

FAMILY PATTERNS
SOC 214H1F
Fall 2015

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Course Website: www.chass.utoronto.ca/~bfox/soc214

Teaching Assistant: Spencer Underwood
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TUTORIALS: Thursday 2-3 & 3-4 in MP137

Class Time: Thur. 12-2

Location: LM161

Office Hour: Tues. 3:30-4:30

Office Hour: Thur. 2:00-3:00; 725

IMPORTANT NOTE: The prerequisite to take this course is SOC 101Y1 or 102H1 or 103H1. Students without this prerequisite will be removed any time they are discovered.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We live in a time of change in family life. Far fewer Canadians marry than married decades ago, cohabitation is more common than marriage for first live-in relationships, divorce rates are high, blended and single-parent families are common, and many adults live alone. Couples are also having fewer children and juggling employment and family responsibilities. Meanwhile, unquestioned divisions of work by gender in heterosexual couples have given way to ideals of sharing and same-sex couples are increasingly raising children. Families assume many different shapes today. This diversity of family patterns is a product of increases in the choices that women and men have about how they live their lives, but it is also due to entrenched obstacles to the realization of people's ideals.

Amidst this diversity in family patterns, there are some things common to most Canadian families: for example, an expectation of love in intimate sexual relationships and a preference to live in nuclear-family households. As well, many young adults expect that they will be parents and that the mother will be responsible for the children if shared parenting proves to be too difficult. Meanwhile, although some characteristics of family seem natural, historians and anthropologists tell us that most, if not all, of these lingering commonalities are fairly new patterns in human history.

The **objective** of this course is to examine a variety of family patterns in order to better understand why families are organized as they are. We also explore some of the implications of living in different types of families, for men, women and children.

To begin our discussion, the lecture on Sept.17 describes current family patterns and issues, and the lecture on Sept. 24 reviews the different theoretical perspectives that sociologists use to study families, the strengths and weaknesses of these different approaches, and the theoretical approach adopted in this course. On Oct.1, we learn something of the diversity of family arrangements across cultures and human history. To enable us to question what we often take for granted about family – especially, the apparent normality of heterosexual nuclear families – the lecture will focus on the communal arrangements common in foraging (or hunting and gathering) societies.

Continuing to examine more collective arrangements by which people acquire their livelihood and care for their children – more collective than nuclear families – the readings and lecture on Oct.8 are on poor African-American families in the 1970s, First Nations families, and families that have immigrated to Canada. Next, we explore some of the history that produced nuclear families. The point of this social history is to better understand the causes of arrangements common in Canada today. Oct. 22 features a look at the 1950s, the period when a majority of Canadians lived in nuclear families in which men were financial providers and women full-time homemakers and mothers.

The rest of the course explores families today. On Nov. 5, we look at marriage as an institution defined in law and symbolized in wedding ceremonies; we also consider the changes that couples often experience when they become parents. Nov.12 features a look at an important trend for families across much of the world: the increasing age at which young adults leave their parents' home. We explore the causes and implications of this change, as discussed in Katherine Newman's interesting book, *The Accordion Family*. On Nov.19, we examine how couples (married or not) juggle the incompatible responsibilities of employment and family when both adults work full time. We consider both how they are handling it and possible long-term solutions to the problem. Returning to the issue of family diversity, on Nov. 26 we look at the relationships and families created after divorce – lone parents and remarried couples —as well as social-policies needed to address family problems.

This course may be different from others you have had. Unlike courses in which there is a textbook that surveys the field of study, raising key questions and summarizing key research findings, the **lectures** provide that function in this course. The readings (in both the Fox text and the “coursepack”) are from journal articles and book chapters. I chose them because they are either classics in the field, offering some of the most insightful analysis or important research findings, or because they offer clear sociological analyses of the topics under discussion. They illustrate the arguments I make in the lecture. But the **lectures themselves are essential** for an overview and understanding of the key questions, issues and findings. Lectures tie together the readings and develop the main arguments in the course. In short, the lectures and the readings are both essential to your understanding, and to do well in this course. Tests will draw equally on both lectures and readings. Attendance at lectures is therefore essential! So are careful reading and thinking about the lectures. You are expected to be able to identify and discuss the key arguments in each reading and every lecture.

NOTE: This course is not on Blackboard. Instead, see the course website (at the address on the first page). Overhead slides and other essential information will be posted on that site.

Required Texts:

Bonnie Fox, editor, 2014. *Family Patterns, Gender Relations. Fourth Edition*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Katherine S. Newman, 2012. *The Accordion Family: Boomerang Kids, Anxious Parents, and the Private Toll of Global Capitalism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

These two texts can be purchased at the University of Toronto Bookstore.

Grading:

The assignments will be weighted as follows: The dates:

First Essay	20%	Oct. 15
First Test	25%	Oct. 29
Second Essay	30%	Nov. 19
Second Test	25%	Dec. 3

Please note: Test/Assignment Dates are fixed and non-negotiable.

Attendance: Students are responsible for attending every lecture. Students unable to attend a lecture must get notes from other students. Lectures synthesize large bodies of research findings and, in the absence of a textbook that reviews the research in the field, are essential. I strongly recommend that you read the required material before coming to class: you will better understand both the lecture and the readings if you do.

Class procedures: The two hours will be used for lecture (except for a brief break), but students should feel free at any time during the lecture to raise questions or comment on the material. A point-form outline of the lecture will be presented in the form of slides during lectures. These slides are not lecture notes; they do not summarize the lecture. They are posted before class on my website at www.chass.utoronto.ca/~bfox/soc214 and they are meant to help you take notes in class.

Requirements: Tests: There will be two in-class tests that will include both multiple-choice and essay questions. To do well on the tests, you need to know the specific arguments in each of the readings and lectures, and be able to discuss the main issues covered in both the readings and lectures. The tests are synthetic, so you should think over **main** themes and arguments discussed in the course, and review the **key** arguments in each reading, to prepare for them. The dates of the tests are on the course outline (and above).

Make-up Tests: In the case of **illness** that prevents you from taking a test, you must inform Professor Fox during the week the test is given. Messages may be left on the office voice mail or sent as emails, and these should include your name, telephone number and email address so that you can be reached with information about the make-up test. Make-up tests will only be given to students who have certifiable reasons for having missed the test: for illness, must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor's note is not acceptable. For other problems, you need a letter from your college registrar. The make-up tests will be given within two weeks of the missed test.

Essays: Two short essays are required. The first essay will involve a 5-page discussion addressing a question about one of the week's readings. (This exercise is aimed at strengthening your reading and writing skills.) The assignment will be handed out in class. The second essay will involve a 5-page discussion of the book, *The Accordion Family* (focused on questions I will assign). These essays are **due at the beginning of class**, on the dates listed. There will be a penalty for handing in any essay after class, and a daily penalty thereafter.

Late essays may be handed in only if I have given you permission beforehand. You will lose **2** percentage points for every day an essay is late, beginning the day it is due. If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting an essay deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar and talk to me as well. If there is a legitimate reason why you missed a deadline (or will miss it), I am willing to work out another deadline. Once you have my permission to hand in the work, attach the registrar's letter to the essay when you hand it in. Work handed in outside of class, or late, should be put in the second-year mailbox in room 225 in the Sociology Department building (at 725 Spadina Ave., open Monday to Friday, 9 - 5 pm). It must have a date stamped on it. Alternatively, it can be slid under my office door (before 5 pm any week day), date stamped using the machine in room 225. (Students must keep copies of their work, in case assignments are lost. Students are responsible for assignments that are lost.)

Note: Please be aware that turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second (or third etc.) course, is considered an academic offense that results in students being referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Students who have questions or concerns about how to write an essay should make an appointment to see me or [TA] during our office hours. I recommend using the very helpful website, "Writing at the University of Toronto," at www.writing.utoronto.ca. Look under "advice" and then "style and editing." Writing workshops are also available for students; for information on them go to www.writing.utoronto.ca/news/writing-plus. A helpful guide to writing is: Margot Northey and Margaret Procter, *Writer's Choice: A Portable Guide for Canadian Writers* (Prentice Hall Cda). And Wm. Strunk and E.B. White's *The Elements of Style* is the best general summary of the rules of grammar and good writing. (Some words of advice: Write short, simple sentences and make sure that every paragraph contains a single theme or idea. When you begin a new theme, start a new paragraph.)

Academic integrity is very important to me, and should be to you. Please familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (www.artsi.utoronto.ca/osai/students). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Copying material word-for-word from any source (including lectures) and not placing the words within quotation marks, with a page number (if a written text) or date (if a lecture).

- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”.
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

Accessibility Needs:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Contacting Us: I am best reached either by email (if you put “Soc 214” in the subject field) or by coming to my office during office hours on Thurs. 3:30 to 4:30. I am happy to answer brief, simple questions by email – and will usually do so within 24 hours – but longer questions must be asked in person. Spencer Underwood has office hours Thurs. 2-3, and can be reached by email at.....

COURSE OUTLINE

Sept. 17 Introduction: Trends and Ongoing Challenges in Families

Reading: Katherine S. Newman, 2012. Introduction, *The Accordion Family*. (Boston: Beacon Press).

Bonnie Fox and Meg Luxton, 2014. Trends and ongoing dilemmas in family and personal life today, pp.17-26 in Chapter 1, Analyzing the familiar, in *Family Patterns, Gender Relations. Fourth Edition*. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press). [“Fox text”]

Discussion questions: What are the main trends in family and, according to these writers, what are their main causes?

Sept. 24 Raising Questions About Common-Sense Beliefs

Readings: Bonnie Fox and Meg Luxton, 2014. Analyzing the familiar: definitions, approaches, and issues at the heart of studying families. Fox text.

Katherine S. Newman, 2012. Chapter 1, The slippery state of adulthood. *The Accordion Family*.

Discussion questions: What is Fox and Luxton’s definition of family? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this working definition? What brief argument are Fox and Luxton making about how some features of families are affected by the way people in different societies acquire their livelihood? Newman’s study begins with a discussion

of how the journey into adulthood has changed. How has it? Why has it? And what are Newman's findings about how young adults are now defining "adulthood"?

Oct. 1 Is the Nuclear Family Universal or "Natural"? Some Cross-Cultural Evidence, and a Brief Consideration of Foraging Societies

Readings: Felicity Edholm, 2014 (1982). The unnatural family. Fox text.

Eleanor B. Leacock, 2014 (1981). Women in an egalitarian society: The Montagnais-Naskapi of Canada. Fox text.

Discussion questions: These readings are by anthropologists. According to Felicity Edholm, are any family patterns universal? The reading by Eleanor Leacock consists of selections from articles she wrote on First Nations communities in Newfoundland and Labrador (so they are not organized like a single essay). Given the lecture and Leacock's work, explain why nuclear families living independently would not have survived in a foraging context and why more communal arrangements were therefore essential. With respect to the Montagnais-Naskapi, why did their family patterns change so dramatically during the period Leacock describes?

Oct. 8 Shifting Our Focus: Not-So-Nuclear Families

Readings: Carol Stack, 1974. Chap. 3, Swapping: "What goes round comes round," & Chap. 4, Personal kindreds: "All our kin." From *All Our Kin*. In coursepack.

Jo-Anne Fiske and Rose Johnny, 2014 (2003). The Lake Babine First Nation family: yesterday and today. Fox text.

Gillian Creese, Isabel Dyck and Arlene McLaren, 2014 (2009). Gender, generation and the 'immigrant family.' Fox text

Kara Somerville, 2014. Making and sustaining transnational families. Fox text.

Discussion questions: What were the "survival strategies" used by the poor African-American women described by Carol Stack? Why did these people trade and give away their scarce resources? "Domestic networks" (and not nuclear families) constitute family in the 1970s Black community studied by Stack. What are these networks? Jo-Anne Fiske and Rose Johnny describe changes that have occurred for a First Nations community over time – some of which involve disruptive changes to the traditions organizing families. What are these changes and, according to them, why did they occur? According to Gillian Creese, Isabel Dyck and Arlene McLaren, why are relationships beyond nuclear-family relationships important to immigrants' adjustment in Canada? What does Kara Somerville argue?

Essay 1 due on Oct. 15

Oct. 15 A Brief Social History of Family in Western Europe and North America

Readings: Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, 2014 (1978). The family economy in pre-industrial England and France. Fox text.

Tamara Hareven, 2014 (2000). Dynamics of kin in an industrial community. Fox text.

Maxine Margolis, 2014 (1984). Putting mothers on the pedestal. Fox text.

Discussion questions: What do social historians Tilly and Scott mean by the “family economy” in England and France before the industrial revolution? What determined the composition of the household in 18th-century France and England? Why did household membership change frequently? How were children raised? According to historian Tamara Hareven’s research, what was the significance of relationships with extended-family members to the Quebeckers who migrated to New England to work in factories in the 19th century? Anthropologist Maxine Margolis argues that there was a relationship between changes in the economy and other factors (in the U.S.) and the development of motherhood as we know it, in the 19th century. Summarize what Margolis argues about the causes of the development of modern ideas of motherhood.

Oct. 22 1950s Families: The “Good Old Days” involving the “Traditional Family”?

Readings: Mary Louise Adams, 2014 (1997). Sexuality and the postwar domestic “revival.” Fox text.

Meg Luxton, 2014 (1990). Wives and husbands. Fox text.

Discussion questions: In M.L. Adams’s description of the postwar (WW II) period in Canada, what do we learn about the meaning attached to family at the time? Why was “the family” so important symbolically in this period? Meg Luxton studied families that were organized in a way that was typical in the 1950s – with a full-time male breadwinner and a full-time female homemaker/mother. According to Luxton, what were the various effects of working-class men’s waged work and their position as sole breadwinner on women and their work, as well as gender relations in families? Are there positive aspects of this family pattern that you think Luxton omits in her discussion?

Oct. 29 TEST 1

Nov. 5 Making (Nuclear) Families: Marriage, Cohabitation and Parenthood

Readings: Dawn Currie, 2014 (1993). “Here comes the bride”: the making of a “modern traditional” wedding in western culture. Fox text.

Bonnie Fox, 2014 (2009). When the baby comes home. Fox text.

Gillian Dunne, 2014 (2000). Opting into motherhood: lesbians blurring the boundaries and transforming the meaning of parenthood and kinship. Fox text.

Discussion questions: What is Dawn Currie’s main finding on the planning of weddings? What are the reasons why cohabitation has become so common today, at least in Quebec, according to C. Le Bourdais and E. Lapierre-Adamcyk? B. Fox’s study revealed some interesting interpersonal dynamics that couples developed when they

became parents. What were they? What important things about lesbian couples did you learn from G. Dunne's study of mothers?

Nov. 12 "Accordion Families" and the Effects of Economic Insecurity

Reading: Katherine S. Newman, 2012. Chapters 2 (Why are accordion families spreading?), chap. 5 (When the nest doesn't empty), chap. 6 (Trouble in paradise) and Conclusion.

Discussion: For each chapter, write a short summary of the main findings and arguments. These notes should indicate why 'accordion families' are increasingly common, what the implications of them are for parents, and what the 'trouble in paradise' is – as well as the key ideas in the conclusion.

Essay 2 due on Nov. 19

Nov. 19 Dual-Earner Families: Juggling Employment and Family Responsibilities

Readings: Meg Luxton, 2014 (2003). Family coping strategies: balancing paid employment and domestic labour. Fox text

Sedef Arat-Koc, 2014 (2009). The politics of family and immigration in the subordination of domestic workers in Canada. Fox text

Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay, 2014 (2009). Quebec's policies for work-family balance: a model for Canada? Fox text.

Discussion questions: According to Meg Luxton, what alternatives do dual-earning Canadian couples have for handling the responsibilities of employment and family (especially children and other dependents) ? What needs to happen for the problem to be addressed? S.Arak-Koc describes and analyses the situation of paid domestic workers in Canada. What does she think are the sources of their vulnerability? Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay describes Quebec's family policies. What are they?

Nov. 26 Divorce, Lone Parents, Stepfamilies and Others

Readings: Catherine K. Riessman, 2014 (1990). Mourning different dreams: gender and the companionate marriage. Fox text.

Elizabeth Church, 2014 (2003). Kinship and stepfamilies. Fox text.

Kate Bezanson, 2014. Putting together a life: families, coping, and economic change, 1997-2008. Fox text.

Discussion questions: Catherine Riessman describes her findings from a study of recently divorced women and men. The reasons they left their marriages reveal much about what people want in marriage. What do women want and what do men want? Based on Elizabeth Church's essay, describe the complexities common to stepfamilies: What challenges do the adults and children in them face? How are these families different from other families? Do you agree with her about the advantages these

families have? Kate Bezanson describes some of the people who were interviewed for a study of Ontario families coping with economic insecurity and neoliberal social policy. What were the problems these people faced? How did they cope with them? What changes in policy are needed?

Dec. 3 TEST 2