

## SOCI/WMGS 221: Sociology of Marriage and the Family

**Professor:** Dr. Norine Verberg  
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**Class time:**  
Wednesdays, 12:45-2:00  
Fridays, 11:15-12:30  
*in SNP 018*

**Office hours:**  
Tuesdays, 9:00-11:30  
Thursdays; 9:00-11:30  
Fridays, 1:15-2:15

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### Course Overview

The social practices surrounding family life are diverse and changing constantly. Our particular focus is to explore how different social forces influence how individuals and families imagine and experience their personal lives. We will explore the influences of culture, social policy, the media, science and technology, social movements, consumerism, religion, and 'professionals' and 'experts', and how social forces interact with traditional and emerging cultural understandings of gender, race, ability, sexuality, and social class.

### Required Readings and Documentaries

The required readings are gathered in a *course pack* published by Canadian Scholars Press. The reader is available at the Campus Store. Documentaries watched in class are 'required,' so if you miss one, it is your responsibility to access it and watch it.

### Grading Scheme

- Participation 10%
- Midterm 25% ~ Friday, October 19 [covers Part 1 & 2]
- Research paper 25% ~ Friday, November 16 at 11:15 (in class)
- Final examination 40% ~ TBA [covers *primary* focus is Part 3 & 4]

### Class Attendance and Participation

You will find the Schedule of Readings at the end of the syllabus. Please do your best to complete the readings *on schedule* and *participate in our discussion of the readings*. You will be asked to submit reading notes on Moodle from time to time. This material counts toward the 'participation' grade. As required by the Dean, class attendance will be taken.

- If you must miss a class, *you are responsible to find out what you missed* (e.g., lectures, announcements, presentations, videos).
- You are encouraged to participate. Your questions help ensure that new ideas are explained fully by the professor and they facilitate class discussion and learning.

### Research Paper

- *Instructions for the Research Paper* will be posted on Moodle and introduced in class. Your paper will be a library research paper around 7-8 pages in length.

### Examinations

The exam covers all course material (readings, videos, lectures and class discussion).

- Note that, except in the case of medically documented illness or death/serious illness in the immediate family, *absolutely no* make-up exam will be offered.
- Please notify me if you *registered* to use the *Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning*, and provide a reminder two week prior to an exam.

### Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the academic integrity policy on plagiarism, cheating, tampering, and falsification. [http://sites.stfx.ca/registrars\\_office/academic\\_integrity](http://sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_integrity)

### Office Hours and Communication Regarding Course Work

You are encouraged to see me during office hours to discuss any aspect of the course. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, please schedule an appointment.

### Email Communication

Important notices are posted on Moodle and/or sent to your StFX email address only. It is your responsibility to check your StFX account regularly to ensure that it is not full. Given the number of students I have, I do not reply to emails about the following:

- questions that are answered in this syllabus or information posted on Moodle.
- inquiries about course work: see me in office hours for academic assistance.
- missing a class ~ except to report exceptional circumstances requiring follow-up. Feel free to mention a prior or future class absence at the end of a regular class.

When you do email a professor, you are encouraged to use proper email etiquette, note the topic noted in the subject line, and provide your name and course number.

### Communication Regarding Equity and Diversity

“Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. Please feel free to talk with me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the STFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor. Please note that a Human Rights and Equity Advisor will soon be appointed. In the meantime, students, faculty, or staff may also contact the Director of Human Resources at [hr@stfx.ca](mailto:hr@stfx.ca) or the Office of the AVP&P”.

### Schedule of Readings

#### Part 1: Studying Families and Social Change

##### ➤ Statistical Snapshots: Family Change and Diversity

Sept. 5/7 Milan, Ann. 2000. “One Hundred Years of Families.” *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada: Catalogue No. 11-008.

Sept. 5/7 Milan, Ann and Nora Bohnert. 2012. “Fifty Years of Families in Canada: 1961-2011.” Statistics Canada: Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011003.

##### ➤ A Wider-Angle Lens: Recognizing the Social Construction of Official Statistics

Sept. 7/12 Bradbury, Bettina. 2000. Single Parenthood in the Past: Canadian Census Categories, 1891-1951, and the “Normal Family.” *Historical Methods* 33(4): 211-217.

Thomas, Derrick. 2010. The Census and The Evolution of Gender Roles in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Canada. *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada. Cat. No.11-008X.

##### ➤ Change and Cultural Lag: The Power of “Tradition” in Culture

Sept. 12/14 Smith, Dorothy. 1993. “The Standard North American Family: SNAF as an Ideological Code.” *Journal of Family Issues* 14(1): 50-65.

Sept. 14/19 Gross, Neil. 2005. The Detraditionalization of Intimacy Reconsidered. *Sociological Theory*. 23(3): 286-311.

## Part 2: Social Changes in Marriage, Coupling, and Family Forms

### ➤ Same-sex Partnerships and Marriage

- Sept. 21/ 26 Green, Adam Isaiah. 2010. "Queer Union: Same-Sex Spouses Marrying Tradition And Innovation." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 35(3): 399-436.
- Sept. 21/26 \* Video: *Why Thee Wed*, NFB

### ➤ Same-sex Families and Parenting

- Sept. 28/O.3 Gibson, Margaret. 2014. "Adopting difference: Thinking Through Adoption by Gay Men in Ontario, Canada." *Signs* 39(2): 407-432.
- Sept. 28/O.3 Robitaille, Caroline and Marie-Christine Saint-Jacques. 2009. "Social Stigma and the Situation of Young People in Lesbian and Gay Stepfamilies." *Journal of Homosexuality* 54(4): 421-442.
- Sept. 28/O.3 \* Video: *Fatherhood Dreams*

**Friday, October 5 -- no class today -- Fall study day**

### ➤ Singlehood, Cohabitation and Divorce

- Oct. 10 Budgeon, Shelley. 2008. "Couple Culture and the Production of Singleness." *Sexualities* 11(3): 301-324.
- Oct. 12 Smart, Carol. 2000. "Divorce and Changing Family Practices in a Post-Traditional Society." *Family Matters* 56(1): 10-19.
- Oct. 12 Scott Coltrane and Michele Adams. 2003. "The Social Construction of the Divorce 'Problem': Morality, Child Victims, and the Politics of Gender." *Family Relations* 52(4):363-372.

**Friday, October 19 ~ Midterm**

***This exam has multiple choice and short-answer essays that covers Parts 1 and 2.  
NOTE: On Tuesday, we begin Part 3: Please read Wall prior to class***

## Part 3: Gender and Social Change in Heterosexual Families

### ➤ Working Mothers/ Working Fathers: Gender and Family Work

- Oct. 17 Wall, Glenda. 2013. "'Putting Families First': Shifting Discourses of Motherhood and Childhood in Representations of Mothers' Employment and Child Care." *Women's Studies International Forum* 40(1): 162-171.
- Oct. 24 \* Video: *The Evolution of Dad*
- Oct. 26 Ranson, Gillian. 2012. "Men, Paid Employment and Family Responsibilities: Conceptualizing the 'Working Father.'" *Gender Work and Organizations* 19(6): 741-761.
- Oct. 26 McKay, Lindsey and Andrea Doucet. 2010. "'Without Taking Her Leave': A Canadian Case Study of Couples' Decisions on Fathers' Use of Paid Parental Leave. *Fathering* 8(3): 300-320.

➤ **“Experts” and the Medicalization of Motherhood**

- Oct.31/Nov.2 Malacrida, Claudia. 2002. “Alternative Therapies and Attention Deficit Disorder: Discourses on Maternal Responsibility and Risk.” *Gender and Society* 16(3): 366-385.
- Oct.31/Nov.2 Wall, Glenda. 2001. “Moral Constructions of Motherhood in Breastfeeding Discourse.” *Gender and Society*. 15(4):592-610.

➤ **Constructions of Lone-Parenting**

- Nov. 7/9 Romagnoli, Amy and Glenda Wall. 2012. “‘I Know I’m a Good Mom’: Young, Low-Income Mothers’ Experiences with Risk Perceptions, Intensive Parenting and Parenting Education Programmes.” *Health, Risk and Society* 14(3): 273-289.
- Nov. 7/9 Zartler, Ulrike. 2014. “How to Deal with Moral Tales: Constructions and Strategies of Single-Parent Families.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 75(2): 604-619.

**Part 4: Family Life and Social Inequalities: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality**

➤ **The Sixties Scoop and the Rebuilding of Indigenous Families**

- Nov. 14/16 Spenser, Dale C. 2017. “Extractions and Pulverization: A Narrative Analysis of Canada Scoop Survivors.” *Settler Colonial Studies*. 7(1): 57-71.
- Nov. 14/16 Ball, Jessica. 2010. “Indigenous Fathers’ Involvement in Reconstituting “Circles of Care.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45:124-138.
- Nov. 14/16 Tam, Benita Y., Leanne C. Findlay, and Dafna E. Kohen. 2016. “Indigenous Families: Who Do You Call Family?” *Journal of Family Studies* 1-17.
- Nov. 14/16 \* Video: *We Were Children*, NFB, 2012.

➤ **Intersectionality of Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality in Global Perspective**

- Nov. 21/24 Gerstel, Naomi. 2011. “Rethinking Families and Communities: The Color, Class, and Centrality of Extended Kin Ties.” *Sociological Forum* 26(1):1-20.
- Nov. 21/24 Hsiung, Ping-Chun and Katherine Nichol. 2010. “Policies on and Experiences of Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada.” *Sociology Compass* 4(9):766-778.
- Nov. 28/30 Mamo, Laura and Eli Alston-Stepnitz. 2015. “Queer Intimacies and Structural Inequalities: New Directions in Stratified Reproduction.” *Journal of Family Issues* 36 (4): 519-540.
- Nov. 28/30 Hearn, Jeff. 2012. “The Sociological Significance of Domestic Violence: Tensions, Paradoxes, and Implications.” *Current Sociology*, 1-19.

**Final Exam (Scheduled by the Registrar)**

***The final exam covers the whole course; however, it draws primarily from the themes covered in Parts 3 and 4.***