

SOCI/WMGS 221: Sociology of Marriage and the Family

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Class time:
Tuesdays, 11:15-12:30
Fridays, 12:15-1:30

Office hours:
Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30
Thursdays; 9:00-noon
and by appointment

Course Overview

The meanings and social practices surrounding family life are diverse and change constantly. This course explores social change related to 'marriage' and 'the family' from a sociological perspective. Students will consider the many social forces that have some bearing on how individuals imagine, shape, and experience their personal lives. Some of the influences explored are social policy, the media, science and technology, social movements, consumerism, religion, and the expanding role of 'professionals' and 'experts' who have been empowered to make decisions on the behalf of others through government agencies or professional associations. We examine how these social forces interact with cultural understandings of gender, race, ability, sexuality, and social class.

Required Readings and Documentaries

You will find a digital *course pack* on Moodle. The course pack includes all required readings. It is comprised of primarily peer-reviewed Sociology journal articles. You pay for 'use' of this material – available from the library - through your tuition fees. Pdf copies of the readings are posted on the Moodle page in the week the reading is assigned. If you cannot open a pdf (check to see if you have Adobe on your computer), you can access the reading by logging on to the StFX library webpage, and doing a Google Scholar search for the reading assigned (be sure you do it through the library website to get access to the full article at no cost). Also, links are provided for any readings available to the public online. If you prefer to work offline:

1. Create a course folder on your computer titled *Readings for SOCI-WMGS 221*; then copy and save the pdfs by the author's name or article title. OR
2. Print a copy of the readings for your notebook.

Documentaries will be assigned to be viewed on your own or to watch in class. If you miss a documentary, it is your responsibility to access it and watch it.

- The Schedule of Readings is presented on Moodle and listed below.

Grading Scheme

- Participation - 10%
- Midterm - 25% ~ Friday, October 13
- Research paper - 25% ~ Tuesday, November 21 at 11:15 (in class)
- Final examination - 40% ~ scheduled by the Registrar

Class Attendance and Participation

Class attendance will be taken, but it is not a measure of participation. You are encouraged to complete the readings *on schedule* and *participate in our discussion of the readings*.

- If you must miss a class, *you are responsible to find out what you missed* (e.g., lectures, announcements, presentations, videos).
- You are encouraged to participate. Your questions help ensure that new ideas are explained fully by the professor and they facilitate class discussion and learning.

Examinations

The exam covers all course material (readings, videos, lectures and class discussion).

- Note that, except in the case of medically documented illness or death/serious illness in the immediate family, *absolutely no* make-up exam will be offered.
- If you *registered* to use the Tramble Rooms, please advise the professor no later than one week after the course begins and provide a reminder 1 week prior to the exams.

Research Paper

Students are required to write a 7-8 page library research paper. The *Instructions for the Research Paper* will be posted on Moodle and introduced in class.

Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the academic integrity policy on plagiarism, cheating, tampering, and falsification. http://sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_integrity

Office Hours and Communication Regarding Course Work

You are encouraged to see me during office hours to discuss any aspect of the course. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, please ask for an appointment.

Email Communication

Important notices are posted on Moodle and/or sent to your StFX email address only. It is your responsibility to check your StFX account regularly to ensure that it is not full.

Given the number of students I have, I do not reply to emails about the following:

- questions that are answered in this syllabus or information posted on Moodle.
- inquiries about course work: see me in office hours for academic assistance.
- missing a class ~ except to report exceptional circumstances requiring follow-up. Feel free to mention a prior or future class absence at the end of a regular class.

When you do email a professor, you are encouraged to use proper email etiquette, note the topic noted in the subject line, and provide your name and course number.

Communication Regarding Equity and Diversity

“Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. Please feel free to talk with me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the STFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor. Please note that a Human Rights and Equity Advisor will soon be appointed. In the meantime, students, faculty, or staff may also contact the Director of Human Resources at hr@stfx.ca or the Office of the AVP&P”.

Schedule of Readings

✚ *Do your best to do a deep reading of the articles in time for class work. Please bring your notes to class to facilitate discussion.*

Part 1: Studying Families and Social Change

➤ Statistical Snapshots: Family Change and Diversity

Sept. 5/8 Milan, Ann. 2000. “One Hundred Years of Families.” *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada: Catalogue No. 11-008.

Sept. 5/8 Milan, Ann and Nora Bohnert. 2012. “Fifty Years of Families in Canada: 1961-2011.” Statistics Canada: Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011003.

➤ A Wider-Angle Lens: Recognizing the Social Construction of Official Statistics

Sept. 12 Bradbury, Bettina. 2000. Single Parenthood in the Past: Canadian Census Categories, 1891-1951, and the “Normal Family.” *Historical Methods* 33(4): 211-217.
Thomas, Derrick. 2010. The Census and The Evolution of Gender Roles in Early 20th Century Canada. *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada. Catalogue No. 11-008 X.

➤ Change and Cultural Lag: The Power of “Tradition” in Culture

Sept. 15 Smith, Dorothy. 1993. “The Standard North American Family: SNAF as an Ideological Code.” *Journal of Family Issues* 14(1): 50-65.

Sept. 17 Gross, Neil. 2005. The Detraditionalization of Intimacy Reconsidered. *Sociological Theory*. 23(3): 286-311.

Part 2: Social Changes in Marriage, Coupling, and Family Forms

➤ Same-sex Partnerships and Marriage

Sept. 22/ 26 Green, Adam Isaiah. 2010. “Queer Union: Same-Sex Spouses Marrying Tradition And Innovation.” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 35(3): 399-436.

Sept. 22/26 Adam, Barry D. 2004. Care, Intimacy, And Same-Sex Partnership Into the 21st Century. *Current Sociology* 52(2): 265–279.

Sept. 22/26 * Video: *Why Thee Wed*, NFB

➤ **Same-sex Families and Parenting**

Sept. 29/O.3 Gibson, Margaret. 2014. “Adopting difference: Thinking Through Adoption by Gay Men in Ontario, Canada.” *Signs* 39(2): 407-432.

Sept. 29/O.3 Robitaille, Caroline and Marie-Christine Saint-Jacques. 2009. “Social Stigma and the Situation of Young People in Lesbian and Gay Stepfamilies.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 54(4): 421-442.

Sept. 29/O.3 * Video: *Fatherhood Dreams*

Oct. 6 -- no class today -- Fall study day

Oct. 13 Friday, October 13 ~ The midterm is scheduled for Friday to allow time to study, bring questions to class on Oct. 10th, or see me during office hours.

- The midterm covers material up to and including *Fatherhood Dreams*

➤ **Singlehood, Cohabitation and Divorce**

Oct. 10 Budgeon, Shelley. 2008. “Couple Culture and the Production of Singleness.” *Sexualities* 11(3): 301-324.

Oct. 17/20 Smart, Carol. 2000. “Divorce and Changing Family Practices in a Post-Traditional Society.” *Family Matters* 56(1): 10-19.

Oct. 17/20 Scott Coltrane and Michele Adams. 2003. “The Social Construction of the Divorce ‘Problem’: Morality, Child Victims, and the Politics of Gender.” *Family Relations* 52(4):363–372.

Part 3: Gender and Social Change in Heterosexual Families

➤ **Working Mothers/ Working Fathers: Gender and Family Work**

Oct. 24/27 Wall, Glenda. 2013. “‘Putting Families First’: Shifting Discourses of Motherhood and Childhood in Representations of Mothers’ Employment and Child Care.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 40(1): 162-171.

Oct. 24/27 Gillian Ranson. 2012. “Men, Paid Employment and Family Responsibilities: Conceptualizing the ‘Working Father.’” *Gender Work and Organizations* 19(6): 741-761.

Oct. 24/27 McKay, Lindsey and Andrea Doucet. 2010. “‘Without Taking Her Leave’: A Canadian Case Study of Couples’ Decisions on Fathers’ Use of Paid Parental Leave. *Fathering* 8(3): 300-320.

Oct. 24/27 * Video: *The Evolution of Dad*

➤ ***Experts and the Medicalization of Motherhood***

- Oct.31/Nov.3 Malacrida, Claudia. 2002. "Alternative Therapies and Attention Deficit Disorder: Discourses on Maternal Responsibility and Risk." *Gender and Society* 16(3): 366-385.
- Oct.31/Nov.3 Wall, Glenda. 2001. "Moral Constructions of Motherhood in Breastfeeding Discourse." *Gender and Society*. 15(4):592-610.
- Oct. 24/27 * Video: *Motherhood: Tales of Wonder (NFB)*

➤ ***Constructions of Lone Motherhood***

- Nov. 7/10 Zartler, Ulrike. 2014. "How to Deal with Moral Tales: Constructions and Strategies of Single-Parent Families." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 75(2): 604-619.
- Nov. 7/10 Romagnoli, Amy and Glenda Wall. 2012. "'I Know I'm a Good Mom': Young, Low-Income Mothers' Experiences with Risk Perceptions, Intensive Parenting and Parenting Education Programmes." *Health, Risk and Society* 14(3): 273-289.

Part 4: Family Life and Social Inequalities: Race, Class And Gender

➤ ***The Sixties Scoop and the Rebuilding of Indigenous Families***

- Nov. 14/17 Spenser, Dale C. 2017. "Extractions and Pulverization: A Narrative Analysis of Canada Scoop Survivors." *Settler Colonial Studies*. 7(1): 57-71.
- Nov. 21/24 Ball, Jessica. 2010. "Indigenous Fathers' Involvement in Reconstituting "Circles of Care." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45:124-138.
- Nov. 21/24 Tam, Benita Y., Leanne C. Findlay, and Dafna E. Kohen. 2016. "Indigenous Families: Who Do You Call Family?" *Journal of Family Studies* 1-17.
- Nov. 21/24 * Video: *We Were Children*, NFB, 2012.

➤ ***Intersectionality: Inequalities and Race, Class, Gender in Global Perspective***

- Nov. 21/24 Gerstel, Naomi. 2011. "Rethinking Families and Communities: The Color, Class, and Centrality of Extended Kin Ties." *Sociological Forum* 26(1):1-20.
- Nov. 21/24 Husiung, Ping-Chun and Katherine Nichol. 2010. "Policies on and Experiences of Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada." *Sociology Compass* 4(9):766-778.
- Nov. 21/24 Houston, H. Rika. 2004. "Other Mothers: Framing the Cybernetic Construction(s) of the Post-Modern Family." *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 7(3): 191-209.

Part 5: Conclusion: Making Sense of Social Influences on Families

- Nov. 28/D. 1 Gillis, John. 2002. *Our Imagined Families: The Myths and Rituals We Live By*. The Emory Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life.
- Nov. 28/D. 1 Daly, Kerry. 2003. Family Theory vs. Theories Families Live By. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 64(4):771-78.