



**Western University**  
**SOCIOLOGY 3364G-001**  
**MARRIAGE MARKETS:**  
**Finding The One In the Era of Rising Inequality**  
**Winter 2019**  
**Monday 1:30-4:30pm, SSC 3010**

**Kate H. Choi**

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays: 4:30-5:30pm

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***Course Description:***

Families are changing. Age at marriage is increasing, as are 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 into a service economy. Changing economic structure, for example, has increased the number of disadvantaged 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 have 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):***

Enrollment in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year student. 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 be 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):**

Risman, Barbara J., & Rutter, Virginia E. (Eds.). (2015). *Families as They Really Are*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

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.

**Participation (20%)**

- (1) Students are responsible for 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) Seventy percent of this grade will be based on quality of participation and 30% of this grade will be based on quantity of participation, with quality of participation being determined solely at the discretion of the instruction. Students who participate frequently but offer irrelevant comments will receive a low participation grade.

**Quiz (15%)**

- (1) An-in class examination will be held on **Monday, January 28, 2019**.
- (2) The exam will include 1 or 2 essay questions centering on the theories of marriage.
- (3) The answers need to be handwritten. Answers that the instructor cannot read will be considered wrong.
- (4) If the student is unable to take the quiz due to a “documented” reason, then the instructor will extrapolate your quiz grade based on the mean grade of the quiz, the standard deviation scores of the quiz, and the average number of standard deviations that your other assignments are from the class mean.

- a. For students to be the beneficiary of this policy, they must obtain documentation from Academic Counselling, the Dean's Office, or the Chair of the Department of Sociology at UWO. Verbal communication to the instructor does not meet the requirement, nor does a doctor's note sent to the instructor.
- (5) In cases where there is no approved justification for the absence, the student will receive a grade of zero on the quiz.

### **Exam (25%)**

- (1) An in-class examination will be held on **Monday, March 4, 2019**.
- a. The exam will include 4 to 5 essay questions.
  - b. The answers will be handwritten. Answers that the instructor cannot read will be considered wrong.
  - c. If you miss the exam due to a documented reason, you can take a make up exam on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 (place: TBD). The difficulty, length, and format of the exam will be similar to those of the original test.
  - d. If the student is unable to take the test due to a "documented" reason, then the instructor will extrapolate your test grade based on the mean grade of the test, the standard deviation scores of the test, and the average number of standard deviations that your other assignment grades are from the class mean.
    - i. For students to be the beneficiary of this policy, they must obtain documentation from Academic Counselling, the Dean's Office, or the Chair of the Department of Sociology at UWO. Verbal communication to the instructor does not meet the requirement, nor does a doctor's note sent to the instructor.
  - e. In cases where there is no approved justification for the absence, the student will receive a grade of zero on the test.

### **Reaction paper 1 (20%)**

- (1) Students will be asked to write a reaction paper after watching the *Loving*. The paper is 1,750 words in length and is due **Monday, March 25, 2019**. 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.

### **Reaction paper 2 (20%)**

- (1) 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 **Monday, April 8, 2019**. 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%
- Quiz 15%
- Reaction paper 1 20%
- Reaction paper 2 20%
- Exam 25%

**Following the Sociology department's guidelines, the average final grade for this class will be between 73 and 78 percent.**

***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.

Even with an excuse, students who cannot complete 2 or more reaction papers or take the exam 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 subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and 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: [http://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: [http://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** should refer to Mental Health@Western ([http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE** (Subject to some variation)

**1.7.2019. Class introduction**

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

**I. Changes in Union Formation**

**1.14.2019. Theories of Marriage**

Becker, G. 1974. "Theory of Marriage". *Economics of the Family: Marriage, Children, and Human Capital*. Ed. Theodore Schultz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<https://www.nber.org/chapters/c2970.pdf>

Oppenheimer, V. "Theory of Marriage Timing". *American Journal of Sociology* 94(3): 568-591.

**1.21.2019. The marriage decline?**

Leathaghe, R. 2014. "The second demographic transition: A concise overview of its development". *PNAS* 111(51): 18112–18115. <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/51/18112.full>

Coontz, S. "Evolution of American Families" in *Families as They Really Are*.

**Supplementary readings**

Cherlin, A. 2004. "The de-institutionalization of the American Family". *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66:848-861.

Lundberg, S. and R. Pollack. 2015. "The Evolving Role of Marriage: 1950-2010". *Future of Children* 25(2): pp. 29-50 (jstor)

**In class:** [The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap](#)

**1.28.2019. Marriage: an institution for the rich?**

Sawhill, I. and J. Venator. 2015. "Is There a Shortage of Marriageable Men?" *Brookings Institute CCF Brief #56*. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/56-Shortage-of-Marriageable-Men.pdf>.

Edin, K. and J. Reed. 2005. "Why Don't They Just Get Married? Barriers to Marriage among the Disadvantaged". *Future of Children* 15(2): pp. 117-137 (Jstor)

Mare, Robert and Christopher Winship. 1990. "Socioeconomic Changes and the Decline of Marriages for Blacks and Whites." *CDE Working Paper 90-21*.

<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cde/cdewp/90-21.pdf>

**In class:** Quiz on Theories of Marriage

#### **2.4.2019. Diverse families**

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

Strohm, C., J. Selter, S. Cochran, V. Mays. 2009. “Living Apart Together relationships in the United States”. *Demographic Research* 21(7): 177-214.

#### **2.11.2019. Non-marital fertility and multi-partnered fertility**

Blackstone, A. and A. Greenleaf. “Childfree Families”. in *Families as They Really Are*.

Guzzo, K. 2014. “New Partners, More Kids: Multiple-Partner Fertility in the United States”. *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 654(1):66-86.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4182921/>

Wildsmith, E. and R. Kelly Raley. 2006. “Race-Ethnic Differences in Nonmarital Fertility: A Focus on Mexican American Women”. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68(2): 491-508.

#### **2.18.2019. Reading Week**

#### **2.25.2019. Intermarriage: Correlates and Consequences**

Kalmijn, M. 1998. “Intermarriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, and Trends”. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 395-421.

Campbell, M. E. 2009. “Multiracial Groups and Educational Inequality: A Rainbow or a Divide?” *Social Problems* 56(3): 425-46.

#### **3.4.2019. In Class Exam (including all materials covered before 2.18.2019)**

#### **3.11.2019. Watch *Loving***

#### **3.18.2019. Power dynamics within the household**

Bianchi, S. 2000. “Maternal employment and time with children: Dramatic change or surprising continuity?”. *Demography* 37(4): 401-414.

Kenney, C. 2006. “The Power of the Purse: Allocative Systems and Inequality in Couple Households”. *Gender and Society* 20(3): 354-381.

#### **3.25.2019. Union Dissolution**

Rutter, V. “The Case for Divorce”. *Families The Way They Were*. (pp. 329-342).

Sayer, L., P. England, P. Allison, and N. Kangas. “She Left, He Left: How Employment and Satisfaction Affect Women’s and Men’s Decisions to Leave Marriages.”

## **Supplementary Reading**

England, P., P. D. Allison, and L. C. Sayer. 2014. "When one spouse has an affair, who is more likely to leave?" *Demographic Research* 30(18):535-546.

### **Assignment – Reaction paper 1 due.**

#### **4.1.2019. Remarriages**

Coleman, M. and L. Ganong. "Step Families as They Really Are: Neither Cinderella or Brady Bunch". *Families as They Really Are*.

Sweeney, M. 2010. "Remarriage and Stepfamilies: Strategic Sites for Family Scholarship in the 21st Century". *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72(3): 667-684.

#### **4.8.2019. Concluding Remarks: Are Families Here to Stay? In What form?**

### **Assignment due Reaction paper 2**