

FAMILY PATTERNS

Sociology 214H1F

Fall 2012

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

Teaching Assistant: Judy Beglaubter

Class Time: Tues. 12-2

Location:

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

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. 18 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 Sept. 25, 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 households 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. 2 are on poor African-American families in the 1970s, the

transnational families of women now leaving the Philippines to work abroad as nannies, 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. On Oct. 9, we consider the merging of work and family that characterized pre-industrial households, and how this affected family relationships and emotional dynamics in earlier centuries in Europe and North America. The next week (Oct. 16) is devoted to a look at social-historical changes that produced the nuclear family featuring love-based marriage, full-time mothering and sentimentalized childhood. Oct. 23 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. 6, we look at marriage as an institution defined in law and symbolized in wedding ceremonies. The readings analyze both law and ceremony, but also address the issue of an apparent decline in the popularity of marriage. On Nov. 20, we discuss how couples (married or not) juggle the incompatible responsibilities of employment and family when both adults work full time. We explore this challenge facing many Canadian couples by considering both how they are handling it and possible long-term solutions to the problem. The issue raises questions about the employment of migrant women, especially from the Philippines, to do child care in wealthy countries; and *Servants of Globalization* provides a perceptive account of the experiences these women have and the families they leave behind. Returning to the issue of family diversity, on Nov. 27 we look at the relationships and families created by cohabiting couples, remarried couples and same-sex couples—as well as how economic insecurity and neoliberal policies are impacting all families.

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.

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 Tues. 3:30-4:30 or Thurs. 4-5. 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.

Required Texts:

Bonnie Fox, editor, 2009. *Family Patterns, Gender Relations. Third Edition.* Toronto: Oxford University Press

Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, 2001. *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press

Collection of articles from Canadian Scholars Press [to be called the “coursepack”]

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

Grading:

The assignments will be weighted as follows: The dates:

First Test	30%	Oct. 30
Second Test	25%	Dec. 4
First Essay	15%	Oct. 9
Second Essay	30%	Nov. 20

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, you need a U of T Medical Certificate signed by your doctor; 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 summary of one week's readings (either Oct. 2 or Oct. 9). The aim is not to summarize all the details in the material, but rather to identify the main questions being addressed and the main arguments being made. Following the summary, there should be brief discussion of what you think is important in the set of readings (ie, what you learned). (This exercise is aimed at strengthening your reading and writing skills.) The second essay will involve a 5-page discussion of a number of readings, likely including the Parrenas book. The discussion will be organized around a question given out in class. These essays are **due at the beginning of class**, on the dates listed.

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. 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.). It must have a date stamped on it. Alternatively, it can be slid under my office door (before 5 pm any week day). (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 Judy Beglaubter during our office hours. I recommend using the very helpful website, "Writing at the University of Toronto," at www.utoronto.ca/writing. 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.)

Additionally, students are expected to acquaint themselves with the rules concerning **plagiarism**: From the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* -- "It shall

be an offence for a student knowingly: to **represent as one's own** any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism. Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on 'knowing', the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known." In short, do not "borrow" passages from books or articles or websites without citing them. If you use the words of other people, put quotation marks around them and cite the reference (author, date, page number). Plagiarizing can produce very serious penalty.

Please note: Test/Assignment Dates are fixed and non-negotiable: Plan your schedule around them.

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.

COURSE OUTLINE

Sept. 11 Introduction: Trends and Ongoing Challenges in Family Life

Sept. 18 Raising Questions About Common-Sense Beliefs: Sociologists Studying Families

Readings: Meg Luxton and Bonnie Fox. Conceptualizing "family." In B. Fox, ed., 2009. *Family Patterns, Gender Relations. Third Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. ['Fox text']

Discussion questions: What is Luxton and Fox's definition of family? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this working definition? What brief argument have Luxton and Fox made about how some features of families are affected by the way people in different societies acquire their livelihood?

Sept. 25 Is the Nuclear Family Universal or "Natural"? Some Cross-Cultural Evidence, and a Brief Consideration of Foraging Societies

Readings: Felicity Edholm. The unnatural family. Fox text

Eleanor B. Leacock. Women in an egalitarian society: The Montagnais-Naskapi of Canada. Fox text

Discussion questions: These readings are by anthropologists. The reading by Eleanor Leacock consists of selections from articles she wrote on native communities in Newfoundland and Labrador (so they are not organized like a single essay). According to Edholm, is anything about families universal? With respect to the Montagnais-Naskapi, why did their family relations change so dramatically during the period Leacock describes? 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.

Assignment (for Essay 1) handed out in class.

Oct. 2 Shifting Our Focus on Families: 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* Coursepack

Rhacel Salazar Parrenas 2001. Chap 4, The transnational family. In *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work*. Palo Alto: Stanford Univ. Press.

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

Discussion questions: What were the "survival strategies" used by the poor African-American women described by Stack? Why did these people trade their scarce resources? According to Parrenas's research, how do women in Canada and the U.S. benefit from the phenomenon of the "transnational family"? How are the children in these families cared for? "Personal kindreds" constitute family in the 1970s Black community studied by Stack. What are personal kindreds? According to Creese et al, why are relationships beyond the nuclear family important to immigrants' adjustment in Canada?

Essay 1 due on Oct. 9

Oct. 9 The Pre-Industrial Household Economy

Readings: Louise Tilly and Joan Scott. The family economy in modern England and France. Fox text

Marjorie Cohen. Patriarchal relations of production in nineteenth-century Ontario. Fox text

Discussion questions: What do Tilly and Scott mean by the "family economy"? What determined the composition of the household in 18th-century France and England? Why did it change frequently? How were children raised? In what ways were nineteenth-century family farms in Ontario "patriarchal," according to Cohen?

Oct. 16 The Historical Development of the "Isolated" Nuclear Family

Readings: Nancy Cott. Domesticity. Fox text

Maxine Margolis. Putting mothers on the pedestal. Fox text

Tamara Hareven. Dynamics of kin in an industrial community. Fox text

Guida Man, From Hong Kong to Canada. Fox text—optional

Discussion questions: According to Cott, what ideals about domesticity developed in the nineteenth century? What was the main effect of the development of these ideals? Margolis argues that there was a relationship between changes in the economy and the development of motherhood as we know it, in the 19th century. Describe the causes of

the development of modern ideas of motherhood. 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, according to Hareven's research?

Oct. 23 Sentimentalized 1950s Families: Was This the "Good Old Days?"

Readings: Mary Louise Adams. Sexuality and the postwar domestic "revival." Fox text

Meg Luxton. Wives and husbands. Fox text

Discussion questions: "The family" of the 1950s has been the subject of much popular nostalgia. 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? In Adams's description of the postwar (WW II) period, what do we learn about the meaning attached to family at the time? Why was "the family" so important symbolically in this period?

Oct. 30 TEST 1

Nov. 6 Marriage: A Changing Institution, On Its Way Out?

Readings: Andrew Cherlin, 2004. The deinstitutionalization of American marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66: 848-861. Coursepack

Chrys Ingraham. One Is not born a bride: how weddings regulate heterosexuality. Fox text

Discussion questions: How has marriage changed, at least in the U.S., according to Cherlin? What is Ingraham's critique of weddings? Why do you think so many people want expensive and large "white" weddings? What do you think are the implications of these kinds of wedding?

Assignment (for Essay 2) handed out in class.

Nov. 13 Fall Break

Essay 2 due on Nov. 20

Nov. 20 Dual-Earner Families: Who Is Doing the Housework? Who Is Caring for the Children? What is Happening to Family Time?

Readings: Meg Luxton. Family coping strategies: balancing paid employment and domestic labour. Fox text

Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, Chap. 3, The international division of reproductive labor, & Chap. 5, Intergenerational and gender relations in transnational families. In *Servants of Globalization*

Sedef Arat-Koc. The politics of family and immigration in the subordination of domestic workers in Canada. Fox text (pp 432-446 only)

Discussion questions: According to Luxton, what alternatives do Canadians have for handling the responsibilities of employment and family (especially children and other dependents) when both adults are employed? Parrenas describes some of the reasons why women leave the Philippines to work abroad, and the implications of their migration for the families they leave behind. What has she found? Arat-Koc describes and analyses the situation of paid domestic workers in Canada. What does she think are the sources of their vulnerability?

Nov. 27 Cohabitors, Stepfamilies, and Same-Sex Couples: Today's Diversity

Readings: Celine Le Bourdais and Evelyne Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004. Changes in conjugal life in Canada: Is cohabitation progressively replacing marriage? Coursepack

Elizabeth Church, 2003. Kinship and stepfamilies. Coursepack

Gillian Dunne. Lesbians at home: why can't a man be more like a woman? Fox text

Sheila Neysmith, Kate Bezanson, Anne O'Connell, 2005. Chap. 3, The outcomes of income insecurity. Coursepack

Discussion questions: What are the reasons why cohabitation has become so common today, at least in Quebec, according to Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk? Based on Church, 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 see advantages in them? Dunne's study of lesbian couples indicates how they are different from other couples. How are they? Why are they? What lessons can we learn from them? What kinds of coping arrangements do Neysmith et. al. find in the families they studied?

Dec. 4 TEST 2