Earlier this year, a committee of the British Parliament recommended allowing couples who conceive through in vitro fertilization to screen their embryos for sex. While recent advances in medical technology allow increasing parental control over the sex of the child, we should note that some control has always been possible, via differential abortion and differential care of the child. We will discuss the economic and social implications of parental choice, and the extent to which this is responsible for gender imbalance in countries such as India and China. We will discuss biological as well economic models of the equilibrium sex ratio. The key policy question is, to what extent should parents be allowed choice in this matter.

Readings
Trivers and Willard, Natural selection of parental ability to vary the sex ratio of offspring, Science 179 (1973), 90-91.
(available at http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~eoster/papers.html.)