

INAF 345: Marriage, Family Structure and Economic Development
Georgetown University

Class Time: Wednesday, 4:15pm—6:05pm

Location: Walsh 394

Instructor: Shareen Joshi

Office: ICC 520B

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2pm—3pm OR by appointment!

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Course Description

Families and households are universal in world history. Their specific forms, however, vary widely through time and across space. This course aims to provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse family structures, as well as the connections between the family life and broader socio-economic environment in which they are embedded. The course will focus on the way conditions in the economy, labor market, households, and culture of a society can influence the well-being and functioning of individuals as well as families. In addition, the course investigates the reverse interaction—how relationships, patterns and decisions within the family may affect the behavior and performance of markets, enterprises, economic development and the overall economy.

The course will be divided into three parts. The first part will provide an overview of general concepts that affect family structure(s) across the world: biology, environment, economics, and religion are some of these. The second part of the course will develop insights into the conditions under which specific forms of marriage and family structure are likely to emerge. The final part of the course will examine economic decisions within the family such as the number of children, investments in health and education. The role of policy in influencing such decisions, particularly in the developing world, will also be discussed.

Textbooks and Readings

There is no official textbook for this class. Under each topic, there will be a set of papers and articles from books. In some cases, paper copies will be provided in class. In all other cases, students will be expected to consult the syllabus or else the class website and download and print the required readings.

Each topic of the syllabus will present perspectives from economics (within which there are competing “schools of thought”) as well as history, sociology, psychology and anthropology. We will read chapters of certain books as well as a variety of papers. Some parts of the readings may be quite technical. Please do not feel obliged to understand the technical material prior to class. Pay attention to the assumptions, understand the conclusions of the analysis and read the discussion and implications carefully.

Evaluation

Grades for this course will be based on two mid-term take-home exams (25% each), a final take-home exam (30%) and weekly reading comments (20%).

Take-home exams: The exams will either consist of a single question, or several short questions, based on the readings. You will be asked to define basic terms, compare perspectives from the readings, or else comment on a contemporary issue based on the knowledge that you have gathered from the readings and class discussion. The mid-term exam will be handed out more than a week before its due date (marked on the syllabus). For students who have done the readings ahead of time, understood them

and followed class discussion, mid-term exams are designed to be completed in about 3-5 hours. The expected length of the write-up for this exam is about 6 double-spaced pages (approximately).

The final exam will be handed out on the last day of class, and will be due back on December 16th, at 5pm. This exam will be only slightly longer than the mid-terms, but will cover the entire syllabus.

In the case of both the mid-term and final, paper-copies of all exams should be turned in under my office door by the due date and due time. If you have any trouble meeting the deadline (out-of-town trips, family situations, other coursework, etc.) you must discuss this with me before the exam is handed out. Once the exam is handed out, there will be no last-minute extensions unless accompanied by a Dean's note.

For those who are interested in writing a paper instead of taking the take-home exam, I am willing to waive the take-home exam requirement. Please come and talk to me if you want to write a paper. You must get my explicit approval before you get a waiver from any take-home exam. I will not be able to accept papers that are handed over without a careful discussion ahead of time.

Weekly reading comment: Weekly reading comments are due by **1pm on the day of class**, via my website www.shareenjoshi.com (under "Teaching > Marriage, Family Structure and Economic Development"). Your responses must be approximately 150--300 words (longer or shorter is okay, just remember that I value content). I will *sometimes* post a question for you to reflect on and/or write about. When I do not post a question however you should write on something that interests you. This could be any of the following: (a) a very basic summary of the readings (or what you thought was most important), (b) an idea in the readings that you found particularly interesting, insightful, pernicious or unconvincing; and (c) a connection that you find interesting between current readings and past readings. You are welcome to deviate from this list and be creative about what you write, but remember that in evaluating/grading these comments, I will try to measure how carefully you have read and paid attention to what was being covered. To do well on these assignments, read actively and carefully, taking notes as you go along. Leave a little time for reflection so that you can think about what you found interesting.

Some important things to remember

- Class attendance is mandatory (FYI, not because I think I'm awesome and worth it, but more because we all want to listen to your reactions and questions, and we can't do that if you aren't there). If there is ever a situation where you can't make it, please let me know ahead of time.
- Your written work should be intellectually honest. Any ideas or language that is not your own should be properly and clearly cited. If you ever use non-academic online websites to inform yourself of any concepts (example: Wikipedia), be very careful about what information you use and cite those sources too. You are free to choose your own citation system, but make sure that you use it RIGOROUSLY.
- You are always welcome to come and talk to me about the course. I am available to talk in person at office hours or alternate times that work better for you. I am also reachable by email and phone. I try to respond to my email within 24 hours, but there are times when I get too much mail to do so. If you don't hear from me within 24 hours, please feel free to send me a second email, call me or stop by!

You are welcome to give me feedback on any aspect of the course. I welcome insights into how the course can be improved. In fact, I prefer that you share your feedback with me as we go along (so I can fix any problems) rather than wait till the end of the course.

Most important of all, enjoy this course!

COURSE OUTLINE

Most readings will be provided on blackboard and some will also be distributed in class. Changes to this list will be announced in class and at the course website.

I. BASIC CONCEPTS

1. September 16th: Origins of marriage

Key topics: What exactly is a family? What is marriage? Are there any universal features of marriage and family structure? How can we learn about early family structures? Is this useful? What does it tell us about society today?

- Gough, K., 1971, "[The Origin of the Family](#)", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 33, 760-770.
- Eleanor Leacock. 1978. "[Women's Status in Egalitarian Society](#)," *Current Anthropology*. 19, 2: 225-59.
- Coontz, Stephanie, Chapters 1—4, *Marriage: A History*, Penguin Books.
- Waite, L. J., "Does marriage matter?" *Demography*, Vol 32, No. 4, pp 483—507.

2. September 23rd: The economics of marriage and the division of labor

Key topics: How does the division of labor by sex relate to the institution of marriage? What are the costs of this division of labor, and who bears them? How should we evaluate the costs and benefits?

- Becker, *A Treatise on the Family*. Chapter 2 DON'T READ BEFORE CLASS!
- Hartford, Tim, "[The Economics of Marriage](#)" and "[Divorce is good for women](#)", In *The Logic of Life: The Rational Economics of an Irrational World*, Random House. Excerpts are made available through Slate.com
- Marianne Ferber, "A Feminist Critique of the Neoclassical Theory of the Family", Chapter 1, In: *Women, Family and Work: Writings on the Economics of Gender*, Edited by Karine S. Moe, Blackwell Publishing.
- Boserup, Ester, 1970, "Male and Female Farming Systems", Chapter 1 in: *Women's Role in Economic Development*, Earthscan Publications Limited, London.

OPTIONAL PAPERS:

- Coleman, Mary T. and John Pencavel, "[Trends in Market Work Behavior of Women since 1940](#)", *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 46 (4), July 1993, 653-676.
- Nancy Folbre & Elissa Braunstein, 2000. "[To Honor and Obey: Efficiency, Inequality and Patriarchal Property Rights](#)," Published Studies ps11, Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

3. September 30th: Marriage, politics and religion

Key topics: How does the structure of the family shape affect political and religious institutions? How do these institutions impact the structure of families? We look at the case of Christianity and Islam.

- Coontz, Stephanie, Chapters 4—8, entitled "Soap Operas of the Ancient World", "Something Borrowed: The Marital Legacy of the Classical World and Early Christianity", "Playing the Bishop, Capturing the Queen: Aristocratic Marriages in Early Medieval Europe", "How the other 95% Wed: Marriage Among the Common Folk in the Middle Ages", and "Something Old, Something New: Western European Marriage at the Dawn of the Modern Age", All in: *Marriage: A History*, Penguin Books. On e-reserve.
- Bianquis, Thierry, 1996, "The Family in Arab Islam", Chapter 16, In: *A History of the Family, Volume I*. Harvard University Press.

- Utley, Jon Basil, 2006, Tribes, Veils, and Democracy: Understanding Muslim societies. <http://www.antiwar.com/utley/?articleid=8900>. April 26.

4. October 7th: Family Structure, Institutions and Economic Change

Key topics: How do different types of kinship systems, marriage systems and household systems affect economic development? This is a broad topic so we will focus on two key areas: (i) Household structure and industrialization; and (ii) inheritance laws in the Middle East versus Europe.

- DeLong, Bradford, “[Bequests: An Historical Perspective](#)”. Mimeo.
- A. Greif, 2005, [Family Structure, Institutions, and Growth: The Origin and Implications of Western Corporatism](#)
- T. Kuran; [The Islamic Commercial Crisis: Institutional Roots of Economic Underdevelopment in the Middle East.](#)” *Journal of Economic History*, 63 (June 2003): 414-46.
- Alston, L. J. and M. O. Schapiro, “[Inheritance Laws Across Colonies: Causes and Consequences](#)”, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Jun., 1984), pp. 277-287

OCTOBER 9th, 5pm: DUE DATE FOR TAKE-HOME EXAM 1

FORMS OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

5. October 14th: Patriarchy

Key topics: What is patriarchy? How prevalent is it? What are the general explanations for this practice? Who benefits most from patriarchal systems? Does the system have any costs? Who bears them?

- **Dadi’s family – video**
- Roland Lardinois, “The World Order and the Family Institution in India”, Chapter 15, In Burguire, Klapisch-Zuber, Segalen, and Zonabend (eds.), 1996, *A History of the Family*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts. Available under e-reserve.
- Cain, Mead, Syeda Rokeya Khanam and Shamsun Nahar, 1979, “Class, Patriarchy, and Women's Work in Bangladesh”, *Population & Development Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 405-438.
- Amartya Sen, 1990, “More than 100 Million Women are Missing”, at: <http://ucatlans.ucsc.edu/gender/Sen100M.html>

6. October 21st and 28th: Polygyny and Polyandry

Key topics: What is polygamy? What is polyandry? How prevalent are they? Under what conditions do they emerge? Who benefits most? Does the system have any costs? Who bears them?

- African family
- Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: Why we are the way we are, The new science of evolutionary psychology*, Chapter 4: The Marriage Market, pages 93—107
- Boserup, Ester, 1970, “The Economics of Polygyny” and “The Loss of Status Under European Rule”, Chapters 2 and 3 in: *Women’s Role in Economic Development*, Earthscan Publications Limited, London.
- Goldstein, Melvyn C. 1971. ["Stratification, Polyandry, and Family Structure in Central Tibet"](#), *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 27(1): 64-74.
- Goldstein, Melvyn C. 1987. ["When Brothers Share a Wife"](#), *Natural History*, 96(3):109-112.

7. November 4th: Consanguinity

Key topics: What is consanguinity? How prevalent is it today? How common was this practice in pre-modern times? Under what conditions was this system of marriage favored? Does it have any costs? Who bears them?

- Slate, 2002, “[The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Surname: What's wrong with marrying your cousin?](#)”
- Bittles, A., 2001, “A Background Summary of Consanguineous Marriage” at <http://www.consang.net/index.php/Summary>
- Sailer, Steve, 2003, Cousin Marriage Conundrum: The ancient practice discourages democratic nation-building. *The American Conservative*, Jan 13, 20-22.
- Take the kinship [tutorial](#) to understand the importance of kinship and marriage

8. November 11th: Marriage transactions: dowry and bride-price

Key topics: The structure and functioning of marriage markets, the practices of dowry and bride-price, theories that explain the causes and consequences of dowry, bride-price and other types of payments at marriage

- Botticini, M., 1999, “[A Loveless Economy? Intergenerational Altruism and the Marriage Market in a Tuscan Town, 1415-1436](#)”, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 59, No. 1., pp. 104-121.
- Botticini, M. and A. Siow, 2003, “[Why Dowries?](#)” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 93, No. 4, pp. 1385-1398.
- Anderson, S., 2007, “The Economics of Dowry and Bride Price”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 21, No. 4, 151–174

9. November 18th: Nuclear versus extended households

Key topics:(i) Differences in the structure, authority structure, rules of formation and rules of dissolution of nuclear and extended households, (ii) Did Europe move from a system of extended to nuclear families? When did this transition occur? Why? (ii) Methods used to analyze family structure in the past.

- John Hajnal, 1982, “[Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation Systems](#)”, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3., pp. 449-494.
- Lee, Gary, 1999, “Comparative Perspectives”, In: *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, Editors: Marvin B. Sussman, Suzanne K. Steinmetz, Gary W. Peterson, Springer, New York.
- Goode, William, 1963, “World Changes in Family Patterns” and “Conclusion” in *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, New York: The Free Press.

NOVEMBER 20th, 5pm: DUE DATE FOR TAKE-HOME EXAM 1.

FAMILY STRUCTURE, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

Note: Readings for this section are likely to change, so don't print them out too far ahead of time!

10. November 25th and December 2nd: Family, fertility and the demographic transition

Key topics: What determines family size? Does it matter? Should the government regulate fertility and/or family size in the worlds poorer countries? Why? Why not? What should policies aimed at reducing fertility look like? What are some of the current new demographic challenges?

- Browse through the Population Reference Bureau's [Population Handbook](#).
- Ronald Lee, 2003, “The Demographic Transition: Three Centuries of Fundamental Change”, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 167-190.

- Judith Seltzer, 2002, Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Origins and Evolution of Family Planning Programs in Developing Countries*, Pages 1---44 Available at: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1276/
- Naila Kabeer, 1996, "[Gender, Demographic Transition and the Economics of Family Size: Population Policy for a Human-Centred Development](#)", Read Section 3 and beyond only.
- Joshi and Schultz, 2009, [Family Planning and Economic Well-Being: New Evidence From Bangladesh](#), From: Population Research Bureau, written by James Gribble and Maj Lis Voss.
- Dreze and Sen, "India and China", read only the sub-section entitled "Coercion, Population and Fertility", In: *India: Development and Participation*, Pages 134—140. Available on electronic reserve, by searching under my name.
- Working Group on Factors Affecting Contraceptive Use, National Research Council, 1993, [Factors Affecting Contraceptive Use In Sub-Saharan Africa](#), Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

An interesting side topic: The new challenge of aging populations

- Haub, C., 2007, "[Global Aging and the Demographic Divide](#)", *Public Policy & Aging Report* 17, no. 4.
- Peterson, Peter G., 1999, "[Gray Dawn: The Global Aging Crisis](#)", *Foreign Affairs*.

11. December 9th: The importance of female education, and the role of policy

Key questions: How can our understanding of household structure help us design policies aimed at improving health and education in the developing world? What are some recent examples of successful programs in these areas?

- Buvinic M. and E. King, 2007, "Smart Economics", June 2007, *Finance and Development*, Volume 44, Number 2
- Gertler, Paul. 2004. "[Do Conditional Cash Transfers Improve Child Health? Evidence from PROGRESA's Control Randomized Experiment.](#)" *American Economic Review* 94(2):336-341.
- Schultz, Paul, 2001, "Why Governments Should Invest More To Educate Girls", *World Development*, 30(2): 207-225.
- A case-study of SEWA
- Murdoch J. (1999) [The Microfinance Promise](#), *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol.37, pp.1565-1614.