

**Economics of Gender:
An Asian and Comparative Perspective
LPS-EC208**

Course Outline

Instructor:

Dr Judith Shapiro is the Undergraduate Tutor in the Department of Economics at LSE. Her research interests include the economics of post-transition and transition (with a particular focus on Russia), and the economics of health and population. She has previously held positions as Chief of the Transition Economics Section of the United Nations Economics Commission for Europe and professor at the New Economic School in Moscow.

Objectives:

This course aims to provide students with:

- A good understanding of progress towards gender equality across the world today, with a strong focus on China in a comparative and global perspective.
- An understanding of how economists and others in international organisations seek to measure gender equality and the status of women in the paid labour force, in unpaid work in the home and other key dimensions of life.
- A knowledge of the wealth of evidence on gender available online and how to use it, with particular emphasis on data and information on China, which is much more accessible than many expect.
- An introduction to “thinking like an economist” about the economics of gender: a working knowledge of valuable key concepts; debates within economics about what economics of gender means; the increasingly greater use of psychology in behavioural economics; increasing emphasis on empirical evidence, without abandoning valuable theoretical insights.
- A knowledge of how economists seek to disentangle discrimination against women from other forces making for gender inequality.
- An introduction to debates over “nature versus nurture” in explaining gender differences, which includes new studies on the role of institutions and psychology, including experimental evidence.
- An introduction to important debates and proposals on what policies are needed for

the next stage in progress towards full gender equality, in China, Asia and the world.

- An, optional, additional objective, is to introduce interested students to intriguing research questions and gender information on China and the world, to aid in future undergraduate research work, including dissertations. The instructor will be available for extra work with those who seek to build on this course to go further.

Prerequisites and Background Reading: There is no formal prerequisite in Economics for the lectures and core readings. Students should not be uncomfortable with numbers, data graphs and statistics, but the course will be accessible to all, with more quantitative and challenging material strictly optional and not in the lectures or core readings.

Background reading possible:

- **An excellent evidence-rich overview of key topics in the economics of gender, as applied to China, is to be found here:**
<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/29341663/Xiao-Yuan%20Dong%20with%20%20%20added%20JCS%20notes.pdf>

This offers Professor Xiao-Yuan Dong's presentation at an international expert meeting, 2012: "Gender, Labor, and Inclusive Growth".

The presentation has added notes by me in red, which explain terms which may be new to you, and indicate further reading you will receive in the coursepack. We may think of this as a keynote for our course.

- We will use a coursepack of individual readings, not a textbook. Lecture handouts contained in the coursepack will provide intuitive and non-technical explanation of key concepts needed in economics and statistics (econometrics), with examples drawn as far as possible from China, so that those who know these concepts will deepen their economics knowledge.
- However, for students with no previous study of economics the following textbook is excellent background, but in no sense required, except for brief selections which will be in the coursepack:
 - **Joyce P. Jacobsen, *The Economics of Gender*, 3rd ed, Blackwell Publishing (2007).**
- For students with some previous study of economics, this textbook is also excellent, particularly on bargaining within the household, which will explain, with a non-technical beginners' introduction to Game Theory.
 - **Mukesh Eswaran, *Why Gender Matters in Economics*, Princeton University Press (2014)**

Core readings are in large measure drawn therefore from the reports of international organisations, and other writing by economists, but written for non-specialists. It is worth reiterating that students should be comfortable with some statistics and graphs, but that the instructor will provide an intuitive and accessible understanding of key economics concepts and statistical methods used in the readings, much of it in a format for further use.

More advanced students will be able to use the data, theories and information also. Enrolment

by students with more economics and quantitative background is welcome, and additional reading will be provided for them in a supplementary coursepack.

- As we will make good use of the World Bank's *Towards Gender Equality in East Asia and the Pacific*, (2012), from the first day, and it is available without charge on line at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/Resources/226300-1339798342386/eap-gender-full-conference.pdf> you may wish to read or at least skim the first 2 chapters in advance.

Assessment: Mid-Term Essay 50%, Exam 50%.

Students will write a mid-term essay, which may be in the style of a section of an international organization report, comparing China and two other countries on a key chosen aspect. This is due on Monday of the second week. I will offer feedback and advice if desired before the due date.

The final Friday a 2-hour exam will set 4 short questions and 2 longer essay questions.

The plan for classes is for a mixture of debate topics and clarification of concepts. Questions will be very welcome through the lectures for clarification and discussion, and the lecturer will ask the class for contributions throughout. Although there will be PowerPoints for organisational structure and wonderful illustrations (even humour), the focus will be on interactive and active learning and free exchange. This is both to develop skills and to encourage students to continue working in this remarkable and expanding area of study in economics.

Course Overview

1. Monday 8 August:

An overview of:

- How do economists see gender equality in the world today
- Gender Equality achievements and challenges in China
- How Chinese Women Economists see gender equality today

Core reading:

**Indicates an essential reading, but note that in many cases this is a longer reading to be read over the whole period, and not in one day!

- Professor Xiao-Yuan Dong, "Gender and China's Development" from *The Oxford Companion to the Economics of China* (Shenggen Fan, Ravi Kanbur, Shang-Jin Wei, and Xiaobo Zhang, editors). Oxford University Press, 2014.) ** (6 pages)

3 other short surveys from this volume will be available, in addition to this excellent short survey, used in other lectures.

- World Bank, *Towards Gender Equality in East Asia and the Pacific*, (2012), selections in the coursepack for Lecture 1. *The report will be read over the 10 days, not in one*

go.

- For an international overview of a very wide range of countries, we will use McKinsey Global Institute, *The Power of Parity*, (2015) in the coursepack, selections of which will be read over the 10 days also
- For a more advanced global overview, and introduction to the distinctions between economists' approaches: Prof Naila Kabeer (LSE Gender Institute) (2016) Gender Equality, Economic Growth, and Women's Agency: the "Endless Variety" and "Monotonous Similarity" of Patriarchal Constraints, *Feminist Economics*, 22:1,

2. Tuesday 9 August:

Why has economic development been accompanied by progress towards gender equality, and how has this varied from country to country: China in a comparative focus.

- Selections from the coursepack, listed above.**
- Additional reading: Esther Duflo, Women, Empowerment and Economic Development, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 2012.
- A review and critique of this article by Naila Kabeer will be provided in the coursepack, and one class exercise will feature a debate between these approaches.

3. Wednesday 10th August:

How have China's economic reforms from 1978 affected the status of women?

- Jing Lin, "Chinese Women Under the Economic Reform: Gains and Losses," *Harvard Asia Pacific Review*. **
- For comparison with China, Judith Shapiro, "The Industrial Labour Force" in Mary Buckley, *Soviet Women and Perestroika*, 1992, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

4. Thursday 11th August:

How is gender equality measured; why does this matter? Where do different countries stand today and a decade ago? What historical progress has there been?

- Selections from the core readings, in the coursepack.** and, also in the coursepack, from the UNDP, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii> **
- Claudia Goldin, "The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family" *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, May 2006. This is a lecture and more accessible than most published economics articles. Though it is US-centred she believes it has broader applicability, which we will discuss. Selections will be in the basic coursepack.**

5. Friday 12th August:

How economists approach the question of unpaid work in the home. What we know about China and other countries in this important dimension. What policy solutions are possible in this sphere?

- Yu Xie, "Gender and Family", in the *Oxford Companion to the Economics of China*, (2014). 6 pages, **

- Selections from Mukesh Eswaran, *Why Gender Matters in Economics*, Princeton University Press (2014), on bargaining and the family.

6. Monday 15th August:

Women in the paid labour force: Trends over time and space in occupational segregation (“women’s work”) and gender pay gaps.

- Selections from the core readings in the coursepack, listed above**.

7. Tuesday 16th August:

Why gender pay gaps are so stubbornly still there and what can be done. How economists work out how much is due to discrimination

- Core reading: Selections from Jacobsen, cited in background readings, in the coursepack. **

8. Wednesday 17th August:

Debates over the origin and persistence of women’s disadvantage: nature versus nurture. What field experiments have revealed.

Selections from Marianne Bertrand, “New Perspectives on Gender” in *The Handbook of Labour Economics*, 2011, coursepack.**

Additional short selections in the coursepack.

9. Thursday 18th August:

The one-child policy and the sex ratio in China in comparison. Where does son preference come from? What will be its impact?

- Core reading: Hongbin Li and Meng Lingsheng, High sex ratio in China Causes and consequences**

10: Friday 19th August:

Conclusion. Towards full gender equality? But how and how fast? Where are we going and how can we get there?

- Claudia Goldin: A Grand Gender Convergence: It’s Last Chapter, *American Economic Review*, 2014, selections. **
- For more cautious views, Alan Manning, “The Gender Pay Gap, *Centrepiece* (2006)
- Judith Shapiro, BBC Radio 4, available online on iPlayer
- A final concluding overview of gender equality in China and the road ahead in 2016:
 - UNDP China Note (2015) which focuses a great deal on gender in a comparative Asian and global perspective. This is in the coursepack, and we will use it as a foundation for a final discussion on action priorities for gender equality, in China and the world.

A range of additional sources, including an introduction to the riches of online data, blogs, and discussions, will be in the coursepack.