

**Spring 2013: Sociology 371-20**  
**Science B Room 105**

## **SOCIOLOGY OF FAMILIES**

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**Office Hours:** Mondays, 3:15 – 5:00pm or by appointment

### **COURSE OVERVIEW:**

This course will provide you with an overview of the sociological study of family life, with an emphasis on Canadian families. Families do not take one form, but many, and what ‘family’ means is different for different people. An understanding of and respect for this diversity will underlie our discussion of the routine practices of daily life, the kinds of transitions families experience, and the factors that shape individual experiences of family. As well, this course will critically examine how particular understandings of ‘family’ influence law and public policy.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course is an opportunity for students to engage with the material at a number of levels. The goal is for you to develop an understanding of the sociology of families, to be able to think in a sophisticated way about some of the issues facing contemporary families, and to learn some practical skills that will be of benefit to you beyond this course. Specific objectives include:

- Knowledge of the characteristics and diversity of contemporary Canadian families
- Understanding of the theories and frameworks used by sociologists to study families
- Knowledge of practices and experiences associated with family life in many forms
- The ability to evaluate social issues in terms of their effects on family life
- The ability to apply the ‘sociological imagination’ to one’s own experiences of family
- The ability to express ideas and engage in discussions with others about families

### **TEXT AND OTHER READINGS:**

Cheal, David (Ed.) *Canadian Families Today: New Perspectives (2nd edition)*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2010. **(Available in the University Bookstore; used copies are available)**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:**

You will be responsible for *all* readings specified in the course outline, as well as *all* lecture materials (including films, guest speaker presentations etc.).

The course grade will be determined as follows (descriptions of each follow the table below):

Assignment	Due	% of Grade
In-Class Exam	June 5	25%
Group Presentations	June 26	30%
In-Class Responses	Throughout	10%
Written Response	By June 26	10%
Final Exam	Registrar-Scheduled	25%

### **In-Class Exam**

The test will cover both readings and class materials, and will involve a variety of question types. These may include multiple-choice, true/false, “fill-in-the-blank” and short essay. Material not yet covered in class will NOT be on the exam. The exam will comprise 25% of your final grade.

### **Group Presentation**

Working in small groups, you will be asked to sign up for a topic, read the associated additional readings, and prepare a presentation for your classmates. More information about the group presentation will be provided in a separate handout. The group presentation will comprise 30% of your grade.

### **In-Class Responses**

10% of your grade will come from your completing 10 short answer responses administered during class, worth 1% each. The in-class responses will be short and you will not be expected to reference the text or class lectures; they will be opinion questions that you can answer informally and time will be provided to complete them. Come to class prepared to hand something in (i.e., bring a pen and some paper!). These will be graded for completion and effort. There will be no in-class response due on June 10 (in-class exam) or June 26 (final day of classes).

### **Written Assignment**

10% of your grade will come from a written assignment due by the end of the course. You may choose any of the in-class responses to expand upon by referencing the text and lecture materials to develop a 2-page written response. Your written assignment does not have to ‘match’ your in-class response, so you can answer the questions in a different way than you did in-class. Alternatively, you can further develop your existing answer. These can be handed in at any time up until the last day of classes (June 26<sup>th</sup>).

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar’s office and will comprise 25% of your grade.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A+ = 95-100	B+ = 80-84	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 54-58
A = 90-94	B = 75-79	C = 63-66	D = 50-53
A- = 85-89	B- = 70-74	C- = 59-62	F = 49 or less

Please note that ALL tests and assignments must be completed to obtain a passing grade in this course. Please note also that final grades are NOT negotiable. No grade will be increased beyond what a student has earned during the term, and in the class.

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

In-class responses cannot be handed in late; however, you may be exempt from a particular day's assignment if you have documented evidence for a legitimate absence (e.g., a doctor's note for an illness). If you miss the in-class exam due to a legitimate absence, arrangements can be made with the Sociology Department for you to take a make-up exam.

Ordinarily, I will not return in-class responses until the end of the course, so if you would like your in-class response back to use for your written assignment, please either indicate this in writing when you hand in the response or email me 24 hours prior to the next class to let me know.

## **CLASS PROTOCOL:**

### **Readings**

You will be expected to have completed each lecture's readings prior to the relevant class, and to come prepared to discuss them. There is a lot of reading to be done in a short period of time, so please plan accordingly.

### **Group Discussions**

Group discussions are an important component of this work. Sometimes, these will be carried out informally, where you will be asked to talk to your neighbour about a particular topic. Sometimes, more formal groups will be established. More information about this will be provided in the first class.

### **Technology Policy**

Cell phones should be turned off and put away, and text messages should not be sent in class time. Laptops may be used in class for note-taking, but for no other purpose. (Permission to use them may be withdrawn if they aren't used appropriately).

### **Arriving Late/ Leaving Early**

I work hard to begin and end classes on time; if you need to leave early, it's courteous to let me know in advance, and to sit somewhere that will allow you to leave without disrupting others. Similarly, if you know that you will have to arrive late, please let me know in advance.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

I will use Blackboard to post class outlines, assignment and test information, and general announcements, so please check the class site regularly. I am available during my office hours, or by appointment, to speak in person. Questions about grades, course content, or personal considerations should be raised during in-person meetings and not through email. If you need to email me, for instance to set up an appointment, please indicate "Soci 371" in the subject line.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
Wed. May 15	Course Introduction Theories of Studying Families	Cheal, ch. 1	
<b>Monday May 20: VICTORIA DAY, NO CLASS</b>			
Wed. May 22	Methods of Studying Families Intimacy and Commitment	Cheal, ch. 2	
Mon. May 27	Family Formation Parents and Children	Cheal ch.3 and 10	
Wed. May 29	Fragmentation and Renewal in Families Families at Midlife	Cheal ch. 4 and 5	
Mon. June 3	Aging in Families Review of the Life Course	Cheal ch. 6	
Wed. June 5	IN-CLASS EXAM		
Mon. June 10	Families and Work Families and Poverty	Cheal ch. 8 and 9	
Wed. June 12	Families and Culture, Race, and Ethnicity Families and Disability	Cheal ch. 11, 12, 13	
Mon. June 17	Family Violence	Cheal ch. 14	
Wed. June 19	Family Law and Policies	Cheal ch. 15	
Mon. June 24	The Future of Families	Cheal ch. 16	
Wed. June 26	Discursive Construction of Families – A Different Approach Group Presentations Review Q&A		All written assignments due by this date Group presentation notes and peer evaluations due
TBA	FINAL EXAM		Registrar-Scheduled

**~Registrar-scheduled final exam dates are June 27, 28, and 29~**

## OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

### ***Emergency evacuations:***

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point in the ICT Food Court.

### ***Deferrals:***

If at all possible you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

### ***Deferred Final Exam Form:***

Please note that requests to defer a Registrar-scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar’s Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

[http://ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM\\_0.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf)

### ***Deferred Term Work Form:***

Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It’s available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

***Ethics Research:*** Students are advised that any research with human subjects—including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation-- must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. *In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects’ research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.*

***Academic Misconduct:*** Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

***The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation*** disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s

office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

***Safewalk:*** The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

***Academic Accommodation:*** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.

***Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:***

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.

2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The

Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours. *Additional office hours will be added at the end of term.*

3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.