problem sets to
me, including log and do files. There are several Stata/R office hours offered by the department
each week, all semester. More details can be found at economics.harvard.edu/pages/stata.

*Writing Assignments (35%):* In addition to the reading responses, there will be a final research
paper. This will be broken up into several parts. First, you will have to submit three (one
paragraph each) ideas for your final topic. Second, you will be submit a prospectus due midway
through the semester that more explicitly details your plan for the paper. Third, you will submit
some preliminary data analysis after loading and cleaning the basic data. A complete rough draft
is due two weeks before final period. The final paper is due on May 3. Please see the file “Final
Research Paper Guidelines” on the course website for more information.

**Grades**
In assigning grades for your coursework, I follow the grading guidelines stated in the “Grades”
section of Harvard’s *Information for Faculty Offering Instruction in Arts and Sciences*:

- **A, A-** Earned by work whose excellent quality indicates a full mastery of the subject and,
in the case of the grade of A, is of extraordinary distinction.

- **B+, B, B-** Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a
good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student’s
full engagement with the course requirements and activities.

- **C+, C, C-** Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of
the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that
indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and
participating in class activities.

- **D+, D, D-** Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal
command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is
worthy of course credit toward the degree.

- **E** Earned by work which is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit towards the
degree.

**Course Policies**
Late assignments will be penalized by a grade deduction of “1 step” for every day you are late.
(For example, A- to B+ is a “1 step” deduction.) That said, I understand that life can have
exceptionally busy periods, so the lowest **three** reading response grades will be dropped.
Office hours will be scheduled upon request. Please feel free to reach out to me if you would like to meet to discuss the course. There is also a link to a google form on the course website where you can submit comments, questions or concerns anonymously. Please include Ec 970 in the subject line of the emails so that they do not get lost in my inbox. Each student will be required to sign up to chat sometime in the first week so that I can get to know you, and there will also be a required individual meeting to discuss the idea for your research paper in the first half of the semester.

This course will address a range of topics relating to gender inequality. Many of these issues are controversial and can be difficult to discuss, such as discrimination and domestic violence. It is imperative to always be respectful and polite in class. If you have any concerns about the topics or the readings, please let me know and I am happy to make accommodations.

Academic Integrity Policy
If you plagiarize, you will fail the course. See the Harvard College Handbook for Students for details.

On problem sets, discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to doing academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates as you work on problem sets. However, after discussions with peers, make sure that you can work through the problem yourself and ensure that any answers you submit for evaluation are the result of your own efforts. In addition, you must cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work using appropriate citation practices. Similarly, you must list the names of students with whom you have collaborated on problem sets.

Major Assignment Due Dates
Gender Pay Gap Problem Set Part 1 Due: February 2\textsuperscript{nd}
Gender Pay Gap Problem Set Part 2 Due: February 9\textsuperscript{th}
Stata/R Problem Set #1 Due: February 12\textsuperscript{th}
Final Paper Three Ideas Due: February 19\textsuperscript{th}
Stata/R Problem Set #2 Due: February 26\textsuperscript{th}
Stata/R Problem Set #3 Due: March 5\textsuperscript{th}
Stata/R Problem Set #4 Due: March 12\textsuperscript{th}
Final Paper Prospectus Due: March 19\textsuperscript{th}
Short Paper on Gender Pay Gap Due: March 26\textsuperscript{th}
Research Paper Preliminary Data Analysis Due: April 2\textsuperscript{nd}
Research Paper Draft Due: April 16\textsuperscript{th}
Research Paper Due: May 3\textsuperscript{rd}

Files on the Course Website:
- Reading Response Guidelines
- Final Research Paper Guidelines
- Research Paper Idea Assignment
- Research Paper Prospectus Template
- Research Paper Preliminary Data Analysis Assignment
- Gender Pay Gap Problem Set Part 1
- Gender Pay Gap Problem Set Part 2