

Course Title	:	Economics of the Family
Course Code	:	ECO3311
Recommended Study Year	:	3 and 4
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture-Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	:	Major in Economics (Elective Course)
Discipline	:	Economics
Prerequisite(s)	:	(a) ECO2101 Introduction to Economics, or (b) ECO2104 Introduction to Microeconomics and ECO2105 Introduction to Macroeconomics, or (c) BUS2105 Microeconomics for Business
Co-requisite(s)	:	N/A
Exclusion(s)	:	N/A
Exemption	:	N/A
Requirement(s)		

Brief Course Description

Based on economic theories, this course offers a way of looking at family that produces useful insights. It provides an introduction to the economic analysis of such socioeconomic behaviours as human capital investment, fertility, marriage, divorce, bequests, and old age support. This course is inter-discipline in nature, and is highly relevant to the issues of contemporary public and social policies.

Aims

This course aims to provide students with knowledge of some important theories of the economics of the family. It also tries to train students to apply the theories to analyse real world problems, and to help analyse social issues and public policies.

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

Upon completion of this course, successful students should be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of some important theories of the economics of the family,
2. analyse social and family issues from an economic perspective,
3. critically assess the public and population policies, and

4. identify and exhibit a better understanding of many macroeconomic behaviours, such as aggregate saving, income distribution and population growth.

Indicative Contents

- I. The demand for children
 - a. Malthus population theory
 - b. Utility Theory and Modern Population Theory
 - c. The Quantity and Quality of Children
 - d. The Cost of Children and Fertility
 - e. Time Allocation and Fertility
 - f. Divorce and Fertility
- II. Home production
 - a. One-person households
 - b. Two-person households
 - c. Sexual division of labour
 - d. Transaction costs
 - e. Household bargaining
 - f. Fertility and female labour supply
- III. The marriage market
 - a. Assortative mating
 - b. Dowries and bride prices
 - c. The marriage contract
 - d. Monogamy and polygamy
 - e. The family and the state
- IV. Divorce and remarriage
 - a. Imperfect information and marital instability
 - b. Extramarital affairs and divorce
 - c. Divorce and remarriage
 - d. Fertility and marital stability
- V. Intergenerational issues
 - a. Altruism in the family
 - b. Altruism and intergenerational transfers
 - c. Bequest and filial attention
 - d. Intergenerational transfers and assortative mating
 - e. Altruism towards children and child labour

VI. Family and education

- a. Educational expenditure and educational attainment
- b. Parental education and home environment of learning
- c. Family background and the opportunities of children
- d. Inequality and intergenerational mobility

VII. Family and economic development

- a. Economic development and gender inequality
- b. Economic development and public expenditure on education
- c. The evolution of family

Teaching Method

Lectures combined with tutorials. Important theories of the economics of the family are taught in lectures. Students make presentations and engage in discussions in tutorials. Close interactions among students and between students and the lecturer are engaged in lectures and particularly tutorials through intensive intellectual discussions.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- 1. Students' presentations of some materials that are closely related to this course in tutorials assess students' comprehension and understanding of major theories in the economics of the family, their abilities of thinking independently, and their presentation skills. (LOs 1-4)
- 2. Students' participations in the intellectual discussions in lectures and particularly in tutorials will be assessed through raising and answering questions. (LOs 1-4)
- 3. A final examination covering all the topics taught in the course assess students' overall understanding and applications of the economic concepts and analysis in related policy and social and family issues. (LOs 1-4)

Assessment

The continuous assessment (based on presentations and discussion) accounts for 40% of the grade, and the final exam accounts for 60% of the grade.

Good Practices

- Student will be advised to not only have a good command of the knowledge of economics but also have the capacity of applying economic theories to solve real-world problems.
- This course is inter-discipline in nature, in which students will be taught to use the methods of economics to analyze socioeconomic issues.

Required /Essential Reading

Recommended /Supplementary Readings

Essential

- (1) Becker, Gary (1991) A Treatise on the Family, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (2) Fan, C. Simon (2014), Vanity Economics: An Economic Exploration of Sex, Marriage and Family, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Supplementary

- (3) Cigno, Alessandro (1991) Economics of the Family, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (4) Blau, Francine D., Marianne A. Ferber and Anne E. Winkler (2002), The Economics of women, men, and work, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- (5) Steven N. S. Cheung (1972) "The Enforcement of Property Rights in Children, and the Marriage Contract," Economic Journal, 82: 641-657.
- (6) Weiss, Yoram, "The Formation and Dissolution of Families: Why Marry? Who Marries Whom? And What Happens upon Marriage and Divorce?" In Handbook of Population Economics, edited by R. Rosenzweig and O. Stark. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science (1997).
- (7) Rao, V. (1993) "The Rising Price of Husbands: A Hedonic Analysis of Dowry Increases in Rural India," Journal of Political Economy 101(4): 666-677.
- (8) Gillis, M. et al (1996). Economics of development (4th ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.
- (9) Fan, Simon, Yu Pang, and Pierre Pestieau (2025). The Intriguing Relation Between

Parenting Styles and Eldercare.

Rubric for Tutorial Presentations (40%)

Criteria	Excellent A, A-	Good B+ to B-	Fair C+ to C-	Pass D+, D	Failure F
The Choice of Presentation Materials 16%	Most pertinent to the course requirement and very enlightening and interesting to the audience of the students	Pertinent to the course requirement and interesting to the audience of the students	Somewhat pertinent to the course requirement and suitable to the audience of the students	Little pertinent to the course requirement and little suitable to the audience of the students	Not pertinent to the course requirement and not suitable to the audience of the students
Conceptual understanding of subject matter, particularly in raising the questions and in the discussions. 6%	Cover a good range of relevant concepts/theories. Important ideas pertinent to the topic are skillfully applied	Concepts/theories and important ideas pertinent to the topic are accurately used	Concepts/theories and important ideas pertinent to the topic are somewhat accurately used	Concepts/theories and important ideas pertinent to the topic are little accurately used	Concepts/theories and important ideas pertinent to the topic are not accurately used
Integration of sources and evidence 8%	The presentation displays a high level of relevance between the student's article and the concepts covered in class.	The presentation displays a good level of relevance between the student's article and the concepts covered in class.	The presentation displays a moderate level of relevance between the student's article and the concepts covered in class.	The presentation displays a low level of relevance between the student's article and the concepts covered in class.	The presentation does not at all establish that the article is relevant to concepts covered in class.

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Department of Economics

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Uses good body language, eye contact, appropriate voice tone 5%	Makes good eye contact with audience Shows enthusiasm and confidence Uses voice tone effectively	Makes fairly good eye contact with audience Shows some enthusiasm and confidence Uses voice tone relatively effectively	Makes somewhat good eye contact with audience Shows some enthusiasm and confidence Uses voice tone relatively effectively	Make little eye contact with audience Shows little enthusiasm and	Make no eye contact with audience Shows no enthusiasm and
Makes effective use of presentation tools (slides/handouts) 5%	Proper use of presentation tools with little or no distractions (e.g. appropriate animation/pictures, appropriate information on one slide, clear titles, etc.)	Generally good use of presentation tools.	Somewhat good use of presentation tools. Some distractions but they are not overwhelming (e.g. reasonable animation/pictures, fair information on one slide, fair titles, etc.)	Poor use of presentation tools and/or many distractions (e.g. too much animation/pictures, too much information on one slide, absence of titles, etc.)	Very poor use of presentation tools

General Rubrics for Final Exam (60%)

Dimensions	Excellent A, A-	Good B+ to B-	Fair C+ to C-	Pass D+, D	Failure F
Accuracy (30%)	The response uses the information from appropriate sources clearly, fully, directly, and accurately. The response is clearly related to a particular area of course coverage	The response communicates most of the relevant information in a generally correct and understandable way. The response is mostly related to a particular area of course coverage.	The response is somewhat related to any area of course coverage.	The response contains several factual errors. The response is only slightly related to any area of course coverage.	The response contains numerous factual errors. The response is barely related to any area of course coverage.
Analysis (20%)	The answer and opinions provided are well-supported with obvious and direct reference to pertinent information. The argument examines all sides of an	The answer and opinions provided are generally supported. The argument mentions all sides of an issue, though not all sides are analyzed in equally appropriate depth.	The answer and opinions provided are somewhat supported.	The answer and opinions provided are only slightly supported by any argument or appeal to information in the article, lecture, or other relevant source. The argument is narrow, superficial, and/or one-	The answer and opinions provided are barely supported by any argument or appeal to information in the article, lecture, or other relevant source.

	issue thoroughl y.			sided.	
Articulation (10%)	The written response is excellent with no glaring errors of spelling, usage, or grammar.	The quality of writing is good with few, though noticeable, errors in usage, spelling, and grammar.	. The quality of writing is fair with many errors in usage, spelling, and grammar.	There are frequent language errors in usage, spelling, and/or grammar	There are very frequent language errors in usage, spelling, and/or grammar

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- (5) Students must adhere to the University's guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents “Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University” and “Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments” can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>.

