



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3368G-200
Marriage Markets
Winter 2024
Blended

Instructor: Kate H. Choi, Associate Professor

Office Hours: by appointment

Department of Sociology

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Course Description: This course examines shifts in marriage market conditions due to the increasing inequality and transition into a service economy. It further investigates how the resulting changes in marriage market conditions affect dating, union formation, family structure; and the wellbeing of couples and their offspring.

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

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, 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): 3364F/G taught in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The purpose of this course is to

- (a) Discuss how marriage market conditions have changed
- (b) Investigate how the resulting changes in marriage market conditions affect dating, union formation, and family structure
- (c) Ascertain how shifts in inequality are affecting the wellbeing of couples and their offspring.

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.

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/business/economics/newspapers/magazines.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>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

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.

Office hour is by appointment only. You *must* arrive 3-4 minutes before the appointment starts and leave once the appointment ends. Access to appointments will be *limited* following repeated no-shows.

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 final exam period.

Option B

- Midterm (33.33%)
- Optional paper (33.33%)
- Final exam (33.34%) – TBA by the Registrar’s Office during the final exam period.

Midterm Exam

- Date: February 15, 2023 at 9:30 am -12:30 pm + 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. With some exception, the class average will be 78-80%. 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. To the extent possible, I will honor the recommendations of Academic Counselling.
- 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 (Date, Time, and 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 for a documented reason, then you must write the optional paper and the final exam. Each component will be worth 50% of your final grade.

Final Exam

- Date: Final 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. With some exception, the class average will be 78-80 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 6,000-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: TBD

Optional paper

- Date: April 4, 2024, at 12:30 pm. Grace period: 120 hours. No points will be deducted if you turn in exam by April 9, 2024 at 12:30pm EST.
- Format: 1500-word essay
- Description: Detailed description and rubric will be offered to the student 2/3 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 at least 168 hours prior to the due date (i.e., March 24, 2024 at 12:30pm EST). 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. Failure to turn in the paper 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 the Assignments Section 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. Your grade will be averaged excluding the lowest grade on the first half of the term and the lowest grade on the second half of the term. This means that you can miss class without writing me once during the first half and once during the second half of the term and it will not affect your grade. Any absences beyond the two may affect your grade.
- 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.
- Number of times students participate: There is no set amount the student needs to participate a good grade. Active listening is an important element of listening. If a student seeks to dominate class discussion or makes repeatedly unrelated remarks, I reserve the right to not call on the student when they raise their hand.
- Relevance of participation points: This is a class where we discuss structural correlates of family formation behavior. Learning how to stay on topic is an extremely important skill to have for your transition into the labor market or higher learning. The student 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. This is not a class about your dating relationships. Political incorrect

speech about the union formation behavior of marginalized groups will be considered disruptive behavior. The determination of what is/is not disruptive behavior is at the discretion of the course professor.

- **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.

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. Future career or educational aspirations are not a valid reason why your grade should be raised, nor is self-proclaimed "A-student" status.
- 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.

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.

Grading guidelines: The Sociology Department has grading guidelines. For a 3000-level class, the class average is between a 73-80%. Subject to some exception (e.g., exceptionally low grade from a student), I will curve so that the class average falls in the 78-80% range.

Student Absences:

Students should aim to attend class regularly.

Slides are posted on OWL. It is the student's responsibility to obtain additional explanations or notes.

Students have the option of attending the lecture in person or via Zoom.

I will not give weekly repeat lectures or offer an asynchronous version of the course lecture for students who need to regularly miss class due to competing responsibilities during class time.

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Schedules and course readings may change depending on student interests or mastery of the material.

1.11. 2024: Class introduction

1.18.2024. How did historical changes shape the institution of marriage?

- Davis, K. (1945). "The World Demographic Transition". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 237: pp. 1-11.
- Leathaege, 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>
- **Supplementary readings**
- Coleman, D. (2006). "Immigration and Ethnic Change in Low-Fertility Countries: A Third Demographic Transition". *Population and Development Review* 32(3): pp. 401-446.

1.25.2024 **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

2.1.2024-2.8.2024 *What's happening to the institution of marriage?*

- Schwartz, C. and P. Smock. (2020). The Demography of Families: A Review of Patterns and Change. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(1): 9-34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12612>.
- Cherlin, A. (2020). Degrees of Change: An Assessment of the Deinstitutionalization of Marriage Thesis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1): 62-80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12605>
- Manning, Wendy, Susan L. Brown, and K. Payne. (2021). Does Cohabitation Compensate for Marriage Decline? *Contexts* 20(2): 68-69. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F15365042211012076>
- Kuperberg, A. (2019). Premarital Cohabitation and Direct Marriage in the United States: 1956–2015. *Marriage and Family Review* 55(5): 447-475.
- Choi, K. H., & Qian, Y. (2023). The rise of the childless single in South Korea. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*.

Exam Review

2.15.2024: Midterm exams (Online)

2.22.2024: No class. Reading week

2.29.2024. Individual workshops (Zoom)

3.7.2024 **Marriage: An institution for the rich?**

- 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)
- Bloome, D. and S. Ang. (2020). Marriage and Union Formation in the United States: Recent Trends Across Racial Groups and Economic Backgrounds. *Demography* 57 (5): 1753–1786.
- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-020-00910-7>
- Schneider, D., K. Hartnett, and M. Stimpson. (2019). Job Quality and Educational Gradient in Entry into Marriage and Cohabitation. *Demography* 56(2): 451-476.
- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0749-5>

Optional:

- Reeves, R. and C. Pulliam. (2020). Middle-class marriage is declining, and likely deepening inequality. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/middle-class-marriage-is-declining-and-likely-deepening-inequality/>.
- Benjamin R. Karney, (2021). Socioeconomic Status and Intimate Relationships, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72, 1, (391-414). [10.1146/annurev-psych-051920-013658](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-051920-013658).

3.14.2024. *Marriages and racial inequality*

- Raley, R., Sweeney, M., & Wondra, D. (2015). The Growing Racial and Ethnic Divide in U.S. Marriage Patterns. *The Future of Children*, 25(2), 89-109. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43581974>
- Guzzo, K. (2014). New Partners, More Kids: Multiple-Partner Fertility in the United States. *Ann Am Acad*

Pol Soc Sci. 2014 Jul; 654(1): 66–86. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0002716214525571>

- Zhang, Y. and S. Ang. (2020). “Trajectories of Union Transition in Emerging Adulthood: Socioeconomic Status and Race/Ethnicity Differences in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 Cohort”. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(2): 713-732.

3.21-3.28.2024. Mate Selection

- Schwartz, C. (2013). Trends and Variation in Assortative Mating: Causes and Consequences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 39: 451-470. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145544>
- Qian, Z. and D. Lichter. (2018). Marriage Markets and Intermarriage: Exchange in First Marriages and Remarriages. *Demography* 55(3): 849-875. <https://read.dukeupress.edu/demography/article/55/3/849/167889/Marriage-Markets-and-Intermarriage-Exchange-in>
- Schwartz, C. (2010). Earnings Inequality and the Changing Association between Spouses’ Earnings. *American Journal of Sociology* 115(5): 1524-1557. [10.1007/s13524-018-0671-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0671-x)
- Choi, K. and R. Goldberg. (2021). Fertility Behavior of Interracial Couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 80(4): 871-887.
- Choi, K. and M. Tienda. (2017). Marriage-Market Constraints and Mate-Selection Behavior: Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Intermarriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79(2): 301-317.

4.4.2024. Transitions in the Family: The Role of Student Debt and Housing.

- 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.
- Wang, S., Wang, Y., & Shen, Y. (2023). The Impact of Supportive Housing Policy Scenarios on Marriage and Fertility Intentions: A Vignette Survey Experimental Study in Shanghai, China. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 42(6), 96.

Current events discussion

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

Final exam review

4.11.2024. Conclusion

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](#)” document

https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism

- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

2023-2024