

**Senior Seminar ECONX3063
Women in Development Economics
Spring 2020**

PRELIMINARY

Monday 2:10pm-4:00pm
Instructor: Anja Benshaul-Tolonen
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Office hours: Monday 10-12
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Prerequisites

Permission of the Instructor and completion of all courses (except the senior requirement) required for the economics track, political economy track, or economics and mathematics majors. Exceptions to these prerequisites may be granted by the chair of the department only.

Overview

This seminar examines the role of gender in processes of economic development. The course focuses on recent quantitative research in order to study the opportunities and challenges that women face in the developing world. Readings will discuss women's economic life in Africa, South Asia, East Asia and Latin America across several themes spanning gender inequality, natural resources, fertility and marriage, and labor and technology. The students will choose a paper to focus on, and moderate the discussion in a week of their theme. The students will write a research paper related to their chosen topic (broadly defined) and present their research findings at the end of the term.

Requirements

The student will read all assigned readings before class, and upload short answers to the questionnaires before class. The answers submitted to CourseWorks will not be graded, unless the student is being reviewed for a higher grade at the end of term. The student will prepare questions and a discussion for her assigned lecture together with her group. Each group has one assigned lecture during which they are responsible for moderating a discussion of the readings (1.5 hour), and jointly presenting what we have learnt from the assigned readings (0.5 hours). The latter will result in a joint, graded submission.

Grade:

Attendance and engagement in discussions (zoom)	10%
Group grade: analysis of research (zoom)	10 %
Group grade: analysis of research (written)	10 %
Research paper content, idea, empirical analysis (written)	20%
Research paper style, organization, bibliography	20%
In class presentation of own research (zoom)	20%
Feedback on group papers and presentations (written)	10%

Learning Outcomes

Students completing this seminar will:

- Develop skills for analyzing the women's situations in a global context.
- Become familiar with recent high quality empirical research concerning women's economic life in developing countries, and identify the challenges remaining to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Gain experience leading a discussion of an economics journal article. The student will gain confidence in debating recent empirical economic literature
- The student will learn to write a substantive research paper related to one of the course topics, using empirical methods.
- The student will learn to present original research findings in a clear and convincing oral presentation.

Honor Code

The Barnard Honor Code will be *strictly* enforced. The Code reads:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by refraining from every form of dishonesty in our academic life. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. We consider it dishonest to remove without authorization, alter, or deface library and other academic materials. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

Research Papers

Students will do a research project alone. The project will result in a research paper and an in class presentation of 7-10 minutes (to be confirmed). The research paper will use **empirical methods**, as the seminar focuses on quantitative methods research.

Students are encouraged to use regression analysis and econometric techniques to do novel data analysis, as well as plotting data using graphs. Suggested programs are Excel, Stata, R, as well as ArcGIS or QGIS for geographic analysis. Excel is recommended for students who have not taken econometrics. The empirical reasoning lab will be helping students to develop empirical skills and provide help with specific questions.

The research paper will follow the normal format of a paper: 1. Introduction, 2. Literature review, 3. Data and methodology, 4. Results, 5. Conclusion, 6. Bibliography. Figures and tables can be in an appendix. To correctly cite sources is imperative, and students are encouraged to be extra careful with the bibliography. Failure to include citations can result in breach of the honor code (above). Please look at the help resources available on CourseWorks, including Nikolov (2013) on how to do a bibliography, and Wyrick Chapter 4 for style, and Chapter 11 for empirical analysis.

DEADLINES

1. Submission of thesis topic and methodology (3-6 sentences) September 21
2. Submission of bibliography list and literature review: October 5
3. First draft (recommended 10 pages minimum): October 26
4. Second draft and first presentation for feedback from breakout group: November 23
5. Submission final paper: November 30
6. In class presentation: November 30, December 7, December 14

READING LIST AND CLASS SCHEDULE

September 14

At the first meeting, students will choose a topic and a paper within this topic. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the papers before the first class to make an informed choice.

- Get to know your breakout group
- Bring your research idea and discuss it in the breakout group
- 1 minute pitch of the research idea to the whole class

September 21

Term paper & literature search

- Guest lecture by Librarian Jennie Correa regarding how to do a literature search, and write a bibliography.
- **ERC advanced Excel**
- Bring updated research paper topic to class

September 28

- No zoom meeting this week
- Make advances on your project at your own pace.
- Suggested activities:
 - Schedule a meeting with your research support group.
 - Email me for feedback on your bibliography and literature review
 - Book a meeting with Jennie Correa or the ERC to make advances on your project.

October 5: Violence Against Women and Sex Ratios. Group A

- Devries, Karen M., et al. "The global prevalence of intimate partner violence against women." *Science* 340.6140 (2013): 1527-1528.
- Qian, Nancy. "Missing women and the price of tea in China: The effect of sex-specific earnings on sex imbalance." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123.3 (2008): 1251-1285.
- Sen, Amartya. "More than 100 million women are missing." *The New York Review of Books* 37.20 (1990): 61-66.

October 12: Witches and Economics. Group B

- Miguel, Edward. "Poverty and witch killing." *The Review of Economic Studies* 72.4 (2005): 1153-1172.

- Oster, Emily. "Witchcraft, weather and economic growth in Renaissance Europe." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18.1 (2004): 215-228.

October 19: Social Norms and Labor Markets. Group C

- Bursztyn, Leonardo, Alessandra L. González, and David Yanagizawa-Drott. *Misperceived social norms: Female labor force participation in Saudi Arabia*. No. w24736. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2018.
- Jensen, Robert. "Do labor market opportunities affect young women's work and family decisions? Experimental evidence from India." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127.2 (2012): 753-792.
- Michael Ross. "Oil, Islam and Women" 2009.

October 26: Girls and Schooling. Group D

- Muralidharan, Karthik, and Nishith Prakash. "Cycling to school: Increasing secondary school enrollment for girls in India." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 9.3 (2017): 321-50.
- Adukia, Anjali. "Sanitation and education." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 9.2 (2017): 23-59. Discussant:

November 2: Sex, Fertility and Beliefs. Group E

- La Ferrara, Eliana, Alberto Chong, and Suzanne Duryea. "Soap operas and fertility: Evidence from Brazil." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 4.4 (2012): 1-31.
- Ashraf, Nava, et al. "Traditional beliefs and learning about maternal risk in Zambia." *American Economic Review* 107.5 (2017): 511-15.
- Dupas, Pascaline. "Do teenagers respond to HIV risk information? Evidence from a field experiment in Kenya." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 3.1 (2011): 1-34.

November 9

Guest lecturer: Maria Fernanda Rosales-Rueda, Rutgers

November 16: Menstruation: Group F

- Interdisciplinary reading: Mason, Linda, et al. "'We Keep It Secret So No One Should Know'—A Qualitative Study to Explore Young Schoolgirls Attitudes and Experiences with Menstruation in Rural Western Kenya." *PloS one* 8.11 (2013): e79132.
- Oster, Emily, and Rebecca Thornton. "Determinants of technology adoption: Peer effects in menstrual cup take-up." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 10.6 (2012): 1263-1293.
- Field, Erica, and Attila Ambrus. "Early marriage, age of menarche, and female schooling attainment in Bangladesh." *Journal of political Economy* 116.5 (2008): 881-930.

November 23

- Group sessions: Preliminary presentations and feedback on research paper and presentations
- Potentially guest lecture with Dr. Margaret Triyana, the World Bank

November 30

- Submissions of all research paper are due electronically (CourseWorks) before class. Also those presenting the following week.
- Student presentations on research papers (7-10 minutes). Please use power point or similar.

December 7

- Student presentations on research papers (7-10 minutes). Please use power point or similar.

December 14

- Student presentations on research papers (7-10 minutes). Please use power point or similar.

Vocabulary:

Panel data, longitudinal data

Cross sectional data

Cross-country data

Event study, natural experiment, field experiment

Randomized control trial, randomized policy experiment

Difference in difference

Regression discontinuity

Pre-existing trends

Correlation vs causation

Identification strategy, empirical specification

Intensive vs extensive margin

Excess mortality

Anthropometrics

Sex ratio

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

Weekly questions to answer through CourseWorks:

1. What is the hypothesis/topic of this paper? Describe in your own words (1-3 sentences)
2. What data source is used? (1-3 sentences)
3. What are your thoughts on the paper (1-3 sentences)?

PREPARING FOR SEMINAR

Suggestions of questions to ask when you read the papers:

1. What theories regarding women does the author present?
2. Are the theories put forward in the paper universal or specific to the context?
3. How would the outcomes or opportunities described in the paper change with economic development?
4. Would we find similar stories in countries that today are considered economically developed, such as the US or Sweden, but 100 years ago?
5. What statistical tools do the authors use to answer their research question?
6. Do the authors imply correlation or causation?

SUGGESTED DATA SOURCES

- [Demographic and Health Survey Data \(DHS\)](#) – focuses on women aged 15-49, and their occupation, fertility history, education, domestic violence and bargaining power.
- [Living Standard Measurement Survey \(LSMS\)](#) – World Bank collected data focusing on households.
- [World Development Indicators](#) – country level data that can be used to map global patterns of inequality
- [DivaGIS](#) – an online portal for geographic data

EVALUATION SHEET FOR RESEACH PAPER

MY NAME:
PAPER NAME:
AUTHOR NAME:

Organization & Style

(+ means good, ± means needs some improvement, - means needs a lot of improvement)

_____ Is there a clear, one sentence thesis? What is it:

_____ Does the entire paper relate to this thesis? If no, what parts can be cut:

_____ Does the paper have abstract, introduction, literature review, data and results section and conclusion?
If no, what else is needed:

_____ Is the bibliography list complete and correct? Comments:

_____ Does the paper use page numbering and correct table/graph numbering?

Content

1-5, with 5 being best.

_____ Does the paper clearly summarize evidence from outside sources concerning the thesis? Comments:

_____ Does the paper have original data analysis, presented in the correct format?

_____ Does the paper intelligently use theoretical foundations of basic economic ideas when they are relevant? (e.g., benefits versus costs, supply and demand, opportunity cost, willingness to pay, externalities and spillovers)

_____ Would an undergraduate economics major find the paper interesting to read?

_____ Does the paper explain how these findings relate to economic/policy issues?

Rules of Economics Writing (from Wyrick, Ch. 4)

_____ Simple, direct sentences.

_____ No unnecessary sentences.

_____ Introduction section is succinct.

_____ Body is not repetitive.

_____ Active verbs rather than passive verbs.

_____ Concrete examples

_____ Avoids excessive use of This, That, These, and Those

_____ Avoids couplets and unnecessary use of synonyms. Repeat the same key term.