

Population Economics - Econ 543

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Purpose: This course explores issues of population from an economic perspective. Focus is on the study of household behaviour in both developed and developing countries, although there will be an emphasis on developing countries. We will cover areas like fertility decisions, issues of health and nutrition, investment in education, the intra-household allocation of resources and household structure and marriage.

The course has three objectives. First, to provide a critical overview of the recent literature and important debates. Focus is on microeconomic approaches to understanding household behaviour.

The second objective is to introduce ways of tackling methodological issues that arise when doing research on population and household economics. Especially important is how to identify causal relationships and avoiding biases that can arise from behavioural responses and unobserved heterogeneity.

The final objective is to prepare for research in population economics. Hence, one of the requirements of the course is a research paper. We will also discuss potential research topics for each area as we progress.

Prerequisites: It is necessary to be familiar with standard micro-economic theory plus basic micro-econometrics. More econometrics, demographic methods and economic theory will open doors to a wider and deeper literature on many inter-disciplinary topics. More advanced empirical techniques will be reviewed in class, but the main thing is what we learn from it not the techniques themselves.

Requirements: There are four requirements for the course:

1. Do all the required reading and participate in class discussion.
2. Each student will furthermore present and lead the discussion of papers on the reading list.
3. Write a research paper. This requirement can be met in one of two ways: (1) replication of the empirical results of an approved paper; or (2) an applied (theoretical, empirical, or both) paper with original research.

Other Readings and Background Literature: Unfortunately, there are not many textbooks to get you started, although both Ermisch and Cigno have written good books. The only downside is that they are more focused on the theory. The "Handbook of Population and Family Economics" contains many useful articles and is available on-line now.

SCHEDULE

Week	Topic
1	Introduction and Basic household model
2	Marriage
3	Fertility and quantity/quality
4	Value of children and other aspects
5	Child health and mortality
6	Schooling and child labour
7	Intra-household resource allocation
8	HIV/AIDS and household behaviour
9	Household structure
10	Student research papers

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SYLLABUS

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3 Marriage and Household Formation

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