

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA – DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
ECON 2559: ECONOMICS OF GENDER AT WORK

Fall 2023

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:15pm

Location: Monroe 130

Professor [Amalia Miller](#)

Email: armiller@virginia.edu

Office hours: Thursdays, 10am-noon, Monroe 239

UVA Canvas Page: <https://canvas.its.virginia.edu/courses/78390>

Teaching Assistants

Mo Van de Sompel, Email: mv8zr@virginia.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays, 3pm-4pm

Sections: Mondays 5pm and 6pm

Camille Wixon, Email: caw2va@virginia.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays, 10am-11am

Sections: Mondays 7pm and 8pm

Course Description

This introductory course explores economic approaches to investigating and understanding gender differences in workplace outcomes, with an emphasis on gender pay gaps. Students will learn about how economists measure and interpret gender pay gaps, and about the remarkable transformations that have taken place in women's earnings, labor market participation and workplace outcomes over the past century. We will examine absolute changes as well as gender comparisons. Students will learn about various hypothesized sources for historical and persistent gender differences in earnings, including the role of non-market factors such as public policy and government programs. In examining these potential explanations for gender gaps, students will learn to apply introductory-level theoretical and empirical economics tools and concepts to the study of workplace gender inequality.

Course Objectives

This course has three main aims. First, students will learn about why gender is an important factor to consider in any economic analysis of labor market outcomes. Second, students will be exposed to a variety of core economics concepts and methods and see how they can be applied to investigate and interpret gender differences in workplace outcomes. The third course aim is to help prepare students for their future work lives by providing them with an economic overview of current and historical work-related gender issues.

Prerequisites

This course does not require any prior background in economic theory or methods or knowledge of Calculus. Students will be introduced to certain quantitative methods used by economists and should expect to engage with mathematical and statistical tools.

Some of the topics we examine can be controversial. Students are therefore also expected to come to class with an open and curious attitude and to show respect and consideration for other class members at all times.

Readings

There is no textbook for this class. Lecture slides and readings will be made available to you through the course page at *UVA Canvas*.

Assessment

Your final grade will be based on:

Assignments	50%
Midterm Examination	20%
Final Examination	30%

Assignments

Students are expected to submit completed homework assignments in hard copy to a TA at the start of class. Because assignments may be discussed during lecture, late work will not be accepted for official grading under any circumstances. If you know in advance that you will be absent from class, it is your responsibility to ensure delivery of your assignment on time.

Students are permitted to discuss assignments with one another. However, each student will be expected to write up and submit their own homework independently, and submissions will be scored on an individual basis.

Assignments will each be worth up to 10% of your final grade. One “extra” homework will be assigned over the course of the semester, allowing students to drop their assignment with the lowest score from their final grade. The tentative dates for assignments are (subject to possible change) the following Thursdays: August 31, September 14, September 28, October 26, November 16, and November 30.

Examinations

There will be two exams in this course. The first is an in-class midterm exam on Tuesday, October 10, during the regular meeting time. The second is scheduled during final exam period on Thursday, December 14, from 9am to noon.

The midterm will cover material from the first half of the course. The final will be cumulative, covering the full semester. Both exams are closed-book and closed-notes. Students are not permitted to access their phones, computers or other electronic devices during exams.

If you miss the midterm for a legitimate personal reason (e.g., illness, death in the family), your final exam will count for 50% of your final grade. If you miss the midterm without a legitimate reason, you will receive a zero grade on the midterm. If you will be traveling with a university-sponsored group on the date of the midterm, you must inform your TA and the professor at least two weeks in advance to make arrangements.

Accommodations

Students requesting accommodation for disability must submit their requests through the Student Disability Access Center ([SDAC](#)). It is the student's responsibility to present this paperwork in a timely fashion and follow up with the instructor about the accommodations being offered.

Students who wish to request academic accommodations for a religious observance or for military deployment should submit their request in writing directly to the instructor of the course.

Regrade Policy

Requests for re-grades of written assignments or the midterm exam must be submitted in writing to a TA with the entire assignment or exam within one week of the return of that graded assignment or exam. If a re-grade request is based on discrepancies between the grading received by two students, both students must submit their graded material for a re-grade. Please note that the entire problem set or exam, not just the part in question, is subject to re-grade. Your total score may increase or decrease as a result.

Recording Policy

Students and instructors are prohibited from photographing, recording audio or video from, or live-streaming, any class meetings. This includes lectures, discussions, and office hours, and meetings that take place online, in person, or in hybrid format. This policy follows university guidelines (available [here](#)), and aims to protect the privacy of individuals in the class and to promote an atmosphere that is conducive to free and open dialogue.

Electronic Device Usage

Electronic devices, including but not limited to phones, tablets, and personal computers, are permitted in class exclusively for the purpose of taking notes. Recognizing that many students rely on these tools for note-taking, this use is fully supported. The use of electronic devices to engage in activities unrelated to the class, such as watching movies, following sporting events, or playing video games, is strictly forbidden.

Prospective Schedule of Topics

1. Gender Pay Gaps: Facts and Trends

- Measurement of gender gaps
- Facts about gender gaps over time, across places and groups
- Adjusted and unadjusted gaps; explained and unexplained variation

2. How Are Wages Determined?

- Economic theory of labor market equilibrium
- Factors affecting labor supply and labor demand

3. Gender Differences in Labor Supply

- Economic theory of labor supply
- Labor supply with household production
- Labor supply and government programs

4. Children and Family Policy

- Effects of children on parental labor supply, earnings
- Effects of child-related policies: childcare subsidies, family leave
- Household bargaining

5. Gender Differences in Productivity and Preferences

- Skills, ability, and human capital
- Investments in formal schooling, on-the-job training
- Gender differences in preferences over non-wage job features
- Sorting into field of study, occupation, employer

6. Labor Market Discrimination and Gender Policy

- Economic theories of labor market discrimination: preferences and information
- Measurement of discrimination: direct and indirect methods
- Anti-discrimination and equal pay rules
- Gender quotas and affirmative action