

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOC 271 (A1): Introduction to the Family

Fall 2016

Instructor: Terra Manca

Class Time: T R 11:00-12:20

Email: tmanca@ualberta.ca

Class Location: Tory Lecture B-2

Office: T 4-28 HM Tory Building

Office Hours: by appointment

Access to instructor: I prioritize answering student emails promptly, but I may take a few business days to respond. Please email me well in advance should you need to schedule an appointment, especially the week prior to an exam.

In addition, I will hold a few informal “meet the instructor” dates throughout the term.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology 271 offers sociological perspectives about various family issues. This course emphasizes how family is performed and reproduced in relation to dominant norms, cultural values, and social contexts. We will analyze some of the ways that sociological inquiry can explain family relationships and the various forms that family can take. Particularly, we will discuss issues pertaining to mate selection; family dissolution, reconstitution, and change; as well as dynamics involving couples, kin, age, ethnicity, class, and gender. An overview of how we will address each of these topics is included in the course schedule below.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe sociological approaches to understanding “the family.”
2. Explain the implications of various conceptualizations of “the family.”
3. Integrate sociological perspectives into their understanding of the challenges that families face.
4. Critically reflect on widespread understandings of diverse familial relationships, structures, and problems.

We will work towards each of these objectives using sociological theories and methods to analyze family trends in the contemporary Canadian context.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:



Cheal, David and Patrizia Albanese. 2014. *Canadian Families Today: New Perspectives (Third Edition)*. Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Students are required to use the third edition of this text. Older editions are very different.

* **On Reserve in Rutherford Library** HQ 560 C3586 2014

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS: Required articles, materials, and topics for eClass discussions will be posted on eClass. They are free to access or available through the University of Alberta library.

CLASSROOM STRUCTURE AND ATMOSPHERE

COURSE STRUCTURE: The course will include lectures, video documentaries, online activities, eClass assignments, and examinations. It is important that you stay up to date with all the course materials and attend lectures. If you are having difficulty keeping up, then make an appointment to meet with me. Likewise, if you have a compelling reason to miss a graded activity or an exam, then contact me as soon as possible.

RESPECT AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR: Students are encouraged to debate controversial topics, but must demonstrate respect at all times. Any disrespectful behaviour on eClass or in class could impact your grade or you may face penalties from the Student Code of Conduct. (For example, eClass discussion posts that are disrespectful will result in 0% in that component of the course.)

SPECIALIZED SUPPORT: Students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) should provide me with a “Letter of Introduction” as soon as possible. If you need accommodations, then please arrange to discuss them with me.

If you have yet to register with Student Accessibility Services, then contact them immediately (1-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; Website: www.ssds.ualberta.ca).

TECHNOLOGY & CLASS ENGAGEMENT: Students are expected to refrain from using the internet, email, social media, or text messaging during class. Regardless of whether you believe these activities impact your learning, they disrupt other students in the classroom.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Activity:	Percent of Grade	Date Due:
<u>eClass Components</u>		
eClass assignments	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 6th • November 24th
eClass discussions	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of two posts
<u>Exams</u>		
First Exam	25%	September 29 th
Second Exam	25%	November 1 st
Third Exam	30%	Date to be determined and posted on Beartracks It will be between December 10 th and 22 nd

* An overview of each component is listed on pages 4 and 5. In addition, we will discuss details in class and I will post information about the assignments on eClass.

GRADE SCHEME			
Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Value
A+	90-100		4.0
A	86-89	Excellent	4.0
A-	82-85		3.7
B+	78-81		3.3
B	74-77	Good	3.0
B-	70-73		2.7
C+	66-69		2.3
C	62-65	Satisfactory	2.0
C-	58-61		1.7
D+	54-57	Poor	1.3
D	50-53	Minimal Pass	1.0
F	0-49	Fail	0.0

ECLASS COMPONENTS (20%)

ECLASS QUESTIONS (15%): 2 questions (Graded)

Twice this semester you will respond to an open-ended question through eClass that will be graded. Unlike the discussion boards, these assignments will be graded based on high expectations. I will post questions on eClass a minimum of one week prior to each deadline. You must respond to one question before each due date (October 6th and November 24th). **Together, these questions will count towards 15% of your final grade (respectively, 7% and 8%).** The purpose of these questions is to promote reflective learning, critical thinking, and engagement with course material. As such, there are multiple “correct” ways to answer questions.

General guidelines: Pick one main argument (or thesis statement) that you can explain in 200 to 250 words. Grammar and spelling will affect your grade if responses are difficult to interpret. Both questions will require that students demonstrate these criteria:

1. An ability to explain how course material relates to your main point.
 - a. Use **at least 1 of the assigned readings** from this syllabus
 - b. Demonstrate your engagement with **material covered during lecture**
2. The capacity to integrate information covered during lectures with other materials (such as personal experiences, media, or eClass discussions); and
3. Reflection or critical thinking.

Due to the size of this class, I am unable to provide written feedback to everyone, but you may inquire if anything remains unclear following the feedback I provide to the class.

*In general, I will not accept late assignments with the exception of extreme circumstances. If you believe your circumstances would qualify, then contact me when you are able.

ECLASS DISCUSSION BOARDS (5%): 2 or more posts (Pass/Fail)

These discussion boards are intended to encourage thinking about topics related to the course that you may encounter in daily life, prepare you for the eClass assignments, and to allow you to have input about what you learn.

Grades will be assigned on a pass/fail basis. In order to receive 5% for your posts, students must:

1. Write a minimum of two posts (each post is 2.5% for a maximum of 5%).
2. Ensure your posts relate to the course material.
 - a. Posts can be very short, but must demonstrate use of the course content.
 - b. Ensure that you cite any materials you use from outside the course.
3. Respect one another. This is extremely unlikely to be a problem, but any disrespectful posts will result in a grade of 0% on this component. (For example, anything that is bullying, racist, sexist, or otherwise inappropriate).

Option 2: If you have a strong desire to do an alternative to an eClass assignment, then share your idea with me. Just note, I can only consider your suggestion if you make it a minimum of two weeks prior to the assignment deadline. I reserve the right to reject your idea for various reasons including my ability to grade your suggestion.

EXAMINATIONS (80%)

There will be three exams, which will consist only of multiple choice questions. The final exam will be similar to the midterms except that it is worth 30% instead of 25%.

Exams will include content covered in lectures, guest lectures, videos, and assigned readings throughout the course. You will need to maintain your knowledge of concepts and topics that we use throughout the course, but each exam will focus on materials covered since the preceding exam.

MEET THE INSTRUCTOR DATES

Stop by, bring a friend if you like, and chat about how things are going. We can talk about anything: the course, life in Edmonton, what you plan to do when you graduate, whether you like cats or dogs better—really anything.

The first date is September 8th from 2pm-4pm. Future dates will be posted on eClass. These dates will be held in addition to the appointments that you can schedule with me to discuss the course.

MY PERFORMANCE

I will provide an opportunity for you to provide anonymous feedback about my teaching.

Required Note: Policy about course outlines can be found in [Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading](#) of the University Calendar.

Required Note: “Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).”

ABSENCES FROM EXAMS

UNACCEPTABLE ABSENCES:

Instructors and Faculties use discretion to determine whether absence from an exam is acceptable. The University Calendar in the [Attendance](#) section lists examples of unacceptable reasons, such as “personal events such as vacations, weddings, or travel arrangements.” In addition, this section also states “**When a student is absent from a term or final exam without acceptable excuse, a final grade will be computed using a raw score of zero for the exam missed.**”

APPLYING FOR A JUSTIFIABLE ABSENCE:

Absence from midterms: Students are expected to speak with me about potential absences at the earliest date possible. Should you be unable to speak with me prior an absence, then you must contact me **within two working days** of the missed exam (assuming your circumstances permit). **Students must provide documentation pertaining to the absence unless the reason is incapacitating illness, in which case a medical note is NOT required.** In absence of other documentation, students must provide me with a **statutory declaration form**, which can be obtained from **your Faculty office** or the **Office of the Registrar**.

Absence from the final exam: I cannot grant excused absences for the final examination. **You must apply to your Faculty office within two working days should you fail to write the final exam.** Your department will only approve applications involving an incapacitating illness and other extreme circumstances.

Should your Faculty approve you to write a deferred exam, it will be held:

Time: **Saturday, January 14th, 2017 at 9:00AM**

Location: **ESB 2-36**

ACADEMIC HONESTY: PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Additional information about Academic Integrity and access to the Academic Integrity Handbook for students is available on the Student Conduct and Accountability website <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/>

Further material about academic honesty can be accessed through the Faculty of Arts “Don’t do it” sheet <http://uofa.ualberta.ca/arts/-/media/arts/student-services/documents/dont-do-it-enclosure-2015.pdf> and University Governance “Don’t Cheat” sheet <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/StudentAppeals/DontCheatsheet.aspx>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Throughout the semester, we will follow the below schedule as closely as possible. Please note that the dates of guest speakers/lecturers are subject to change.

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

September 1: Introductions and defining the family

READING: Chapter 1; Fox article

September 6: “The family”

READING: Chapter 1; Fox article

Fox, Bonnie. 2015. “Feminism on Family Sociology: Interpreting Trends in Family Life.” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 52(2): 204-211.

September 8: Canadian families

READING: Chapter 2

*Meet the instructor: I will be available from 2-4pm, feel free to come say hello. (I will post future meet the instructor dates on eClass).

September 13: Evolution and family

READING: Trivers article (<http://goo.gl/6CvmRN>)

Trivers, Robert L. 1972. “Parental Investment and Sexual Selection.” In B. Campbell (ed.) *Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man, 1871-1971*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, Chicago. pp. 136-179.

*Guest Lecturer: Jeff Andrews

September 15: Family Theory and Family Life

READING: DeVault article

DeVault, Marjorie. 2000. “Producing Family Time: Practices of Leisure Activity Beyond the Home.” *Qualitative Sociology* 23(4): 485-503.

FAMILY ISSUES (PART 1)

September 20: Immigrant families; visible minority families; Aboriginal families

READING: Chapter 12; “I, Racist – THOSE PEOPLE.” Blog. (<https://goo.gl/FM8u3e>)

September 22: Family narratives and colonial legacies

READING: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Excerpts

“The Survivors Speak” (<http://goo.gl/OwwGxB>) p. x-xiii, p. 1, p. 91-107

*Guest speaker: Sheldon Stockdale

September 27: Families with disabilities

READING: Chapter 13

September 29: MIDTERM 1 (25% of final grade)

Midterm includes all course material covered between September 1st-29th

LIFE COURSE (PART 1): SEXUALITY; INTIMACY; AND PARENTHOOD

October 4: “Doing Family;” Intimacy; Families of Choice

READING: Chapter 3

October 6: Sex, religion, and the family

READING: Willey article

Willey, Robin. 2013. “The Evangelical Sexual Marketplace: An Ethnographic Analysis of the Exchange and Conversion of Erotic Capital in an Evangelical Church.” *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth* 5(1): 1-37.

*Guest Lecturer: Robin Willey

***eClass question 1 due October 6th (7% of final grade)**

October 11: Parental roles; Raising young children

READING: Chapter 4

October 13: Parenting, privilege, and health

READING: Reich article

Reich, Jennifer A. 2014. “Imagined Gated Communities and the Privilege of Choice.” *Gender & Society* 28(5): 679-704.

LIFE COURSE (PART 2): RITES OF PASSAGE; CHANGING FAMILIES

October 18: Family rituals and rites of passage

READING: Chapter 8

October 20: Pre-wedding rituals and gender

READING: Grazian article

Grazian, David. 2007. “The Girl Hunt: Urban Nightlife and the Performance of Masculinity as Collective Activity,” *Symbolic Interaction* 30(2): 221-243.

*Guest Lecturer: Robin Willey

October 25: Multi-generational families; aging; family caregiving

READING: Chapter 6 (pages 109-116); Chapter 7 (pages 125-127; 131-141)

October 27: Family fragmentation; Mid-life changes

READING: Chapter 5

FAMILY ISSUES (PART 2)

November 1st: MIDTERM 2 (25% of final grade)

Midterm focuses on topics covered from September 29th-October 27th

November 3rd: Sexual and gender minorities: Controversy and social change

REQUIRED MATERIAL: PBS Documentary; CBC Radio clip

PBS: “Growing Up Trans” (<http://goo.gl/0U3Lv0>)

CBC: “Gay Adoptive Parents make Legal History” (<http://goo.gl/YvHMA5>)

*Guest Speaker Michel Lévesque

READING WEEK (November 8 & 10): No classes!

November 15: Low-income families

READING: Chapter 10

November 17: Family problems, violence, and mistreatment

READING: Chapter 14

November 22nd: Work; Gender; and Marxism

READING: Engels excerpt (“4. The Monogamous Family,” pages 33-44)

Engels, Friedrich. 1884. “Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.”

Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume 3. <https://goo.gl/fkfUTF>

*Guest Lecturer: Barret Webber

November 24th: Families and work

READING: Chapter 9

*eClass question 2 due November 24th (8% of final grade)

FAMILY POLICIES AND PREDICTIONS

November 29: Family policies in Canada

READING: Gazso article

Gazso, Amber. 2009. “Reinvigorating the Debate: Questioning the Assumptions about and Models of ‘The Family’ in Canadian Social Assistance Policy.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 32: 150-162.

December 1: Projections about families

READING: Chapter 16

WRAP-UP AND REVIEW

December 6: Course review

READING: Reread your notes, catch up, and review for your final exam

IMPORTANT DATES

FINAL EXAM (30% of final grade): Date, time, and place to be announced (between December 9-21st).

*Think of the final exam like a third midterm. It focuses on material covered from November 3rd-December 3rd.

I have no control over the date and time of the third exam. You are responsible to check Bear Tracks for the finalized date.

Other dates:

- Course Drop/Add Deadline: September 15th
- Course Withdrawal Deadline (50% refund): October 4th
- Course Withdrawal Deadline (no refund): November 30th