

Being and Belonging: The Family in Global Perspective

Wed 1:30-4:20pm, CHN 307

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Overview:

Interpersonal relationships are foundational objects of analysis for social scientists. As a student of social analysis, it is crucial for you to understand the ways through which people understand themselves to be connected to each other. This course explores both macro-social movements and intimate micro-practices, examining topics ranging from the impacts of technology, migration, and capitalism on family ties, to caregiving and the sharing of food. Together, we will explore how the ideologies and practices of relatedness intersect with and are shaped by gender and sexuality, national identity and state building, embodiment, ways of understanding signs in the world (semiotics), the law, and economic relationships.

Key questions explored in this course include:

- ✧ How have anthropological and lay theories of kinship shaped modalities of social recognition and social exclusion?
- ✧ What are the connections between understandings of kinship and theories of modernity?
- ✧ How do intimate family practices shape—and how are they shaped by—capitalism, the economy, and industry?
- ✧ What are the roles of blood ties, legal relationships, sexuality, friendship, and caregiving in constituting kinship in different times and places?

Objectives:

- ✧ *Content:* You will become familiar with historical and current anthropological approaches to kinship.
- ✧ *Skills:* You will develop your ability to interpret richly empirical and theoretical material from an anthropological perspective, and hone your academic writing capacities.
- ✧ *Application:* Through course readings, class discussion, and written assignments, you will learn how to approach the messiness of empirical data to build grounded theorizations of interpersonal ties.

Learning Assessments:✧ **Participation (20%)**

This mark reflects your 1) attendance, 2) active and collegial classroom discussion, and 3) a completion grade for at least **seven timely responses** on Avenue to your classmates' posts.

✧ **Weekly short writing exercises (15%)**

Before class each week, please post to Avenue two paragraphs: one paragraph reflecting on the readings for that day, and one paragraph posing a question for discussion. You may be asked to share this post during class. You will be given "free passes" for two weeks of your choice. (Thus, you are required to post for **nine** class sessions.)

✧ **Midterm essay (25%)**

You will choose from several essay prompts for this short paper (5-6 pages). The objective for this paper is to develop your skills analyzing course materials to make an incisive written argument.

✧ **Final essay (40%)**

In this essay, you will have the opportunity to apply insights from the class to real-world empirical material (10-12 pages). Options include: 1) Use course material to develop a theoretical framework for an analysis of your own graduate research subject (this can be somewhat speculative); 2) Analyze your own family relationships through the lens of course material; 3) Conduct and analyze interviews regarding kinship and relatedness (we will obtain IRB approval); 4) Analyze a cultural product (news, weblog, film, novel, artistic event, exhibit).

Required Texts, available in the campus store:

1. Schneider, David M. 1968. *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
2. Carsten, Janet. 2004. *After Kinship*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
3. McKinnon, Susan and Fenella Cannell, eds. 2013. *Vital Relations: Modernity and the Persistent Life of Kinship*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
4. Butler, Judith. 2000. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press.
5. Stasch, Rupert. 2009. *Society of Others: Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
6. Course Pack

Schedule**Sept 10**

Introduction

Sept 17: American Kinship and its (Self-)Critique

Schneider, David M. 1968. *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Schneider, David M. 1984. *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Ch14: The Fundamental Assumption in the Study of Kinship: "Blood is Thicker Than Water," 165-177.

Sept 24: After Kinship?

Carsten, Janet. 2004. *After Kinship*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ch 1: Introduction: After Kinship? 1-30.

Ch2: Houses of Memory and Kinship, 31-56.

Ch5: On Substance, 109-135.

Ch6: Families into Nation: The Power of Metaphor and the Transformation of Kinship, 136-162.

Oct 1: Assisted Reproduction and Chosen Families

Weston, Kath. 1995. Forever is a Long Time: Romancing the Real in Gay Kinship Ideologies. *In* *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, S. Yanagisako and C. Delaney, eds. New York City: Routledge. 87-110.

Strathern, Marilyn. 1992. *Reproducing the Future: Essays on Anthropology, Kinship and the New Reproductive Technologies*. New York: Routledge.

Introduction: Artificial life, 1-12 (*skim chapter summaries*).

Ch1: Kinship assisted, 14-30.

Cussins, Charis. 1998. Quit Sniveling, Cryo-Baby. We'll Work Out Which One's Your Mama. *In* *Cyborg Babies: From Techno-Sex to Techno-Tots*, R. Davis-Floyd and J. Dumit, eds. New York City: Routledge. 40-66.

Oct 8: Chosen and Fated Families

Bodenhorn, Barbara. 2013. On the Road Again: Movement, Marriage, Mestizaje, and the Race of Kinship. *In* *Vital Relations*. 131-154.

Cannell, Fenella. 2013. The Re-enchantment of Kinship. *In* *Vital Relations*. 217-240.

Goldfarb, Kathryn. n.d. 'Coming to look alike': Materializing affinity in Japanese foster and adoptive care. Under review at *Social Analysis*.

Oct 15: Domaining I: Kinship and “Progressive Societies”

Schneider, David M. 1984. *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Ch15: Institutions, Domains, and Other Rubrics, 181-185.

Ch16: Conclusion, 187-201.

McKinnon, Susan, and Fenella Cannell, 2013. The Difference Kinship Makes. *In Vital Relations*. 3-38.

McKinnon, Susan. 2013. Kinship within and beyond the “Movement of Progressive Societies.” *In Vital Relations*. 39-62.

Midterm paper prompts distributed in class Oct 15**Oct 22: Domaining II: Sentiment, Capital, and State**

Zelizer, Viviana A. 2000. The Purchase of Intimacy. *Law and Social Inquiry*. 817-848.

Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko. 2000. Patriarchal Desire: Law and Sentiments of Succession in Italian Capitalist Families. *In Elites: Choice, Leadership and Succession*. Joao de Pina Cabral and Antonia Pedroso de Lima, eds. Oxford: Berg. 53-72.

Shever, Elana. 2013. “I am a Petroleum Product”: Making Kinship Work on the Patagonian Frontier. *In Vital Relations*. 85-108.

Midterm papers due Fri, Oct 24, 5pm. Please submit via Avenue Dropbox.**Oct 29: Recognizing Queer Kinships**

Butler, Judith. 2000. *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2002. Notes on Gridlock: Genealogy, Intimacy, Sexuality. *Public Culture* 14 (2): 215-238.

Nov 5: Care and Harm

Garcia, Angela. 2010. *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch3: Blood Relative, 111-149.

Han, Clara. 2011. Symptoms of Another Life: Time, Possibility, and Domestic Relations in Chile’s Credit Economy. *Cultural Anthropology* 26(1): 7-32.

Borneman, John. 1997. Caring and Being Cared For: Displacing Marriage, Kinship, Gender and Sexuality. *International Social Science Journal* 49(154): 573-584.

Somatosphere roundtable discussion on “Care”

Nov 12: Otherness as a Relation

Stasch, Rupert. 2009. *Society of Others: Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Introduction: Otherness as a Relation, 1-23. [*FOCUS*]

Ch1: A Dispersed Society: Place Ownership and the Crossing of Spatial Margins, 25-72. [*SKIM*]

Ch2: Pairing and Avoidance: An Otherness-Focused Approach to Social Ties, 73-104. [*FOCUS*]

Ch3: Strange Kin: Maternal Uncles and the Spectrum of Relatives, 134-139. [*Read only these pages unless you have time to skim the chapter*]

Nov 19: The Contingency of Attachment

Stasch, Rupert. 2009. *Society of Others: Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ch4: Children and the Contingency of Attachment, 140-172. [*FOCUS*]

Ch5: Marriage as Disruption and Creation of Belonging, 173-178, 192-199. [*Read only these pages unless you have time to skim the chapter*]

Ch6: Dialectics of Contact and Separation in Mourning, 208-254. [*SKIM*]

Conclusion, 255-275.

Nov 26: Performative Futures

Lambeck, Michael. 2013. Kinship, Modernity, and the Immodern. *In Vital Relations*. 241-260.

Rutherford, Danilyn. 2013. Kinship and Catastrophe: Global Warming and the Rhetoric of Descent. *In Vital Relations*. 261-282.

Dec 3 [AAA, no class]

Final papers due Mon, Dec 15, 5pm. Please submit via Avenue Dropbox.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained. (Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (Insert specific course information)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link (Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)