

**SOCI 502 Sociology of Fertility**  
**Fall 2019**  
**Peterson 310, Fridays 12:35pm-2:25pm**

**Instructor:** Dr. Sarah Brauner-Otto  
**Email:** [sarah.brauner-otto@mcgill.ca](mailto:sarah.brauner-otto@mcgill.ca)  
**Office:** 728 Leacock Building  
**Office hours:** Fridays 3-5pm and by appointment

**Description:** The course will cover the major theories and findings from the social scientific study of fertility behavior. Readings and discussion will focus on the causal linkages between social change and transitions in fertility behavior. We will examine contemporary fertility behavior in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the United States, along with historical change in Europe.

**Format:** We meet once a week for 2 hours. I have selected a series of topics and chosen background readings for each of those topics. Class periods will be devoted to discussion of these topics and students will take responsibility for facilitating these discussions on a rotating basis. Additional topics may be added as warranted by participants' interests.

**Grade:**

1. Regular class participation (15%). All students are expected to be active participants in class. This includes arriving to class with the assigned readings in hand (electronically or in hard copy), having read the assigned readings, having identified questions or comments you may have on the readings. You must speak in class and offer constructive thoughtful comments to receive full credit for participation.

Note: If students are not participating I will change this to require written reading summaries at each class period. I will then likely increase the contribution of class participation to the overall grade and decrease the contribution of the final paper.

2. Discussion leader (15%). Once during weeks 6-13 (11 October-29 November) each student must sign up to be a discussion leader. There will be more than 1 student for each week and you must work together to make sure you can lead a thoughtful, interesting, and engaging discussion that day. There are no specific requirements other than competent mastery of the material, but efforts to enhance the class (e.g. audio/visual aids such as video clips, graphs) will be appreciated by your peers and likely improve your grade. A sign-up sheet will be made available after the add/drop period.
3. Contemporary theory presentation (20%). For weeks 4 and 5 (27 Sept and 4 Oct) we will be discussing contemporary theories of fertility decline. All students must be familiar with all readings, but you will sign up to be the expert of 1 reading. You must come to class prepared to answer questions about "your" theory and be prepared to discuss how it

compares and contrasts with classical theories of fertility change and other contemporary theories of fertility. You will need to submit a brief summary of your theory (~1 page).

4. Group project on high fertility (20%). For week 9 (1 Nov) we will have group presentations. The class will divide into at most 4 equal groups (the exact size and number of groups will be determined once the add/drop period has ended). Each group will then pick a topic related to high fertility to present to the class. The nature of the presentation and specific topic are open and you will be graded on the content and the presentation itself.
5. Final research paper (30%: proposal 5%, paper 25%). All students will submit a final research paper on a topic related to fertility. Papers are due 3 December but no late penalty will be applied until 13 December. Proposals are due by November 8 in class.

Graduate students must write either an empirical study or a proposal for an empirical study. Papers will likely be roughly 7000 words long.

Undergraduate students may write a simpler theoretical research paper without tying explicitly to data. Paper should be roughly 3000 words and must include at least ten (10) scholarly sources from within the past 20 years. Undergraduates may elect to write an empirical study or a proposal for an empirical study. Students writing a thesis or planning on attending graduate school may prefer this option.

### **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 26<sup>th</sup> is due at 11:35am that day. If it is turned in after the start of class but before 1:35pm on February 27<sup>th</sup> the highest grade it can receive is a B. If it is turned in between 1:35pm on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 1:35pm on February 28<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).*

**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.*

**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.

**Course outline**  
**Subject to change**

Readings can be found either as PDFs on myCourses or via the university library

Week	Date	Topic and Readings
<b>Part I--Introduction and ways of thinking about fertility</b>		
1	06-Sep	<b>Introduction</b>
2	13-Sep	<p><b>Demographic Transition Theory and Conceptual Tools Developed to Study Fertility</b></p> <p>Kirk, Dudley. 1996. "Demographic transition theory." <i>Population Studies</i> 50:361-387.</p> <p>Bongaarts, John. 1982. "The Fertility-Inhibiting Effects of the Intermediate Fertility Variables." <i>Studies in Family Planning</i>. 13:179-189.</p> <p>Easterlin, Richard and Eileen Crimmins. 1985. "Theoretical Framework." Pp. 12-31 in <i>The Fertility Revolution</i></p> <p>Smith, Herb. 1989. "Integrating Theory and Research on the Institutional Determinants of Fertility." <i>Demography</i> 26(2): 171-184.</p> <p><i>Supplemental readings:</i></p> <p>Bulatao, Rodolfo and Ronald Lee. 1983. "A Framework for the Study of Fertility Determinants." In <i>Determinants of Fertility in Developing Countries</i>. Vol. 1. R. Bulatao and R. Lee eds. Academic Press, Pp. 1-26.</p> <p>Davis, Kingsley and Judith Blake. 1956. "Social Structure and Fertility: An Analytic Framework." <i>Economic Development and Cultural Change</i> 4: 211-235.</p> <p>Miller, Warren B., Lawrence J. Severy and David J. Pasta. 2004. "A Framework for Modelling Fertility Motivation in Couples." <i>Population Studies</i> 58(2):193-205.</p> <p>Udry, J. Richard. 1983. "Do Couples Make Fertility Plans One Birth at a Time?" <i>Demography</i> 20(2):117-128</p>
3	20-Sep	<p><b>Classical Theories of Fertility Change</b></p> <p>Becker, G. S. (1960) An economic analysis of fertility. Pp 209-231 in NBER Demographic and Economic Change in Developed Countries. <a href="http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2387.pdf">http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2387.pdf</a></p> <p>Blake J. (1968) Are Babies Consumer Durables?: A Critique of the Economic Theory of Reproductive Motivation. <i>Population Studies</i>, 22(1), 5–25.</p> <p>Davis, Kingsley. 1955. "Institutional Patterns Favoring High Fertility in Underdeveloped Areas." <i>Eugenics Quarterly</i>. 2:33-39</p> <p>Caldwell, John C. 1982. "Toward a Restatement of Demographic Transition Theory." Pp. 115-156 in <i>Theory of Fertility Decline</i>. New York: Academic Press.</p> <p><i>Supplemental:</i></p>

Caldwell, John C. 1982. "A Theory of Fertility: From High Plateau to Destablization." Pp. 157-180 in *Theory of Fertility Decline*. New York: Academic Press.

4 27-Sep

**Contemporary Theories of Fertility Change I**

Lesthaeghe, Ron and Johan Surkyn. 1988. "Cultural Dynamics and Economic Theories of Fertility Change." Population and Development Review. 14(1): 1-45

Thornton, Arland. 2001. "The Developmental Paradigm, Reading History Sideways, and Family Change." Demography 38(4): 449-466.

McDonald, P. 2000. "Gender equity in theories of fertility transition." Population and Development Review 26 (3), 427-440.

Casterline, John. 2001. "Diffusion Processes and Fertility Transition: Introduction." Pp. 1-16 in *Diffusion Processes and Fertility Transition*, edited by J. B. Casterline. Washington: National Academy Press

5 04-Oct

**Contemporary Theories of Fertility Change II**

Pollak, R.A. and Susan C. Watkins. 1993. "Cultural and economic approaches to fertility: Proper marriage or mesalliance?" Population and Development Review 19(3): 467-496.

Bachrach, Christine A. and S. Philip Morgan 2013. "A Cognitive-Social Model of Fertility Intentions." Population and Development Review 39(3): 459-485.

Lesthaeghe, Ron. 2010. "The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition." Population and Development Review 36: 211-251.

Zaidi, Batool and S. Philip Morgan. 2017. "The Second Demographic Transition Theory: A Review and Appraisal." Annual Review of Sociology 43: 473-492.

Goldscheider, Frances, Eva Bernhardt, and Trude Lappegard. 2015. "The Gender Revolution: A Framework for Understanding Changing Family and Demographic Behavior." Population and Development Review 41: 207-239.

*Supplemental:*

Bachrach, Christine A. 2014. "Culture and Demography: From Reluctant Bedfellows to Committed Partners." Demography 51: 3-25.

Caldwell, John C. and Thomas Schindlmayr. 2003. "Explanations of the fertility crisis in modern societies: A search for commonalities." Population Studies 57(3):241-263.

Cleland, John and Christopher Wilson. 1987. "Demand Theories of the Fertility Transition: An Iconoclastic View." Population Studies. 41: 5-30.

Hirschman, C. 1994. "Why fertility changes." Annual Review of Sociology 20, 203-233

Kertzer, David I. 1995. "Political-Economic and Cultural Explanations of Demographic Behavior." Pp. 29-52 in Susan Greenhalgh, Ed., *Situating Fertility*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mason, K. O. 1997. "Explaining fertility transitions." Demography 34 (4), 443-454.

Mason, Karen O. 2001. "Gender and Family Systems in the Fertility Transition." Population and Development Review 27(Supplement: Global Fertility Transitions): 160-176.

Thornton, Arland, T. Fricke, L.S. Yang, and J.S. Chang. 1994. "Theoretical Mechanisms of Family Change." pp. 88-115 in *Social Change and the Family in Taiwan* by Arland Thornton and Hui-Sheng Lin, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

## Part II--Empirical evidence

### 6 11-Oct Value of Children and Fertility

Caldwell, John C. 1982. "The Mechanisms of Demographic Change in Historical Perspective." Pp. 203-232 in *Theory of Fertility Decline*. New York: Academic Press.

Also published in Population Studies. 35(1): 5-27.

DiPrete, Thomas A., S. Philip Morgan, Henriette Engelhardt and Hana Paclova. 2003. "Do Cross-national Differences in the Costs of Children Generate Cross National Differences in Fertility Rites?" Population Research and Policy Review 22:439-477.

Cain, Mead. 1977. "The Economic Activities of Children in a Village in Bangladesh." Population and Development Review. 3(3): 201-227.

Cain, Mead. 1983. "Fertility as an Adjustment to Risk." Population and Development Review. 9(4): 688-702.

### Status of Women and Fertility

Mason, Karen Oppenheim. 1987. "The Impact of Women's Social Position on Fertility in Developing Countries." Sociological Forum. 2(4): 718-745.

Bradley, Candice. 1995. "Women's Empowerment and Fertility Decline in Western Kenya." Pp. 157 - 178 in Susan Greenhalgh, Ed., Situation Fertility. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Axinn, William G. and Tom Fricke. 1996. "Community Context, Women's Natal Kin Ties, and Demand for Children: Macro-Micro Linkages in Social Demography." Rural Sociology 61(2):249-271.

### 7 18-Oct Family Planning/Development Programs and Fertility

Bongaarts, John. 2014. "The Impact of Family Planning Programs on Unmet Need and Demand for Contraception." Studies in Family Planning 45(2): 247-262.

Entwisle, Barbara and William Mason. 1985. "Multilevel Effects of Socioeconomic Development and Family Planning Programs on Children Ever Born." American Journal of Sociology 91:616-49.

Entwisle, Barbara, Ronald R. Rindfuss, Stephen J. Walsh, Tom P. Evans, Sara R. Curran. 1997. "Geographic Information Systems, Spatial Network Analysis, and Contraceptive Choice." Demography 34:171-187.

Barber, Jennifer S., Lisa D. Pearce, Indra Chaudhury, and Susan Gurung. 2002. "Voluntary Associations and Fertility Limitation." Social Forces 80(4):1369-1401.

*Supplemental readings*

- Axinn, William G. and Scott T. Yabiku. 2001. "Social Change, the Social Organization of Families, and Fertility Limitation." American Journal of Sociology. 106(5): 1219-61.
- Brauner-Otto, Sarah R., William G. Axinn, and Dirgha J. Ghimire. 2007. "The Spread of Health Services and Fertility Transition." Demography 44(4): 747-70.
- Freedman, Ronald. 1987. "The Contribution of Social Science Research to Population Policy and Family Planning Program Effectiveness." Studies in Family Planning. 18(2): 57-82
- Lesthaeghe, Ron and Christopher Wilson. 1986. "Modes of Production, Secularization, and the Pace of Fertility Decline in Western Europe, 1870-1930." Pp. 261-292 in Ansley J. Coale and Susan Cotts Watkins, eds. *The Decline of Fertility in Europe*. Princeton University Press.

**8**      **25-Oct**

**Education and Fertility**

- Singh, Susheela and John Casterline. 1985. "The Socio- economic Determinants of Fertility." Chapter 9 (Pp.199-220) in Cleland, John and John Hobcraft, Eds., *Reproductive Change in Developing Countries: Insights from the World Fertility Survey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caldwell, John C. 1982. "Mass Education as a Determinant of the Timing of Fertility Decline." Pp. 301-330 in *Theory of Fertility Decline*. New York: Academic Press.  
Also published in Population and Development Review 6(2): 225-255.
- Axinn, William G. and Jennifer S. Barber. 2001. "Mass Education and Fertility Transition." American Sociological Review. 66(4):481-505.
- Trimarchi, Alessandr and Jan Van Bavel. 2018. "Gender differences and similarities in the educational gradient in fertility: The role of earnings potential and gender composition in study disciplines." Demographic Research 39(13): 381-414.

**Diffusion of Ideas and Fertility**

- Hornik, Robert and Emile McAnany. 2001. "Mass Media and Fertility Change." Pp. 208-239 in Diffusion Processes and Fertility Transition, edited by J. B. Casterline. Washington: National Academy Press.
- Barber, Jennifer S. and William G. Axinn. 2004. "New Ideas and Fertility Limitation: The Role of Mass Media." Journal of Marriage and Family 66:1180-1200.

**9**      **01-Nov**

**group presentations on high fertility settings**

**10**      **08-Nov**

**Low Fertility Trends and Issues**

- Billari, F. C. and H.-P. Kohler 2004. "Patterns of low and lowest-low fertility in Europe." Population Studies 58 (2), 161-176
- Sobotka, Thomas. 2004. "Is Lowest-Low Fertility in Europe Explained by the Postponement of Childbearing?" Population and Development Review 30(2): 195-220.

- Rindfuss, R. R., K. B. Guzzo, and S. P. Morgan 2003. "The changing institutional context of low fertility." Population Research and Policy Review 22 (5-6), 411-438
- May, Elaine Tyler. 1995. "The Baby Craze: The Rise of Compulsory Parenthood." Chapter 4 in Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness. New York: Basic Books.
- Stephen, E. (2000). Demographic implications of reproductive technologies. Population Research and Policy Review, 19(4), 301-315.
- Dunne, Gillian A. 2000. "Opting into Motherhood: Lesbians Blurring the Boundaries and Transforming the Meaning of Parenthood and Kinship." Gender & Society 14(1):11-35.

*Supplemental readings:*

- Rindfuss, Ronald R. and Sarah R. Brauner-Otto. 2008. "Institutions and the Transition to Adulthood: Implications for fertility tempo in low fertility settings." Vienna Yearbook of Population Research 57-87.
- Rindfuss, Ronald R., Minja Kim Choe, and Sarah R. Brauner-Otto. 2016. "The Emergence of Two Distinct Fertility Regimes in Economically Advanced Countries" Population Research and Policy Review 35(3): 287-304.
- Morgan, S. P. 2003. "Is low fertility a 21st century demographic crisis?" Demography 40 (4), 589-603
- Morgan, S. P. and R. B. King. 2001. "Why have children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Biological predispositions, social coercion, rational choice." European Journal of Population 17(1): 3-20.
- Rindfuss, Ronald R., David Guilkey, S. Philip Morgan, and Oystein Kravdal. 2010. "Child-Care Availability and Fertility in Norway." Population and Development Review 36(4): 725-748.

11      15-Nov      **no class**

12      22-Nov      **Policies, values, ideas, attitudes**

- Feng, Wang, Yong Cai, and Bochang Gu. 2013. "Population, Policy, and Politics: How Will History Judge China's One-Child Policy?" Population and Development Review 38(Supplement): 115-129.
- Feng, Wang, Bochang Gu, and Yong Cai. 2016. "Commentary: The end of China's One-Child Policy." Studies in Family Planning 47: 83-86.
- Arpino, Bruno, Gosta Esping-Andersen, and Lea Pessin. 2015. "How Do Changes in Gender Role Attitudes Toward Family Employment Influence Fertility? A Macro-Level Analysis." European Sociological Review 31: 370-382.
- Barber, Jennifer S. 2001. "Ideational Influences on the Transition to Parenthood: Attitudes Toward Childbearing and Competing Alternatives." Social Psychology Quarterly 64(2):101-127.
- Luker, Kristin. 1996. "Choice and Consequence." Pp. 109-133 in Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

*Supplemental readings:*

Preston, Samuel. 1986. "Changing Values and Falling Birth Rates." Below Replacement Fertility in Industrial Societies. Supplement to Population and Development Review. Vol. 12: 176- 200.

Mirowsky, John. 2002. "Parenthood and Health: The Pivotal and Optimal Age at First Birth." Social Forces 81(1):315-350.

Bock, Jane D. 2000. "Doing the Right Thing? Single Mothers by Choice and the Struggle for Legitimacy." Gender & Society 14(1): 62-86.

13      29-Nov

### **Unintended childbearing**

Mosher et al. 2012. "Intended and Unintended Births in the US: 1982-2010." National Health Statistics Reports. Num 55.

Sedgh, Gilda, Susheela Singh, and Rubina Hussain. 2014. "Intended and Unintended Pregnancies Worldwide in 2012 and Recent Trends." Studies in Family Planning 45(3): 301-314.

Schalet, Amy T. 2010. "Sex, love, and autonomy in the teenage sleepover." Contexts 9(3): 16-21.

*Read Schalet 2010 before reading Schalet 2011*

Schalet, Amy T. 2011. "Chapter 7: Romantic Rebels, Regular Lovers" pgs 155-180 in *Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

Also skim Chapters 4 (Adversarial and Interdependent Individualism, pages 77-106) and 6 (At least They Know Where I am/Control through Connection, pages 131-154)

Joshi et al. 2014. "Virginity Loss and Pregnancy in US and Dutch Teen Girl Magazines: A content-analytic comparison." Youth & Society 46(1):70-88.

### **Other topics and suggested readings (eg ideas for papers or group projects)**

#### **Consequences of unintended childbearing**

Barber, Jennifer S., William G. Axinn, and Arland Thornton. 1999. "Unwanted Childbearing, Health, and Mother-Child Relationships." Journal of Health and Social Behavior 40(3):231-257.

Axinn, William G., Jennifer S. Barber, and Arland Thornton. 1998. "The Long-Term Impact of Childbearing Decisions on Children's Self-Esteem." Demography 35(4): 435-444.

#### **Fertility intentions**

Yeatman, Sara, Christie Sennott, and Steven Culpeper. 2013. "Young Women's Dynamic Family Size Preferences in the Context of Transitioning Fertility." Demography 50: 1715-1738.

#### **Work and fertility**

Gough, Margaret and Mary Noonan. 2013. "A Review of the Motherhood Wage Penalty in the United States." Sociological Compass 7: 328-342.

#### **Childlessness**

Sobotka Tomáš. 2017. "Childlessness in Europe: Reconstructing Long-Term Trends Among Women Born in 1900–1972", in: Kreyenfeld, Michaela and Dirk Konietzka (eds), *Childlessness in Europe: Contexts, Causes, and Consequences*, Springer Demographic Research Monographs, pp. 17-50.

Merz, Eva-Maria and Aart C. Liefbroer. 2012. "The Attitude toward Voluntary Childlessness in Europe: Cultural and Institutional Explanations." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74: 587-600.

**Inequality/heterogeneity (eg race and class differences)**

Barber, Jennifer S., Jennifer Eckerman Yarger, and Heather H. Gatny. 2015. "Black-White Differences in Attitudes Related to Pregnancy among Young Women." *Demography* 52: 751-786.

Hartnett, Caroline Sten and Emilio A. Parrado. 2012. "Hispanic Familism Reconsidered: Ethnic Differences in the Perceived Value of Children and Fertility Intentions." *The Sociological Quarterly* 53: 636-653.

Sweeney, Megan M. and R. Kelly Raley. 2014. "Race, Ethnicity, and the Changing Context of Childbearing in the United States." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40: 539-558.

**Non-marital fertility**

Curtin, Sally C., Stephanie J. Ventura, and Gladys M. Martinez. 2014. "Recent Declines in Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States." NCHS Data Brief No. 162. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db162.pdf>