

Sociology 2U06: Sociology of Family 2016-2017

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Day and Time of Classes: Tuesdays and Fridays 2:30-3:20 BSBB136

Course Objectives

Most of us are embedded in family relationships, whether it is in our families of origin or in our current relationships. Although every relationship is unique, and every family is unique, one of the most exciting things about sociology is that it can help us to better understand and contextualize our own experiences. Sociology allows us to connect our personal experiences to a broader social context and to understand the historical, social, economic, political, and legal forces that shape family life. Sociological research illuminates how personal choices and individual destinies are constrained by larger social forces. The course will provide you with the tools to critically evaluate ‘common-sense’ understandings of the family and political debates surrounding contemporary family life, which are all too often rooted in myth and assumption rather than evidence. We will address sociological research on a number of issues including historical and cross-cultural perspectives on family life, parenthood, divorce, family violence, contemporary trends in family life, and diversity in families. The course aims to develop important academic skills including library research, effective writing, critical thinking, and active reading.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes of this course are consistent with McMaster’s Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, which can be found at:

<http://c11.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf>

In this course students will develop a comparative and critical analysis of a topic using peer-reviewed sociological articles. This connects to several of the undergraduate degree level expectations including developing a depth and breadth of knowledge and development of communication skills.

Avenue-to-Learn

Please check Avenue-to-Learn regularly for: announcements, lecture slides, and other resources. Please do not email the instructor from Avenue. Please use colaves@mcmaster.ca to email me.

Required Readings (available in the bookstore)

Baker, Maureen. 2009. Families: Changing Trends in Canada. 6th Edition. McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Fox, Bonnie J. 2014. Family Patterns Gender Relations. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press.

Evaluation

All quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. Quizzes are NOT cumulative. You are only tested on material covered since the previous quiz. Quizzes are written during lecture time.

Quiz 1: 10%

Quiz 2-6: 8% each

Assignment #1 25%

Essay 25% (paper copy submitted in lecture; electronic copy submitted to turnitin.com)

Assignment #1 and Essay

- Both on same topic
- Both using same sources
- Essay builds from Assignment #1

Assignment #1

Description: Select a families-related topic that interests you and has been studied by sociologists. Find 5 peer-reviewed sociological articles. You will need to identify a specific issue or question to narrow your scope. For example, the general topic of divorce is too broad a topic, however a more specific topic of the impact of non-custodial fathers on children would be doable.

Part A: Requirements for Selection of Sources (20 marks)

Requirement #1: All 5 articles must be closely-related reflecting a narrow focus. 10 marks

You must use Sociological Abstracts database to locate these articles.

Requirement #2: All 5 articles must be sociological. 10 marks

Not all articles within Sociological Abstracts database are sociological. There are various ways of determining whether your article is sociological. First, check the journal name. Sometimes these explicitly include “Sociology” or “Sociological”, however there are sociological journals that don’t have “sociology” in their name (i.e. Journal of Marriage and Families). Additionally, sometimes sociological research is published in related or interdisciplinary fields, such as criminology. Thus you shouldn’t necessarily exclude an article because it is published in a non-sociological journal. A second way of determining whether the article is sociological is to check the author’s institutional affiliation (whether they are working in a sociological department or not). The best way of ensuring that the article is sociological is to read the article and make this determination based on the content of the article. If you are uncertain about whether an article is sociological meet with your Teaching Assistant during their office hours and bring your article.

Requirement #3: All 5 articles must be peer-reviewed

Deduction of 5 marks for each non peer-reviewed article included. To ensure that your articles are peer-reviewed select the “peer-review” option when searching for articles.

Requirement #4: 2 out of the 5 articles must have been published after Jan 1 2006.

Deduction of 5 marks if one article is not recent. Deduction of an additional 5 marks if two articles are not recent.

Requirement #5: Length of articles must be acceptable.

Deduction of 5 marks for each article that is deemed to be of insufficient length. Do not include short research notes which tend to be only 5-10 pages in length. Peer-reviewed articles tend to be 10-30 pages in length.

Part B (50 marks)

For **each** article, answer questions 1 and 2 below.

Answer each of the following questions in your own words and in sentence format. No point form is allowed. You are expected to paraphrase others' words and are discouraged from using any direct quotations in each of the following answers (with the exception of short phrases or terms that may appear in quotations, ie., Colavecchia uses the term "moneywork" to describe the labour involved in managing family finances).

Answer Questions 1 and 2 for each of your 5 articles (10 marks per article * 5 articles=50 marks)

1. In 2 or 3 sentences outline the key research questions of this study. (5 marks)
2. In 4 to 6 sentences describe the key findings of the study. (5 marks)

Format: Provide full bibliographic information for the article using APA (author, year of publication, article title, journal name, volume number, page numbers) followed by your answers.

Part C (30 marks)

3. In 6-10 sentences compare the research questions that are pursued in your 5 articles. You need to make explicit connections across the 5 articles. You must use in-text citations to indicate the specific articles you are referring to, or comparing. Be very precise in your use of in-text citations. If you make a statement and the in-text citation lists 3 articles this means that the statement you have made only applies to the 3 articles. The in-text citations do not need to consistently include all 5 articles, however you need to show that you are making comparisons across as many of your 5 articles as possible.
4. In 6-10 sentences draw connections between the findings of your studies. Again, you must use in-text citations to indicate which articles you are referring to.

Please note: Questions 3 and 4 are asking you to draw connections across the articles in terms of their research questions and findings. You are encouraged to use this comparative analysis for your final essay and you are permitted to go beyond this to draw connections across your articles in relation to other issues, including but not limited to: theory, social policy, and methodology.

Penalty: 5% per day late.

Essay

Description: The essay will build on assignment #1 and will be a synthesis and critical and comparative analysis of your 5 articles. Another way of saying this is that you are showing the reader that you comprehend the complexity of the research and can engage with it in a thoughtful manner. You need to develop connections across your 5 articles without resorting to merely summarizing each article. The objective of the paper is to analyze the topic from a sociological perspective by drawing on sociological research. What does sociological research have to say

about your topic? The following are suggestions for what you might want to discuss in your paper.

Comparisons across 5 articles in relation to:

- Central research questions pursued by researchers and significance of the questions
- Key findings (Address complexity here; avoid temptation to simplify findings)

You might also compare (but are not required to do so):

- Theoretical approaches (Differences in theoretical approaches taken by the various researchers studying your topic)
- Methodological approaches (i.e., How might differences in methodology or sampling impact the findings?)
- Policy Implications (i.e., How might you explain variation in policy suggestions made by researchers studying the same topic?)
- Directions for future research (these should be grounded in the findings of your studies)

Format: 8 pages (excluding Title page and References). Do not exceed page limit. Double-spaced, 12-point font, number your pages.

Penalties: 5% per day late, 20% penalty for not submitting to turnitin.com. If you do not want to submit to turnitin.com you must bring Dr. Colavecchia a second paper copy of your essay.

Referencing: You must use APA (American Psychological Association) referencing format.

Turnitin.com: In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and to submit a paper copy in lecture. To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. Instructions for using Turnitin.com will be provided.

It is important that you are careful about your referencing in order to avoid plagiarism. In the event that there is plagiarism the student will receive a zero for the essay. Further consequences might also arise as plagiarism constitutes academic misconduct at McMaster University. Presenting someone else's words as your own is plagiarism. Presenting someone else's ideas as your own is also plagiarism. When using someone else's words, the student must put the words in quotation marks and cite the source (author, year of publication, page reference). When using someone else's ideas (and the student's own words) the student must cite the source (author and year of publication). If you are unclear about what plagiarism is please speak to Professor Colavecchia.

Thesis Statements: Many of you have written position papers where you take one side of a debate and use selective evidence to support your position. This essay is NOT a position paper; it is a synthesis and critical analysis of sociological research. Rather than a one-sentence thesis where you take a position on an issue, the kind of thesis that you are writing for this essay is one where you will take a few sentences and be very specific about what sociological research has to say about your topic.

Here is an example of a thesis that is **incorrect** because it is based on opinion rather than being informed by research on the topic: In this paper I will argue that divorce has negative consequences for children's emotional, physical, social, and academic well-being and I will use sociological research to support this position.

Here is an example of a thesis that is **correct**, and the main reason that it is correct is that the thesis has been informed by sociological research rather than being based on personal opinion or experience: Research on the impact of divorce on children throughout the life course suggests that there is no singular uniform outcome for children (cite specific source). This research dispels the myth that divorce is devastating to all children. This essay will examine recent sociological studies on the role of non custodial fathers. It examines the ways that involvement with non-custodial fathers impact children's adjustment to parental divorce.

Sources: Same 5 peer-reviewed sources as Assignment #1. If your TA indicated on Assignment #1 that particular articles needed to be replaced you must do this for your essay.

Using Quotes:

- Do not use long quotations to fill space throughout your essay
- If you are going to use quotes, make sure they are short, be selective in what you decide to quote, and ensure that you have integrated the quote into your discussion (need to explicate quote).
- Do not just stick a quote into your essay without doing something with the quote.
- Limit the number of quotes you use by putting others' work into your own words. You must cite the original author's ideas even if you have put it into your own words.

Writing and Organization: How you structure your essay is important. Organization is not merely a reflection of writing style. An organized essay reflects clear logic and reasoning. Avoid summarizing each article in sequence. This reflects poor organization and an underdeveloped analysis. You must demonstrate that you have read and synthesized the research cited in your bibliography. Your essay should be organized around major ideas, themes, findings, or arguments, not by each individual article.

Many of you learned in high school that an essay has a one sentence thesis followed by three points, or three body paragraphs. This rule is not appropriate for university academic papers and should be disregarded. You will take several sentences to identify the specific issues that you will examine in the paper. This takes the place of a one-sentence thesis statement. You can have as many points as you want in the paper, keeping in mind that it is better to focus on fewer issues in greater depth than to cover numerous points superficially.

Subheadings: The student can use subheadings, however the use of subheadings does not necessarily mean that the paper is organized. Ensure that the material you have in each section under the subheading is organized. Group similar ideas in the same paragraph and use transitions when you are moving from one issue or idea to the next. The reader should know where the writer is headed and it is the writer's job to make this clear. Do not jump from one point to the next without adequate discussion or analysis. It is better to focus on fewer issues, and to examine them in greater depth, rather than touching on many issues in a superficial manner. There is no singular way to organize this paper as it is dependent on the specific issues that each student is addressing in their paper. Thus, no two papers will be organized in the same way.

Introduction: The essay must have an introduction where the student is explicit in highlighting the issues that will be addressed in the paper. Be as specific as possible in this introduction: what are you planning to address in your essay?

Conclusion: Include a conclusion at the end of the paper which highlights what was discussed. You might also point out directions for future research (which connects to ideas that were raised in the essay).

Common Areas of Weakness:

- Basing an essay on inappropriate sources (sources that are not sociological; or sources that are not closely related)
- Inadequate critical reading and reflection of articles; poor comprehension of articles
- Summary of articles rather than synthesis and analysis of articles
- Clarity of expression (often tied to problems with sentence construction and paragraph construction)
- Inappropriate use of quotes (too many/too long quotes that are not integrated into the discussion)
- Inclusion of unnecessary bibliographic information within text of discussion (author name and year of publication is sufficient, you do not need to include article title or journal name as this information appears in the References)
- Inadequate editing of work
- Essays that are too short
- Poor organization, discussions that address each article sequentially rather than having the discussion be organized by idea, theme, or finding

Suggestions:

- Go to the library for help if you need assistance with library research
- Write multiple drafts of your essay (as many as possible)
- Have others proofread and edit your work (i.e. to identify sentences/sections that are unclear)
- Invest time at the beginning in selecting articles that address similar issues. Don't just pick the first few sources you find
- Go to the Centre for Student Development for assistance with your writing
- Start early, don't procrastinate!

Calendar of Topics and Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Tuesday Sep 6	Introduction to the Course	No readings
Friday Sep 9	Defining Families	Chapter 1 Fox Chapter 2 Fox
Tuesday Sep 13 Friday Sep 16	Introduction to Sociology of Families; Family Trends	Chapter 1 Baker
Tuesday Sep 20 Friday Sep 23	Theoretical Perspectives on Families	Chapter 2 Baker
Tuesday Sep 27	Families and Foraging Societies	Chapter 3 Fox
Friday Sep 30	Quiz #1	
Tuesday Oct 4	Families and Agricultural Societies	Chapter 4 Fox

Friday Oct 7	Canadian Families in the Past	Chapter 3 Baker
Mon Oct 10-Oct 14	Mid-term Recess	
Tuesday Oct 18 Assignment #1 Due	Families and Industrialization	Chapter 5 Fox
Friday Oct 21	Families and Industrialization	Chapter 5 Fox
Tuesday Oct 25	Families and Industrialization	Chapter 6 Fox Chapter 8 Fox
Friday Oct 28	Quiz #2	
Tuesday Nov 1	The 1950s Nuclear Family	Chapter 7 Fox
Friday Nov 4	Beyond the 1950s Family	Chapter 18 Fox
Tuesday Nov 8	21 st Century Families	Chapter 10 Fox Chapter 14 Fox
Friday Nov 11	21 st Century Families and Diversity	Chapter 19 Fox
Tuesday Nov 15	Ethnicity, Immigration, and Family Life	Chapter 7 Baker
Friday Nov 18	Ethnicity, Immigration, and Family Life	Chapter 20 Fox Chapter 21 Fox
Tuesday Nov 22	Partnering, Cohabitation, and Marriage	Chapter 4 Baker Chapter 11 Fox
Friday Nov 25	Quiz #3	
Tuesday Nov 29	Sexuality	Chapter 12 Fox
Friday Dec 2 Tuesday Dec 6	Return of Graded Assignments in Lecture	
Friday Jan 6	Essay Assistance	
Tuesday Jan 10 Friday Jan 13	The Transition to Parenthood	Chapter 13 Fox
Tuesday Jan 17	The Transition to Parenthood	Chapter 15 Fox Chapter 16 Fox
Friday Jan 20	Childhood and Child-Rearing	Chapter 5 Baker
Tuesday Jan 24	Paid and Unpaid Labour	Chapter 17 Fox
Friday Jan 27 Tuesday Jan 31	Paid and Unpaid Labour	Chapter 6 Baker
Friday Feb 3	Quiz #4	
Tuesday Feb 7 Friday Feb 10	Divorce	Chapter 8 Baker Chapter 24 Fox
Tuesday Feb 14 Essays Due in Lecture	Divorce	Chapter 25 Fox Chapter 26 Fox

Friday Feb 17	Gender and Families	Chapter 9 Fox
Feb 20-24	Reading Week	
Tuesday Feb 28 Friday March 3	Family Finances and Economic Stress	Chapter 22 Fox Chapter 23 Fox
Tuesday March 7	Quiz #5	
Friday March 10	Family Violence	Chapter 9 Baker Chapter 27 Fox
Tuesday March 14	Family Lives of the Middle- Aged and Elderly in Canada	Chapter 11 Baker
Friday March 17	Social Policy	Chapter 10 Baker Chapter 28 Fox
Tuesday March 21 Friday March 24	Social Policy	Chapter 29 Fox Chapter 12 Baker
Tuesday March 28	Quiz #6	
Friday March 31 Tuesday April 4	Course Wrap Up and Return of Graded Essays	

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, specifically Appendix 3, located at <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 or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
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 and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 5 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 5 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, balloting, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

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.

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.