

ECON 339 (A01): ECONOMICS OF THE FAMILY

Winter Session: 2026 09 First Term – Fall 2026 ; **CRN:** 11130 (A01) **Units:** 1.5.

Lectures: Monday and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. **Cornett Building**, room: **A120**.

University of Victoria Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ 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: TBD.

Teaching and Assessment Modality: This course is face-to-face and **all** exams are held in person.

Course Content:

Families, as economic entities and the behaviour 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 economic agents as units, 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](#).

Repeating Courses: A student may not attempt a course a third time without the prior approval of the Dean of the Faculty and the Chair of the Department in which the course is offered unless the calendar course entry states that the course may be repeated for additional credit. A student who has not received this approval may be deregistered from the course at any point and may be asked to withdraw from his or her declared or intended program.

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](#).

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.

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, including Crowdmark.

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 and are strongly encouraged to attend all lectures to take their own notes during class.

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

	Percent of Final Grade	Due Dates
Term Paper + Presentation	20%	Dec. 7, 2026.
Group Presentation and Peer Review	25%	TBD
Midterm Exam	25%	Oct. 19, 2026
Final Exam	25%	TBD.
Quizzes (5)	5%	Weekly
Extra Credit	up to +10%	Randomly.

Course Components:

- Term Paper: 20%** There will be one assignment worth 20% 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.
 - *Presentation:* to ensure students work independently, they must orally present their findings from the term paper during office hours in addition to submitting a written document. This presentation is to be scheduled **following** the completion of the term paper.
 - *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: 25%** Students will form groups of up to six people to work with (students may choose to do it on their own, as a “group” of one). Each group will select one journal article from the reading list (see: Optional Papers) to present to the class (20%). The presentation will be a multimedia recording (between 5 - 10 minutes long) that will be uploaded to Brightspace and will be part of the testable material. Each student will then be assigned another group to conduct a peer-review of their presentation (5%).

- The group must schedule a meeting with the instructor **at least one week prior** to the deadline for their presentation (depending on when we cover the material in the order **of 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 submits a “pretend to interview the author”-type podcast, no subsequent groups can use that format; 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 and contributed to the production of the recording.
- Students can opt out of the multimedia portion of the group presentation and the weight of the presentation (20%) will be shifted to the final exam. Students who choose to do this must still conduct a peer review.
- 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: 25%** There will be one 90-minute midterm (worth 25% of the final grade) on **Oct. 19, 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 5 of 6): 5%** 10-15 mins, unannounced.

- 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 5 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.
- f. **Extra Credit: Up to 10%** Throughout the course, students will have the opportunity to participate in in-class exercises related to the course material for the opportunity to obtain extra credit (each exercise worth 0.25 - 1 points for a maximum total of 10 points). It is worth reiterating that these are conducted **during class** and will **only be available** to students who (a.) come to class and (b.) participate. There will never be make-ups for extra credit, if a student did not attend class on the day these exercises were offered, they miss the opportunity of obtaining extra credit entirely, no exceptions.
- **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 the 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 once they are 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 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 during 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 go to 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.

If LLM use is suspected in *any* written deliverable, it will be treated as a violation of UVic's [Policy on Academic Integrity](#), and a complaint will be filed accordingly. The University reserves the right to use plagiarism and AI detection software to verify the authenticity of submitted work.

Extremely limited use of AI for formatting or looking up software syntax is hesitantly tolerated; if used it **must** be disclosed in a brief appendix. Use beyond these purposes is strictly prohibited.

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
1	Sept. 7 - 11	Labour Day	Introduction and Overview
2	Sept. 14 - 18	Overview + F, HD & GR	F, HD & GR
3	Sept. 21 - 25	F, HD & GR	F, HD & GR
4	Sept. 28 - Oct. 2	F, HD & GR	F, C & WB
5	Oct. 5 - Oct. 9	F, C & WB	F, C & WB
6	Oct. 12 - 16	Thanksgiving Break	F, C & WB
7	Oct. 19 - 23	Midterm	E, LM, O & E
8	Oct. 26 - 30	E, LM, O & E	E, LM, O & E
9	Nov. 2 - 6	E, LM, O & E	E, LM, O & E
10	Nov. 9 - 13	Reading Break	E, LM, O & E
11	Nov. 16 - 20	E, LM, O & E	E, LM, O & E
12	Nov. 23 - 27	OT	OT
13	Nov. 30 - Dec. 4	OT	OT
14	Dec. 7 - 10	OT (Term Paper due)	Exams Begin

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 is fundamental to all scholarly work. At the University of Victoria (UVic), students are expected to comply with the university's academic regulations and must not engage in acts of dishonesty, falsification, misrepresentation, or deception in any academic work. Violations of the [University's academic integrity policy](#) may result in academic or disciplinary consequences.

Review [Citation Help](#) and the definition of plagiarism. **Note:** Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

Appeals: Depending on the nature of your concern, the order in which you should normally try to resolve the matter is:

1. the course instructor;
2. the Associate Chair: econassoc@uvic.ca;
3. the Associate Dean of Academic Advising;
4. the Senate.

If you're seeking a formal review of an assigned grade, you should also consult the regulations in the academic calendar regarding [review of an assigned grade](#).

University Policies and Statements:

Please note that this course is executed in a manner consistent with these University statements and policies.

- University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students.](#)"
- [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Academic Concession Regulations, Academic Concession and Accommodation](#), Academic Accommodation - Policy AC1205
- [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Diversity / EDI](#)
- [Equity Statement](#)
- [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
- [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)

Resources for Students:

- [Student Wellness](#)
- [Centre for Accessible Learning](#)
- [UVic Learn](#). UVic Learn is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
- [Library Resources](#)
- Academic Skills Centre ([ASC](#))
- Learning Assistance Program ([LAP](#))
- [Academic Advising](#)
- Economics Undergraduate Advising: ecadvice@uvic.ca
- [Student Awards and Financial Aid](#)
- [International Student Advising](#)
- Indigenous student services ([ISS](#))
- [Student groups and resources](#) including UVic [Ombudsperson](#).

Student Experience of Learning (SEL Survey)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential SEL survey 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.

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.