

**The University of Calgary
Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Sociology**

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

**Sociology 371.01
Fall 2013**

SOCIOLOGY OF FAMILIES

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Office hours: Mon. 10-30-11.30 a.m.
Wed. 1-2 p.m.
or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course will offer a sociological examination of family life in all its multiple and changing forms – beginning with an exploration of what “family” means to individual Canadians today. There is growing recognition that families do not take one monolithic form, and that family life may involve conflict and pain as well as love and nurture. This awareness of family diversity will underlie our discussion of key transitions and common practices in family life, as well as some of the factors that shape individual experience of “family”. We will also critically examine the understandings of “family” that influence law and public policy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Course objectives are not always explicitly outlined; the most important ones are sometimes hard to define. One way to approach them is to think of them as the instructor’s expectations. Another way is to consider them as a series of opportunities available to students wanting to make the most of their time in class. Among other experiences, this course will offer students the opportunity to:

- examine families both as social constructions and as (diverse) configurations of people;
- explore a wide array of practices and experiences associated with family life in many forms;
- read a challenging collection of materials, by many authors, who take different approaches to family issues;
- express their ideas, test their knowledge and improve their written skills through a formal writing assignment;
- be part of a class in which participation is encouraged and diversity is valued.

TEXT AND OTHER READINGS:

Cheal, David and Patrizia Albanese (eds.) *Canadian Families Today: New Perspectives* (3rd edition). Don Mills: Oxford University Press. 2013. [**Available in the university bookstore**]

Selected supplementary readings (see separate list), which will be posted as links or pdf files on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

You will be responsible for *all* readings specified in the course outline, as well as *all* lecture materials (including films, guest speaker presentations etc.) Exams will cover both readings and class materials, and will involve a variety of question types. These may include multiple-choice, true/false, “fill-in-the-blank” and short essay. Exams will not be cumulative.

You will also be required to write two short papers, scheduled at different points in the term in order to give you some choice of timing. The first one will be due *either* Sept. 27 or Oct. 21. The second will be due *either* Nov. 15 or Dec. 7.

The course grade will be determined as follows:

1 st mid-term exam (Oct. 11)	30%
2 nd mid-term exam (Nov. 8)	30%
Short papers	20%
Registrar-scheduled final exam	20%

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A+ = 95-100	B+ = 80-84	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 54-58
A = 90-94	B = 75-79	C = 63-66	D = 50-53
A- = 85-89	B- = 70-74	C- = 59-62	F = 49 or less

Please note that ALL tests and assignments must be completed to obtain a passing grade in this course. Please note also that final grades are NOT negotiable. No grade will be increased beyond what a student has earned during the term, and in the class.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Blackboard will be used to post class outlines, assignment and test information, and general announcements. I will be available during office hours or by appointment, and it's during those times, and in person, that questions about course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with. It's acceptable to e-mail me for administrative purposes, for example to set up an appointment – but please don't use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss.

CLASS PROTOCOL:

Because this is a big class, it's extremely important that we all behave in ways that are respectful of others. This means maintaining an environment that is not distracting, and that enables

students to get as much as possible out of the time we are together. Cell phones should be turned off, and text messages should not be sent in class time. Laptops may be used in class for note-taking, but for no other purpose. (Permission to use them may be withdrawn if they aren't used appropriately). I work hard to begin and end classes on time; if you need to leave early, it's courteous to let me know in advance, and to sit somewhere that will allow you to leave without disrupting others.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. Academic Misconduct: Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>
3. Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. "If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment."
4. Ethical Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.
5. Deferrals: If possible, please provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a "make up" test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Sp_Su_DFE_App.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>
Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

6. Student Representation: The 2013-14 Students' Union VP Academic is Emily Macphail; email: suvpaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>
7. Emergency Evacuation: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at the Social Science food court. Please check these assembly point locations for your other classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>
8. Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.
9. Academic Accommodation: Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, must register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 293, phone 403-220-8237). Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.

TOPICS AND READINGS

The following is a tentative schedule of topics for class discussion, the accompanying readings, and the test and assignment schedule. This schedule may be changed if unforeseen circumstances arise, or if topics emerge that seem to warrant more attention. The chapter numbers refer to the course text. Reading numbers refer to the supplementary readings, which will be posted on Blackboard.

<u><i>Week beginning</i></u>	<u><i>Topic</i></u>	<u><i>Readings</i></u>
Sept. 9	Introduction: What is “family”?	Chs. 1 and 2
	<i>The life course</i>	
Sept. 16	Intimacy, commitment and family formation	Chs. 3 and 11
Sept. 23	Parents, children and family life [Short paper 1a due Sept. 27]	Ch. 4, Reading 1
Sept. 30	Fragmentation and renewal of families	Ch. 5, Reading 2
Oct. 7	Midlife and aging [Midterm #1 Oct. 11]	Chs. 6 and 7
Oct 14	Other trajectories	Readings 3 and 4
	<i>Family issues</i>	
Oct. 21	Work and family life [Short paper 1b due Oct. 21]	Ch.9, Reading 5
Oct. 28	Family poverty	Ch. 10, Reading 6
Nov. 4	Immigration and transnational families [Midterm #2 Nov. 8]	Readings 7, 8 and 9
Nov. 11	Families and disability	Ch. 13
Nov. 18	Violence in families [Short paper 2a due Nov. 22]	Ch. 14, Reading #10
	<i>Law, policy and the future of families</i>	
Nov. 25	Family law, family policies	Ch. 15, reading 11
Dec. 2	The future of families [Short paper 2b due Dec. 6]	Ch. 16

REGISTRAR-SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM

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Supplementary readings

1. Gillespie, Rosemary. (2003). "Childfree and feminine : Understanding the gender identity of voluntarily childless women", *Gender & Society*, 17(1): 122-136.
2. Wade, Amanda and Carol Smart. (2003) "As fair as it can be? Childhood after divorce". Chapter 7 in An-Magritt Jensen and Lorna McKee (eds.) *Children and the Changing Family: Between Transition and Transformation*, London: Routledge Falmer
3. Castellano, Marlene Brant. (2002) *Aboriginal Family Trends: Extended Families, Nuclear Families, Families of the Heart*, Vanier Institute of the Family.
4. Arnett, Jeffrey. (2004). "What is it like to be an emerging adult? Four profiles". Ch. 2 in Jeffrey Arnett: *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road From the Late Teens Through the Twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press.
5. Ranson, Gillian. (2010). " 'Shift-workers' and 'dual-dividers': sharing earning, sharing caring". Ch. 4 in Gillian Ranson: *Against the Grain: Couples, Gender and the Reframing of Parenting*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
6. Shier, Micheal L., Marion E. Jones and John R. Graham. (2010). "Perspectives of employed people experiencing homelessness of self and being homeless", *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 37 (4): 13-37.
7. Shirpak, Khosro Refaie, Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale and Maryam Chinichian. (2011). "Post migration changes in Iranian immigrants' couple relationships in Canada", *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 42(6): 751-770.
8. Este, David and Admasu Tachble. (2009). "Fatherhood in the Canadian context: perceptions and experiences of Sudanese refugee men", *Sex Roles*, 60: 456-466
9. Charles, Grant, Tim Stainton and Sheila Marshall. (2010). " Young carers in immigrant families: an ignored population", *Canadian Social Work*, 12(1): 83-92.
10. "A sociologist's perspective on domestic violence: a conversation with Michael Johnson, Ph.D." Interview by Theodora Ooms, Center for Law and Social Policy. 2006.
Source: Interview transcript available from CLASP website (link is <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_states/files/0314.pdf>)
11. Harder, Lois. (2011). *After the Nuclear Age? Some Contemporary Developments in Families and Family Law in Canada*, Vanier Institute of the Family.