



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3352F - 200

Inequalities Across Families

Fall 2022

Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30 pm SSC #2036

Blended

Instructor: Kate H. Choi, Associate Professor

Office Hours: Zoom Wednesdays 5:30-6:30 pm and by appointment

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Course Description: Children born in rich and poor families have diverging destinies, with markedly different socioeconomic, and family trajectories. This course will describe class disparities in children's family life, document the socioeconomic outcomes for children in the two groups, and identify social mechanisms contributing to class inequality

Prerequisite(s): Registration in the third year or above

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean 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.

Anti-requisite(s): 3365F/G taught in 2020/2021

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The purpose of this course is to

- Describe social class disparities in children's family backgrounds
- Identify mechanisms contributing to children's diverging destinations, (3) describe educational, health, and family outcomes for children in the two groups, and (4) assess how socioeconomic resources are being passed from one generation to the next.

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

- Gain insights about patterns and trends in socioeconomic inequalities for children
- Identify the social mechanisms contributing to socioeconomic inequalities
- Recognize how economic socio-cultural, and behavioral factors work together to generate family inequality by race, ethnicity, and nationality

Course Material:

All other course materials can be downloaded from jstor.org or scholar.google.com. You can download them from the UWO library; type the journal name, and once you go to the journal type the article name, and log in using your library credentials.

Relevant sites:

- <https://scholar.google.com>

- <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/>
- <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/business/businesseseconomicnewsnewspapersmagazines.html>

You need a stable internet connection and a computer with a working microphone and/or webcam.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) and their official e-mail regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course. To offer students agencies in their program of education, students can opt for one of two options.

Option A

- Midterm (50%)
- Final exam (50%) – TBA by the Registrar’s Office during the December exam period.

Option B

- Midterm (33.3%)
- Optional paper (33.3%)
- Final exam (33.4%) – TBA by the Registrar’s Office during the December exam period.

Midterm Exam

- **Date:** October 26, 2022 at 2:30-5:30 pm, with 30 minute grace period.
- **Format:** Online, typed, short-answer questions, open book, no consultation (person or AI).
- **Material:** 75% lecture notes + 25% from readings and in-class discussion
- **Number of questions:** 5-6 questions (subject to my discretion)
- **Duration:** 3 hours + 30 minutes (grace period)
- **Grades:** You will be graded on a curve. The class average will be 80 percent. I will apply a two-tier grading. A grader who does not know you marks the exams first. I will double-check the grader's marks to ensure that you have received all the requisite points.
- **Review:** The class before the midterm
- **Communication during the exam:** No substantive questions will be addressed by the professor or grader, just procedural questions.
- **Late exams:** Because students are offered a 30-minute grace period, 1 point will be deducted for each late minute after the 210 minutes. This ensures fairness in the amount of time that students have to take the exam.
- **Submission:** Need to e-mail kate.choi@uwo.ca and the grader. Both electronic addresses can be found on the first page of your exam.

- Accommodations: Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.
- Makeup exam: If a student misses the midterm with proper documentation, a make-up exam will be administered during the departmental make-up exam date (November 11, 12:00-3:00 pm; Location: TBA). It will be an in-person exam. It will ask 1 broad essay question. The grade will not be curved. The course professor will mark the exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will be 150 minutes in duration and have a 30-minute grace period. It will cover the same material as the original test. The course professor will not be available during the makeup exam to answer questions.
- Missed exam and make-up exam: If you cannot make the test date and the departmental make-up date, then you must write the optional paper and the final exam, with each component worth 50% of your final grade.

Final Exam

- Date: December exam period (Specific date/time is TBA by Registrar's Office)
- Format: Online, typed, short-answer questions, open book, no consultation (person or AI).
- Material: 75% lecture notes + 25% from readings and in-class discussion
- The number of questions: 5-6 questions (subject to my discretion) – 1-2 questions from material covered in the midterm and 3-4 questions from new material (the exact distribution of pre/post midterm exam content will be announced during the review of the final exam).
- Duration: 3 hours + 30 minutes (grace period)
- Grades: Exams will be graded on a curve. The class average will be 80 percent. The course professor will apply a two-tier marking system. A grader who does not know you marks it first (aka "blind grading"). The course professor will double-check the grader's marks to ensure that you have received all requisite marks.
- Late exams: Because students are offered a 30-minute grace period, 1 point will be deducted for each late minute after the 210 minutes. This ensures fairness in the amount of time that students have to take the exam.
- Submission: Need to e-mail kate.choi@uwo.ca and the grader. Both electronic addresses can be found on the first page of your exam.
- Accommodations: If a student is unable to take this exam, you need to go to Academic Counselling or the Dean's Office to obtain the necessary documentation to take the make-up exam.
- Makeup exam: If a student misses the exam with the proper documentation, they will write a 3,500-word essay on a topic designated by the instructor. The paper will be graded by the course professor and will not be curved. Due date: Friday, January 13th at 3 pm (same date as the department's final make-up).

Absences from Final Examinations:

- Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).
- You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in a 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in 47 hours).
- **Note**: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western

has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator, or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

Optional paper

- Date: December 8, 2022, at 5:30 pm with a grace period of 72 hours.
- Format: 1500-word essay
- Description: Detailed description and rubric will be offered to the student three weeks ahead of the last class.
- Grades: Optional paper will be graded on a curve.
- Feedback: General feedback will be offered to all students who submit the paper by 5 pm on 12.6.2022. These will be general comments and offer feedback about ways to improve the paper. As I am grading these essays, the course professor will not do line-by-line edits on your essay, nor will the course professor write paragraphs. Because it is graded on a curve, the course professor cannot guess the student's grade and offer a list of things that they may want to address to get a precise grade.
- Late essays: This paper is optional. All students get a 72-hour grace period. Failure to turn in the paper by December 11, 2022, at 5:30 pm will automatically transition the student into Option 1 (midterm + final) without any penalty.

Extra Credit: Participation

- I do not take attendance.
- Participation is an important aspect of all my classes. It is also the part that students find very enjoyable. It also helps develop mastery in verbal skill sets necessary to help students perform better in job interviews, team meetings upon employment, and when they enroll in law/graduate schools.
- Hybrid approach: A prerequisite for receiving the weekly extra credit participation is filling out the weekly participation diary for that week in OWL. 60% of the marks come from verbal discussions. 40% of the marks come from the participation diary in OWL.
- Expectations: You will receive a rubric and will be graded before the beginning of the second class accordingly. You must fill out the weekly inventory in the Assignment Section in OWL to receive any marks.
- Grades: Up to 10 percentage points can be added to your exam and optional exam. I will delineate the dates for the participation marks that will go to
- Length of participation: You are training to accurately describe a phenomenon and get your point across. This is an important skill to develop for job interviews. I am going to ask that you stay within 2 minutes *unless* I prompt you to elaborate.
- Relevance of participation points: This is a class where we discuss structural correlates of inequality within and across families. Learning how to stay on topic is an extremely important skill to have for your transition into the labor market or higher learning. If you deviate, I will direct you back. You will earn no marks for irrelevant points.
- Political correctness: I care a lot about all my students. Part of caring about my students is ensuring that the classroom is a safe environment. Hate speech or discriminatory remarks regarding racial minority

groups, gender minority families, etc. are not allowed. Repeated discussions of your political perspectives are unwelcome and will be considered “disruptive behavior”.

- Disruptive behavior: 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- you will forfeit your right to any extra credit marks. The third time – you will be asked to leave the class and I will request that the student be considered for disciplinary action. It is at my sole discretion to determine what is and what is not disruptive.
- Requests for extra credit for the extra credit assignment: This is an extra credit assignment. I will not offer **any** alternate assignments for this portion of the class. If you cannot participate, please forego the participation mark and do well in the exam.

Incompletes

- You need to fulfill at least 2 of the 3 major components of this course (i.e., midterm, final exam, optional paper) to receive a grade and potentially pass the course.
- If during the semester, you foresee a circumstance precluding you to complete 2 out of the 3 components of the course, consider dropping the course by the Fall official drop deadline.

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 negotiations

- The grader (who has never met you) marks the exam. I review the exams to ensure that they are graded reliably and validly and decide on a curve. The two-tiered process ensures greater accuracy. 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 14 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 written 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 students' 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.
- I am a true believer in meritocracy and fairness of opportunity. Writing me that you need to go to law school or graduate school and asking that I raise your grade is not a valid reason why your grade should be raised, nor is saying that you are usually an "A" student.
- Bottom line: To contest your grade, there needs to be an academic basis for why you feel like you need a higher grade.
- During the individual workshop, we can go over strategies on how to do well in the final exam and optional paper.

Blended course

- The course is blended. The sociology department has strict rules governing the number of online classes

that we can have. A blended course must have 70% of its courses in person.

- The blended designation allows us to do 3 things: (a) ensure that students can take the exams online, (b) we can have an online class right after fall break so that we don't have to be in class for 2.5 hours shortly after the class has traveled, and (c) an online class on the last day of class when students and faculty usually have low immunity.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

- In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Important Policies

Academic Consideration for Missed Work: Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. The student medical certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation: When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

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.

Accessibility Options: Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/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:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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.

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 (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

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

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters:

[Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_counselling/).

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Schedules and course readings are subject to change)

9.14. 2022: Class introduction

9.21.2022. Diverging Destinies for American Children

- Lesthaeghe, R. (2014). The second demographic transition: A concise overview of its development. *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(51): 18112-18115.
- McLanahan, S. (2004). Diverging destinies: How children are faring under the second demographic transition. *Demography* 41, 607–627.

9.28.2022 **Diverging Childbearing and Childrearing Context by Race/Ethnicity and SES**

- Sweeney M., K. Raley. (2014). "Race, Ethnicity, and the Changing Context of Childbearing in the United States". *Annual Review Sociology*. 40:539-558.

- Manlove J., S. Ryan, E. Wildsmith, K. Franzetta. (2010). The relationship context of nonmarital childbearing in the U.S. *Demographic Research* 23:615-654.
- Gibson, Christina, Kathryn Edin, and Sara McLanahan. (2005). “High Hopes but Even Higher Expectations: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Marriage Plans of Unmarried Couples who are New Parents.” *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 67(5): 301-312.

Current events: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/social-fabric/202208/why-does-south-korea-have-the-lowest-fertility-in-the-world>

10.5.2022 ***Divergent Parenting by SES, Race, and Immigration Status***

- Cooper, K. (2020). Are Poor Parents *Poor* Parents? The Relationship between Poverty and Parenting among Mothers in the United Kingdom. *Sociology* 55(2): 349-383.
- Evans GW. The environment of childhood poverty. 2004. *American Psychologist* 59(2):77-92.
- Nomaguchi, K. and A. House. (2013). Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Maternal Parenting Stress: The Role of Structural Disadvantages and Parenting Values. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 54(3): 386-404.
- Lareau, A. (2012). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*.

Current events: <https://theconversation.com/too-busy-for-the-pta-but-working-class-parents-care-104386>

10.12.2022 **Childhood Poverty and Implications for Health**

- Hamilton, E. R., & Choi, K. H. (2015). The mixed effects of migration: Community-level migration and birthweight in Mexico. *Social science & medicine*, 132, 278-286.
- Frost, M., R. Forste, and D. Haas. (2005). [Maternal education and child nutritional status in Bolivia: finding the links](#)”. *Social Science & Medicine* 60: 395-407.
- Mcleod J.D., M. J. Shanahan. (1996). Trajectories of poverty and children's mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 37(3):207-20
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10.19.2022 **Diverging destinies in Educational Attainment**

- Guo, G. and K. Harris. (2000). The Mechanisms Mediating the effects on Poverty on Children’s Intellectual Development. *Demography*7: 41-447. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.2000.0005>
- Isaac, J. (2012). [Starting School at a Disadvantage: The School Readiness of Poor Children](#). *Brookings Institutes*
- Black, S. and A. Sufi. (2002). [Who Goes to College? Differential Enrollment by Race and Family Background](#). NBER Working Paper 9310.
- Current events discussion: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/15/lower-income-parents-most-concerned-about-their-children-falling-behind-amid-covid-19-school-closures/>
- Exam Review

10.26.2022: Midterm exams (Online)

11.2.2022. No class. Reading week

11.9.2022. Individual workshop (Online)

11.12.2022 No class. Just a reminder. The last day to drop the course without penalty.

11.16.2022. Housing affordability and child wellbeing

- Newman, S. J., & Holupka, C. S. (2015). [Housing affordability and child well-being](#). *Housing Policy Debate*, 25(1), 116-151.
- Ziol-Guest, K. M., & McKenna, C. C. (2014). Early childhood housing instability and school readiness. *Child development*, 85(1), 103-113.
- Treas, J., & Batalova, J. (2011). Residential independence: Race and ethnicity on the road to adulthood in two US immigrant gateways. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 16(1), 13-24.

Current events discussion

<https://theconversation.com/how-the-slow-burning-housing-crisis-is-driving-hunger-in-canada-182487>

11.23.2022. Transition into Adulthood: Family

- Musick, K., P. England, S. Edgington, and N. Kangas. (2009). Education Differences in Intended and Unintended Fertility. *Social Forces* 88(2): 543–572.
- Xie, Y., J. Raymo. K. Goyette, and A. Thornton. (2003). Economic Potential and Entry into Marriage and Cohabitation. *Demography* 40(2): 351-367.
- Edin, K. and M. Kefalas. (2011). *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Current events discussion:

- <https://theconversation.com/why-young-people-in-south-korea-are-staying-single-despite-efforts-to-spark-dating-111486>

11.30.2022. Transitions in the Family: The Role of Student Debt

- Addo, Fenaba. (2022). [Who is Really in a Student Debt Crisis?](#)
- Nau, M., Dwyer, R. E., & Hodson, R. (2015). Can't afford a baby? Debt and young Americans. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 42, 114-122.
- Bozick, R., & Estacion, A. (2014). Do student loans delay marriage? Debt repayment and family formation in young adulthood. *Demographic Research*, 30, 1865-1891.

• **Current events discussion**

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/social-fabric/202203/student-debt-and-its-impact-young-adults-today>

• **Final exam review**

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12.7.2022. Divergent Destinies in Health (Online)

- Thomeen, M., J. Yahirun, and A. Colon-Lopez. “How families matter for health inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic”.
- Patel, J. A., Nielsen, F. B. H., Badiani, A. A., Assi, S., Unadkat, V. A., Patel, B., ... & Wardle, H. (2020). Poverty, inequality, and COVID-19: the forgotten vulnerable. *Public health*, 183, 110.

2022-2023