

SOCIOLOGY 200 (001): FORMS OF FAMILIES

Fall Term 1, 2015

Monday & Wednesday 15:00-16:30, West Mall Swing Space #221

“The family is both the crucible of culture -where children first learn what matters in life-and the bellwether of how societal aspirations and concomitant pressures affect the vitality of persons and relationships.”

-Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik

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This course provides an introduction to family studies, which includes a critical examination of contemporary sociological issues and debates pertaining to intimate relationships and family life within the North America context (Canada and US) and beyond. Its main focus is to bring different material to analytically engage students with key questions about social and/or biological relatedness, family dynamics, ways of raising children, class, race, ethnicity, and family and illness, among others. Throughout the course, students will explore and critically think about the wide variety of social and cultural forms of family life. We will examine one case study in depth, that of a group of middle-class families in Los Angeles (US).

Goals:

- Develop an understanding of family studies approaches to contemporary forms of families
- Provide conceptual and theoretical tools to understand the similarities and differences in contemporary forms of families
- Examine the diverse organization of family life from different sociological dimensions (class, ethnicity, gender, health, etc.)
- Examine the relationships between micro-social and macro-social processes and cultural changes and the ways families need to adapt to these changes

Required readings:

Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) *Fast-Forward Family: Home, Work, and Relationships in Middle-Class America*. Berkeley and LA: University of California Press; available for purchase at the UBC Bookstore or online at

<http://www.ubc.eblib.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1092959>.

Mitchell (2009) *Family Matters: An Introduction to Family Sociology in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press; available for purchase at the UBC Bookstore.

Electronic copies of articles will be posted on the course website at CONNECT.

Assignments

Assignments are due on the date specified. If they are not handed in during class they should be deposited in the drop box in the Main ANSO Office. Extensions are granted ONLY in exceptional circumstances. Five points per day will be deducted from the assignment grade for each day beyond the deadline. Papers more than a week late WILL NOT be accepted, except under *extraordinary circumstances* (and a letter from Arts Advising). If there is a health or family situation, or any condition that may affect your ability to meet a deadline, please let me know in advance if possible.

Course Evaluation

1. In-class participation and course engagement	25%
a) Participation	5%
b) Pre-class Q/A (via Connect)	5%
c) Group participation (5% reports + 10% item)	15%
2. Midterm Exam (Oct 14)	25%
3. Book Review (Nov 23)	20%
4. Final Exam (TBA)	30%

1. In-class participation and course engagement (20%):

a) Participation (5%): This part of your grade will evaluate the **quality** of your engagements in the course lectures and discussions. Participation includes demonstration of effective preparation for class as well as active and thoughtful engagement with the ideas of the instructor, TA, and other students. Effective preparation for class includes completing a **thorough reading of the assigned texts PRIOR to each class** as well as taking note of questions you have about the readings and examples that could illustrate the concepts being articulated. While attendance at all classes is the basis for participation (I am expecting that you will maintain at least 75% attendance during the term), **marks will not be assigned for simply being present in class. It is student's responsibility to sign the attendance sheet.**

b) Pre-class Q/A (5%): Participation also includes sharing your ideas about the course material with the instructor, your TA, and other students. As part of your participation, you will also have to submit (at least) **ONE question and/or answer/comment another student's question PER WEEK** about the readings for that particular week over the course of the term (**due on Tuesday at midnight**). Because these questions are intended to give the instructor some sense of what and how you are thinking about the course material, they can ask for clarification about a particular concept or passage of a reading or advance a more open-ended discussion about each class' theme.

c) Group participation (15%): From the second week you will be assigned to a group. Some group discussions will require that the group will **write a short report about their discussion**. These reports will be submitted electronically and posted on the class website on Connect. This part of the grade will be equal to all the members of the group present on the day of the assignment/report (this part is 5%).

Discussion item (10%): As part of group participation once during the term as a group you will

also be asked to bring some “item” or “artifact” to class for discussion. You may bring whatever you like—a magazine, a photograph, a news item, or a link to an online video—**as long as your “item” relates to the subject matter we are covering that CLASS.** PRIOR to the chosen class the group will decide which “item” fits best the class theme. DURING the class the group in **ten (10) MINUTES** will explain why your item is **relevant** to our material and have at least **3 questions for the class** to consider related to your item. You will be expected to submit a **short write-up (300 words max.)** related to your “item” **during the class you are presenting.** The report should explain why your item fits with the class theme (what we can learn from connecting this item with the readings and discussion of that class) and bring at least 3 relevant questions to spark the debate. There will be a sign-up sheet distributed in class so that you can select the week and day that your commentary and discussion item are due.

2. Midterm Exam (25%):

The midterm test will be on **October 14h** and it will take the whole class. The test will require answering Multiple Choices, short, mid-range and long written answers to questions. You will be provided with sample essay questions prior to the exam and asked to write on a subset. It will include material discussed in lectures, required readings, and films.

3. Book Review (20%):

You will have to write a 1,000 words (+/- 10%), double-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12, 1-inch margins book review of Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) *Fast-Forward Family: Home, Work, and Relationships in Middle-Class America*. You will be penalized if you go below or beyond the word limit. Add the exact word count at the end of the paper. You will follow the Canada Review of Sociology's specification for the book review:

“The review should give a thematic overview of the book, discussing its strengths and/or weaknesses. We discourage chapter-by-chapter accounts and mention of bibliographical references in the review. It is always important to locate the book in the larger context of the field and to suggest the audience(s) who would be the most interested in reading or using the book.”

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Book Review is due on November 23 during the class. If you cannot submit it during the class you can submit it at the ANSO Dpt. Assignment Submission Box no later than 18:00 that day (**time-stamp it before submission**). Submission after this day **will be penalized 5p per day.**

4. Final Exam (30%):

The final exam will consist of Multiple Choices, short, mid-range and long written answers to questions that address content introduced throughout the course. It will include material discussed in lectures, required readings, and films. Multiple choice and mid-range answer questions will cover material AFTER the mid-term exam. Essays questions will cover material discussed throughout ALL the term. The University will schedule the final exam during the Fall Exam Period (Dec 8-22).

1 www.csa-scs.ca/files/webapps/csapress/canadian-review/book-reviews/submit-a-review/

Disability Accommodation

Academic accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations that are required for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Centre.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism sometimes happens when students panic or feel overwhelmed. As your instructor, I am here to support your learning. Please contact me to discuss your situation PRIOR to reaching the point where you feel yourself in a panic situation. Students are encouraged to review the publication *Plagiarism Avoided* on the UBC Faculty of Arts website, which includes helpful examples of, and practical strategies to, avoid plagiarism. See, <http://www.arts.ubc.ca/faculty-mpstaff/resources/academic-integrity/resources/plagiarism-avoided.html>.

Students must abide by the academic integrity rules of the Faculty of Arts. The overarching theme of academic integrity is that your work must be, in fact, your own work. All students assume full responsibility for the content of the academic work that they submit. Plagiarism, using notes during a test, or copying from another student will result in a failed grade for the course. The UBC library maintains an excellent web-based resource on Academic Integrity and students should review the web site: <http://www.library.ubc.ca/clc/airc.html> (www.students.ubc.ca/access).

Grade Appeals

Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked exams in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to review their exams and/or group project with me, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades.

Please understand that I take grading very seriously, and make every effort to provide you with a grade that honestly reflects the quality of your work. If you believe the grade does not adequately reflect the quality of your work, return the assignment to me with short, specific, written comments arguing for why you think you deserve a higher grade. **It is best to do this within a week of the time the test/assignment is returned.**

Other Miscellaneous Requests, Expectations, and Class Policies:

1. If you have any questions or concerns about the course material or course requirements, please contact me. I am here to act as a resource to guide you through the difficult terrain of sociology and help you improve your critical reading, thinking, and writing abilities.
2. Please, follow proper professional etiquette in all email communications. For instance, begin all email communication with a proper salutation.
3. Please arrive to class on time and, whenever possible, limit the number of times you exit and re-enter the room during class.
4. You should exercise and develop your critical thinking skills. Critical thinking refers to the process whereby claims are assessed for their validity, relevance, and complexity. When presenting a position or an argument you should aim to go beyond conventional assumptions and black or white explanations. From the readings you are expected to grasp the main thesis, arguments, concepts, and

examples.

5. Computers **cannot be used in the classroom** unless you required a special permission granted by the instructor. Students should turn off their cell phones and any other audio equipment during class.

6. Respect for different opinions is expected in order to create a mutually supportive and respectful learning environment. Participation does not mean talking a lot in class, but rather listening actively, doing the readings every week *prior* to class, and making relevant contributions.

7. If you miss a class, please contact another student for the class notes. Below is a space for you to collect the email addresses of three of your classmates who will be able to provide you with the class notes.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Grades and Grading Criteria

(adapted from the Faculty of Arts “Grading Guidelines”)

A+ (90 - 100%) A (85 – 89%) A- (80 – 84%) Exceptional

Exceptional student performance. Strong evidence of original thinking and sound critical evaluation. Very good organization and capacity to analyze and synthesize information. Superior grasp of the literature and/or subject matter.

B+ (76 - 79%) B (72 - 75 %) B- (68 – 71%) Very Competent

Very competent student performance. Evidence of original thinking and critical evaluation. Good organization, analytic ability and synthesis of information. Very reasonable understanding of the literature and/or subject matter.

C+ (64 - 67%) C (60 - 63%) C- (55 - 59%) Adequate

Adequate student performance. Able to provide simple solutions to critical and analytical problems. Adequate organization, analysis and synthesis of information. Some understanding of the literature and/or subject matter.

50% - 54% (D) Pass

Passing student performance. Serious weaknesses in organization, critical, and analytic skills. Little evidence of understanding of the literature and/or subject matter.

0% - 49% (F) Fail

Failing student performance. Severe weaknesses in organization, critical and analytic skills. No evidence of understanding the literature and/or subject matter.

Outline of topics and readings – (I reserve the right to make modifications)
COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1, Sept 9, Introduction: Sociology of Forms of Families

I) Issues:

- (1) What is meant by “family” in sociology of family?
- (2) How do sociologists distinguish the diverse forms of families?

II) Required reading:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 1: Family Matters: An Introduction to the Sociology of Canadian Families. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press.

Week 2, Sept 14-16, Forms of Families: Definitions and Theories

I) Issues:

- (1) How and why did definitions and theories about family change during time?
- (2) What kinds of methods sociologists use to grasp and understand the diversity of forms of families?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Smith, D. E. (1993) The Standard North American Family SNAF as an Ideological Code. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14(1), 50–65.
<http://jfi.sagepub.com/content/14/1/50>
- (2) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 2: Family Theory and Methods: Windows on Families and Family Research.
- (3) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Introduction.

Week 3, Sept 21-23, Class and Globalization

I) Issues:

- (1) How do social class and globalization impact the diverse forms of families?
- (2) What can we learn from history and anthropology to understand the diversity of forms of families?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 3: Canadian Families in Anthropological, Cross-cultural and Global Perspective
- (2) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapters 6: Chores, and 7: Homework and recreation.

III) Not required reading:

- Lareau, Annete. (2002) Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families. *American Sociological Review*, 67(5), 747-776.

Week 4, Sept 28-30, Gender

I) Issues:

- (1) How does the gender dimension help us understand division of labor within families and public and private issues?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 5: More Than a Labour of Love: Gender and the Cult of Domesticity.

(2) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapters 4: Mountains of Things, and 11: Time for Family.

Week 5, Oct 5-7, (De)Constructing a Family

I) Issues:

- (1) How can we understand the different forms of dating, union, marriage, cohabitation, divorce and separation?
- (2) How do people construct families?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Laner, M. R., & Ventrone, N. A. (2000). Dating scripts revisited. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21(4), 488-500 <http://jfi.sagepub.com/content/21/4/488>
- (2) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 6: Close Relations in Youth and Young Adulthood: Establishing Partnerships and Starting Families.
- (3) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapters 1: Coming Home, and 2: At home.

Week 6, Oct 12-14, Race/Ethnicity

I) Issues:

- (1) How do (in)visible minority groups and First Nations people organize themselves as families and navigate Canadian society?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 4: Aboriginal Families, Immigration, and the Changing Ethnic Mosaic of Canadian Families.

*****MIDTERM EXAM (on Wednesday Oct 14)*****

Week 7, Oct 19-21, Families with and without Children

I) Issues:

- (1) How do families experience birth and rising children?
- (2) How do families experience (in)voluntary childlessness?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 7: Families and Children in the Early Years: Childhood, Socialization, and Shifting Ideologies of Parenthood.
- (2) Blackstone, A., & Stewart, M. D. (2012) Choosing to be Childfree: Research on the Decision Not to Parent. *Sociology Compass*, 6(9), 718–727 <http://goo.gl/RJDD33>
- (3) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapter 8: Nurturing.

Week 8, Oct 26-28, Diverse Forms of Family

I) Issues:

- (1) What we mean by hegemonic/normative forms of family?
- (2) How we can understand the different forms of families?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 8: All Our Families: Diversity, Continuity, and Challenges in Lesbian, Gay, and Transgendered Families.

- (2) Hopkins, J. J., Sorensen, A., & Taylor, V. (2013) Same-sex couples, families, and marriage: Embracing and resisting heteronormativity. *Sociology Compass*, 7(2), 97-110 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/soc4.12016/abstract>

Week 9, Nov 2-4, Leaving Home

I) Issues:

- (1) How can we understand the transitional changes of “leaving home” for family dynamics?
- (2) What are the consequences for families of economical instability in the phenomena of “returning home” and intergenerational co-residence?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 10: Families in the Middle and the Launching of Children
- (2) Mitchell, Barbara; Wister, Andrew and Gee, Elle. (2004) The Ethnic and Family Nexus of Homeleaving and Returning Among Canadian Young Adults. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 29(4): 543-575.

Week 10, Nov 9-11, Families, Stress and Crisis

I) Issue:

- (1) How can we understand the impact of domestic violence, abuse and crisis from a sociological perspective?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 14: Families in Crisis: Domestic Violence, Abuse, and Stress.
- (2) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapter 9: Stress.

Week 11, Nov 16-18, Health and Illness

I) Issues:

- (1) What is the impact of illness on family life?
- (2) How do families respond to the irruption of illness into the family dynamic?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 12: In Sickness and in Health: Families Facing Health Challenges
- (2) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapter 10: Health as a family matter.

Week 12, Nov 23-25, The Burden of Care

I) Issues:

- (1) How do family members divide their time between parenting and employment?
- (2) How do class and gender interplay when considering the “opt-out phenomenon”?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Moe, Karine and Shandy, Diana (2010) Glass-Ceiling and 100 Hour Couples: What The Opt-Out Phenomenon Can Teach Us About Work and Family. Athens, GE: University of Georgia Press. Chapter 4: Glass Ceilings and Maternal Walls.
- (2) Mason, Mary et al. (2013) Do Babies Matter? Gender and Family in the Ivory Tower. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. Chapter 4: Alone in the Ivory Tower

(3) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapter 5: House Work

*****BOOK REVIEW of Fast-Forward Family DUE (Monday Nov 23)*****

Week 13, Nov 30-Dec 2, Families and the State

I) Issues:

- (1) What is the role of the State in relation to family life?
- (2) Which are the salient policy challenges for future family life in Canada?

II) Required readings:

- (1) Mitchell (2009) Chapter 15: Families and the State: Family Policy in an Era of Globalization and Uncertainty
- (2) Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) Chapter 12: The good enough family.

Final Exam Review

Final Exam TBD (Dec 8-22)