

The University of Manitoba  
**Sociology 077.246, "The Family" LO4W**  
3 Credits  
Winter 2004

**Instructor** Dr. Susan Prentice  
**Office** 329 Isbister Building  
**Telephone** 474-6726 (with voicemail)  
**Office Hours** Posted on instructor office door, and by special appointment  
**Class Times** Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:30 -1:20, Room 214 Tier  
**Website** <http://www.umanitoba.ca/webct>  
*Specific instructions on logging-on will be provided in class*

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**Required Textbooks**

- Baker, Maureen, 2001. *Families: Changing Trends in Canada*, 4th edition. McGraw Hill Ryerson: Toronto.
- Richardson, C. James, 1996. *Family Life: Patterns and Perspectives*. McGraw Hill Ryerson: Toronto.

Note on cost: You will encounter additional costs as you prepare copies of your written work for students in your small groups (see below). Please take this into account. You will also need to purchase a large duotang folder or small three-ring binder in which to keep your on-going essay and associated commentaries.

**Course Objectives**

*Background*

Many sociologists begin from the assumption that 'the family is a haven in a heartless world.' My approach examines and then diverges from this consensus-based paradigm. The course as I teach it highlights the way family life articulates to, and is shaped by, social and political organization. I am interested in the ways that families (currently and historically) produce and reproduce various forms of inequality, including gender, sexuality, race and class. Since I am particularly interested in the social construction of family relations, this course will emphasize how the historical is integral to sociological study of families.

As this brief background indicates, the family area is highly contested within the

discipline of sociology. Correspondingly, different instructors take different approaches. Course outlines are available for your review in the Sociology General Office to help you select the approach best suited to you.

### Course Design

The overall objective of this course is to help students develop an analytic and critical approach to the study of families, and to bring an historical sensibility to that approach. The course is designed to explore a range of perspectives and evidence on family and household organization, familial and domestic practices and family-related social policies. We will critically review both large-scale (macro) as well as small-scale (micro) relations, analyzing on how race, class, gender and sexualities relate to family organization. We will also address the complex issue of how boundaries between ‘private’ and ‘public’ are generated and altered. Throughout this course, we will consider how and why images of “The Family” persist, despite considerable evidence of long-standing past and current diversity.

Students are encouraged to question both received wisdom and common-sense ideas about the family as well as the instructor, texts, the films and each other. To accomplish this, class time will be spent in a variety of ways. Much of our time together will be spent in lectures or watching (then discussing) films, or intensively working together in small groups. Students will undertake a course-long writing project, and will work in assigned small-groups over the course of its development.

One of my core teaching objectives is to help you improve your writing skills. Most students are nervous about writing, and so tend to delay it. Generally, students write a paper which only a professor reads. Students rarely receive constructive feedback from either their instructor or classmates on drafts-in-progress. In this course, there are multiple structured opportunities for students to read and comment on each others’ work. I expect that your final papers will be stronger and that you will grow as writers from this process.

Students are warmly invited to introduce themselves to me, and to drop by during office hours or by special appointment.

### **Grading Scheme**

In-class Test #1 (Oct. 1)	25%
Writing Project:	
Proposal: due September 29	must be satisfactory or rewritten
Draft #1: due October 20	must be satisfactory or rewritten
Draft #2: due November 14	must be satisfactory or rewritten
Final paper: due December 1	40%
Unscheduled in-class writing exercises & pop quizzes	5%
Participation	10%
In-class Test #2: December 3	20%

***Important Notice:*** Students should note that there is considerable content to be covered in this

course. Earning an outstanding grade in this course will require that you learn extensive empirical as well as conceptual material.

### Assessment-related Course Policies

Generally speaking, the following letter/percentage/GPA/descriptive scale will be used, however students should note that *these are guidelines only* and that different percentage cut-offs may be used in the course, depending on final grade distribution:

A+	90 - 100%	4.5	Exceptional
A	80 - 89%	4	Excellent
B+	75 - 80%	3.5	Very Good
B	70 - 74%	3	Good
C+	65 - 69%	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60 - 64%	2	Adequate
D	50 - 59%	1	Marginal
F	49% or less	0	Failure

Senate Policy #1307 requires “a post-examination review of final grades in multi-sectioned courses that will ensure an equitable correspondence between grades and level of performance in all sections.” Sociology 077.246 is a multi-sectioned course, and accordingly the final grade distribution in this course may be raised or lowered to achieve such equity, and therefore your final grade may be changed.

Only documented reasons will be accepted for missing a test or an assignment date. If you miss a test for a health-related reason, you must get in touch with me as soon as possible to present a signed medical certificate and to arrange a make-up test. I may grant makeup tests for compassionate or other good reason. In all cases, you must make a request for a make-up test in writing. Ordinarily, tests must be made-up within one week. If you fail to promptly communicate with me you may be ineligible for a make-up test. It is your responsibility to initiate a make-up test. Note: any make-up test will be short-answer essay question format.

It is in your personal and collective best interest to attend class regularly. Over the term, there will be unscheduled writing exercises and pop quizzes. If you are absent that day (for any reason), you can not take advantage of that day’s opportunity. Part of your grade is determined by participation: I will randomly take attendance, and will use these irregular roll-calls in assigning your participation grade. Your peers will also assess your participation grade; your obligations are to each other, as well as to me.

The University acknowledges the right of all students to observe recognized Holy Days of their faith which fall within the academic year. I should be notified in writing of your intended absence in advance.

Disability Services (474-6213) is a resource to help students with learning or other special needs. If you are uncertain if you can or should avail yourself of this opportunity, please

feel free to consult me.

### *Late submissions for Writing Project*

Provided you have a good reason, I will accept one late submission for the written assignment which is no more than two calendar days past the due date. It must be handed-in to me personally or date-stamped by the Sociology office -- without this, it will be judged too late to be accepted. A student can only use this option once: subsequent late assignments will not be accepted. The writing assignment builds on preceding steps, so you will need to keep and resubmit throughout the term. Any student who fails to resubmit will lose the previously assigned mark(s). You will need to plan carefully to succeed in this assignment.

### **Student and Instructor Responsibilities**

As instructor, I have selected texts and organized classroom time to meet the objectives of this course. Lectures and discussions are designed to help you understand and extend the concepts and ideas discussed in your texts and in the films. You will often need to independently cover material in the textbooks (since not everything in the assigned readings will be addressed in class). You will be tested on all aspects of listed chapters, any extra readings, lectures and films. You are expected to grasp both theory and empirical material.

My responsibility as instructor begins with the University's ROASS Policy (see the *Undergraduate Calendar*, pp. 32-33), and extends to creating a safe, cooperative and stimulating learning environment for students. I encourage a respectful, participatory and dialogic classroom environment -- something that is particularly important in a course that may challenge received wisdom and raise contentious social issues. As instructor, I have selected texts and organized classroom time to meet the objectives of this course. Lectures are designed to help you understand and extend the concepts and ideas discussed in your texts and in the films. I comply fully with all University of Manitoba policies regarding teaching.

Students have responsibilities, too:

- (1) Students are responsible for their own learning. You are expected to do readings in advance of class and are required to come prepared. You will often need to independently cover material in the textbooks (since not everything in the textbooks will be addressed in class). You will be tested on all aspects of assigned readings -- including theory and empirical data -- as well as on lectures, films and other classroom activities. It is in your personal and collective best interest to attend class regularly.
- (2) If you are unclear about material or have academic concerns or questions, it is your responsibility to ask for help. The TA and I will be pleased to schedule extra time with you outside of class to help you succeed in this course, but you must make the request. It is also your responsibility to track your success in the course, and to take action if you discover you are failing tests or assignments.
- (3) If you miss a film, you will need to arrange to view it at an alternate time. Making this arrangement is a student responsibility, and must be undertaken in ways that do not inconvenience Educational Support Services. To view a missed film, you need a form which

is available from 123 Fletcher Argue and which requires my signature. It is your job to bring the form to me for signing.

- (4) You are responsible for complying with the policies on grades and tests, including policies on missed tests. You will find all course policies listed in this syllabus -- please review it regularly. If you misplace this syllabus or a term schedule, you can download a copy from the course website.
- (5) Students are requested to be civil and courteous to students and the instructor at all times, and can expect civility and courtesy in return. You should be aware that disruptive behaviour may result in you being asked to leave a lecture or being barred from the course (which results in course failure).

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense, with grave consequences. Students should acquaint themselves with the University of Manitoba's policy in the *Undergraduate Calendar* (Section 7, page 29-30).

Penalties for plagiarism and academic honesty are severe. The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism in a written assignment, test or examination is "F" on the paper and "F" for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as the purchase of an essay or cheating on a test or examination, the penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department in Arts or from all courses taught in the Faculty. The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

Last day for voluntary withdrawal without academic penalty is November 12, 2003. You will have one returned test grade before that date.

### **Writing Project**

The project is to explore selected dimensions of family life which interest you, and to create a research essay out of this exploration. Unlike most writing assignments, this project is to be written as a proposal and drafts, with a final paper of approximately 10 - 15 pages (around 3,250 words.)

The multi-step writing process will help you improve both your argument and writing skills. The proposal and drafts must be handed-in on or before the due date -- you should plan very carefully to ensure you can meet these due dates, since penalties for being late are severe. Any draft which is graded "Unsatisfactory" will need to be rewritten within one week in order for you to proceed to the next version. You will need to hand-in the proposal and each draft again when you submit your final paper. Any final paper which is not accompanied by the preceding drafts will automatically earn a grade of "F."

Each phase of the writing project will be discussed in class, as well as reviewed by the instructor. You will need to bring a copy for everyone in your small group. It is your

responsibility to ensure everyone in your group has a copy of your assignment (see ‘Note on cost,’ above). If your assignment is late (see below), you will need to distribute it *in advance of class* to students in your small group.

You will need to keep drafts and class commentaries in a duotang folder or three-hole binder (see ‘Note on cost,’ above).

#### Proposal: due September 29

The proposal must set out the dimension(s) of family which you want to address, and the methods by which you will address it. It should include a statement of why you are interested in this issue, and how you intend to analyze it. It must include a bibliography of at least four academic citations, with annotations (excluding web sources in your count, although you may use web-based material for content). The annotation should summarize both the argument and the evidence you intend to use in your paper. Once your proposal is returned, you cannot change topics without my written approval.

#### Draft One: due October 20

Draft One lays out key empirical evidence about your selected dimension(s). It must also include some historical material. For example, if you are discussing single-parent households, you must include some discussion of historical rates of single-parenting; if you are interested in childcare and socialization, you must address earlier models of socialization and child-minding. This should provide an empirical research base on which you can build a conceptual argument. Your bibliography should have grown to a minimum of 8 annotated citations (excluding web sources).

#### Draft Two: due November 14

Draft Two should define the context for your focus. You are required to make some educated predictions about what future changes/continuity you anticipate in your area (although you can set your own window for ‘future,’ within reason. A decade is reasonable, as is a half-century; a millennium is not, nor is next month.) For example, if you are covering single parenting, you should be able to argue why you think rates will increase/decrease/stay the same over the next period; if you are discussing childcare, you will need to predict what changes/continuity might occur over the next period. You will need to substantiate your claims with argument and data. Your bibliography should have grown to a minimum of ten annotated citations (excluding web sources). By this point, you should be able to produce a clear introduction to your paper which spells out your argument and conclusion. This paper will require significant editing.

#### Final paper: due December 1

A ‘cleaned-up’ final paper due December 1. All previous versions must be handed-in with this final submission. This final paper is the only version your classmates will not critique.

This is the final paper which I will mark for 40% of your course grade: It will receive little or no comments from me, since my comments will have been extensive on earlier drafts.

### **Website**

This course has a website. Registered students can visit the website and do a variety of things: for example, send mail to other classmates, contribute to a bulletin board discussion of issues, communicate with the instructors via email, etc. Importantly, it will also allow you to securely review your grades (which are private, and cannot be accessed by other students.) The only place test grades will be posted is to the course website.

No previous experience is required to use the website; you do not need a personal account or email address to visit the course's site. Not every student has access to a personal computer and so the University provides free access to nearly one hundred computers in various labs located around the campus. We will be pleased to help you locate a computer terminal.

The TA and I will be available to help you learn how to use the course website.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*Handed out on first day of class, and subject to change without notice*