Course Objectives: 

We all experience, at some point in our lives, being part of both a family and an economy. The purpose of this course is for students to gain a deeper understanding of the connections between the family life and economic forces. The focus will be on the way conditions in the economy, labor market, households, and culture of the workplace and marketplace can influence the well-being and functioning of 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. It will consider the role of gender, race, age, and socioeconomic class, and influence of discrimination, historical and market forces. Finally, it surveys the various current strategies that employers and public policy makers have undertaken to improve the well-being of family members, parents and children, by enhancing the ability to earn income and better balance work and family responsibilities.

The scope of issues covered range from the impact of recent increases in female labor force participation and work hours, overwork, work-family imbalance, income inequality, consumer debt, unemployment and contingent work. It will also analyze the impact of recently decreasing child poverty, fertility rates, occupational segregation, etc. Finally, it will address the public policy debates regarding governmental support of family income, child-care, etc. The topics addressed are intended to flow in a logical sequence, beginning from the individual decision to participate or not in the paid labor force, to the decision regarding the allocation of one’s time in a family, household and life-cycle context, to the effects of family roles on well-being, to policy regarding family, children, work-family balance and social welfare programs.

Because students must have had HD FS 312 (Empirical Inquiry in Human Development) and HD FS 315 (Family Development) as prerequisites, we will be able to explore some of the technical research in the subject, from the perspectives of a variety of disciplines, as well as literature of a less technical nature.

Each topic will usually begin with the perspectives offered by economics (within which there are competing “schools of thought,”) then will construct a fuller picture by adding in some historical, sociological, psychological and cultural perspectives. We will try to blend the dispassionate research findings with personal experiences, to help put the latter in better perspective. The course has the following three general objectives:

1) To acquaint students with the various ways of thinking analytically about family life from an economic perspective and contrast it with that of other disciplines.
2) To increase the breadth, depth and accuracy of students’ empirical knowledge about the state of contemporary family life to apply in their future professional lives.
3) To provide students with the information and tools upon which they can develop a clearer basis for making their own decisions concerning work and family life.

Course Requirements:

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<th>Grade (%) Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #1: 25% Febrary 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper Outline: -- March 13</td>
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<td>Deliberation: 10% March 20</td>
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<td>or, 2:</td>
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<td>Term Paper/Book Review: 20% April 10</td>
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<td>Paper Presentations: 5% April 17</td>
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<td>Two Synopses 10% Twice</td>
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Family Life in Economic Context
Lonnie Golden, Penn State University, Economics — Spring 2002
Participation, Attendance  5%  Every Class!
Final, Exam #2  25%  Wed., May 1, 4:30pm
100%

The Midterm Exam will cover the material since the start of the course, the Final Exam only material past the Midterm test. All of the material covered in the class (lectures, readings, discussions, videos) is fair game for test questions, but the material that the instructor focuses on during class will indicate what will be emphasized on an exam. The format of the tests will be essays. The Mid-term will be during class time, the Final will be a take-home.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all the regularly scheduled classes and roll will be taken. Students will be allowed no more than one absence without penalty.

**Textbooks:**

**Weekly Readings and Student Synopses:**
We will conduct part of the class seminar-style, typically with the professor taking the first half or so of the class to address the topic of the week analytically. Students will volunteer to read and present a synopsis of one of the articles on the extensive reading list for an upcoming week. Students should have their main points and questions typed up and turned in at the end of class, but it need not be any more than a paragraph or two. Three students per week will present. The professor will prepare synopses of those articles not selected. The course enrollment numbers mean that each student will do two such articles and synopses during the course of the semester. A good synopsis will:

- Identify the authors’ theme, main points, hypotheses and findings.
- Relate the research to the textbook readings for this week (and previous weeks).
- Observe what appears to be innovative, unique, impressive or disappointing about their approach, compared to the other articles in this week’s reading list.
- Point out what seems to be unique about their research findings, compared to other articles.
- Critique the article: what was not satisfactorily covered or answered? What do you wish they would have included but omitted?
- List two new things you learned from this article.
- List two ways that the findings may be of practical use to families.
- List two ways that the findings may be of use to professionals in your field, in counseling families or family members.
- List two ways that the findings could guide public policy makers or organizational leaders.
- Raise two questions for the class to trigger discussion that the article provoked in your mind.

We will see two videos:
- *Juggling Work and Family*, a breakthrough two-hour documentary by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Hedrick Smith, who takes a close-up look at the agonizing choices that Americans face between making a living and having a life.
- *Affluenza* is a one-hour television special that explores the high social and environmental costs of materialism and overconsumption. *Escape from Affluenza* is the solution-oriented sequel, profiling people and organizations that are reducing consumption and waste, choosing work that reflects their values and working to live in better balance.

**Term paper / book review project: 7-8 pages**
The object of this assignment is to explore in more depth an area of your own interest in the course. You are to pick a recently published book and write a review. You will have to first develop and turn in an outline, having chosen the book. The book may have one author, or up to several contributing authors. A book review means a summary of its contents and theme, critique of its main arguments and assessment of its importance, relevance and usefulness of its findings. A thoroughly written book review should answer the following questions:

What are the major points the author is trying to make? Is the theme well developed or vague? Are the conclusions reached reasonable, logical, and persuasive? Is the evidence marshaled in support of the conclusions sufficient? What disciplinary perspectives is the author(s) drawing on, and do they apply it proficiently? What issues or questions are omitted? How has your own opinion evolved after “wrestling” with the issues raised?

Try to challenge yourself and stretch to a high level book, and do not choose one you have already read. You may substitute in a special issue of a particular journal, with a set of articles devoted to a relevant topic (not that these often lead to books, so check). You may find your own favorite, but examples of recent books (meaning mid or late 90s and after, unless permission granted) include:

- Ackerman, Frank, Goodwin, Neva; Kiron, David (eds.); 1996, Consumer Society, Island Press.
- Gallagher, Goodwin and Harris (editors), 1997, Human Well-Being & Economic Goals, Island Press.
- Gallagher, Kevin, Goodwin, Neva (editors); 1998, Changing Nature of Work, by Island Press.


• Reich, Robert, 2000, *The Future of Success*.


• Sullivan, Teresa, Elizabeth Warren, and Jay Lawrence Westbrook *The Fragile Middle Class: Americans In Debt*, 2001


Or, Special Issues of Journals/Magazines:


Course Outline:

Topics/Week

I. Competing Methodologies of Analysis of Families, Households, Economy, Labor, Time and Markets:

1. Economic analysis, contrasted with methodology of other social sciences; Statistical techniques in research; Historical and current popular perspective on family-economy-work connection.

II. Families and Work Activity:

3. Working Time, Working Overtime or Part-time, Hours Preferences and Constraints.
5. Work-Family Imbalance, Time Squeeze, Dual Income Households.
7. Mid-Term Exam
   Unpaid- and House-work, Time Use, Leisure Activities.

III. Outcomes for Family Life, Family Members

10. Effects of Economy and Work and Culture on Caregiving Time, Childrearing, Quality of Children.
11. Effects of Teen and Child Labor on Youth and the Family Well-Being.

Policy Deliberation I:
Current Systems of Child Care, Family Leave (FMLA) and Corporate Work-Life Programs are (Working Well Enough vs. Not Working Well Enough) to Ease the Combining of Work and Family.

IV. Macroeconomy, Family Structure and Economic Well-Being

   Video: “Affluenza”


Paper Presentations

Final Exam, Wed. 5/1 at 4:30p-6:20p

I. Competing Methodologies Analyzing Families, Households, Economy, Labor, Markets:

BFW: Ch.1 (including appendix), Ch.2.
EPI: Introduction
Sch: Ch.2
Fol: Introduction.


II. Families and Work Activity:


BFW: Ch.4 (81-107; 115-129).
Sch: Ch.3 (49-58).
EPI: Ch.1.


3. Working Time, Working Overtime or Part-time, Work Hours Preferences and Constraints.

BFW: Ch.4 (107-12).

Golden, Lonnie and Deborah Figart; Doing something about long hours, Challenge; Armonk; Nov/Dec 2000; Volume: 43 Issue: 6 Page: 15-37.


5. Work-Family Imbalance, Time Squeeze, Dual Income Households.

EPI: Ch.2.


Cappelli, Peter; Constantine, Jill; Chadwick, Clint, “It Pays to Value Family: Work and Family Tradeoffs Reconsidered,” Industrial-Relations; 39(2), April 2000, pages 175-98.


6. Responses to Work-Family Conflict, Coping through Nonstandard Jobs and Work Schedules

BFW: Ch.8 (283-93), Ch.10 (354-380).
EPI: Ch.7, 8, 10.


7. Unpaid- and House-work, Time Use, Leisure Activities

BFW: Ch.3 (35-64), Ch.4 (112-14).
EPI: Ch.2, 5.
Fol: Ch.1.


*Policy Deliberation I:*
*Current Systems of Child Care, Family Leave (FMLA) and Corporate Work-Life Programs are (Working Well Enough vs. Not Working Well Enough) to Ease Combining of Work and Family*


*III. Outcomes for Family Life, Family Members*
8. Effects of Inequality, Demographics, Gender/Racial Discrimination, Occupational Segregation.

BFW: Ch.5, Ch.6 (155-181, 192-99), Ch.7 (202-35), Ch.8 (257-69).
Sch: Ch.9, 10.


BFW: Ch.3 (64-69), Ch.9.
Sch: Ch.6.


* Introduction
* Chapter 5. The Mommy Tax


10. Effects of Work on Caregiving Time, Childrearing, Quality of Children.

Fol: Ch. 2, 3, 8.


11. Effects of Teen and Child Labor on Youth and the Family Well-Being.


IV. Macroeconomy, Family Structure and Economic Well-Being


Sch: Ch.1 (12-20).


Hayhoe Celia Ray, Lauren Leach, Pamela Turner, Marilyn Bruin, Frances Lawrence, “Differences in spending habits and credit use of college students,” The Journal of Consumer Affairs, Summer 2000, Volume: 34, Issue: 1, Pages 113-133.


BFW: Ch.8 (269-83).
Sch: Ch.3 (58-72), Ch.4.

Mangum, Garth, Andrew Sum, and Neeta Fogg, “Poverty Ain’t What It Used to Be,” *Challenge*, March-April 2000 Vol. 43, No. 2 p. 97-.


**Policy Deliberation II: Welfare-to-Work (TANF), Minimum Wage Laws and EITC are (Working Well vs. Not Working Well Enough) to Lift and Keep Families out of Poverty in the US.**

Fol: Ch. 4, 5, 7, 9.
BFW: Ch.10 (335-53).
Sch: Ch. 11,12 (236-40), 15.


Houseknecht, Sharon K; Mohamed Abde, “Forms of economic security and the family,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Autumn 1998; Vol. 29, Iss. 3; pg. 429-449.


Sch: Ch.5, 12 (225-33).


