41031 INEQUALITY, GENDER AND POLICY

a.y. 2026-27

Letizia Mencarini and Paola Profeta, Bocconi University

This course examines gender inequality from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining insights from demography and economics to understand its determinants, dynamics, and policy implications. The course is based on data analysis and quantitative methods.

The course is organized into two main parts:

1. Demography of Gender (Letizia Mencarini)
This part focuses on the demographic dimensions of gender inequality. It introduces key concepts and measurements of gender in population studies, and explores how gender shapes demographic behaviors such as fertility, family formation, and life-course outcomes. It also examines theoretical frameworks linking gender equality to reproductive behavior, well-being, and social change, drawing on comparative and empirical research.

2. Economics of Gender (Paola Profeta)
This part analyzes gender gaps from an economic perspective, with particular attention to education, labor markets, political representation, and corporate leadership. It investigates the causes and consequences of these disparities and evaluates the role of public policies (such as quotas, labor regulations, and welfare measures) in promoting gender equality. Emerging topics, including the interaction between gender inequality and technological change, are also discussed.

Overall, the course provides a comprehensive understanding of gender inequality by integrating demographic processes with economic analysis and policy evaluation.

References (selected)
First part
Aassve A., G. Fuochi, L. Mencarini, D. Mendola (2015), “What is your couple type? Gender ideology, housework sharing, and babies”, Demographic Research, 32: 835-858.
Arpino, B., G. Esping-Andersen, and L. Pessin (2015). How Do Changes in Gender Role Attitudes towards Female Employment Influence Fertility? A Macro-Level Analysis. European Sociological Review 2015 (31), 370–382
Esping-Andersen, G., & Billari, F. C. (2015). Re-theorizing family demographics. Population and Development Review, 41(1): 1–31.
García-Pereiro T. , Mencarini L, Patimo R., Tanturri ML, Women’s domestic burden and

fertility intentions: Italy between tradition and modernity, European Journal of Population 2025.
Goldscheider, F., Bernhardt, E., & Lappegard, T. (2015). The Gender Revolution: A Framework for Understanding Changing Family and Demographic Behavior. Population and Development Review, 41(2): 207-239
Lorenti, A., Nisen J, Mencarini L, Myrskylä M. (2024) Gendered parenthood-employment gaps from midlife: A demographic perspective across three different welfare systems, European Journal of Population, 40, 16 (2024).
Matysiak A., L. Mencarini, D. Vignoli (2016), "Work–Family Conflict Moderates the Relationship between Childbearing and Subjective Well-Being", European Journal of Population, 32 (3), 355-379.
Mencarini L., M. Sironi (2012) "Happiness, Housework and Gender Inequality in Europe", European Sociological Review, 28 (2): 203-219.
Mencarini L., D. Vignoli (2018), "Employed Women and Marital Union Stability: It Helps When Men Help", Journal of Family Issues, 39(5): 1348-1373.

Second part

Angelici, M. and P. Profeta Smart-working: Work Flexibility without constraints (2022) Management Science
Baltrunaite, A., Bello, P., Casarico, A. and Profeta, P. "Gender quotas and the quality of politicians" (2014), Journal of Public Economics 118:62-74.
Baltrunaite, A., Casarico, A., Profeta, P. and Savio, G. "Let the voters choose women" (2019) Journal of Public Economics 180.
Carvajal et al. (2025) Will Artificial Intelligence Get in the Way of Achieving Gender Equality?
Ferrari, G., Ferraro, V., Profeta, P. and Pronzato, C. "Do Board Gender quotas matter? Selection, performance and the stock market effects" (2021) Management Science
Galasso, V. and Profeta, P. Gender differences in Math Tests: The role of time pressure (2024) Economic Journal
Shelly Lundberg (2022) Gender Economics: Dead-Ends and New Opportunities IZA DP No. 15217
Marchese, A., Profeta, P. and Savio, G. (2025) Who cares about childcare? Covid-19 and gender differences in local public spending International Tax and Public Finance 32: 1990-2010
Profeta, P. Gender equality and public policy. Measuring progress in Europe. Cambridge University Press (2020).
Woodhouse, E. and Profeta, P. "Electoral rules, women's representation and the qualification of politicians" (2022) Comparative Political Studies 55(9): 1471-1500.