

Gendering Political Economy

WAGS 311

Amherst College

Spring 2012

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM in WEBS 220

Course website:

<https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/courses/1112S/WAGS/WAGS-311-1112S>

Professor Nancy Folbre

Department of Economics, UMass-Amherst

Thompson Hall 836

Office phone: 413-545-3283

Email: folbre@econs.umass.edu

Office hours: immediately after class on Mondays and Wednesdays or by appointment

This course will explore the interface between feminist theory and political economy from both directions. It will ask how the social construction of gender has shaped the discourse of economics, with a strong emphasis on its intellectual history in Britain, the U.S., and France. It will also explore a variety of ways that economic theory can help explain the evolution of gender inequality, with particular attention to insights of recent behavioral and experimental economics research. No formal background in economics is necessary, but participants must have a high level of intellectual curiosity about social science in general, and economics in particular. They should also be prepared to tackle some technical topics including utility maximization, game theory, statistical analysis, and experimental methodologies. Course pedagogy will emphasize active learning, requiring consistent class participation, a number of small written assignments and oral presentations, and a final research paper.

My lectures in this class will never exceed thirty minutes. I expect students to come to class prepared for discussion and will call upon everyone to participate. I rely on a seating chart to learn student's names and also use it to take attendance.

Classes will often include free-writing exercises where I ask students to take ten minutes to write down their ideas about a particular subject. Some of these are specified in advance on the syllabus. Others will emerge spontaneously from discussion. These exercises will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Every student will be required to make several ten-minute presentations on a supplemental reading or topic. The number will depend on the number of students enrolled. You will need to sign up for this presentation in advance. You are not limited to the supplemental readings or topics that are listed—feel free to suggest alternatives, but please clear them with me in advance.

Grading and evaluation. 20% of your grade will be based on your class presentation, 30% on three short writing assignments (about 5 pages each), and 50% on your research paper (see description below). The short writing assignments will be discussed and determined by the class, because they depend in part on class size. One or two of them may be based on class

presentations on supplemental readings. One or two of them may be similar to take-home exams—that is, essays written in response to a specific question.

Your research paper should address an issue related to the theme of the course in 15-20 double-spaced pages, including a reference list. The topic and outline for this paper must be approved by the instructor no later than April 18. The final paper is due by 5PM on May 11.

The supplemental readings and topic lists are intended to help promote class discussion but also to give you ideas for your research paper.

Required Books Available at Food for Thought Books in Amherst:

Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (New York: New Press, 2003).

Nancy Folbre, *Greed, Lust, and Gender: A History of Economic Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

PLEASE COMPLETE THE REQUIRED READING BY THE FIRST CLASS MEETING OF THE WEEK (NORMALLY MONDAY)

Week 1: Overview of the Political Economy of Gender

January 23: Introductions, logistics, and overview. Is economics a science? What does “science” mean?

January 25: Economics, Science, and Rhetoric
Performance of Gordon Gekko’s famous [monologue](#) from Oliver Stone’s film *Wall Street*.

Required Reading:

Donald N. McCloskey, “The Poverty of Economic Modernism” and “From Methodology to Rhetoric”, pp. 3-32 in McCloskey, *The Rhetoric of Economics*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Introduction, pp. xix – xxxiii in Nancy Folbre, *Greed, Lust, and Gender*. New York: Oxford, 2009.

Supplemental Readings:

Donald N. McCloskey, “Anti- Anti-Rhetoric” or “The Rhetoric of Significance Tests” from *The Rhetoric of Economics*.

Week 2: Invisible Hearts

January 30. Gender and self interest, and how they connect. Are women more altruistic than men? Or altruistic in different ways? (We will return to this question later in the course).

February 1. The Prisoner's Dilemma and other games.

Required Reading: Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (New York: New Press, 2003). passim. (Note that Chapter 5 will come up in Week 4 regarding welfare reform).

Two New York Times Economix blogs: Edward Glaeser, "[The Moral Heart of Economics](http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/25/the-moral-heart-of-economics/)"

and Nancy Folbre, "[The Weak Heart of Economics](http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/31/the-weak-heart-of-economics/),"

Supplemental Reading:

Russell Roberts, *The Invisible Heart*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Week 3: Defining Virtues and Moral Sentiments

February 6: Introduction to early political theory and political economy.

Performance and in-class discussion of Bernard de Mandeville, [*The Grumbling Hive*](#)

February 8: Adam Smith meets the Marquis de Sade.

Required readings:

Chapters 1-7 (pp.1-110), *Greed, Lust and Gender*

Nancy Folbre, NYT blog post, "[Utopian Capitalism](http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/26/utopian-capitalism/)"

Supplemental reading/topics:

Adam Smith, excerpt from *The Moral Sentiments* (Part 1, Section 1, Chapters 1-2), at McMaster University Archive,
<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/smith/moral.1>

Adam Smith, excerpt from *The Wealth of Nations* (Book 1, Chapters 1-2) at McMaster University Archive,
<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/smith/wealth/wealbk01>

Feel free to take a look at some of De Sade's writings to discuss them, but be mindful that you and/or those you discuss them with may find them disturbing.

Week 4. Population, Production, and Reproduction

February 13: Lecture and discussion with a focus on Malthus.

February 15: Lecture and discussion with focus on Ricardo.

Required readings:

Chapters 8-10, (pp.111-157), *Greed, Lust, and Gender*

Thomas Robert Malthus, *Essay on Population*, 1798 edition, Chapters 1 and 15, available from McMaster University Archive at

<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/malthus/popu.txt>

Supplemental readings/topics

Poor Law Commissioners Report of 1834, section concerning Settlement and Bastardy

<http://www.econlib.org/LIBRARY/YPDBooks/Reports/rptPLC.html>

David Ricardo, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, (1821 edition) pages 85-96 of Chapter 7, "On Foreign Trade," Value," available from

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/ricardo/tax/ch07.htm>

How did debate over the Poor Law in Britain resemble welfare reform in the U.S. in 1996?

Week 5. The Early Socialist Feminists

February 20: Lecture and discussion with a focus on Mill and Taylor.

February 22. Lecture and discussion with a focus on Thompson and Wheeler.

Required readings

Chapters 11-12 (pp. 158-189), *Greed, Lust and Gender*

Anna Wheeler and William Thompson, excerpt from *Appeal of One-Half the Human Race* at <http://www.leadstrinity.ac.uk/histcourse/suffrage/document/appealoha.htm>

Supplemental readings/topics:

Browse website on utopian socialism at

<http://www.marxists.org/subject/utopian/index.htm>

Or, choose a piece of utopian feminist science fiction such as Sherri Tepper's *Gate to Women's Country*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, or Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

Week 6. The Early Liberal Feminists

February 27: Lecture and discussion with focus on Mill and Taylor

February 29: Lecture and discussion with focus on Stanton and Anthony

In class exercise—how does 21st century feminism compare with that of the 19th century?

Required readings:

Chapters 13-14 (pp. 190-217), *Greed, Lust and Gender*

John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, available at

<http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/jsmill/JS-Mill-Subjection-of-Women6x9.pdf>

Supplemental readings/viewing:

Not for Ourselves Alone, a Ken Burns PBS documentary at

<http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/movement/index.html>

Harriet Martineau, "The Political Non-Existence of Women" (the second section of *Society in America*); the entire document is available at:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/fem/martineau.htm>

How does 19th century feminism differ from what we think of as feminism today?

Week 7. Marxists and Marshallians

March 5: Marx, Engels, and Bebel

March 7: Jevons, Marshall, and fellow-travellers

Required Readings:

Chapter 15-18 (p. 222-286), *Greed, Lust and Gender*

Supplemental Readings:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>

August Bebel, *Woman and Socialism*, available at

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/bebel/1879/woman-socialism/index.htm>

Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*
Book 1, Chapters 1 and 2, available at the McMaster University Archive,
<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/marshall/prin/index.html>

Week 8. Modern Economics and Gender Inequality

March 12: Human capital and discrimination models.

March 14: Political economy and gender

Required readings:

Nancy Folbre, Chapters 18-20, *Greed, Lust and Gender*

Nancy Folbre, “The Political Economy of Human Capital,” paper presented at the meetings of the Union for Radical Political Economics, January 2012, Chicago, Illinois.

Supplemental readings:

Francine D. Blau, Marianne A. Ferber, Anne E. Winkler, *Economics of Women, Men, and Work* (5th Edition), New York: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Julie Nelson, *Economics for Humans*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

WEEK OF MARCH 19—SPRING BREAK.

Week 9. Household Bargaining Models

March 26. Overview of bargaining approaches

March 28. Nash bargaining and other models

Required reading:

Susan Himmelweit, et al. “Decision-Making in Households,” Ch. 6 in *Households*, The Open University, Social Sciences Third Level Course, 1998.

Supplemental reading:

Bina Agarwal, “Bargaining and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household,” *Feminist Economics* 3:1 (1997), 1-51.

Week 10. Gender Norms and Caring Preferences

April 2. Norms, preferences and values

April 4. Why caring preferences are costly.

Required Reading:

Nancy Folbre, Paula England, and Carrie Leana. Chapter 2, “Motivating Care,” from *For Love and Money*, ed. Nancy Folbre, forthcoming, Russell Sage Foundation.

Muriel Niederle and Lise Vesterlund, “Do Women Shy Away from Competition? Do Men Compete Too Much?” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, available at <http://www.stanford.edu/~niederle/Women.Competition.pdf>

Catherine C. Eckel and Philip J. Grossman, “Are Women Less Selfish than Men? Evidence from Dictator Experiments,” *Economic Journal* 108:448 (1998): 726-35.

Supplemental Reading:

Shelley E. Taylor, *The Tending Instinct. Women, Men, and the Biology of our Relationships*. New York: Henry Holt, 2002.

Kingsley Browne. *Divided Labors: An Evolutionary View of Women at Work*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Roy Baumeister, *Is There Anything Good About Men?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Sarah Hrdy. *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection*. New York: Pantheon, 1999.

Sarah Hrdy. *Mothers and Others. The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Week 11. Measurement and Valuation of Non-Market Work

April 9. Measurement of time use. .

April 11. Valuation of non-market work, and implications thereof.

Required reading:

Nancy Folbre, Chapters 6 and 7, *Valuing Children*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Nancy Folbre, “Time Use and Inequality in the Household, 342-363 in Wiemer Salverda, Brian Nolan, and Timothy Smeeding, *Oxford Handbook of Economic Inequality*. New York: Oxford, 2008.

Supplemental reading:

National Research Council (2005). *Beyond the Market. Designing Nonmarket Accounts for the United States*, ed. Katharine Abraham and Christopher Mackie (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press).

Duncan Ironmonger, "Bringing Up Bobby and Betty: The Inputs and Outputs of Child Care Time," in Michael Bittman and Nancy Folbre, eds. *Family Time: The Social Organization of Care*, (New York: Routledge, 2004).

Duncan Ironmonger, "Counting Outputs, Capital Inputs and Caring Labor: Estimating Gross Household Product," *Feminist Economics* 2:3 (Fall 1996): 37-64.

Nancy Folbre, "A Theory of the Misallocation of Time," in *Family Time: The Social Organization of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

Supplemental reading:

Margaret Reid, *The Economics of Household Production* (passim.), available at http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6304986M/Economics_of_household_production

Week 12. Gender, Property-Rights and Collective Bargaining

April 16. Property rights, efficient contracts, and collective bargaining

April 18. Principal-agent models

Required reading:

Steven Cheung, "The Enforcement of Property Rights in Children, and the Marriage Contract." *Economic Journal* 82:326 (1972): 641-57.

Elissa Braunstein and Nancy Folbre. 2001. "To Honor and Obey: Efficiency, Inequality, and Patriarchal Property Rights," *Feminist Economics* 7:1 (2001): 25-54.

Rick Geddes and Dean Lueck. 2002. "The Gains from Self-Ownership and the Expansion of Women's Rights," *American Economic Review* 92(4):1079-1092.

Supplemental Reading:

Bina Agarwal, *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Week 13. Possible Origins of Patriarchal and Patriarchal/Capitalist Systems

April 23. Evolutionary models and group selection.

April 25. Did patriarchal systems confer evolutionary advantages? How are they linked to class-based systems?

Required reading:

Barbara Smuts, "The Origins of Patriarchy: An Evolutionary Perspective," *Human Nature* 6 (1995):1-31.

Nancy Folbre. "Chicks, Hawks, and Patriarchal Institutions," 499-516 in *Handbook of Behavioral Economics*, ed. Morris Altman. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2006.

Andrew F. Hanssen and Robert K. Fleck, "Rulers Ruled by Women: An Economic Analysis of the Rise and Fall of Women's Rights in Ancient Sparta," *Economic Governance* 10 (2009):221-245.

Supplemental reading:

Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha. *Sex at Dawn. The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010.

Malcolm Potts and Thomas Hayden. *Sex and War*. Dallas: Ben Bella Books, 2008.

Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Mackie, Gerald. 1996. "Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account," *American Sociological Review* 61:6.

Week 14. Spillovers and Catch-Up

May 2. Last class will be devoted to quick paper summaries and class evaluation.