

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**Philosophy, Politics, & Economics Minor**  
**Fall 2020**

**PPE 43101-01: Colloquium**  
**“Parenting 101: What Economics Tells Us about Having and Raising Kids”**  
Tuesdays, 8:00-8:50 a.m., 114 Bond Hall

Prof. Kasey Buckles, Ph.D.  
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Office: 3052 Nanovic Hall  
Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:45, or by appointment.

In this course, we will read and discuss writings that address issues of parenting through the lens of economics. We will begin by considering recent trends in parenthood and fertility, with a focus on the United States. Students will then develop an understanding of how an economic framework can be used to make decisions as a parent. We will also consider how parenting behaviors interact with policy, and how individual parenting decisions affect and are affected by the world around us.

**Sakai:** Our website within Sakai ([sakai.nd.edu](http://sakai.nd.edu)) will have links to any of the materials we will be discussing in class, as well as handouts, assignment information, Zoom recordings of lectures, and more. It should be very useful to you and you should visit it regularly.

**Required texts:** I will provide you with links to any articles that you will need to read. In addition, you should acquire the following two books (eBooks are fine):

Oster, Emily. *Cribsheet: A data-driven guide to better, more relaxed parenting, from birth to preschool*. Penguin Books, 2020.

Doepke, Matthias, and Fabrizio Zilibotti. *Love, money, and parenting: How economics explains the way we raise our kids*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

**COVID-related policies:** First and foremost, we should keep in mind that we will need to be *flexible and understanding* this semester. This goes both ways—I will be flexible with you if you have health issues or concerns that affect your ability to attend class in person, and I will understand that we are all working under strange circumstances so your best work might reflect a constrained optimum. Please be understanding with me if the schedule changes, if the technology does not work well right away, or if I am not able to give you comments on your work as quickly as I normally would.

Beyond this, the expectation is that we will all comply with university guidelines at all times, including by wearing masks indoors and distancing within the classroom. If you are not able to attend class in person, you should be able to participate virtually via Zoom.

**Honor Code Information:** In signing the university’s honor code, you agreed not to participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty. I expect you to adhere to this strictly, and any violations will be reported to the Associate Provost. I will let you know if it is acceptable to work in groups on assignments.

**Evaluation:** Each student will be given a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory, based on the following components.

- A. Participation (50%)** - You are expected to attend class (virtually if you are unable to attend in person), and to participate in class discussions. In order to participate fully, you will need to prepare for class by conscientiously reading the assigned texts. Quality of participation is valued over quantity. I will let you know if your participation grade is in danger of entering the “unsatisfactory” range.
- B. Writing assignments (25% each)** – There will be two writing assignments. Each will be 3-5 pages and I will give details about the topic later in the semester. The rough draft for the first will be due on Sept. 15, with the final version due Sept. 22. The second will be due on Nov. 10.

### **Schedule** (*Subject to Change*)

Date	Topic for class	Reading/assignment due
8/11	Snapshot of the American family, economic models of fertility.	
8/18	Fertility decline	Popular press readings.
8/25	An economic framework for making parenting decisions.	Oster: Introduction, Introduction to Part II, <i>Slate</i> article.
9/1	Quantifying costs & benefits, assessing evidence.	Oster: Ch. 4, 8, 14, 20
9/8	Pregnancy decisions, a critical perspective, preparation for her visit.	Oster: podcast, WSJ article, articles with critiques.
9/15	Zoom session with Emily Oster	Prepare questions for Oster, draft of Paper #1 due.
9/22	Birth order, spacing, and family size	Paper #1 due, discussion with parents
9/29	The economics of parenting styles	Doepke & Zilibotti (D&Z): Chpt. 1
10/6	Helicopter parents	D&Z: Chpt. 2, popular press on “lawnmower parenting.”
10/13	Parenting styles around the world	D&Z: Chpt. 3
10/20	Inequality and the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status	D&Z: Chpt. 4, popular press on legacy admissions
10/27	Gender and parenting	D&Z: Chpt. 6, popular press piece.
11/3	Zoom session with Matthias Doepke (tentative)	Prepare questions for Doepke, send to Prof. Buckles by 10/29.
11/10	Can women (and men) have it all?	Reading: Anne-Marie Slaughter. Paper #2.

**Lauren's Promise: I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening or harassing you.**

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year old student at the University of Utah and the daughter of economist Jill McCluskey, was murdered on Oct. 22, 2018 by a man she briefly dated. I am committed to doing what I can to make sure this does not happen again.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, or harassment you can report it to me. You should be aware that I am a mandatory reporter, which means that I am required to report these instances to the university's Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator to investigate. **You can also learn about your options (on-campus and off-campus, confidential and not) at <http://titleix.nd.edu>.**

If you are in need of support for your mental or emotional health for any reason, you can find helpful resources at <http://ucc.nd.edu>.