

**SOCI 324: Sociology of the Life Course**  
**2014-2015 Term 1 (3 Credits)**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**University of British Columbia**

Mon/Wed/Thurs 3:00-4:00pm  
BUCH B213

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to the theories, methods, and substantive topics, which exemplify the life course approach to sociology. Life course is a culturally defined sequencing of transitions that people typically pass through. Our lives are structured in a historical context, shaped by powerful institutions, including the family, marriage, the job market, and we find meaning based in part on a cultural dialogue of what meaning we ought to assign to key aspects of our lives. In this course we focus on contemporary issues at four major life transitions: childhood to adolescence, adolescence to adulthood, adulthood to marriage, and marriage to parenthood. Our focus is North American specific, and invites students to engage with public debates surrounding hook-up cultures on college campuses, co-habitation, delayed marriage, home birthing, and helicopter parenting.

**Course Evaluation:**

1) 40%: One essay, 10 pages. This essay requires that you draw on the information that we discuss in class, the assigned readings, and your own literature to explore in greater detail a substantive topic related to parenthood. This paper is meant to demonstrate your ability to apply the concepts, theoretical framework, and methods from early in the course to a specific area that relates to the transition of becoming a parent. Paper is due in class on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

2) 40%: Two in-class tests emphasizing assigned readings. Tests will be held in class on September 19<sup>th</sup> and October 27<sup>th</sup>.

3) 20%: Participation, attendance and engagement. Throughout the term students will be asked to contribute actively to course discussions, bring examples from media and their home life to illustrate concepts, and come to class prepared by having read the material and ready to discuss it. One way I will reinforce this readiness is with unannounced quizzes during the first few minutes of class. These quizzes cannot be made up. If you arrive while one is in progress, you may take it as long as you turn it in when everyone else is done.

**Course Materials:**

Fox, Bonnie. 2009. *When Couples Become Parents: The Creation of Gender in the Transition to Parenthood*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, Ontario.

Edin, Kathryn. 2011. *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. University of California Press: Berkeley, California.

Lareau, Annette. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. University of California Press: Berkeley, California.

In addition, additional readings as well as links to course materials will be posted on CONNECT.

**Policies:**

**Attendance for the entire class period is required, as is attendance at the Discussion Groups.** Lectures, discussion groups, and class activities are essential for your understanding of the sociological concepts I will be teaching in this course, and your success in this course will be jeopardized if you miss class. With the exception of accommodations for religious observance, I will not excuse absences, so please do NOT email me to tell me you will not be in class. Please let me know at the beginning of the term if you require accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other personal or professional commitments cannot assume that they will be accommodated. **If you miss class**, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from a classmate, and if you need clarification, to come to office hours.

You are requested to arrive on time. Repeated tardiness will be penalized.

**Electronic devices** can be useful tools; however, they are also very distracting. For this reason **I do not want to see or hear** cell phones, cameras, ipods, laptops, or other electronic equipment in the classroom. That means they must be stowed away in a backpack or bag and not brought out during class time.

**Academic Dishonesty** will not be tolerated. This includes lying, cheating, and plagiarism. I will deal with instances of academic dishonesty, should they occur, according to university policy. Please see the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct for university policies on academic misconduct and academic dishonesty: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0> I reserve the right to use any tool available to determine if a student is engaged in this kind of behavior.

UBC's Early Alert program is designed to get students help quickly and in a coordinated way. Problems it can help with include academic advising, financial advising, counseling, and other resources that can help you get back on track. **If you are feeling stressed, please notify me or the TA** and indicate that you would like assistance. While we are not trained to help with personal problems, we can get you help from people who can assist you. Any information that they receive from you or us is strictly confidential and is in the interest of your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit [earlyalert.ubc.ca](http://earlyalert.ubc.ca).

If anyone has **special needs** that require modification of seating, testing, or meeting other class requirements, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.

**Office Hours** are times that we have set aside to meet with students. The hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. I encourage you to come and visit during office hours. Come individually, or with friends. It's a chance to talk about the course, assignments, exams, study strategies, or whatever you would like to discuss. You don't have to have a *problem* to visit. If you find yourself having difficulty with the readings, or if you do not do well on an exam we definitely want to see you.

**Faculty of Arts Grading Table:**

A+	90-100	B+	76-79	C+	64-67	D	50-54
A	85-89	B	72-75	C	60-63	F	0-49
A-	80-84	B-	68-71	C-	55-59		

**Course Schedule: Please complete the readings by class time on the day that they are listed.**

	Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	3 September	<b>Introduction to the Life Course</b>	
	5 September	What is Life Course?	Elder, "The Life Course"*
Week 2	8 September	What do we mean by "family"	White, et al. "Defining Family"*
	10 September	How to study the Life Course	White, et al. "Life Course Analysis"*
	12 September	The Family as an Institution	Cherlin, "Public and Private Families"
Week 3	15 September	Family Change	Coontz "The Way We Never Were"
	17 September	Catch up and review	
	19 September	<b>Test #1</b>	
Week 4	22 September	<b>Childhood</b>	
	24 September	Socialization	Corsaro, Sociology of Childhood*
	26 September	Peer Culture	Corsaro, Peer Culture*
Week 5	29 September	<b>Adolescents</b>	
	1 October	Popularity	Adler, et al. Socialization of Gender Roles*
	3 October	What does Up teach us?	Watch Up series from BBC
Week 6	6 October	Claiming your class	Duina, "Going to College"*

	8 October	Stymied Transitions	Smith, "Intoxications"*
	10 October	Is hooking up bad for women?	Armstrong, et al "Hooking Up"*
Week 7	13 October – NO CLASS		
	15 October	Cohabitation	Smock and Manning, "New Couples, New families"* <b>Outline of paper due, in class</b>
	17 October	<b>Marriage</b>	
Week 8	20 October	A short history	Coontz "How Love Conquered Marriage"
	22 October	What makes it work?	
	24 October	Violence in personal relationships	Almeida, "Domestic Violence"*
Week 9	27 October	<b>Test #2</b>	
	29 October	<b>Transitions to Parenthood</b>	
	31 October	Pregnancy and Childbirth	Fox, Chapter 1-3
Week 10	3 November	Postpartum Depression	Fox, Chapter 4-5
	5 November	Gender Roles	Fox, Chapters 6-7
	7 November	Households and the Economy	Fox, Chapter 8
Week 11	10 November	Fatherhood	Outline for final essay due; Stone, Opting Out*
	12 November	Changed relationships	Edin, Chapters 1-4
	14 November	What can policy do?	Edin, Chapters 5-7
Week 12	17 November	<b>Parent-Child Relationships</b>	
	19 November	Variations by Social Class	Lareau 2011. "Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life" Chapters 1, 2
	21 November	Variations by Social Class	Lareau 2011. "Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life" Chapters 3 & 6
Week 13	24 November	Variations by Social Class	Lareau 2011. "Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life" Chapters 8,9, &12
	26 November	Family Disintegration	Friedman, "Divorce: the silent revolution"*
	29 November	Wrap up and Catch up	Final Essay Due

\*Indicates material available through Connect.