

**SOCI 405 Families Over the Life Course**  
**Winter 2020**  
**310 Peterson Hall, Mondays, 10:35am-12:25pm**

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**General description and objectives:**

This seminar examines the profound family changes throughout the life course observed in wealthy, industrialized countries over past decades. For example, given the prevailing high levels of conjugal instability, it is not now uncommon for children to see their parents separate and to have to adjust to the arrival of step-parents, step-siblings and half-siblings into their environment. This has also led to a reconfiguration of parental roles, especially for fathers who often do not live on a regular basis with their children and have to redefine their relationships with them. At the other end of the age spectrum, the decline of fertility combined with the rise of separation and divorce clearly affects the composition of the family networks of tomorrow's elderly. What are the effects of the diversification of family trajectories on children's living conditions and development or on the provision of care to elderly? This seminar aims to answer such questions that are at the forefront of social science research and constitute a major concern for policy makers. The course will examine in a comparative perspective the extent and ways in which the sequences of family events have changed over time across western countries and their consequences among men, women, and children. It will expose students to a large array of research drawn from different disciplines, in an effort to understand the mechanisms at work.

**Requirements and evaluation:**

- 1. Discussion leader (20%):** Each week, a group of students (2-4 depending on the number of readings) will be responsible for leading class discussion. This group is expected to have prepared brief summaries of the readings (less than 300 words) and discussion questions. You do not need to prepare summaries for readings listed as "also skim" in the syllabus but you may find them useful in generating discussion questions and/or answers. Summaries and readings are to be posted on myCourses at least 24 hours before the assigned class (i.e. by 10:35am on Sunday). A sign-up sheet will be available here after the add/drop period:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dyJCH6ex510YS4sUCmgzNm\\_HquS16J\\_KIC95MVhhNAk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dyJCH6ex510YS4sUCmgzNm_HquS16J_KIC95MVhhNAk/edit?usp=sharing)

Students will then be responsible for starting the class discussion. This will typically involve a brief refresher of the material and/or an overview of the readings.

Evaluation/grading. Leading discussions will be evaluated on the clarity of the presentation, the quality, rigor, and relevance of the comments, the openness towards others' point of views, and the critical and constructive nature of the exchanges. Additionally, discussion leaders will complete Peer Review sheets (available on myCourses) for each group member and themselves. This will also contribute to your participation grade. You must submit your Peer Review sheet (electronic or hard copy) by the class following your leadership week (e.g. if you lead class on Jan 27 you must submit your Peer Review sheet by class on Feb 3).

- 2. Participation (10%):** All students are expected to read all the assigned readings each week in order to actively participate in the class discussions.

Evaluation/grading: Participation in discussions will be evaluated on the clarity of the presentation, the quality, rigor, and relevance of the comments, the openness towards others' point of views, and the critical and constructive nature of the exchanges.

I know that speaking in class is challenging for some students. I am happy to work with you to make this as stress free as possible. Do not hesitate to talk with me if you have concerns over your ability to successfully participate.

- 3. Debates (25%):** Students will be broken into two groups, with each group preparing a debate on a specific topic. We will then have two debates in class on February 24. Each group will prepare a pro and a con presentation (~15 min each) after which the class will have a debate on the topic. The “winner” of each group will be decided by vote at the end of class and will be based on the quality of the evidence provided and the presentation (not on the substance).

Each group must prepare a synopsis of their presentation and submit the synopsis and any materials used for the presentation (e.g. PowerPoint slides) by 10am on **February 24**.

I have identified three potential topics for the debates. Email me your ranking of the three (1= topic you would most like to debate, 3=topic you would least like to debate) by Wednesday, **January 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 8pm. I will then assign groups.

If there is another topic you would like to propose you may do so via myCourses by presenting a brief (3-4 sentence) description of the topic by Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. I will then indicate whether students should include that topic in their ranking.

Evaluation/grading. Individuals will receive a grade based on the groups' product and individual contributions. Your grade will not depend on “winning” your debate. Everyone must submit a Peer Review sheet (electronic or hard copy) by before Reading Week (i.e. by February 28). This will allow you to assess each group members' contribution to the preparation and the actual debate itself. The presentation (oral and written) and debate will count for 25% of the final grade. Again, peer rating will contribute to the grade.

- 4. Research Topic:** Each student will pick a topic flowing from the seminar. This topic will be the base for a presentation and a paper.

**Paper: “What’s missing? What’s next” (30%)** Each student must write a paper on their chosen topic. This paper will be a critical literature review which comprises a critical review of existing studies on the chosen topic and a discussion of unanswered or next questions. You may include tables or figures you find in academic sources in your paper but you are not expected to conduct your own data analysis. The topic of research should be chosen by turning in a proposal (1 page) by **February 10 at the latest**. Proposals are worth **5%** of your total grade. The final paper is due on **April 14**, and will count for **25%** of the total grade. Papers should be roughly 3000 words long. Additional instructions are on myCourses.

**Presentation (15%)** Each student must present their topic to the class during the last two days of class, on **March 30 and April 6**; this presentation will count for **15%** of the final grade. Presentations will be in the [Pecha Kucha](#) format and will be evaluated in terms of the substance of topic, the presentation itself, and your presentation style. Additional instructions are on myCourses.

### **Written Work**

All written work must be typed using Times New Roman 12 or Arial 10 font with 2.54 cm/1 inch margins on all sides. Evaluation will include the substance of the paper and the quality of the writing (including grammar and spelling as well as the clarity of presentation).

### **Late assignment policy**

All assignments are due at the start of class on the day they are due. Assignments turned in late will be marked down 1 full letter grade for each 24 hour period late. That is, an assignment due on February 27<sup>th</sup> is due at 10:35am that day. If it is turned in after the start of class but before 10:35am on February 28<sup>th</sup> the highest grade it can receive is a B. If it is turned in between 10:35am on February 28<sup>th</sup> and 10:35am on February 29<sup>th</sup> the highest grade it can receive is a C.

### **Disability and illness policies**

Individuals with university recognised disabilities will be afforded special considerations in the setting of examination times and venues and depending on the type of disability may be given extra time to complete the required work. Assignments and/or projects that are late due to illness will not be accepted without an authoritative third party excuse and explanation.

### **Academic Integrity**

*McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).*

*"L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/))."*

### **Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded**

*In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*

The FRENCH TRANSLATION about this right may also be used on your course outlines:

*"Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue)."*

**Email:** There are two key points regarding email for this class.

- To communicate with you I will most likely use the email tool on the course website on myCourses. It is your responsibility to check this email account (or have it forwarded to an account you use more regularly). It is also your responsibility to ensure that I receive any messages from you. I recommend sending messages through the course website to ensure your messages to me from a non-McGill account are not mistaken as SPAM.

- Email is a written document and should be treated as a permanent record of communication. Each email should be addressed specifically (e.g. “Professor Brauner-Otto,” or Dear Prof. Otto) and include your name as a closing. Do not use texting shortcuts or incomplete sentences. Emails to me should be more formal than emails to your friends or family. If it is too cumbersome to properly compose an email from your phone then you should wait until you have access to a computer. I will not respond to emails that do not follow these guidelines.

**Tardiness.** Tardiness, arriving late to class, will not be tolerated. Students who are more than 10 minutes late to class will not be allowed to attend that day. Students repeatedly arriving late to class will be asked to withdraw from the course. If the time of this class is too difficult for you to accommodate then you need to find another class.

**Leaving early.** Leaving class early will not be tolerated. If you have other commitments that prevent you from being in class the entire time then you need to find another class. Students repeatedly leaving early will be asked to withdraw from the course.

**Cell phones and other electronic devices.** The use of cell phones and similar electronic devices is not allowed in class. Use includes texting, checking Facebook, and other similar activities. If a cell phone “goes off” (e.g. rings, buzzes, beeps, vibrates) in any manner the student will be asked to leave the class immediately. Any student who uses a phone or similar device in class may be asked to leave class immediately. Re-admittance into the class at a later date is at the professor’s discretion. Students who repeatedly use unapproved electron devices will be asked to withdraw from the course. Laptops will be permitted but if I find their presence distracts from the learning environment of the class I will ban them.

### Schedule and Reading list

Readings can either be found by clicking the hyperlink in the syllabus or on myCourses (all readings are not in both places). You can also search for articles through the library.

Students may find the following blog informative both for class discussions and for paper ideas: Family Inequality blog <http://familyinequality.wordpress.com/>

Week	Date	Topic
1	06-Jan	<i>Introduction</i>

2	13-Jan	<i>Defining families</i>
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Powell, Brian, Catherine Bolzendahl, Claudia Geist, and Lala Carr Steelman. 2010. Chapters 1-3 in *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans’ Definitions of Family*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

[Bould, S. 1993. “Familial Caretaking. A Middle-Range Definition of Family in the Context of Social Policy”, \*Journal of Family Issues\* 14 \(1\): 133-151.](#)

[Statistics Canada. 2012. \*Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada: Families, households and marital status, 2011 Census of Population. Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011001. Part 1 and Box on page 17.\*](#)

Also skim:

[http://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/read/a-child-in-the-netherlands-is-going-to-have-five-parents-876](http://www.vice.com/en_ca/read/a-child-in-the-netherlands-is-going-to-have-five-parents-876)

Statscan definitions: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/guides/98-312-x/98-312-x2011005-eng.cfm>

Family change over past 50 years: [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-312-x/98-312-x2011003\\_1-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-312-x/98-312-x2011003_1-eng.cfm)

3 20-Jan ***The life course; changing family life cycles***

[Elder, G.H., M. Kirkpatrick Johnson and R. Crosnoe. 2003. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory", in Handbook of the Life Course, J.T. Mortimer and M.J. Shanahan \(ed.\). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, p. 3-19 \[ebook\].](#)

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2004. "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66: 848-861.

Coontz, Stephanie. Selection from *The Way We Never Were*

21-Jan add/drop deadline (discussion leader sign up sheet available)

22-Jan deadline to submit debate preferences (optional)

4 27-Jan ***Changing family trajectories***

(student discussion leaders start)

[Andersson, Gunnar. 2002. "Children's experience of family disruption and family formation: Evidence from 16 FFS countries," \*Demographic Research\* 7\(7\): 343-364.](#)

[Salmela-Aro, K., N. Kiuru, J.E. Nurmi and M. Eerola. 2011. "Mapping pathways to adulthood among Finish university students: Sequences, patterns, variation in family- and work-related roles", \*Advances in Life Course Research\*, 16 \(1\): 25-41.](#)

[Ravanera, Z.R. and F. Rajulton. 2006. "Social Status Polarization in the Timing and Trajectories to Motherhood", \*Canadian Studies in Population\* 33 \(2\): 179-207.](#)

Juby, H. and C. Le Bourdais, 1998. "The Changing Context of Fatherhood in Canada. A Life Course Analysis", *Population Studies*, 52(2): 163-175

5 03-Feb ***Childhood experiences and adult outcomes***

[Ongaro, F. and S. Mazzuco. 2009. "Parental separation and family formation in early adulthood: Evidence from Italy", \*Advances in Life Course Research\* 14 \(3\): 119-130.](#)

[Amato, P.R. 2003. "Reconciling Divergent Perspectives: Judith Wallerstein, Quantitative Family Research, and Children of Divorce", \*Family Relations\* 52 \(4\): 332-339.](#)

[Sobolewski, J.M. and P. R. Amato. 2005. "Economic Hardship in the Family of Origin and Children's Psychological Well-Being in Adulthood", \*Journal of Marriage and Family\* 67 \(1\): 141-156.](#)

Hoffman, Saul D.; E. Michael Foster; Frank F. Furstenberg Jr. 1993.

"Reevaluating the Costs of Teenage Childbearing." *Demography* 30(1):1-13.

Also skim:

Geronimus, Arline and Sanders Korenman. 1993. "The Socioeconomic Costs of Teenage Childbearing: Evidence and Interpretation." Demography 30(2):281-290.

Hoffman, Saul D.; E. Michael Foster; Frank F. Furstenberg Jr. 1993. "Reevaluating the Costs of Teenage Childbearing: Response to Geronimus and Korenman." Demography 30(2): 291-296.

6 10-Feb ***Growing up with same-sex parents: does it matter?***

**proposals due**

[Gartrell, N. and H. Bos. 2010. "US National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study: Psychological Adjustment of 17-Year-Old Adolescents", \*Pediatrics\* 126 \(1\): 28-36.](#)

[Stacey, J. and T.J. Biblarz. 2001. "\(How\) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?", \*American Sociological Review\* 66 \(2\): 159-183.](#)

Regnerus, M. 2012. "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study", *Social Science Research* 41 (4): 752-770.

Rosenfeld, Michael J. 2015. "Revisiting the Data from the New Family Structure Study: Taking Family Instability into Account." *Sociological Science* 2 (September): 478–501. doi:10.15195/v2.a23.

Cheng, Simon and Brian Powell. 2015. "Measurement, methods, and divergent patterns: Reassessing the effects of same-sex parents." *Social Science Research* 52: 615-626.

[Also skim Family Inequality posts related to Regnerus controversy:](#)

<http://familyinequality.wordpress.com/tag/regnerus/>

[Watch: http://youtu.be/YIKGXz5CIPw](http://youtu.be/YIKGXz5CIPw)

7 17-Feb ***Children: who's having kids? Why or why not?***

Morgan, S. Philip and Miles G. Taylor. 2006. "Low Fertility at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century." *Annual Review Of Sociology* 32, 375-399.

Zaidi, Batool and S. Philip Morgan. "The Second Demographic Transition Theory: A Review and Appraisal" *Annual Review Of Sociology* 2017. 43:473–92.

Selections from *Low and Lower Fertility: Variations across Developed Countries and Low fertility, institutions, and their policies* edited by Rindfuss, Ronald R. and Minja Kim Choe, eds. 2015.

Chapter 1 and 1 other chapter of your choice. Sign up on discussion sign-up sheet:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ohY7wPd97mZKS8k-IFQ11eGxX7htiGi2oSB2\\_MtEDgE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ohY7wPd97mZKS8k-IFQ11eGxX7htiGi2oSB2_MtEDgE/edit?usp=sharing)

8 24-Feb **Student debates**

02-Mar **Reading week. No class**

- 9 09-Mar ***Motherhood and work***  
[Gough, Margaret and Noonan Mary. 2013. "A review of the motherhood wage penalty in the United States." \*Sociology Compass\* 7\(4\): 328-342.](#)  
[Phipps, S., P. Burton and L. Lethbridge. 2001. "In and out of the labour market: long-term income consequences of child-related interruptions to women's paid work", \*Canadian Journal of Economics\* 34 \(2\): 411-429.](#)  
[Aisenbrey, S., M. Evertsson and D. Grunow. 2009. "Is There a Career Penalty for Mothers' Time Out? A Comparison of Germany, Sweden and the United States", \*Social Forces\* 88 \(2\): 573-605.](#)  
 Also skim  
 Waldfogel, Jane. 1997a. 'The Effect of Children on Women's Wages.' *American Sociological Review* 62(2): 209-17.  
 Taniguchi, Hiromi. 1999. 'The Timing of Childbearing and Women's Wages.' *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61: 1008-19.
- 10 16-Mar ***Childbearing after separation***  
[Beaujouan, E. and A. Solaz. 2008. "Childbearing after Separation: Do Second Unions Make Up for Earlier Missing Births? Evidence from France". Paris: INED, Documents de travail No 155.](#)  
[Henz, Ursula and Elizabeth Thomson. 2005. "Union Stability and Stepfamily Fertility in Austria, Finland, France, and West Germany." \*European Journal of Population\* 21\(1\): 3-29.](#)  
[Stewart, S. D. 2002. "The effect of stepchildren on childbearing intentions and births", \*Demography\* 39 \(1\): 181-197.](#)
- 11 23-Mar ***Family changes and elderly support***  
[Albertini, M. and A. Garriga. 2011. "The Effects of Divorce on Parent-Child Contacts", \*European Societies\* 13 \(2\): 257-278.](#)  
[Kalmijn, M., 2007. "Gender Differences in the Effects of Divorce, Widowhood and Remarriage on Intergenerational Support: Does Marriage Protect Fathers?"; \*Social Forces\*, 85 \(3\): 1079-1104.](#)  
[Shapiro, A., 2012. "Rethinking marital status: Partnership history and intergenerational relationships in American families", \*Advances in Life Course Research\*, 17 \(3\): 168-176.](#)  
 Ruppanner, Leah and Georgiana Bostean. 2014. "Who Cares? Caregiver Well-being in Europe." *European Sociological Review* 30 (5): 655-669.
- 12 30-Mar *Student presentations*
- 13 06-Apr *Student presentations*