

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2025

SO2710 (A3): The Family – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Michael Holland	PHONE:	780-539-2973
OFFICE:	C404	E-MAIL:	mholland@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30-11:30 am; or by appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

The structure and function of the family system, historically and cross-culturally will be explored in this course. The family system in contemporary societies emphasizing its institutional characteristics and current trends will be a focus.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: SO1000.

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Albanese, P. (2023). *Canadian Families today: New perspectives* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will be made available for free on myClass.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus and Videoconference (VC).

Note: *Videoconference Student Requirements:* Technology (e.g., webcam, microphone, speakers), Class Participation (e.g., camera on during class, appropriate screen name)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will:

- gain insights into the formation/maintenance of intimate relationships in their own lives
- learn how they are socialized into marital roles; how they can successfully transition to parenthood

- approach family and relationship responsibilities in fair and equitable ways;
- understand how relationships and families are impacted by social pressures and stress and how conflict can be resolved
- make informed personal decisions regarding modern innovations in family structure in the context of social-technological change

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assessment	Weight
Weekly Discussion Posts	15 %
Family Case Study	30 %
Midterm	25 %
Final Exam	30 %
Total	100 %

Weekly Discussion Posts

Beginning Jan 21, you will engage in weekly discussion posts designed to enhance your understanding of course materials and strengthen critical thinking skills. The class will be divided into two groups based on alphabetical order by last name: one half will respond to a question posed by the instructor, while the other half will reply to their classmates' posts. These roles will alternate each week.

Details about expectations, rubrics, and submission processes will be explained during the first few classes. Posts will be submitted through the myClass platform according to the outlined schedule.

Family Case Study

You will conduct a sociological analysis of a family of your choice (real or fictional). Apply key sociological concepts such as family roles, power dynamics, socialization, and cultural norms to explore how family experiences reflect broader social patterns.

Project Stages Overview:

1. **Family Selection & Proposal (10%):** Choose a family and explain why it's an interesting sociological case.
2. **Source Snapshot (15%):** Collect and annotate 3-4 key sociological sources relevant to your analysis.
3. **Case Study Summary (25%):** Create a concise report connecting sociological concepts to family dynamics.
4. **Creative Presentation (30%):** Present findings using a digital poster, recorded video, podcast, or multimedia project.
5. **Peer Feedback & Reflection (20%):** Provide constructive feedback on classmates' projects and reflect on what you learned.

Note: Full assignment instructions, grading rubrics, and submission guidelines will be provided on myClass. More details about this assignment will be discussed early in the course.

Midterm and Final Exam

Note: There are two options for the midterm and final exams. You may choose your preferred format.

Option A will be a closed-book exam written with the class that will consist of multiple-choice questions.

Option B will be an open-book exam that consists of essay answer questions. These questions must be submitted on myClass by the completion time.

There will be a brief review in class before the midterm and final exam respectively. These will test your knowledge and application of concepts, theories, and perspectives on the course material (textbook chapters, classroom lectures, discussions, and video clips). The final exam is cumulative but with an emphasis on 'big picture ideas' covered throughout the semester.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is less than C-.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
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Jan 7, 9	Introduction to the course/meet and greet	Syllabus	
Jan 14, 16	Understanding Family concepts and definitions	Chapter 1	Reflection and response 1
Jan 21, 23	Historical and Contemporary variations	Chapter 2	Reflection and response 2
Jan 28, 30	LGBTQI+ Families in Canada	Chapter 3	Reflection and response 3
Feb 4, 6	Intimacy, Commitment, and Family Formation	Chapter 4	Reflection and response 4
Feb 11, 13	Parenting Young Children	Chapter 5 Article by Lareau	Reflection and response 5 Family Selection & Proposal Due Feb 13 at 11:59 pm
Feb 18-21	Family Day & Winter Break – No Classes		
Feb 25	Midterm		
Feb 27	<i>Research Workshop</i>	None	Source Snapshot Due Feb 27 at 11:59 pm
Mar 4, 6	Separation and Divorce	Chapter 6	Reflection and response 6
Mar 11, 13	Families in Middle and Later Life	Chapter 7	Reflection and response 7
Mar 18, 20	Family Poverty	Chapter 10	Reflection and response 8
Mar 25, 27	Visible Minorities and Indigenous families	Chapters 11 & 12	Reflection and response 9 Case Study Summary Due Mar 27 at 11:59 pm
Apr 1, 3	Violence in Families	Chapter 14	Reflection and response 10

Apr 8	Investing in Families and Children: Family Policies in Canada	Chapter 15	Reflection and response 11 Creative Presentation Due Apr 8 at 11:59 pm
Apr 10	Final exam Review/Course Wrap up	All course material post-midterm	Reflection and response 12 Peer Feedback & Reflection Due April 10 at 11:59 pm Final Exam (non-cumulative) Registrar Scheduled, TBA

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Jan 6 – Classes Start

Jan 15 – Last day to add/drop.

Feb 17 – Family Day

Feb 18 – 21 - Winter Break

March 31 – Last Day to Withdraw

April 11 - Last day of classes

April 14 – 23 - Final Exam Period

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Ultimately, you are responsible for your learning and performance in this course.

If at any point in the semester, you feel you are struggling with the course material or with your coursework, please do not hesitate to ask me for assistance. Please contact me by e-mail for an appointment. **Furthermore, it is your responsibility to track your grades: Please do not contact the professor for such information.**

Submission & Late Policies: It is very important to complete your assignments on time. Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day (including weekends). Incomplete tests and assignments will receive a grade of 0% unless you have a valid reason supported with appropriate documentation (i.e., a medical note from an M.D.) and you discuss it with me **in advance of any due date**. Extension requests are granted only well in advance of assignment due dates and with valid reasons.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the Northwestern Polytechnic Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/> or the

Student Rights and Responsibilities policy which can be found at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

This course will make extensive use of our course website (myClass) to support your learning. You are expected to keep current with the content of the site, and I advise you to log on often.

Professional Conduct:

- Please be aware that I respect that everyone's time is valuable, please afford me the same courtesy.
- Instead of preoccupying your mind with questions such as, "How do I get an 'A'?", ask yourself "How can I work to expand my knowledge, perspective, and outlook on the real world?"
- Classroom etiquette:
 - Please do not be late for class.
 - Avoid the use of cell phones except for course-related activities.
 - **Do not disrupt the class**, especially when talking about things non-sociology related
 - You will be given a warning and subsequent action will be taken if disruptive behaviour continues, including being asked to leave the class.
- Please only use your NWP e-mail account to contact me to avoid having your message blocked by SPAM filters.
- Always include "SO2710" (with your section) in the subject line (or I may never even receive your message).
- Finally, in our academic environment, please practice writing e-mails formally, as you will need to do so regularly. For example, use a simple greeting, do not use slang or abbreviations, and always sign off with your name!