MARRIAGE MARKETS: Finding The One In the Era of Rising Inequality

Fall 2017
Thursday 9:30-12:30pm

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Course Description:
Families are changing. Age at marriage is increasing, as is non-marital fertility, non-marital cohabitation, and divorce. At the heart of these changes are shifts in marriage market conditions resulting due to the increasing inequality and transition from a manufacturing to a service economy. Changing economic structure, for example, has increased the number of disadvantage men who no longer play economically productive roles or meet the prerequisites of marriage, diminishing the marriage rates among men and women of lower socioeconomic status. Polarizing economic fates has increased the salience of economic markers in mate selection, increasing the likelihood that “birds of a feather flock together”,

The goal of this course is threefold: (1) to discuss how marriage market conditions have changed; (2) to investigate how the resulting changes in marriage market conditions affect dating, union formation, and family structure; and (3) to ascertain how shifts in inequality is affecting the wellbeing of couples and their offspring.

Learning Outcomes:
At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Understand how economic transformations over the last 50 years has altered the availability of marriageable mates and family life
- Identify how marriage market conditions influences the timing of marriage
- Increase awareness on the implication of union formation and mate selection on the financial and emotional wellbeing of couples and offspring.

Prerequisite(s):
3rd or 4th year standing in a module in Sociology or Criminology.

This course may be of interest to Sociology Majors interested in social inequalities and will be part of the Health, Aging, and Population Concentration. It may be a nice follow-up to the family course.

Unless you fulfill either requisite for this course or written special permission to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.
**Required Text(s):**

You can also download all other articles on-campus using [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) or [scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com). The instructor reserves the right to change some of the readings during the course in response to student interests.

**Method of Evaluation:**
Below is a detailed description of the work requirements of this course.

1. Students are responsible for the all the readings in the syllabus. Students are expected to actively read, which means that they need to know the content of the readings and identify the common themes across the readings each week.

2. Students are expected to actively participate in class. They must answer the questions posed by the instructor; provide comments about the papers they read; ask clarification questions; and offer thought-provoking questions/comments about the subject in discussion. When offering thought-provoking insights about current events, students need to be respectful.

3. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner during class. They must be on time, focus on class activities, and be respectful to all members of the class. Failure to do so will result in deductions in the participation grade.

4. Students will be asked to write a reaction paper after watching the documentary *Married in America 2.* The paper is 1,250 words in length and is due **Thursday, October 19, 2017.** I will provide more detailed instructions about this assignment 2 weeks before its due date. A penalty of 10% will be applied for every late business day. If late, please submit in the drop box in front of SSC 5307. I will only read papers that are stamped by the staff of the sociology department. Please **do not** turn your papers in elsewhere.

5. An in-class examination will be held on **Thursday, November 2, 2017.** The exams will include essay questions. You can use a wifi-disabled laptop during the test. Answers that the instructor cannot read will be considered wrong.

6. Students will be asked to write a reaction paper after watching the *Loving.* The paper is 1,250 words in length and is due **Thursday, November 16, 2017.** I will provide more detailed instructions about this assignment 2 weeks before its due date. A penalty of 10% will be applied for every late business day. If late, please submit in the drop box in front of SSC 5307. I will only read papers that are stamped by the staff of the sociology department. Please **do not** turn your papers in elsewhere.

7. Students will be asked to assess whether families are here to stay; what form they will take in the future; and to determine the government’s role in ascertaining this vision. The paper is 2,000 words in length and is due **Thursday, December 7, 2017.** I will provide more detailed instructions about
this assignment 2 weeks before its due date. A penalty of 10% will be applied for every late business day. If late, please submit in the drop box in front of SSC 5307. I will only read papers that are stamped by the staff of the sociology department. Please do not turn your papers in elsewhere.

**Evaluation Breakdown:**
The course grade will be computed using the following weights:

- Active participation 20%
- Reaction paper 1 20%
- Reaction paper 2 20%
- Reaction paper 3 20%
- Exam 20%

**How to Contact Me:**
E-mail is the best way to contact me. During weekdays, allow for 24 hours until response. During weekends, allow for 48 hours until response.

**IMPORTANT POLICIES**
*Standard Western Policies except for Policies for Assignment Deadlines*

**Policies for Assignment Deadlines:**
If you miss a due date for an assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must notify your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. Please follow the Academic Counselor’s instructions about proper documentation. For example, if your problem is medical in nature, you should hand in a doctor’s note to the Academic Counselor for the due date of the assignment. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor’s documentation, you will be allowed to write a makeup exam or hand in your reaction paper late.

I will not accept any late policy papers. If you have a legitimate reason, I will compute your grade excluding this paper. Students who cannot complete 2 or more reaction papers by 12.7.2017 will receive an incomplete.

**A Note on Plagiarism:**
Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).
**Plagiarism Checking:**
All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is submit to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).

**Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:**
Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

**Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness**
Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: [http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html)

**Accessibility Options:**
Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: [www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

**Scholastic Offences**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Mental Health**
Students who are in [emotional/mental distress](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.
COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to some variation)

9.7.17. Class introduction

In class: What does the "average" Canadian family look like? – CBC documentary

I. Changes in Union Formation


In class: The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap

9.21.17. The marriage decline?


9.28.17. The marriage decline? (cont’d)


10.5.17. “Married in America 2”
10.12.17. **Fall Reading week – No Class**

10.19.17- **Diverse families**

“New Couples, New Families: The Cohabitation Revolution in the United States” (pages 149-158 in *Families as they Are*).


**Assignment due Reaction paper 1**

10.26.17. **Non-marital fertility and multi-partnered fertility**


11.2.17 **Exam – (Cover all topics until non-marital fertility)**

11.9.17. **Interracial marriage**


**In class**: *Loving (movie)*.

11.16.17. **Union Dissolution and Remarriage**


Coleman, M. and L. Ganong. “Step Families as They Really Are: Neither Cinderella or Brady Bunch”. *Families as They Really Are*. 
11.23.17. **Marriage and Child Wellbeing**


**Assignment due Reaction paper 2**

11.30.17. **Divided Faiths: Implications for Children**


12.7.17. **Marriage and Gender Dynamics**


Myers, K. and I. Demaritas. “Being the Man without Having a Job and/or Providing Care Instead of Bread”. In Families as They Really Are (pages 632-665).

Concluding Remarks: **Are Families Here to Stay? In What form?**

**Assignment No. 3 due**