
Syllabus
SOC214H1S: Sociology of Family
Winter 2023

Instructor: Jillian Sunderland

Time & Location: Tuesdays 12:10-2 pm at University College (UC) 140

Office Hours & Office: Thursdays 4-6 pm on Zoom (Check Quercus) or by appt.

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Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description & Objectives:

This course offers a theoretical and empirical examination of the family as a social institution that is both historically and culturally situated. In this class we will challenge the notion that certain family formations are “universal,” “natural,” or “transhistorical” by exploring how family patterns and dominant ideas of the family have changed over time. Throughout, we will investigate how the family unit both *shapes* and is *shaped by* transformations in the economy, the state, and other social institutions as well as the systemic forces of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, etc. Some topics will include: how the nuclear family came to be treated as natural; how regulating family formations was central to European colonization; how contemporary sexuality and dating has transformed family formations; the inequality of race, gender, and class in family forms; LGBTQ families; transnational and immigrant families and other topics.

By the end of this course, students who have engaged thoughtfully and reflectively with course content will be able to:

- Challenge or problematize commonly held or taken for granted ideas of family
- Describe how the family is affected by micro, meso, and macro social forces
- Situate different formulations of family in their historical and sociopolitical locations
- Explain how normative ideas about families sustain hierarchies of age, gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation in Canada today
- Explain how the family is both implicated by and ameliorative of social inequities

Further, this course incorporates into its lectures the building/honing of various academic skills or the “hidden curriculum” that benefits students more broadly. As such, students will be able to improve in the following areas:

- Reading and comprehending academic literature/studies
- Test-taking skills through employing proven strategies
- How to search literature, how to cite, and how to construct a thesis
- How to write an academic paper

Prerequisite: The prerequisite to take this course is SOC100H1. As per university guidelines, those without this requirement will be removed at time of discovery and without notice.

Textbook and Readings

All full readings or links to readings will be available on course **Quercus**.

Requirements & Evaluation:

All assignments, evaluations, and tests will need to be submitted via **Quercus**, except for in class participation.

PARTICIPATION - ONGOING (10%)

For each lecture (time permitting), you will engage in small group exercises of “think, pair, share” to allow you to exchange ideas and this will form the basis of your participation marks. Attending classes is strongly encouraged to facilitate learning and reaching course milestones. I am not expecting perfect attendance and you will not be penalized for missing a class or two due to unexpected or extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, mental health day, scheduling conflicts). But you should strive to attend as many as possible given tests are based on class lectures. At the first class you will be given the opportunity to share contact info of classmates so that if you miss a class, you can get class notes from your peers.

ALTERNATIVE: If you do not feel comfortable participating in this way, you can ask for your participation grades to be allotted to Test 2.

TEST 1- FEB 7 (25%)

This test will be taken during class time on February 7. It will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions covering weeks 1-4 (i.e., all proceeding weeks before test). All questions will require you to demonstrate understanding and critical application of course materials. You will have **two hours** to complete the test. This test will be administered on **Quercus** and will be open book. To reduce anxiety around the test and facilitate skill building we will go over test taking strategies in the class lecture before the test.

TEST 2 -MARCH 14 (25%)

This test will be taken in class time on March 14. As with the first test, it will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions covering weeks 5-7. All questions will require you to demonstrate understanding and critical application of course materials. You will have **two hours** to complete the test. This test will be administered on **Quercus** and will be open book.

1 PAGE PROPOSAL – MARCH 21 (10%)

On March 28, you will hand in a one-to-two-page (single space) proposal related to the *sociology of family* which outlines your topic, provides preliminary background info, and presents a clear and concise thesis statement for your final paper. This is a chance to get feedback on your ideas, framing, and argument to improve the outcome of your final essay. The proposal **MUST** include a brief summary of topic, thesis argument, a selection of 3-5 sources and a sentence or two on their relevance and how they will be used in the paper. The citation style we will be using is the *American Sociological Association (ASA)* Style found here:

<https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf>

Further details will be discussed in class.

To development/hone the skills needed to complete the assignment, we will have a skill building in-class tutorial on how to: search literature, cite correctly (both in-text and reference) and how to construct a thesis.

This assignment is to be submitted on **Quercus “Assignments Page.”**

FINAL ESSAY – APRIL 14 (30%)

Your final assignment for this class will be an academic essay following from your proposal. It will be a critical synthesis and reflection on academic literature that demonstrates clear understanding and a persuasive argument. It should draw from 6-8 academic, peer-reviewed sources. An additional 2-3 non-peer reviewed sources may be used, *but are not required*, to contextualize and support your argument. The citation style we will be using is the *American Sociological Association (ASA)*.

<https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf>. More details and rubrics will be available in class and on Quercus.

To prepare for the skills needed to complete the assignment, we will have a skill building in-class tutorial on how to write an academic essay.

This assignment is to be submitted on **Quercus “Assignments Page.”**

There will be no final exam in this course.

Course Policies:

Communicating with the Professor

Students are welcome to contact me by email or in person by dropping in on office hours or scheduling an appointment. Under normal circumstances, I am able to respond to emails within 2 business days. Please include **SOC214H1** in the subject of your email. All communications need to be to and from your University of Toronto email address, not on Quercus.

Periodic announcements will be made using the Quercus system. You should regularly monitor the “*Announcements*” section on Quercus as well as your U of T email.

Classroom commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity (race, age, sexuality, gender identity, disability, etc.). This class aims to model a strong commitment to diversity and equity. This not only means an environment free of harassment and discrimination as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, but also one that showcases how diversity enriches the classroom and contributes to full engagement of all members of the class. All members of this class should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all students can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another’s differences and unique positionalities.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodation, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services. Location: 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th floor, Suite 400/accessibility.services@utoronto.ca/ 416-978-8060. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Do you have access needs that I have not covered? Is there something we can do collectively as a class that will help make sure you thrive? We can and will have those conversations in the ways that feel most comfortable to you (privately, with each other, and so on).

Classroom Discussion Policy

In this class, some of the content will challenge or question commonly held beliefs and assumptions that can potentially be uncomfortable. Sometimes discomfort is necessary for growth and new insights to emerge! However, if course content dealing with racism, trauma, inequality is too triggering feel free to step away at any time. This is

completely acceptable, and it is not required you disclose to me why you chose to leave. Just make sure to get notes from fellow classmates. I will try my best to include content warnings before uncomfortable content. Further, to make the classroom space respectful, here are a set of tenets we must all agree to while being in the classroom space:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting
- Allow everyone the opportunity to speak
- Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups
- Avoid inflammatory language, including name-calling
- Ask questions when you don't understand; don't assume you know others' thinking or motivations
- Connect back to course concepts whenever possible
- Don't expect any individuals to speak on behalf of their gender, ethnic group, class, status, etc.

In an ideal situation, our classroom will become an intellectual community where we all feel free to share and participate actively. Think of your comments and queries as building or facilitating another's point of view rather than merely arguing or finding holes in a theory or idea.

Absences and Late Assignments

If you miss a test, please contact me within 24 hours to re-schedule. Please note that test questions are randomized in Quercus to prevent answer sharing.

For Winter 2023, the University will be continuing use of the **Absence Declaration Form**. Students are to complete the form, available to them directly on ACORN, anytime they are absent from academic work. No additional information or documentation is required.

Please try to get assignments in on time as it facilitates smooth turn around so you can incorporate feedback for the next assignment. A **48-hour** grace period will be in effect for all assignments with due dates (Proposal + Essay). You do not need to email me if your assignment will be **2 days** overdue. If you need a longer extension than 2 days, you may ask for one via email. You do not need to supply a reason or documentation. If request for extensions is not made via email, I will deduct 5% for each day late.

However, unless you have accommodations from accessibility services there are some **hard deadlines** that I have to return grades by/post marks that come from **university administration**. I have no ability to change the final cut-off date or work around it so please be mindful that we are working within these constraints. I will communicate those to you if it becomes an issue.

Grading Scale

Percentage	Grade	Gpa Value	Grade Definition
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent
85-89	A	4.0	
80-84	A-	3.7	
77-79	B+	3.3	Good
73-76	B	3.0	
70-72	B-	2.7	
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate
63-66	C	2.0	
60-62	C-	1.7	
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal
53-56	D	1.0	
50-52	D-	0.7	
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate

Disputing a Mark Received on an Assignment

All assignments in this course are marked by your wonderful TA's so if you feel the grade, you received is not an accurate reflection of the work that you produced, contact them. **BUT** – you must follow these steps:

- You **must** wait at least **24 hours** to contact the TA requesting a re-grade.
- For a request to be taken up, you must specify in paragraph or point form the reason for the re-grade request along with precise examples referencing the TA's comments
- The request must be made within 2 weeks **after it was returned**.
- If you are unable to come to an agreement with your TA, you may request a re-grade from the instructor.
- Keep in mind that upon re-grading, your mark may go up or down or stay the same. Continuing with the remark or the appeal means the student accepts this condition.
- At all steps of initiating a re-grade, communication must remain respectful and professional.
- Requests for re-grades that state you need a better mark simply for some extraneous reason (GPA) will not be considered.

Writing Support:

As a university student, you are afforded the privilege of having access to writing support. While many think of going to the writing center only when there are “problems,” try not to think of it like that. A writing centre appointment is useful to even the strongest of writers. At the writing centre they can help you clarify your arguments; adjust the structure and presentation of your essay; improve grammatical correctness; help you craft impactful sentences; and set an appropriate tone for your work. See it as an opportunity to

get another set of eyes on your work. Find your writing centre here:
<https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/>

Family Care Responsibilities

The University of Toronto and this course, strive to provide a family-friendly environment. You may wish to inform me if you are a student with family responsibilities if it affects your engagement with course work. If you are a student parent, caregiver, or have family responsibilities, you also may wish to visit the Family Care Office website at familycare.utoronto.ca.

Land Acknowledgment

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, this meeting place is still home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. It is important that we take time to reflect on how the legacy of colonization is still relevant to our university experience and presence on this land.

For more information, please look here: <https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/>

Religious Observances

The University provides reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. Students will need to alert the teaching staff in a timely fashion of upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences and instructors will make every effort to accommodate those requests.

Please reach out to me as early as possible to communicate any anticipated absences related to religious observances, and to discuss any possible related implications for course work.

“Ouriginal”

Sometimes, students will be required to submit their assignments to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

For some of your assignments, we will be using the software Ouriginal. It uses text matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism. Ouriginal is integrated into Quercus. For the assignments set up to use Ouriginal, the software will review your paper when you upload it to Quercus. To learn more about Ouriginal's privacy policy please review its [Privacy Policy](#).

Students not wishing their assignment to be submitted through Ouriginal will not be assessed unless a student instead provides, along with their work, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is one type of academic offence that, if suspected, instructors are required to report to the University. You can avoid many types of plagiarism by following the guidelines below:

- Always give proper credit to *all* the sources (irrespective of the format of the source) you have drawn on by providing in-text citations and a list of works cited.
- If you *paraphrase* the words of another author, be sure to relay their ideas in a way that differs substantially from their original wording. When you paraphrase, you must provide an in-text citation that indicates the page number (s) where you found the idea you are paraphrasing.
- If you *quote* the words of another author, you must place the author's words between quotation marks, and provide an in-text citation that indicates the page number(s) where you found that quote. As a rule of thumb, you should place another author's words between quotation marks if you use the same 5 or more words in the same sequence.
- You need not cite information or ideas obtained during lectures for this course. You should, however, cite information and ideas that you obtained in the lectures or tutorials of other courses you have taken.
- Never submit all or part of an assignment more than once unless you have the instructor's permission. If you draw on written material that you produced for another course, you must cite yourself.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how you can avoid it, please inquire at the Writing Centre or visit their website

<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>

If you need further clarification, feel free to get in touch with me or your TA.

READING LIST:

Readings are to be read in advance of the lecture and are listed under the heading for that week.

All readings or links to readings will be made available on Quercus.

Note: Every attempt will be made to follow this reading schedule, but readings are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Note: when readings are marked “**peer reviewed**,” this is an important designation for scholarly and credible academic work. We will discuss further details about this designation in class.

WEEK 1: January 10th - How do we define family? What is a family?

Additional:

[The family is not an isolated entity](#). [1m 30s]

WEEK 2: January 17th - Standard North American family/Nuclear family - is it natural?

- *In class skill building: How to read an academic article*

Nicholson, Linda. “The Myth of the Traditional Family.” In *The Play of Reason*, 77–96. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501729225-007>. (Peer Reviewed)

[Where does the Nuclear Family Come From](#) [9m]

[How the Nuclear Family Broke Down](#) [5m]

WEEK 3: January 24th - Making Nuclear Families - Marriage/Motherhood/Fatherhood

Hays, Sharon. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. Chap.2. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Peer-Reviewed)

Shafer, Kevin. “Why Dads Can't Be the Dads They Want to Be.” *The Conversation*, September 15, 2017. <https://theconversation.com/why-dads-cant-be-the-dads-they-want-to-be-75045>.

WEEK 4: January 31 -- Social Reproduction and Inequality in Families - Race, class, gender

- **In class Skill building - How to study for test /Test-taking strategies**

Scommegna, P. (2020). *Married women with children and male partners do more housework than Single Moms*. Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved November 13, 2022, from <https://www.prb.org/resources/married-women-with-children-and-male-partners-do-more-housework-than-single-moms/>

Sedef, Arat-Koc. 2014. 'The politics of family and immigration in the subordination of domestic workers in Canada.' in B Fox, ed., *Family Patterns, Gender Relations*. Fourth Edition. Oxford UP (Peer-Reviewed)

WEEK 5: FEBURARY 7 - TEST 1

WEEK 6: February 14th - Modern Sexuality - love and dating, sex parties, and apps (Pam Guest lecture)

Hobbs, Mitchell, Stephen Owen, and Livia Gerber. "Liquid love? Dating apps, sex, relationships and the digital transformation of intimacy." *Journal of Sociology* 53, no. 2 (2017): 271-284. (Peer Reviewed)

[Why Dating is Hard for Millennials](#) [5m]

[Do Dating Apps Ruin Men's Self-Esteem?](#) [4m]

WEEK 7: FEBURARY 21 (READING WEEK - NO CLASS)

WEEK 8: February 28: Indigenous kinship - How the institution of nuclear family is a tool of colonization

Phillips, Richard. "Settler Colonialism and the Nuclear Family." *The Canadian Geographer* 53, no. 2 (2009): 239–53. (Peer-Reviewed)
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0064.2009.00256.x>.

*The Legacy of the Sixties Scoop. YouTube. CBC The National*2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RZ1yI0FnMs>

WEEK 9: March 7 - Divorce/Single-parent families/Stepfamilies

Skill building: **How to search literature, how to cite, how to construct a thesis**

Moore, Mignon R. "Gendered power relations among women: A study of household decision making in Black, lesbian stepfamilies." *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 2 (2008): 335-356. (Peer Reviewed)

Divorce Trend Report with Sociologist Phillip Cohen. YouTube. Fox NY , 2018.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEcdOJ0IpRw>

WEEK 10: MARCH 14 - IN CLASS TEST – TEST 2

WEEK 11: March 21 LGBTQ families - History, policies, politics, and care

Tey Meadow. "Studying Each Others." In *Trans Kids*, 1st ed., 1–. University of California Press, 2018. (Skim for argument) (Peer Reviewed)

Tey Meadow. "Building a Parent Movement." In *Trans Kids*, 1st ed., 94–. University of California Press, 2018. (Peer Reviewed)

WEEK 12: March 28 - Immigration and Families –Transracial adoption, Jenn guest lecture

DUE: 1 PAGE PROPOSAL

Abrego, Leisy J. *Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders*, Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014. (Peer Reviewed) <https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1515/9780804790574>

Read: Chapter 1 - *Salvadoran Transnational Families* and Chapter 2 - *Why Parents Migrate:*

WEEK 13: April 4 -- The Future of Family, Communities and Kin and Networks of Care?

Dawson, Brit. "*It's Time to Abolish the Family: An Interview with Dr. Sophie Lewis.*" Huck Magazine, October 5, 2022.

<https://www.huckmag.com/perspectives/its-time-to-abolish-the-family/>.

Skill building: how to write an academic paper

APRIL 14TH - FINAL PAPER DUE
