

Sociology of the Family

SOC214H1F

Fall 2024

Schedule: Tuesdays, 1:10pm - 3:00pm

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Office Hours: By appointment

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1 Course Description

This course provides a critical analysis of families using a life course perspective. We will pay attention to historical transformations of families in society and to family transitions over the life course of individuals. This course emphasizes the linked lives of individuals to each other, to institutions such as work, and to their cultural contexts. The intersections between the family and other social institutions, as well as growing diversity between families will be central foundations of this course. We will examine trends in family life such as racial and economic inequality, technology's transformation of romantic relationships, and demographic trends. Other topics include historical trends in courtship, family formation, parenting, families and work, and divorce and remarriage.

1.1 Learning Outcomes

Students will finish the course with a better understanding of the differences between families and the ways that social forces shape families. They will apply the sociological perspective to the institution of the family and examine how social factors such as race, class, and gender shape contemporary families. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand and evaluate the family as a socially and culturally constructed institution
- Explain how cultural contexts and social policies shape family life
- Think critically about how normative ideas about families sustain hierarchies of age, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and class
- Describe historical and demographic trends in family patterns in their historical and sociopolitical locations

1.2 Prerequisite

The prerequisite to take this course is **SOC100H1**. As per university guidelines, those without this requirement will be removed at time of discovery and without notice.

2 Required Texts

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings will be available on Quercus.

We will typically read about 30 pages of material per week (sometimes less, sometimes more). The lectures build on the readings, and I expect that you have read the assigned texts ahead of class. It is critical that you keep up with these readings.

3 Components

All assignments, evaluations, and tests must be submitted via Quercus.

Assessment	Worth Due	
Flipped Quizzes	10%	Due weekly
Midterm	15%	Oct 08
Final Exam	25%	TBD
Fact Check Paper	50%	2 deadline options: Oct 01, Nov 12

4 Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Flipped Quizzes	Tests	Fact Check Paper
1	03-Sep	01 Terms and Theory			
2	10-Sep	02 Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity	FQ1		
3	17-Sep	03 Families and Social Class	FQ2		
4	24-Sep	04 Gender and Sexuality	FQ3		
5	01-Oct	05 Love and Romantic Relationships	FQ4		Deadline Option 1
6	08-Oct		FQ5	Midterm	
7	15-Oct	06 Marriage and Cohabitation			
8	22-Oct	07 Work and Families	FQ6		
	29-Oct	NO CLASS - Fall Reading Week			
9	05-Nov	08 Families and Children	FQ7		

Week	Dates	Topic	Flipped Quizzes	Tests	Fact Check Paper
10	12-Nov	09 Divorce, Remarriage and Blended Families	FQ8		Deadline Option 2
11	19-Nov	10 Family Policy	FQ9		
12	26-Nov	Study Review	FQ10		
TBD			Final Exam		

5 Evaluation

5.1 Flipped Quizzes (10%)

Your top 5 Flipped Quiz (FQ) scores will be used to calculate your final grade (2% each). This assignment requires students to create multiple choice questions related to the course material (readings, lectures, videos, activities, etc.) and share them with classmates to assist in study review. Detailed instructions about developing appropriate quiz questions will be provided.

Responses are due on the Quercus discussion board by the following class time (Tuesdays at 1:10pm). For example, a FQ on material from Week 3 is due by the class start time on Week 4. FQs will never be accepted late. If you cannot submit it on time, then you can complete one(s) that is/are due later in the term.

These assignments are voluntary. You can choose to do all 10 FQs (10 substantive lectures), some FQs, or not to do any FQs, in this case their weight will shift to your total test score. For example, if your total test score is 85%, you will receive an 85% for any missing FQ.

There is no risk to submitting a FQ. Any FQ score lower than your total test score will be replaced. In the example above, any FQ score below an 85% will also be replaced with an 85%.

5.2 Midterm (15%)

The purpose of the midterm is not to evaluate memorization but rather familiarity with theories, concepts, trends, and approaches to understanding families. All materials in this course (i.e., readings, lectures, videos, and discussions) are considered “fair game” for test questions. The midterm will cover material from topics 1-5.

The midterm will be taken in-person, in our regular classroom during the class time noted on the schedule. It will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions. More details will be provided closer to the midterm date.

A make-up mid-term is ONLY offered in the following circumstances:

1. Illness which must be declared on Acorn and proof of this declaration provided.
2. Unexpected extenuating circumstances such as a family or non-illness- related personal emergency in which case you must contact your college registrar and have them email the professor to confirm the circumstance.

If you miss both the mid-term and make-up mid-term, the 0 received for this test will be replaced by your final exam score.

5.3 Final Exam (25%)

The final exam is scheduled by the university during the final exam period. It will be in-person and cumulative in nature (i.e., cover all 10 substantive topics). The exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions.

Please note that, per university policy, if you make personal commitments during the final exam period, you will not receive special consideration and **no special arrangements will be made in the event of conflicts resulting from personal commitments such as travel arrangements.** If you think you have a [qualified scheduling conflict](#), please review the Arts & Sciences procedure for reporting the conflict as soon as possible.

5.4 Fact Check Paper(s) (50%)

You will be asked to write a *1500-2000* word examination of a claim you find in the media related to a course topic. Think of this as a writing assignment structured as: “I read that XXXX, but in reality the research says YYYY.”

Writing one Fact Check (FC) is required. You also have two additional options:

- Submit 1 FC, which will comprise the entire 50% of your FC grade (choose deadline 1 or 2).
- Submit 1 FC by deadline 1, and revise your FC by deadline 2. Your FC grade will be the average of your two scores*.
- Submit 2 FC (1 per deadline). Your highest FC grade will comprise the entire 50% of your FC grade.

*Note that if your revised FC score is lower than your first FC score, your first FC score will stand (except in instances of academic integrity cases).

The deadlines for the papers are as follows:

Options	Deadline
Fact Check Paper Deadline #1	Tuesday, Oct 1 by 1:10pm
Fact Check Paper Deadline #2	Tuesday, Nov 12 by 1:10pm

Additional assignment details will be provided separately. Papers will be submitted online through Quercus and will be checked diligently for plagiarism (plagiarism will, at a minimum, result in a grade of 0 on the paper).

Feedback will be provided as extensively as possible for papers submitted by the first deadline. Feedback will be more limited thereafter due to the amount of grading and time restrictions that arise later in the term. Your papers will be graded based on the following scale (0-100):

- <50 = no submission/clearly does not demonstrate effort/major flaws
- 50: marginal
- 60: adequate
- 70: good

- 80: excellent
- 90+: outstanding

Paper Extension & Late Paper Policy

A 7-day grace period is available for all students, for any reason (documentation not required). Students may use the 7-day grace period for none, one, or both paper deadlines. **You do NOT need to inform us if you decide to use the grace period.**

Starting with the day the assignment is due, papers submitted after a grace-period will be deducted 5% points for each 24-hour period the assignment is late.

Options	Grace Period End Dates
Fact Check Paper Deadline #1	Tuesday, Oct 8 by 1:10pm
Fact Check Paper Deadline #2	Tuesday, Nov 19 by 1:10pm

NOTE: The grace period should be used as just that (a grace period in case something unexpected happens such as illness, a personal emergency, etc.) and not a planned time to write your paper. No further extensions will be granted, as the policies described above are designed to be flexible, acknowledging students encounter unforeseen challenges while also maintaining transparency, applying equally to all students.

5.5 Arts & Sciences Grading Scale

Percentage	Letter	GPA	Definition
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent
85-89	A	4.0	
80-84	A-	3.7	
77-79	B+	3.3	Good
73-76	B	3.0	
70-72	B-	2.7	
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate
63-66	C	2.0	
60-62	C-	1.7	
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal
53-56	D	1.0	
50-52	D-	0.7	
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate

6 FAQs

6.1 Can I have an extension or take the test at a later date?

The policies on deferrals/incompletes/extensions described for each assessment above are aligned with Universal Design for Learning principles. All students know the policies in advance, and they apply equally to all students.

Because flexibility is built into the class already, there will be no further extensions or individualized opportunities to improve your grade. I will offer the benefit of the doubt that whatever caused you to miss a test or deadline was valid. That may be illness, oversleeping, a technical glitch, a family emergency, or something else. I understand that students, much like faculty, have responsibilities and priorities outside of their schoolwork, and that all of us have unexpected difficulties that may arise. This is why I build flexibility into the course. You will receive no judgement from me for taking advantage of that flexibility.

We all need to use caution and weigh the costs and benefits of our choices appropriately. I trust you to do so and not make additional requests beyond the flexibility offered here. This flexibility is designed to offer all students the same opportunities rather than favoring only those students who are comfortable making special requests. If you are dealing with a prolonged issue that is interfering with your ability to stay engaged in the class and meet course standards, I strongly encourage you to reach out to your College Registrar who may be able to connect you with university support.

Be aware that assignment closing dates and deadlines are automated within Quercus. For example, if something is due at 11:59pm on Mar 1st, it will be marked late if it is submitted at 12:00am on Mar 2nd, and if an assignment is set to close (i.e., late assignment is not accepted) at 11:59pm on Mar 1st, Quercus will not accept submissions at 12:00am on Mar 2nd. I will not provide extensions due to slow internet, connectivity issues, or other technical delays that result in submission after the deadline. Start the submission process well enough in advance to ensure that your assignments will be fully submitted before the deadline.

6.2 Can I do extra credit?

I don't offer extra credit out of fairness for all students in the course. There is flexibility built into the assignments already to allow you to overcome poor performance on early assignments/tests. Please do not ask for opportunities for extra credit.

I appreciate that you are managing competing demands on your time and that you care about your grade. Instead of spending extra energy completing even more assignments, use it to do your best on the remaining assessments.

6.3 Will you change my grade?

If you have a question about the grading of any piece of work or believe that your assignment or test has been mismarked, first consult with the TA who graded your work. For simple mathematical errors, simply alert your TA of the mistake. Sometimes these happen. For other grade appeals, submit a short memo that clearly states specific reasons to justify the request and backs up these

reasons with evidence from your assignment. If you cannot resolve your questions with the TA, you should consult with the instructor.

If you ask for your grade to be changed on any assignment, your grade may stay the same, be increased, OR decreased after the TA or instructor reconsiders your work. Be advised that we err on the side of being too generous, rather than stingy, during the first pass of grading. Thus, it is possible that when your assignment is re-examined, your grade might be lowered.

Any questions about grading an assignment or test **must be raised within two weeks of the date that the assignment was graded**. In other words, if you do not review your work in a timely fashion, you may forfeit your right to question the grading of your work.

6.4 What if I need to contact you?

The best way to get in touch outside of class is to directly email your TA first. Accessibility accommodation matters should be directed to the professor.

Use your University of Toronto email (emails from non University email addresses may go unanswered) and start the email subject line with “SOC214H.”

We will make every effort to respond to emails within 24-48 business hours (i.e., Monday through Friday, between 9am – 5pm).

Academic tip #1 How to address TAs and instructors

- Err on the side of formality
 - For faculty (with Ph.D.s), use “Professor LastName” or “Dr. LastName” unless directed otherwise.
 - Instructors without Ph.D.s usually invite you to use first names (but will likely not be offended if “Professor” slips out).
- Use a formal, respectful writing style
 - Include opening and closing salutations.
 - No text-speak.
- Do your part in solving what you need to solve.
 - Don’t ask about something that’s answered right on the syllabus.

6.5 Can I record or share class materials?

Video, audio, and photographic recording of lectures is prohibited without my explicit permission. The selling or dissemination of tests, study guides, and homework assignments is prohibited without my explicit permission. The selling or dissemination for commercial purposes of notes derived from my lectures is also prohibited without my explicit permission.

Permission to record or share lectures/meetings may be granted to a student at the discretion of the instructor and normally for the sole purpose of accommodating a student’s accessibility needs and only for the purposes of private study. Students who are entitled to record the lectures because of accessibility accommodations are required to sign a form stating that the recording is made for

personal use only. Out of fairness to everybody (and because it is unlawful to record somebody without their consent in Ontario), this will be required of all students who wish to make a recording of the lectures. Students who have obtained permission to record a lecture should do so in a manner which ensures the privacy of other students present.

7 Policies & Required University Notices

7.1 Quercus Information

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Grades posted on Quercus are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

7.2 Assignment Submission

All written work must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins using 11 or 12 point Times New Roman, Aptos, Calibri, or Roboto.

Written work must be submitted via Quercus. No work will be accepted over e-mail. When you submit files, they should be in PDF or .doc(x) format unless otherwise specified. Other file formats will not be graded and will be treated as unsubmitted assignments.

Students can typically expect work to be returned within two weeks unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise. Please consider that TAs, who grade much of the work, are unionized workers with rights, lives, and other demands on their time.

7.3 Academic Integrity

Students are expected to know and adhere to the University's principles of academic integrity. Any act of plagiarism or other unethical behavior will be addressed in accordance with University guidelines. Please see the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) for specific information on academic integrity at UofT.

7.4 Plagiarism Detection

Turnitin plagiarism detection software is integrated within Quercus. It uses text matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site <https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>.

I am not comfortable with the widespread use of this software, which effectively provides large quantities of student work to a for-profit company whose future business uses may include using it to train machine learning and AI tools. Consequently, none of the assignments for this course are set for automatic review by Turnitin. However, if assignments look overly similar or the teaching team has other reason to suspect plagiarism we do have access to this tool and may use it to detect plagiarism if we feel it's necessary.

If you object to your work being subject to review by Turnitin, add a comment when you submit your assignment. If we do find that we need to review your assignment for plagiarism and you have asked that we not use Turnitin, we will ask that you provide sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper you submit is truly yours. In the event that you cannot or decline to provide the requested documentation and do not consent to us using Turnitin for review, we will decline to mark the assignment.

Plagiarism: Be careful to avoid plagiarism. It is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the [Code of Behavior on Academic Matters](#)). Do not present someone else's ideas as your own. Give proper references to others' ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, err on the side of a reference. Turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second (or third etc.) course, is considered an academic offense that results in students being referred off to the Office of Academic Integrity.

7.5 Accessibility and Student Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as> as soon as possible.

7.6 Writing Support

Students are urged to seek assistance from the University of Toronto [Writing Centre](#) should they anticipate challenges in this area.