Sociology 247 – Family and Modern Society
Winter 2021
Tuesday: 2:35 – 5:25 pm

Instructor: Céline Le Bourdais
e-mail: celine.lebourdais@mcgill.ca

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00am – 12:00pm via zoom:
Please sign up at: https://calendly.com/celine-lebourdais
Meeting ID: 891 7799 4463; Passcode: 341280
(note this link is for office hours only; the zoom meetings for classes should be accessed through myCourses)

TA: Gabrielle Juteau
e-mail: gabrielle.juteau@mail.mcgill.ca
Office Hours: TBA

Course description:
This course examines the profound transformations that families have experienced over the last fifty years, following the increased participation of mothers in the labour market, the decline of fertility, and the transformation of conjugal life through the increase of divorce, the postponement of marriage, the rise of cohabiting unions and the authorization of same-sex marriage. These changes have led to a diversification of family structures (single-parent families and stepfamilies; same-sex couples with children) and of individuals’ family trajectories, and to a reorganization of family life and a redefinition of parental roles. These are the central topics that will be dealt with in this course.

Online course and communication:
This course will be offered completely online. We will make extensive use of the course website through myCourses.

To communicate with you we will use the email tool on myCourses or your McGill email address. It is your responsibility to check this email account (or have it forwarded to an account you use more regularly). If you have logistical questions about the class, you should pose those on the discussion board on myCourses that we will monitor. Do not e-mail us with these questions. The reason is that many of you will have the same questions and we don’t want to answer the same question multiple times.

Office hours: Wednesday 10:00am – 12:00pm. To make an appointment you need to sign up no later than on Tuesday 10:00pm at: https://calendly.com/celine-lebourdais

Course structure:
Except for the first class, lectures will be pre-recorded and posted on myCourses. The other two hours of the class will be used for virtual, interactive activities on Zoom including Q&A periods.
and discussion groups. To facilitate exchanges and discussions, the class will be split in two groups (see below).

1. **Completion of the required readings**: you are expected to complete the assigned readings before the class for which they are assigned. This will facilitate your understanding of class lectures and discussions.

2. **Lectures**: except for the first class, one-hour long lectures (usually two 30-minute lectures) will be prerecorded and posted on myCourses a few days before the class. You can watch them at any time of your convenience but no later than during the first hour of the class to which they are related.

Lectures will not only cover material from the readings, but also material which is not in the readings. So, while attendance is not mandatory, it is in your interest to attend lectures.

3. **Revision/discussion sessions**: will be held during the 2nd and 3rd hours of each class. To facilitate exchanges and discussions, the class will be broken up in two groups. **Group 1** comprises students whose last name starts by A to L (inclusive) and will attend the session from 3:35 to 4:25 pm; those whose name starts by M to Z (**Group 2**) will attend the session from 4:35 to 5:25 pm. Sign into your group sessions through the Zoom tab on MyCourses.

Prior to the discussion session, each week you are invited to write comments and questions about the readings on the Discussion board linked to your group. I will spend the first 15-20 minutes of these sessions to address these questions as well as those that you write in the chat (Raise your questions this way instead of emailing me or the teaching assistant. This way, all students can benefit from the questions and answers). The rest of the session will be devoted to small group discussions.

**IMPORTANT**: If you are unable to attend the regular class meetings, for example due to different time zones, you need to inform us, by sending an email to Gabrielle Juteau and providing all information that we need to know to facilitate your participation. We might be able to form an additional discussion group.

**Required readings:**

All required readings are available through myCourses. Most readings can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink of the articles listed in the online version of the syllabus. Other texts (that do not have a hyperlink) can be found under the module ‘Readings’ in myCourses.

**Requirements and evaluation:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>30% (distributed on Tuesday, February 23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual/Group project</td>
<td>35% (due on April 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35% (to be scheduled during the final exam period)</td>
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1. **Mid-term exam**: the mid-term exam will include both multiple choice and short answer questions and is worth 30% of your grade. It will focus on all materials covered in readings, lectures and discussion sessions, from the beginning of the term up to February 23 inclusively. The exam will be posted on **Tuesday, February 23 at 3:30pm and has to be**
completed by Thursday, February 25 at 5:30pm. Once you start the exam, you will have 2 hours to complete the test in one sitting.

Note that there is absolutely no extension on the Midterm exam. Late submissions and submission by email are NOT accepted.

2. **Individual/Group project:** working individually or in small teams of no more than 3 members, students will select one family policy or one recent family court case found in a country of their choice. Examples of family policies include the provision of childcare services, of maternity/parental leaves, or of financial child benefits. Family court cases could focus on issues such as the rights and obligations of gay couples, the number of parents a child can have, or the rights and obligations of separated parents in terms of custody and child support. The project report should first briefly present the policy or court decision, describe the pursued goal or intent and situate it in the broader context of the country. Secondly, the report should take a critical stance and discuss, for example, counter arguments to the ruling or some unexpected and perhaps adverse effects of the policy. Finally, the report should conclude regarding the benefits/disadvantages of the policy or ruling and point to remedial measures, if needed.

The project report should be 8-10 pages long (double space, Times New Roman font 12, and one-inch margins), excluding references and other supportive material. Students need to submit the choice of their topic and country (including the names of team members, if applicable) for approval by the Professor no later than on Friday, March 19. Their final report is due by Tuesday, April 6 and is worth 35% of your grade.

3. **Final exam:** the final-term exam will include both multiple choice and short answer questions and is worth 35% of your grade. It will focus on all materials covered in readings, lectures and discussion sessions covered during the term. The exam will be held during the formal exam period (date and time to be announced). You will have two days to complete the exam, but once you start the exam, you will have a fixed number of hours to complete the test in one sitting.

**Notes / Policies**

*In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.*

**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/students/srr/honest/ for more information) (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003).

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/).
Academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. If I find evidence of any academic misconduct for any activity in this class, I will report the offense to the Office of the Dean of Students and they will determine the appropriate sanction.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, deceptive acts such as the following: cheating, fabrication (lying), falsification, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity, or violation of departmental or college rules.

Submitting work that you have not completed as if it is your own is academic misconduct.

**Language:** 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.

(approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

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).

**Copyright and the reproduction of course material:** Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., lectures, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Specifically, **you may not reproduce or place in the public domain lecture and course session recordings.** Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow-up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

**Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities:** If you need any accommodation please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/ 398-6009). You may also contact me directly. I will make every effort to accommodate you.
Calendar, Themes and Readings

Week 1 - Introduction to the Course. Defining Families (January 12)

Week 2 - Measuring Changing Families (January 19)

Week 3 - Home Leaving and Family Formation (January 26)

Week 4 - Conjugal Life: Marriage (February 2)

Week 5 - Diversification of Conjugal Life (February 9)
Week 6 - Union Dissolution & Single Parenthood (February 16)

Week 7 - Stepfamilies (February 23)
- Mid-Term Exam

Week 8 - Sharing Parenting and Domestic Work (March 9)

Week 9 - Parenthood in Question (March 16)
- Sikkema, J. 2018. “Three legal parents is in child’s ‘best interests’ says Canadian judge”. Mercatornet May 1 [on myCourses].

Week 10 - Intergenerational Relations and Support (March 23)
Week 11 - Impact of Crises on Families (March 30)
- ---, 2020. “Baby boom, baby bust – The Pandemic may be leading to fewer babies in rich countries”. *The Economist* October 29 [on myCourses].

Week 12 - Family Policies (April 6)
- ---, 2020. “South Korea wants mothers to work, to bolster the labour force”. *The Economist* October 17. [on myCourses]

Week 13 - The Future of Families (April 13)

FINAL EXAM (to be scheduled during the final exam period)