

ECON 339 - A01: ECONOMICS OF THE FAMILY

Spring Session: 2026 01; **CRN:** 21033 (A01) **Units:** 1.5.

Lectures: Monday and Thursday, 11:30 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. **Cornett Building**, room: **B135**.

University of Victoria Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Instructor: Dr. Paola Beneras P., paolabeneras@uvic.ca

Office: BEC 376

Office Hours: Friday 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., in-person or [Zoom](#) and via appointment (please email).

Teaching Assistants: Giang Nguyen, giangnguyenuhuong@uvic.ca.

Course Content:

Families, as economic entities and the behavior of these households or of the individuals within the households have been core study subjects in Economics. This course is an introduction to the theoretical and empirical literature on the allocation of labour and resources within households, and its relation to labour force outcomes.

Topics include families, marriage, divorce, household decisions, intra-family allocations, gender roles, fertility, well-being, human capital decisions, labour force participation, labour markets, child care, household work, earnings, child labour, cultural norms, gender-based violence. We will apply economic models of decision making, consumer choice, comparative advantage, human capital, supply and demand to create the theoretical framework that will allow us to explore historical trends and empirical findings.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop a strong understanding and use of the tools required to establish a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for economics of the family.
- Students will be able to critically assess and analyze the scholarly articles through weekly readings while fostering a strong foundational understanding of the methodologies used in the literature.
- Students will be able to apply the concepts and methodologies learned in class to their own lives and decision making.

Course Prerequisites: Can be found [here](#).

Brightspace: Brightspace is used extensively for the course. Materials for the course (including lecture notes, assignments, tutorials, additional reading materials, practice questions, solutions, and grades) will be posted on Brightspace. All students are expected to be fully functional with the system.

All announcements will be posted in Brightspace. Students are advised to check it frequently.

Lectures: Lectures are in-person. Lecture notes will be available on Brightspace as PDFs. These notes will be posted after class and are outlines of the information covered in the actual lectures. In addition to these notes, students are expected to work from their own notes and are strongly encouraged to attend all lectures to take their own notes during class.

Textbook: The course will not use a textbook, we will rely on a *reading list* and these books will serve as references:

- Blau, F. D., & Winkler, A. E. (2021). *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work* (9th ed.). Oxford University Press.
 - **Course Reserve:** There is a copy of this textbook on reserve at the library which you can check out for two hours.
- Goldin, C. D. (2021). *Career and family: women's century-long journey toward equity*. Princeton University Press. [DOI](#)
- Eswaran, M. (2020). *Why Gender Matters in Economics*. Princeton University Press. [DOI](#)
- Lundberg, S., & Voena, A. (Eds.). (2023). *Handbook of the Economics of the Family*. Vol. 1. North Holland.

Reading List: All materials will be provided in a reading list that can be accessed via Brightspace. We will thoroughly study the news and journal articles listed under each topic of the reading list.

The articles listed under ‘Additional Readings’ for each topic are not mandatory, rather supplementary to the discussion.

Grading Scheme and Assessments: The course grade is determined as follows:

	Percent of Final Grade	Due Dates
Term Paper	15%	Apr. 2, 2026.
Group Presentation and Peer Review	30%	TBD
Midterm Exam	20%	Feb. 12, 2026
Final Exam	25%	TBD.
Quizzes	10%	Weekly.

Course Components:

a. **Term Paper: 15%** There will be one assignment worth 15% of the final grade. Students will have most of the term to complete the assignment. The main objective of this assignment is for students to apply the concepts learned in class to their daily life or daily occurrences in life. Students will be provided a list of questions or ideas for entries they can do, a portion of which will be mandatory. Although it is **strongly encouraged** that work on the assignment occurs at a steady pace throughout the term, entries should be submitted together as a portfolio at the end of term.

– *Late Assignments:* Out of respect for those students who do submit assignments on time, late assignments will be marked down by 10 percent per day up to a total penalty of 50 percent unless prior arrangement (*at least a week prior to the deadline*) has been made with the instructor. Please use [this](#) form to ask for an in-course academic concession.

b. **Group Presentation and Peer Review: 30%** Students will form groups of up to six people to work with. Each group will select one journal article from the reading list to present to the class (20%). The presentation will be a multimedia recording that will be uploaded to Brightspace and will be part of the testable material. Each group will be assigned another group to conduct a peer-review of their presentation (10%).

– The group must schedule a meeting with the instructor **at least one week prior** to the deadline for their presentation (determined by when we will cover it **according to the Reading List**) to go over and finalize the presentation.

- Each recording must be different than the ones previously submitted. For instance, if one group submit a “pretend to interview the author”-type podcast, no subsequent groups can use that format or if one group does a “TED Talk”-type video, no subsequent groups can use that type of format.
- Creativity and production quality will constitute a portion of the grade.
- All members of the group must denote clearly exactly how they participated in the production of the recording.
- If a student fails to participate due to illness or family affliction, the weight of the presentation (20%) will be shifted to the final exam.
- Barring a complete collapse of social cohesion (discussed during office hours), students may not switch groups or assigned papers.

c. **Midterm Exam: 20%** There will be one 90-minute midterm (worth 20% of the final grade) on **Feb. 12, 2026**.

- **Make-up exams for the midterm will not be given** and midterms cannot be deferred (i.e., made up after the course has ended).
- If a student misses the midterm due to illness or family affliction, the weight of the missed exam will be shifted to the final exam.
- If a student misses a midterm and a final exam, only the final exam can be deferred by filling a [request for a deferral](#).

d. **Final Exam: 25%** The final examination will be a comprehensive 3-hour exam. It will be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office and a timetable will be posted once available. Please wait *until the final examination timetable is available* before making any plans to leave Victoria.

e. **Quizzes (best 10 of 11): 10%** 10-15 mins.

- Students are expected to attend every lecture, complete the readings in advance of the lecture, and participate in classroom discussion.
- Starting on the second week of class, students will be given an unannounced quiz on the readings covered previously.
- Each quiz is worth 1% of the final grade and will be 10-15 minutes long.
- Given that only the best 10 quizzes will count towards the final grade, if a student misses a quiz it will be automatically dropped.
- **No make-ups** will be given for quizzes.

• **Mandatory Course Components:** The final exam is an essential course requirement, meaning, it must be attempted in order to pass the course. Failure to complete the final exam will result in a grade of ‘N’ regardless of the cumulative percentage on the course. N is a failing grade and factors into GPA as a value of 0.

Appealing Grades: Students who have questions or concerns regarding a grade for any of the assessments should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

All concerns should be addressed during office hours (please see email policy), **with specific questions and formal arguments** (i.e., no: “why did I get this grade?” rather: “I believe there is an error in the grading because after further investigation I have found that XYZ...”).

Any concerns must be dealt with **within one week** after the grade was returned, otherwise, **the grade is final**.

Ensuring Progress and Learning:

We will start this course by exploring interesting facts about Economics of the Family. For each topic, we will start by doing a review of its theoretical framework. An important aspect of this course will be familiarizing students with empirical research, providing the intuition behind core methodologies. In order to do this, I *strongly* encourage that students practice and review the theoretical underpinnings as well as describing in a step-by-step fashion the methodology behind the papers after being covered in class. I encourage students to try to identify in plain English what the authors are aiming to answer in each of the papers. I will provide examples of this during class.

Regularly keeping up with the readings will be essential to do well in the course.

Similarly, please know that I will always be happy to provide additional support during office hours. I strongly encourage students to come to office hours to seek additional help, especially if struggling with a particular subject. While I will not provide the solutions directly, I will help students understand the concepts so that they can arrive at the answers or understanding independently.

Missing Assessments: To reiterate, quizzes components during the term have built in flexibility for all students rendering the need for in-course concessions via special arrangements unnecessary.

Should students encounter a situation where they miss the midterm, do not participate in the group project or cannot submit the term paper on the due date, they may qualify for an academic concession (as outlined above). Students are required to indicate the specific grounds on which they are requesting an academic concession and to provide a justification outlining the impact of the circumstances on their ability to complete course requirements. Please use [this](#) form to ask for an in-course academic concessions.

In case you miss the final exam, fill in a [request for a deferral](#).

Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the examination timetable has been finalized. Students who wish to finalize their travel plans at an earlier date should book flights that depart after the end of the examination period. Students *do not* qualify for an academic concession if travel plans conflict with the examination.

E-mail Correspondence: I will do my best to respond to e-mails within 24 hours on a weekday, 48 hours on a weekend, according to the following policy:

- E-mails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend class, an exam, or prolonged illness, and should include the **course name and number in the subject line**.
- The standard format for writing a letter must be used. Include full sentences include a signature that includes your **full name and V#**. Text message lingo must be avoided.
- Students are **strongly** advised to use their @uvic.ca e-mail address to avoid being flagged as spam.
- I will respond to emails posing questions that can be answered in a sentence or two. For detailed questions, please see me during office hours.
- **Questions on course material should be asked during office hours or in class.**
- I will not reply to e-mails that request information that can be found on Brightspace or the syllabus, please check those places first.
- I will not reply to e-mails regarding the results of graded material - for that, please see me during office hours (see: [Appealing Grades policy](#)).

Class Cancellations: In the event of a cancelled class due to illness, campus closure or emergency, class will be automatically postponed and lectures will resume on the next scheduled class time.

Office Hours: The default format for this term is holding office hours in-person, office: BEC 376.

If office hours are moved to Zoom, an announcement will be made in-class and via Brightspace. The Zoom link is available [here](#).

If there is a scheduling conflict with regular office hours, please email at least 48 hours in advance to make an appointment.

For **questions regarding the course material, please come prepared** and review the lecture notes and book chapters beforehand.

Electronic Devices: use of mobile phones, smart watches and laptops is **not permitted** during lectures (i.e.: they should not be in use nor visible). Students can take notes with a tablet by permission, only (please come see me during office hours). Ensure you bring something to write with (e.g.: pen, pencil) and to write on (e.g.: paper, notebook). The only exception to this policy is a CAL accommodation.

Use of Large Language Models, AI: Students are **strongly** encouraged to refrain from using AI, especially for assignments. The purpose of this class is that you learn; using AI directly restricts you from doing so as you directly obtain an output (answer, solution, definition) rather than developing the skills to conceptualize, think critically, read and revise material, research a topic. Similarly, the way many LLM generate output is vastly unknown, not only is it a black box but also, there are many issues with copyright infringement. The use of LLM has been [linked](#) to lower brain connectivity and lower attention engagement which is diametrically opposed to what we try to do in this class.

Grading Scale: all course components above will be assessed following a numerical score. Each component of the course will be then assigned the appropriate weight resulting in a total final score out of 100. The following grading scale will be used:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F or N
90 – 100	85 – 89	80 – 84	77 – 79	73 – 76	70 – 72	65 – 69	60 – 64	50 – 59	0 – 49

Students should review the University's more detailed [summary of grading](#).

Course Structure:

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Families, Household Decisions and Gender Roles (F, HD & GR)
3. Fertility, Children and Well-Being (F, C & WB)
4. Education, Labour Markets, Occupations and Earnings (E, LM, O & E)
5. Other Topics: Child Labour; Violence (Time-Permitting) (OT)

Course Calendar:

Note: The calendar and due dates are subject to minor changes depending on the pace of the course.

Week No.	Dates	Monday	Thursday	Quiz
1	Jan. 5-9	Introduction + Overview	Overview	
2	Jan. 12 - 16	F, HD & GR	F, HD & GR	x
3	Jan. 19 - 23	F, HD & GR	F, HD & GR	x
4	Jan. 26 - 30	F, HD & GR	F, C & WB	x
5	Feb. 2 - 6	F, C & WB	F, C & WB	x
6	Feb. 9 - 13	F, C & WB	Midterm	x
7	Feb. 16 - 20	Reading Break	Reading Break	
8	Feb. 23 - 27	E, LM, O & E	E, LM, O & E	x
9	Mar. 2 - 6	E, LM, O & E	E, LM, O & E	x
10	Mar. 9 - 13	E, LM, O & E	E, LM, O & E	x
11	Mar. 16 - 20	E, LM, O & E	OT	x
12	Mar. 23 - 27	OT	OT	x
13	Mar. 30 - Apr. 2	OT	OT (Term Paper due)	x

Additional Course Policies This course adheres to the [Undergraduate Course Policies](#) of the Department of Economics that deal with the following issues:

- Academic concessions
- Academic integrity (plagiarism and cheating)
- Attendance
- Grading
- Inclusivity and diversity
- Late adds
- Late assignments
- Repeating courses
- Review of an assigned grade
- Sexualized violence prevention and response
- Students with a disability
- Term assignments and debarment from examinations
- Travel plans
- Waitlists

The following policies are explicitly included because of their importance.

Waitlist Policies

- Instructors have no discretion to admit waitlisted students or raise the cap on the course.
- Students on the waitlist should discuss with the instructor how to ensure they are not behind with coursework in the event they are admitted.
- Registered students who do not participate as specified in this outline during the first 7 calendar days from the start of the course may be dropped from the course.
- Registered students who decide not to take the course are responsible for dropping the course, and are urged to do so promptly out of courtesy toward waitlisted students.
- Waitlist offers cease after the last date for adding courses irrespective of published waitlists.

Academic Integrity Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity

as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) in the University Calendar, is subject to penalty by the University.

Review [What is Plagiarism](#) for the definition of plagiarism. **Note:** Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

Student Code of Conduct The Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences Faculties have adopted this *Student code of conduct*. Please, review.

University Policies:

- University Calendar - Section “[Information for all students](#).”
- [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Diversity / EDI](#)
- [Equity statement](#)
- [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Policy on Human Rights, Equity and Fairness](#) - The University is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

Sexualized Violence Prevention & Response

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously, and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. Students are encouraged to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting www.uvic.ca/svp. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Contact svpcoordinator@uvic.ca.

Resources for Students [UVic Learn Anywhere](#) - UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.

[Centre for Accessible Learning](#) - Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, you are free to approach me; however, you must register with the [Centre for Accessible Learning \(CAL\)](#) for formal arrangements to be made. The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

[Centre for Academic Communication](#) - Offers coaching on [academic integrity](#), including preventing accidental plagiarism. Provides support to students with time management, reading, writing, speaking, understanding academic expectations, and other aspects of academic communication as well as creating academic posters, blogposts, PowerPoint slides, and e-portfolios.

[Health Services](#) - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.

[Support Connect](#) - a 24/7 mental health support service for students

- Toll-free (calls from North America): 1-844-773-1427
- International collect calls: 1-250-999-7621

Counselling Services - Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.

Indigenous Student Services - Indigenous UVic students have access to many sources of support on campus. Before, during and after your time at UVic, you are encouraged to explore programs and services available to you, such as [Indigenous counselling services](#) and the [Elders in Residence](#), as well as non-academic programs that may be of interest to you.

International Student Support - The University of Victoria offers a number of resources to support international students as they pursue their studies. UVic's International Centre for Students is the primary office supporting international students on campus at the university-wide level and provides various supportive program through the [UVic Global Community Initiative](#), including a Mentorship Program and Conversation Partner Program.

For academic advising-related questions, students in the Economics Department are also encouraged to meet with the Economics Undergraduate Advisor (ecadvice@uvic.ca) as well as an academic advisor in the [Academic Advising Centre](#) early in their studies to help map out a plan to declare a major and complete university program requirements. Other resources include the [Centre for Academic Communication](#) and the [Math and Stats Assistance Centre](#).

The International Student Liasson in the Economics Department is Dr. Paul Schure who can help you connect with other international and domestic students in the Department. His email address is schure@uvic.ca. Please, reach out if you are interested.

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future.

When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to the [CES log-in](#). You will use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be completed on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

- What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
- Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

Educational Technology Involving Storage Outside Canada

The following educational technologies, which stores or accesses your personal information outside Canada, is required for this course: Zoom. I will make you aware if this list changes. Personal information is required by the service. The privacy policy and the terms of use list the personal information stored outside of Canada and are available at <https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/>. Please read these documents. If you are not comfortable with your personal information being stored outside of Canada, please speak to me within the first week of class about using an alternative (such as using an alias or nickname). Otherwise, by continuing in this course, you agree to the use of the educational technology in the course and the storage of personal information outside of Canada.

Agreement:

I, _____ (student name), have read the entirety of the course outline and fully understand all course requirements for ECON 339. By signing this document, I agree to all the course policies set out in the syllabus, especially those related to Academic Integrity.

Group Members:

Signature

Once completed, please submit a signed copy of this page only to the Assignments > Syllabus Agreement Dropbox on Brightspace.