

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:	Fridays 10–11 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):

Complete 1 of the following

Completed the following:

SO1000 - Introductory Sociology (3)

Equivalent course

COREQUISITE(S):

None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Bartolic, S., Martin, T., & White, J. (2023). Families across the life course (2nd ed.).

Open Educational Resource.

<https://blogs.ubc.ca/familiesacrossthelifecourse/>

- The textbook will be available as a free online PDF through the course myClass (D2L) site. You are not required to purchase a physical textbook for this course.

- Additional short readings (such as Canadian data, policy documents, or brief articles) may be posted on myClass for specific in-class activities or discussion.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe how families form, change, and function across the life course
- Analyze how gender, class, race, institutions, and colonialism shape family life
- Apply sociological concepts to real Canadian family issues
- Interpret sociological research and public policy related to families
- Critically examine both historical and contemporary family trends in Canada

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.alberta.ca>

****** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a 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:

Weekly Quizzes – 10%

Film Analysis – 10%

Midterm Exam – 25%

In-Class Activities/Participation – 25%

Final Exam – 30%

Total – 100%

WEEKLY QUIZZES: Short online quizzes based on the assigned textbook chapters and class lectures. These quizzes are designed to help you stay on track with the course material and to check your understanding. Quizzes are low-stakes and completed through myClass. Late quizzes are not accepted.

SOCIOLOGICAL FILM ANALYSIS: You will watch one assigned film outside of class and complete a short written sociological analysis (approximately 800–1,000 words). You will be given 4–5 guided questions that ask you to apply key course concepts to the film. The emphasis is on sociological analysis, not on summarizing the movie. A class discussion will follow.

MIDTERM EXAM: The midterm exam will take place in class around Week 6. It will cover material from the first half of the course, including readings, lectures, discussions, and in-class activities. The format will be reviewed in advance.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES / PARTICIPATION: This grade is based on active participation in structured in-class learning activities, such as:

- Small-group discussions
- Case study analysis
- Canadian data interpretation
- Policy workshops
- Review games
- Short in-class written reflections

Participation is based on consistent engagement, preparation, and contribution to in-class work. Missed in-class activities cannot be made up.

FINAL EXAM: The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar during the official exam period. It will focus primarily on material covered after the midterm, with some cumulative connections to earlier topics. The format will be discussed near the end of the semester.

GRADING CRITERIA:

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

Grading Chart

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:

Week	Topic	Required Readings	Assessments Due
Week 1 – Jan 6,8	Course Overview & Introduction to Families <i>What counts as “family,” and who gets to decide?</i> Tasks: Icebreaker, family mapping, course expectations	–	–
Week 2 – Jan 13,15	Defining Family Across the Life Course <i>How do families change across the stages of life?</i> Tasks: Life-course mapping activity	Chapter 1	Quiz 1
Week 3 – Jan 20, 22	Family Theory <i>How do different sociological theories explain how families work?</i> Tasks: Theory sorting and scenario analysis	Chapter 2	Quiz 2
Week 4 – Jan 27, 29	Dating & Mate Selection <i>How do gender, class, culture, and technology shape who we partner with?</i> Tasks: Partner preference polling and discussion	Chapter 3	Quiz 3
Week 5 – Feb 3, 5	Cohabitation & Marriage <i>Why are fewer people marrying today, and what has replaced marriage?</i> Tasks: Marriage myths vs Canadian data	Chapters 4–5	Quiz 4
Week 6 – Feb 10, 12	Midterm Review & Midterm Exam Tasks: Review game and in-class exam	–	Midterm Exam Feb 12
Week 7 – Feb 16;	Family Day and Winter Break (No Classes)		

17-21			
Week 8 – Feb 24, 26	Fertility & Having Children <i>Why are people having fewer children, and what shapes fertility decisions today?</i> Tasks: Canadian fertility trends worksheet	Chapter 6	Quiz 5
Week 9 – Mar 3, 5	Parenting & Parent–Child Relationships <i>How do parenting styles reflect social class, gender, and inequality?</i> Tasks: Parenting style scenarios and small-group discussion	Chapter 7	Quiz 6
Week 10 – Mar 10, 12	Families & Social Institutions <i>How do schools, work, the economy, and the state shape family life?</i> Tasks: Institution mapping workshop; Film Analysis Assigned	Chapter 8	Quiz 7
Week 11 – Mar 17, 19	Divorce & Re-Partnering <i>How do relationships end, and what happens to families afterward?</i> Tasks: Divorce myths vs data and film discussion	Chapter 9	Quiz 8 & Film Analysis Due
Week 12 – Mar 24, 26	Aging Families & Care Work <i>Who is responsible for care in aging families, and why?</i> Tasks: Caregiving scenarios and policy discussion	Chapter 10	Quiz 9
Week 13 – Mar 31, Apr 2	Stress, Conflict & Family Violence <i>Why does conflict and violence occur within families?</i> Tasks: Risk and support	Chapter 11	Quiz 10

	systems mapping		
Week 14 – Apr 7, 9	Family Policy in Canada <i>What role should the government play in supporting families?</i> Tasks: Policy comparison workshop; Final Exam Review	Chapter 12	Participation Focus
Final Exam Period scheduled by the Registrar)			

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Ultimately, you are responsible for your learning and performance in this course. Your grades are posted to myClass, so please be sure you are tracking them there. If you believe there is an error, please let your instructor know.

Submission, Late Policies, & Issues of Intellectual Concern:

- Meeting deadlines is a key professional skill. Please complete your assignments on time. If you anticipate any issues, contact me in advance so we can discuss possible options. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Late assignments received will be deducted 5% for every late day (including weekends!).
- Incomplete 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 well in advance of any due date.
- In cases where submitted work shows concerning patterns or raises questions about how it was created and the level of intellectual effort involved, you may be required to complete an oral examination about the work at my discretion. Failure to participate in the oral examination will result in a grade of 0 for the assessment. If, following the oral examination, I still have concerns about the work, the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked below) may be applied.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and

Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Attendance:

Because many activities take place during class time, regular attendance is important. Missed in-class work cannot be made up. If you need to leave class early, please let me know before class begins whenever possible. Repeated early departures without notice may affect your participation grade. Emergencies are, of course, understood.

Devices:

Phones and laptops should be put away during lectures and discussions, unless we are using them for a class activity (polls, worksheets, readings, etc.) or there is an emergency. I often use menti.com for in-class engagement. Off-task device use may impact your participation grade and can be distracting for those around you.

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, and I ask that you afford me and your classmates 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?"
- 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 – A3) in the subject line, or I may not receive your message.
- Finally, in our academic environment, please practice writing e-mails formally. For example, use a simple greeting, avoid slang or abbreviations, and always sign off with your name.

Use of AI-Generated Content:

You are expected to complete all course work using your own understanding and effort. Submitting work that is primarily generated by AI tools (such as ChatGPT,

Gemini, or similar tools) without permission is considered a form of academic misconduct. Your assignments must reflect your own thinking, interpretation, and engagement with the course material. AI tools may be used in limited ways, such as for brainstorming, outlining, or basic grammar checking, but not for generating full answers or analysis. If you use AI in any way, you must clearly acknowledge how it was used in your submission. If you are ever unsure whether a tool is appropriate, please check with me first.