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 the 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 are 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 influence 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 3rd or 4th-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.


**Lecture format:**

*Plan A:* If everything goes as planned and there are no technological issues:

- At 3:30 pm on Mondays, I will e-mail students a link to the zoom call with a password.
- Starting at 3:40 pm, I will deliver a lecture for 60-75 minutes, allowing for students to ask questions as the lecture progresses.
- We will have a zoom discussion of a popular media or movie article. You can participate verbally by raising your hands or using the clap function in zoom.
- After class, you need to fill out your participation diary in the Assignment section of OWL.

*Plan B:* If technological issues emerge.

- The class will be converted into an asynchronous course.
- I will record all the lectures.
- I will host Q&A sessions for 30-45 between 3:40-4:25 pm on Mondays to address any questions or concerns that students may have.
- I will host a review session before the midterm and before the final for 60-75 minutes to go over key concepts and offer a general idea of questions to be asked in the exam.
- You will be asked to answer write 1-2 paragraphs addressing the question that I pose every week in your Participation Diary. This will affect how many extra points you can get on your exams.

**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). You can obtain access to these sources by installing a VPN or by logging in through the library. 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.

**Midterm exam (33%)**

1. An-in class examination will be held on **Monday, October 26, 2020**
2. The exam will include 8 short answer questions.
3. I will send you the exam at 3:30 pm and you need to complete and return the exam at 6:00 pm.
   - Format of turning in exams via (a) e-mail and (b) deposit a copy in assignments at OWL.
     Multiple submissions minimize the prospect that technological failure.
b. You will receive a receipt from me between the time of submission and 6:30 pm.

c. If you have not received an acknowledgment by 6:31 pm, the student needs to resend the exam to me the exam by 6:36 am at hchoi228@uwo.ca. Forward the exam with the time stamp in the e-mail that shows that you attempted to send me the exam between 3:30-6:00 pm.

d. If the student does not receive a receipt notice by 7:00 pm, he/she needs to call (519) 661-2111 x-85115 and leave a message.

e. In the absence of (a) a receipt notice or post under assignments in OWL or (b) no attempts to contact me and resend the exam will result in a grade of 0.

(4) Some students go on a fishing expedition during exams and write anything and everything in hopes that they can obtain a higher score. Factual inaccuracy can reduce the validity of your argument and dampen your credibility. Incorrect guessing will result in lower grades.

(5) Students who take the exam during the scheduled time will be graded in relative terms.

(6) If the student cannot take the exam due to a “documented” reasons, they have the option of having their grades reweighed.

a. 50% final exam; 50% essay. If you take this option, you must complete all remaining assignments to receive a grade and pass the class.

b. They will have to arrange a time to take the exam with me. Their test will be 2 essay questions. You will be graded in absolute terms to ensure that other students do not have to wait to receive their grades.

(7) You can obtain documentation by contacting 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. You cannot use a self-reported absence because the exam grade exceeds the 30% threshold for self-reported absences.

(8) In cases where there is no approved justification for the absence, the student will receive a grade of 0% on the exam.

(9) To optimize the reliability and validity of your grades, I employ a two-step grading process. All exams are graded initially by a grader in absolute terms using a key that I provide. I will then regrade the exam and adjust the grades to reflect your "relative" grade. Comments will be provided in track changes.
Final exam (34%)

A final examination will be held during exam week.

1. Please review steps (1)–(9) in the midterm exam section.
2. Content: The exam will be cumulative, with 6 or more questions coming from the material after the midterm and the rest coming from questions that a significant portion of the students did not answer properly in the midterm.
3. Date and Time: TBD by Registrar’s Office. Duration: 150 minutes.
4. Turning in procedure is the same.

Reaction paper (33%)

1. You will be asked to write a 1500-word essay about a topic. I will provide detailed instructions about this assignment and rubric for grading the exam 2 weeks before its due date.
2. You will lose 10 points/day of delay.
3. The instructor will read drafts ahead of time and provide “general” advice if the student asks for feedback in advance.
4. These essays are due at 3:30pm on December 7, 2020 (i.e., last day of class).

Extra Credit: Participation

1. Participation is an important aspect of all my classes. It is also the educational portion of class that students find very enjoyable and necessary because it helps develop mastery in the verbal skill sets necessary to help students perform better in job interviews, team meetings upon employment, and when they enroll in law/graduate schools. We are, however, living in the era of COVID-19 and many of you are logging in remotely. Although it would be unfair to penalize a student for having a weak internet connection, it would also be unfair for me to penalize students who participate actively. Below is a “hybrid” approach to ensure fairness for all students.
2. Expectations: You are expected to attend class and have the materials read ahead of class. You should answer questions posed in class or ask questions of your own relevant to the material. You should substantiate your insights with empirical evidence from your readings. You are allowed some leeway in terms of bringing outside material, but it needs to be factually accurate, you need to cite where you read it from, and you need to link with the material being discussed.
3. Within seven days, students will be asked to fill out a weekly Participation Diary in the Assignment Section in OWL. If a point did not get across, the student can say: this is what I said, but this is what I wanted to say. The extra credit participation grade will be computed based on my notes of your participation in class (75%) and your post (25%).
4. Daily grades:
   a. 0: no attendance
   b. 1: attendance no participation
c. 2: attendance with at least one participation

d. 3: attendance with 2 or more participations – comments tend to be a hit or miss

e. 4: attendance with 2 or more participations and most comments made a significant contribution to the class. Of the students who attend and participate more than once, roughly 25% will be given a score of 4.

f. Midterm and final scores: The student will be ranked based on their cumulative scores for the first latter half of the class.

i. Top 20%: 10 extra points in the corresponding exam

ii. 21-40%: 8 extra points in the corresponding exam

iii. 41-60%: 6 extra points in the corresponding exam

iv. 61-80%: 4 extra points in the corresponding exam

v. 81-100%: 2 extra points if attended more than half the classes and no disruption

vi. Disruption and/or did not attend more than half the classes: 0 points

(5) Attendance covers both: (a) attendance throughout the duration of zoom session and (b) filling out the Participation Diary in the Assignments section in OWL.

(6) Some students are verbose. Getting to the point quickly is an important skill to develop for the job market. I want you to try to summarize your point of view in less than 2 minutes unless I prompt you to elaborate.

(7) Some students have a fear of public speaking. I encourage students to try to verbalize their point of view. At the beginning of class, the students can use the chat function in zoom where they can type their remarks. The remark must be less than 3 sentences.

(8) This is a class where we discuss the individual correlates and structural determinants of union formation. It is not a class where we discuss your own dating experiences. Repeated discussions of your dating life and/or sexual history are unwelcome and will be considered “disruptive behavior”.

(9) To ensure that our class is a pleasant learning environment for everyone, there is a zero-tolerance policy towards disruptive behavior in class. The first time - you will receive a warning in writing; the second time- I will mute you for 3 consecutive classes, preventing you from getting any extra points. The third time – you will be asked to leave the class and I will request that the student be considered for disciplinary action.

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

- Midterm 33%
- Final exam 34%
- Reaction paper 33%

- Following the Sociology department's guidelines, the average final grade for this class will likely be 80 percent. The standard deviation will likely fall in between 3 to 4 percentage points. The instructor reserves the right for some discretion depending on class performance.
Important note: There are 3 assignments in this course. If a student is unable to complete 2 or more assignments, then he/she will (a) receive an incomplete in the course and needs to retake the course in the future or (b) write a 5000-word essay addressing the questions posted for the reaction paper. This essay will be graded in absolute terms. If you foresee having to miss more than 2 assignments, please consider dropping the course before November 12, 2020 (i.e., the official date for dropping the course). It is the student's responsibility to double-check the exact dropping with his/her academic counselor.

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.

Grade negotiation
Students are graded on a curve. Research suggests that the likelihood of approaching faculty to verbally negotiate grades are lower for women than for men, more disadvantaged than advantaged students, younger relative to older students, and visible minority relative to other students. As someone committed to fairness, I will not entertain verbal grade negotiations. Within 7 days of receiving your grade, you must write a memo contesting a section of the grade; write down what your answer was, indicate what the write answer was, and explain why your grade deserves to be raised. This approach is taken to ensure that the process is fair and a learning experience. Without proper documentation, I cannot excuse students from assignments on grounds of compassion. It is also worth noting that I cannot alter grades on grounds of compassion.

If you submit another student's grade as an excuse, I will review both student's grades. Simply put, Student B’s answer and grade can serve as a rationale for why Student A’s grades deserve to be raised, but also a rationale for why Student B’s grades should be lowered. Student B – proceed at your own risk.

Material provided outside of class:
I will upload my power point slides before class each week. I cannot record the lecture because I cannot show any copyrighted content from outside sources, if I do.

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.

Even with an excuse, students who cannot complete 2 or more assignments by the final exam date (to be announced by the registrar’s office) will receive a grade of incomplete. Their ability to not receive an “F” will be contingent on their completion of the 5,000-word assignment listed above by a deadline specified by the Dean’s Office.

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. 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

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
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

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is 48 hours or less and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will not be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course.

Students whose absences are expected to last longer than 48 hours, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances. https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/having_problems/Self_Reported_Absence.html
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to some variation)

WEEK 1 (9/14/2020). Class introduction

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

WEEK 2 (9/21/2020). Demographic transitions and institution of marriage


Supplementary readings


WEEK 3 (9/28/2020). Theories of Marriage


WEEK 4 (10/5/2020). Institution of Marriage


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

WEEK 5 (10/12/2020). Happy Thanksgiving!

WEEK 6 (10/19/2020). Marriage: an institution for the rich?


Exam review.

**WEEK 7 (10/26/2020). Midterm Exam.**

**WEEK 8 (11/2/2020). Reading week**

**WEEK 9 (11/9/2020). Diverse families: Cohabitation, non-marital fertility, and same-sex marriages**


**WEEK 10 (11/16/2020). Mate selection: Correlates**


I will review the essay topic and the grading rubric for 30 minutes. You can watch the movie on your own.
WEEK 12 (11/30/2020). Online dating

