

**Sociology 471 - Lecture 01**  
**Special Topics in the Sociology of Families: Gendering Families**  
**Winter 2011**  
**TR 11:00-12:15 - SH 262**

**Instructor:** Dr. Fiona Nelson  
**Office Location:** SS 940  
**Office Phone:** 403-220-5267  
**E-Mail:** [nelsonf@ucalgary.ca](mailto:nelsonf@ucalgary.ca)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 14:00 – 16:00  
Other times available by appointment

**Course Description**

Families are composed of people who embody and perform various conceptualizations of gender. Family roles and gender roles inform, construct and conflict with each other in many ways over diverse family formations. Families are gendered but we might also say that gender is familial. This course will examine ways in which family roles are constructed and negotiated around understandings of gender and ways in which gender actualizations are negotiated around constructions of family.

**Objectives of the Course**

This is an inquiry-based course and, as such, will allow students a great deal of autonomy in pursuing topics of interest to them. Using a core set of readings as a spring-board, students will be able to further research their chosen topics and work together to facilitate the learning of their classmates. The first three weeks will be spent laying a conceptual foundation. The following eight weeks of class will each revolve around a particular topic area. The Tuesday of each of those eight weeks will be spent discussing /exploring/applying the readings assigned for that week. Each Thursday of those eight weeks will see a group presenting material related to that week's topic, and facilitating class discussion and other kinds of learning activities. In the final two weeks of class, each student will briefly present their final paper to the class.

The main objective of the course is that students have the opportunity to engage in inquiry that is meaningful to them. Related to this, students will have opportunities to develop their research, writing and presentation skills. There will be no exams.

**Textbooks and Readings:**

No textbook. All assigned readings will be available online.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

#### **Grade Components:**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| -Reading Responses (8 x 2%)      | 16% |
| -Critical Reflections (8 x 2%)   | 16% |
| -Group presentation/facilitation | 10% |
| -Topic Paper                     | 20% |
| -Final Paper                     | 35% |
| -Final Paper Presentation        | 3%  |

#### **About the Reading Responses:**

**Due:** in class, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>,

Assigned readings will be discussed on these Tuesdays. You are asked to bring to class a short discussion question/topic and preliminary thoughts related to the reading. You should state your topic or question in one sentence and then write a paragraph with your preliminary response to your own question/topic, or with a very brief discussion of why you think this topic needs to be discussed. So, each of these assignments will be a one-sentence statement of your topic or question followed by a one-paragraph (about half a page) preliminary discussion. Class discussions on these days will be structured, in part, around these topics/questions.

Reading responses are due the day the readings are being discussed. Late submissions will not be accepted.

#### **About the Critical Reflections:**

**Due:** in class, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>,

On each of these Thursdays, a group will have an hour to present material and facilitate discussion of that week's topic. In the final 15 minutes of class, each student is asked to write a critical reflection on some of the material presented. This is NOT an assessment of the group's work/presentation. You are being asked to critically engage with any of the material that was presented, or with the week's topic more broadly. Further details will be discussed in class.

These are to be completed in class and, since they are based on material presented in class, missing the class will result in the loss of the 2% grade.

#### **About the Group Presentation/Facilitation and Topic Paper:**

Students will be assigned to groups of three or four people, based on the topics they have chosen. Each student should choose their own particular area of interest within the broader topic and should use this paper to complete some of the preliminary research for their final paper. The papers should be about 8 to 10 pages in length (double-spaced). They should include a preliminary critical examination/discussion of two or three articles relevant to their topic. The paper should also contain a discussion of your proposed final paper and the ways in which these early articles will be used. I will use these papers to provide input and guidance on the design of your final project.

Each group will have an hour to present their material to the class and to facilitate a class discussion. Students are encouraged to be creative in thinking of ways to get their classmates involved in the material being presented – this is not meant to be a passive learning exercise for the rest of the class. Group members might design tasks or activities for the class, try out research instruments, share and discuss media items etc. The grade for the presentation will be a group grade. All other grade components in the course are individual grades.

Since the class discussion might impact your thoughts on the topic and on the direction of your final paper, it is important to have time to process this information. The topic papers will thus not be due until the Tuesday after the group has presented.

***About the Final Paper/Project:***

**Paper Due:** Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Length:** 18-22 pages (double-spaced)

This paper will be the culmination of the semester's thought you have given to your chosen topic. It can be a critical literature review, a secondary data analysis or a primary data analysis. All students should have discussed with me their plans for this paper, at least once, before reading week (February 22).

Each student will have about eight minutes, during the last two weeks of class, to present their final project to the class.

Further details about the final paper will be discussed in class.

***\*It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.***

***Handing in papers outside of class-time, return of final papers, and release of final grades:***

1. If students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor. Under no circumstances may papers/assignments be placed on or under the professor's door.
2. Term work will be returned in class. Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the professor's office hours at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted publicly. They are available only online.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

If at all possible you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to pass in an assignment or essay 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 physical or emotional problem 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.

Assignments submitted after the deadline, without documentation or my approval, may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

### ***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).

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

### **Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews,

observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about applying for research ethics approval see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>. There is no requirement of human-subject research in this course.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by using their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Faculty policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see [www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info). Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

### **Grading System**

The following grading system will be used:

|     | Grading Scale |
|-----|---------------|
| A+  | 96-100        |
| A   | 90-95.99      |
| A - | 85-89.99      |
| B+  | 80-84.99      |
| B   | 75-79.99      |
| B-  | 70-74.99      |
| C+  | 65-69.99      |
| C   | 60-64.99      |
| C-  | 55-59.99      |
| D+  | 53-54.99      |
| D   | 50-52.99      |
| F   | 0-49          |

### **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Face-to-face, engaged, interaction is the key feature of this course. Students are thus requested *not* to use their computers in this class and to make sure their cellphones are turned off.

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Academic Accommodation Policy**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course. For further information, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/node/46>

### **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

Please note the evacuation points for this particular classroom. All classrooms on campus exit to specific places in case of emergency. The emergency assembly points differ depending upon where your classroom is located. For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **"SAFEWALK" Program**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 403-220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

### **Student Representation**

Another source of information that you may wish to use is your student representative. All faculties elect students to represent them on the Students Union. Please see

<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/home/contact.html>

For your student ombudsman, please see

<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

### **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

A full schedule of topics and readings will be provided by the second week of class, after people have had the chance to choose their topic area. Topic-related readings and presentations will begin the week of February 1. As part of the foundational component, please retrieve and read, **by January 25<sup>th</sup>**, the following articles:

Rich, Adrienne. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs*, 5(4), 631-660.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. (1993). The five sexes: Why male and female are not enough. *The Sciences*, 33(2), 20-25.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. (2000). The five sexes: Revisited. *The Sciences*, 40(4), 18-23.

From the week of February 1<sup>st</sup> through the week of March 29<sup>th</sup> we will be exploring the following topics (order to be determined by the second week of class):

- 1) Intimate Relationships  
-e.g. dating; partnership; hooking up; monogamy; polyamory; marriage; cohabitation, etc.
- 2) Developing a Sexual Identity  
-e.g. childhood, teen and adult identities; familial contexts, etc.

- 3) Reproductive Decisions and Experiences  
-e.g. reproductive decision-making; choosing to be child-free; dealing with infertility; abortion; getting pregnant; the medical industry of reproduction, etc.
- 4) Journeys into Parenthood  
-e.g. embodied journeys to parenthood (pregnancy); becoming an adoptive parent; the transition to parenthood, etc.
- 5) Paid and Unpaid Labour  
-e.g. domestic labour; bread-winning; role negotiation; role satisfaction/conflict, etc.
- 6) The Work of Parenting  
-e.g. types of parenting behaviour; changing parental roles; parenting in different family configurations, etc.
- 7) Gendered Childhood Worlds  
-e.g. growing up in various family forms; developing gender identity; cultural constructions of childhood, etc.
- 8) Communication, Conflict, Violence  
-e.g. communication patterns; types or topics of conflict; relationship power; interpersonal violence, etc.