

AGING IN MODERN (AND POST-MODERN) FAMILIES

Fall 2019

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Lecture: Monday 3:30-4:20pm
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Course Description

This course is focused on the sociological study of families, gender, health, and aging in North America. We will become sensitized to the interplay between social structures and individual experiences in shaping our understanding of relatedness, reproduction, parenthood, care-work, and familial health over time. We will begin the course by familiarizing ourselves with the different theoretical approaches and methodologies for family research. We will then use our knowledge of these theories and methods to unpack major trends surrounding gender, work-family balance, and well-being. In the second half of the course, we will look more in-depth at key issues of health and aging in the sociology of families. These issues include: gender, parenting, and mental health; bodies, identities, and reproductive aging; infertility and assisted reproduction technologies; the representation of children's health and fitness; and, the relations between grandparents, adult children, and grandchildren.

Important questions shaping this course include:

- How do sociologists theorize and examine family life?
- How are social factors, cultural discourses, and individual experiences interrelated in constructing meanings for what families are and what families are supposed to be?
- How do family trajectories transform across the life course?
- What are salient issues surrounding gender, health, and aging in contemporary families and how are these issues experienced by different families in North America?
- How are gender, biology, sexuality, health, and aging implicated in definitions, expectations, and practices of kinship and family relations?

Course Objectives

- Content – You will learn about the co-construction of families, gender, health, and aging. You will also become familiar with particular theories and methodologies that social scientists use to analyze and make sense of family issues. These ideas will be illustrated in guidebook chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, and documentary films that we will discuss in depth.
- Skills – You will learn how to comprehend, compare, and contrast theoretical and empirical texts about families. You will gain experience in communicating your understanding of the course content in tests, discussions, and a written assignment.
- Application – You will have the opportunity to expand your knowledge on a specific topic relating to health and/or aging in families. By doing library research, you will develop expertise on your chosen topic and then learn how to apply your expertise in a written assignment. This assignment will provide you with space to develop and demonstrate critical thinking informed by course material and your own research.

Required Materials and Texts

[All of the assigned readings for this course can be accessed via McMaster University's library system. For more information about locating journal articles, go to: https://library.mcmaster.ca/instruction/social-science-inquiry/finding-articles/story_html5.html.

Each week, I will provide a lecture on the readings and take any questions you may have—but this will not take up the entire 2-hour lecture period. After we have covered the readings, there will be time for watching relevant media clips and having a broader group discussion.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Attendance & Participation – 10%
2. In-Class Activities – 10% (4 x 2.5%)
3. Two Examinations – 50% (2 x 25%)
 - a. Midterm Exam – October 10th – 25%
 - b. Final Exam – November 28th – 25%
4. Written Assignment – 30%

Course Evaluation – Details

Attendance & Participation (10%)

- You will be expected to attend the lectures and participate in discussions.

In-Class Activities (10%) (4 x 2.5%)

- There will be four in-class activities to complete between October 7th and November 21st. These activities will consist of writing short answers to questions about a documentary or other video clip shown in the lecture period. You will not be graded based on the factual accuracy of your answers; instead, you will be graded based on the level of engagement and critical thinking evidenced in your answers.

Two Examinations (50%) (2 x 25%)

- There will be two exams on the assigned course readings. The exams will consist of short-answer and long-answer questions and will be written in class during the two-hour lecture period. The purpose of the exams is to evidence your understanding of theories and methodologies for family research, as well as sociological findings on gender, health, and aging in family contexts.

Written Assignment (30%) Due November 14th 2019 (or November 21st 2019)

- This written assignment consists of a review of literature on a topic surrounding family health and/or aging. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate that you have: identified an appropriate topic; found, read, and understood relevant social science articles on the topic; synthesized, analyzed, and explained the research conducted in the studies; and provided an informed, scholarly discussion of the topic.

- To start this assignment, you will need to choose a specified topic on health and/or aging in family contexts (e.g., parents' mental health, reproductive aging, men's filial care). With this topic determined, you then must find **3** peer-reviewed journal articles on this topic using the databases from the library website. These articles cannot be from the assigned course readings. Moreover, these articles must: 1) be from the **social sciences** (e.g., sociology, social psychology, anthropology, media studies); and, 2) include **original empirical data**—they cannot be reviews or commentaries. We will talk more about this in class.
- Once you have collected your articles, you must read them closely. In reading the articles, you must identify: the background context for the study; the theoretical framework or key concepts used; the dataset and methodology; the overall findings and arguments. By identifying these elements of the article, you will be prepared to write the literature review
- To write the literature review, you must include the following:
 1. An introduction outlining your topic and literature
 2. A concise write-up of the research design of each article
 3. A synthesis and analysis of the articles—comparing and contrasting the research findings, and making links to assigned course readings
 4. A critical discussion including your informed thoughts and/or criticisms of aspects of the articles that illustrates your understanding of both the articles themselves and material from the course
 5. A reference list of all sources cited in APA format
- This assignment does not have a page limit but should be around 6-8 pages, double-spaced, references excluded. This assignment will be graded based on: paper structure, using the correct citation style; identifying an appropriate topic and cohesive articles on that topic; explaining and evaluating the research design and findings of each article; and, providing an insightful critical discussion.

Optional Essay Extension

Students may opt for a short essay extension until November 21st. If you opt for this extension, however, you will not receive any comments or feedback on your paper. Your grade will be posted on Avenue, but you will not receive the essay back. Neither the TAs nor the professor will meet with you to discuss your paper or your grade in any fashion – no exceptions. It is not necessary to request this extension, as it will be automatically granted.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1: September 5

Introduction

Readings: No Readings

Week 2: September 9th and 12th

Theorizing and Studying Families (pt. 1)

Readings:

- Coltrane, S., & Adams, M. (2008). The Social Construction of Gender and Families. In S. Coltrane & M. Adams (Eds.), *Gender and Families* (pp. 1-32). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Fox, B., & Luxton, M. (2014). Analyzing the Familiar: Definitions, Approaches, and Issues at the Heart of Studying Families. In B. Fox (Ed.), *Family Patterns, Gender Relations* (pp. 2-30). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Week 3: September 16th and 19th

Theorizing and Studying Families (pt. 2)

Readings:

- Daly, K. J., & Beaton, J. (2005). Through the Lens of Time: How Families Live in and Through Time. In V. L. Bengston, A. C. Acock, K. R. Allen, P. Dilworth-Anderson, & D. M. Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of Family Theory and Research Methods* (pp. 241-262). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Silverstein, M., & Giarrusso, R. (2010). Aging and Family Life: A Decade Review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 1039-1058.

Week 4: September 23rd and 26th

Research Methods for Studying Families

Readings:

- Acock, A. C., van Dulmen, M. M. H., Allen, K. R., & Piercy, F. B. (2005). Contemporary and Emerging Research Methods in Studying Families. In V. L. Bengston, A. C. Acock, K. R. Allen, P. Dilworth-Anderson, & D. M. Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of Family Theory and Research Methods* (pp. 59-90). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lareau, A. (2012). Using the Terms *Hypothesis* and *Variable* for Qualitative Work: A Critical Reflection. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74, 671-677.

Week 5: September 30th and October 3rd

Gender, Work-Family Balance, and Well-Being (pt. 1)

Readings:

- Biblarz, T. J., & Stacey, J. (2010). How Does the Gender of Parents Matter? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 3-22.
- Young, M., & Schieman, S. (2018). Scaling Back and Finding Flexibility: Gender Differences in Parents' Strategies to Manage Work-Family Conflict. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 80, 99-118.

Week 6: October 7th and 10th

October 7th – Gender, Work-Family Balance, and Well-Being (pt. 2)

Readings:

- Milkie, M. A., Nomaguchi, K., & Schieman, S. (2018). Time Deficits with Children: The Link to Parents' Mental and Physical Health. *Society and Mental Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156869318767488>

October 10th – Midterm Exam

Readings: No Readings

Week 7: October 14th to 18th

Mid-Term Recess

Week 8: October 21st and 24th

Men and Fathers

Readings:

- Shafer, K., Fielding, B., & Holmes, E. K. (2019). Depression, Masculine Norm Adherence, and Fathering Behavior. *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(1), 48-84.
- Marsiglio, W. (2009). Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids. *Contexts*, 8(4), 22-27.
- Campbell, L. D., & Carroll, M. P. (2007). The Incomplete Revolution: Theorizing Gender When Studying Men Who Provide Care to Aging Parents. *Men and Masculinities*, 9(4), 491-508.

Week 9: October 28th and 31st

Women and Mothers

Readings:

- Dworkin, S. L., & Wachs, F. L. (2004). "Getting Your Body Back": Postindustrial Fit Motherhood in *Shape Fit Pregnancy Magazine*. *Gender & Society*, 18(5), 610-624.
- Dillaway, H. (2005). Menopause is the "Good Old": Women's Thoughts About Reproductive Aging. *Gender & Society*, 19(3), 398-417.

Week 10: November 4th and 7th

Infertility

Readings:

- Hanna, E., Gough, B., & Hudson, N. (2018). Fit to Father? Online Accounts of Lifestyle Changes and Help-Seeking on a Male Infertility Board. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 40(6), 937-953.
- Bell, A. V. (2019). "I'm Not Really 100% A Woman If I Can't Have A Kid": Infertility and the Intersection of Gender, Identity, and the Body. *Gender & Society*, 33(4), 629-651.

Week 11: November 11th and 14th

Kinship and Assisted Reproduction

Readings:

- Hertz, R. (2002). The Father as an Idea: A Challenge to Kinship Boundaries by Single Mothers. *Symbolic Interaction*, 25(1), 1-31.
- Almeling, R. (2007). Selling Genes, Selling Gender: Egg Agencies, Sperm Banks, and the Medical Market in Genetic Material. *American Sociological Review*, 72(3), 319-340.

Notes: Written assignment due in class and online on November 14th

Week 12: November 18th and 21st

Children's Health and Fitness

Readings:

- Quirke, L. (2016). "Fat-Proof Your Child": Parenting Advice and "Child Obesity." *Fat Studies*, 5(2), 137-155.
- Wall, G. (2018). "Love Builds Brains": Representations of Attachment and Children's Brain Development in Parenting Education Material. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 40(3), 395-409.

Notes: Optional extension for the written assignment due in class and online on November 21st

Week 13: November 25th and 28th

November 25th – Grandparents and Grandchildren

Readings:

- Dunifon, R. E., Near, C. E., & Ziolo-Guest, K. M. (2018). Backup Parents, Playmates, Friends: Grandparents' Time with Grandchildren. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 80, 752-767.

November 28th – Final Exam

Readings: No Readings

Week 14: December 2nd

Conclusion and return of work

Readings: No Readings

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

The written assignment should be submitted via Avenue To Learn on **December 2nd**. It is your responsibility to review this syllabus prior to each class to recall deadlines. It is also your responsibility to contact me about submitting assignments via email regardless of whether they are being submitted on time or not.

All pages of the assignment must be numbered and have 1" margins on all sides. All text should be double-spaced in Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font. You should use APA citation style (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) in the assignment. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will be reflected in the mark for the assignment.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

For late assignments without approved excuses, you must make arrangements directly with Professor Scheibling to submit the assignment. Assignments will be marked down by five (5) percentage points for each day it is late, *including* weekends and holidays.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any 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.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. [Student Accessibility Services](#) can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

If you require this course outline in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society (ext. 27227 | e-mail: hasdept@mcmaster.ca).

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

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.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.).

Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” Wampum agreement.