

**PSCI 380
Sex Marriage Family
Spring 2023**

FINAL VERSION

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Sawyer 307 Mabie Room
MR 2:35pm—3:50pm

Office Hrs.: Mondays 10-11:30am, Wednesdays 2-3pm & by appointment

Course description

Something has happened to America over the past fifteen years. Large minorities of young adults, especially young men, are now celibate. Cohabitation has skyrocketed but marriage is disappearing, and the country's birth rate is at an all-time low. Not surprisingly, loneliness has become epidemic. A similar story can be told for most other developed countries. The implications for political polarization, economic growth, social insurance programs, public health, military defense, even national survival are grim.

What is the cause of this loss of faith in the future? Can public policy reverse these trends? This course is an investigation into relations between the sexes in the developed world, the fate of children and the family, and government attempts to shape them. The course investigates family models in historical and comparative context; the family and the welfare state; the economics of sex, gender, marriage, and class inequality; the dramatic value and behavioral changes of Gen Z around sex, cohabitation, and parenthood; and state policies to encourage partnership/marriage and childbearing.

Readings

All readings for this course are collected into a multipart course reader and four books. The books are:

- Göran Therborn, [Between Sex and Marriage](#) (Routledge, 2004)
- Louise Perry, [The Case Against the Sexual Revolution](#) (Polity, 2022).
- Kathryn Edin, [Promises I Can Keep](#) (University of California Press, 2011)
- Patricia Boling, [The Politics of Work-Family Policies](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

The books are available for purchase at Water Street Books or from your favourite on-line retailer. The course reader is divided into two/three parts. Part One will be available soon from the packet room in the Class of '37 House (51 Park St.). Subsequent parts will be available later in the semester.

All students are expected to faithfully keep up with the readings during the semester. Readings assigned for a particular class session will be the topic for that day's lecture and discussion, and therefore should be completed prior to class. Come to each class prepared to learn and discuss.

Speech policy

With the aim of advancing and deepening everyone's understanding of the issues addressed in this course, students are urged to speak their minds, explore ideas and arguments, play devil's advocate, and engage in respectful but robust discussions. There is no thought or language policing. I expect students to do business in the proper currency of intellectual discourse—a currency consisting of reasons, evidence, and arguments—but no ideas or positions are out of bounds. If you have any concerns about classroom climate, please come to me to share your concern.

Honor code

You are free to consult with other students during the semester, organize study groups, etc., but remember that all *written* work should be the product of your own individual efforts. Please be especially vigorous in avoiding plagiarism. Use quotation marks where necessary and cite any sources clearly. Remember, all work in this course must be completed in accordance with the Honor Code.

Course requirements

1. Two essays

Out of five opportunities, you will write two essays (1500-2000 words; 1-in. margins; double-spacing; 11-pt. font min.) on course readings during the semester. You may choose any two based on your personal interests, work due in other courses, sports schedule, etc. Students may write more than two essays and have only the best two count toward the overall course grade. One of the two must be written before spring break. Themes and due dates are as follows:

The history and social diversity of sex, marriage and family:
Tuesday, February 28, 5pm
Sex: Friday, March 17, 5pm
Marriage and family: Tuesday, April 18, 5pm
Fertility: Tuesday, May 2, 5pm
Family policy: Tuesday, May 16, 5pm

You will not be given paper prompts, but will be expected to craft your own topic based on the readings for that section of the course. All students are strongly encouraged to discuss their papers plans with me before they begin writing!

2. Research paper

You will write one term research paper (4000-5000 words; 1-in. margins; double-spacing; 11-pt. font min.) on a topic of your choice in consultation with me. A 300-500 word prospectus is due May 4 in class. The final paper is due Saturday, May 20, 5pm.

A NOTE ON DEADLINES:
Deadlines in this class are firm. Please do not ask for extensions except in highly unusual circumstances (sports or work in other classes is *not* such a circumstance). Late papers will be penalized one partial letter grade (e.g. from A- to A-/B+, B to B-) per 24 hours late. If you cannot write a good paper by the deadline, take the late penalty to do so.

3. Discussion questions

Prior to each class, each student will write and submit 1-2 discussion questions relevant to the day's readings. These questions should be thoughtful engagements with the main ideas from the text(s) and thus go beyond a simple one-sentence query. Possible questions might explore unclear passages in the readings, point out notable gaps in an author's discussion, or offer critiques of an author's argument. The best questions will be framed by a brief (< 250 words) discussion. I will use these questions to guide class discussion each day, including calling on you in class based on your remarks. Use our course Glow page to submit them. Questions are due by 11am the day of class. Glow will lock automatically at that time and will not accept any questions submitted after the deadline. I will grade questions on a check-plus/check/check-minus scale.

4. Class participation

Regular attendance and constructive participation is necessary for this course to be successful and is therefore expected; unexcused absences and a failure to engage the material in class will be noted. More than one unexcused absence will result in a grade penalty.

Grades

Your grade in this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Research paper	30%
Discussion questions	20%
Class participation	10%

Course Calendar

Date **Topic and Readings**

INTRODUCTION

Wednesday
Feb. 1

Introduction to the course

- no readings

Monday
Feb. 6

What to expect when no one's expecting

- Stein Emil Vollset et al., "Fertility, mortality, migration, and population scenarios for 195 countries and territories from 2017 to 2100," The Lancet 396, 17 October 2020, 1285-1306.
- James Gallagher, "Fertility rate: 'Jaw-dropping' global crash in children being born," BBC News, 15 July 2020.
- Emma Green, "A world without children," The Atlantic [online], 20 September 2021.
- Lyman Stone, "The truth about demographic decline," Law & Liberty, 2 January 2023.

Thursday
Feb. 9

Sex, power and family structure

- Göran Therborn, Between Sex and Power, Introduction & ch. 1.

Monday
Feb. 13

Family

- Göran Therborn, Between Sex and Power, chs. 2-3.

Thursday
Feb. 16

Sex and marriage

- Göran Therborn, Between Sex and Power, Part II.

Monday
Feb. 20

Fertility

- Göran Therborn, Between Sex and Power, Part III & Conclusion.

SEX

Thursday
Feb. 23

Sex

- Edward Feser, "What's the deal with sex? Part I," [Edward Feser](#), 27 January 2015.
- Mark Regnerus, [Cheap Sex](#) (2017), 22-61.
- Ashley K. Fansher and Sara Eckinger, "Tinder Tales: An exploratory study of online dating users and their most interesting stories," [Deviant Behavior](#) 42 (2021), 1194-1208.
- Nona Willis Aronowitz, [Bad Sex](#) (2022), 83-114, 232-238.

Monday
Feb. 27

Love

- Eva Illouz, [Why Love Hurts](#) (2012), 1-15, 156-197.
- Eva Illouz, [The End of Love](#) (2019), 6-15, 144-180.

Thursday
March 2

'A wall between us'

- Nicholas H. Wolfinger, "Contours of the sex recession," Institute for Family Studies, 31 March 2021.
- Alice Aedy, "Disconnected" [video] (2020). [*see link on Glow*]
- Anton Cebalo, "Is America suffering a 'social recession'," [The Guardian](#) 2 January 2023.
- Monica McDermott, [Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior](#) (2016), 57-82.
- Thomas B. Edsall, "The gender gap is taking us to unexpected places," [New York Times](#), 12 January 2022.
- Hannah June Kim and Chungjae Lee, "The 2022 South Korean presidential election and the gender divide among the youth," [Pacific Affairs](#) 95 (2) (June 2022), 285-308.

Monday
March 6

The sexual counterrevolution I

- Mary Harrington, "The sexual counterrevolution is coming," [The Spectator World](#), June 2021.
- Louise Perry, [The Case Against the Sexual Revolution](#), 1-69.

Thursday
March 9

The sexual counterrevolution II

- Louise Perry, [The Case Against the Sexual Revolution](#), 70-160.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Monday
March 13

The rise and fall of marriage

- Joseph Henrich et al., "The puzzle of monogamous marriage," Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences (2012), 657-669.
- Katie M. Laplant, "Family decline theory," in Constance L. Shehan, ed., The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Family Studies (2016).
- Gøsta Esping-Andersen and Francesco C. Billari, "Re-theorizing family demographics," Population and Development Review 41 (2015), 1-31.
- Renee Romano, "Something old, something new: Black women, interracial dating, and the black marriage crisis," differences 29 (2018), 126-153.
- Louise Perry, The Case Against the Sexual Revolution, 161-189.

Thursday
March 16

Family structure and child outcomes

- Sarah McLanahan and Wade Jacobsen, "Diverging destinies revisited," in Families in an Era of Increasing Inequality (2015), 3-23.
- Melissa Schettini Kearney, "The 'college gap' in marriage and children's family structure," NBER Working paper 30078, May 2022.
- Diederik Boertien et al., "Family structure and socioeconomic inequality of opportunity in Europe and the United States," in Unequal Family Lives (2018), 165-178.
- W. Bradford Wilcox and Joseph Price, "Families and the wealth of nations: What does family structure have to do with growth around the globe?" in Unequal Family Lives (2018), 179-195.

SPRING BREAK

Monday
April 3

Single motherhood in America I

- Kathryn Edin, Promises I Can Keep (2011), 1-103.

Thursday
April 6

Single motherhood in America II

- Kathryn Edin, Promises I Can Keep (2011), 104-220.

Monday
April 10

Family structure and political/cultural outcomes

- Lena Edlund and Rohini Pande, “Why have women become left-wing? The political gender gap and the decline of marriage,” The Quarterly Journal of Economics 117 (2002), 917-961.
- Rosalind Shorrocks, “Cohort change in political gender gaps in Europe and Canada: The role of modernization,” Politics & Society 46 (2018), 135-175.
- Mary Eberstadt, Primal Screams (2019), 37-61.

FERTILITY

Thursday
April 13

Fertility decline

- Ron Lesthaeghe, “The unfolding story of the second demographic transition,” Population and Development Review 36 (2010), 211-251.
- S. Philip Morgan and Rosalind Berkowitz King, “Why have children in the 21st century? Biological predisposition, social coercion, rational choice,” European Journal of Population 17 (2001), 3-20.
- Melissa S. Kearney et al., “The puzzle of falling US birth rates since the Great Recession,” Journal of Economic Perspectives 36 (1) (Winter 2022), 151-176.

Monday
April 17

Differential fertility

- Lyman Stone and Spencer James, “Marriage still matters: Demonstrating the link between marriage and fertility in the 21st century,” Institute for Family Studies, October 2022.
- Wendy D. Manning et al., “Does cohabitation compensate for marriage decline?” Contexts 20 (2) (Spring 2021), 68-69.
- Eva Beaujouan and Caroline Berghammer, “The gap between lifetime fertility intentions and completed fertility in Europe and the United States: A cohort approach,” Population Research and Policy Review 38 (2019), 507-535.
- Nitzan Peri-Rotem, “Religion and fertility in Western Europe: Trends across cohorts in Britain, France and the Netherlands,” European Journal of Population 32 (2016), 231-265.

Thursday
April 20

Lowest-low fertility

- Omar Encarnación, “The revolt of Empty Spain,” The New York Review, 17 August 2022.
- Albert Esteve and Rocío Treviño, “The main whys are wherefores of childlessness in Spain,” Perspectives Demogràfiques (Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, Barcelona) 15 (April 2019).
- Claire Lee, “Til death do I stay single,” Agence-France Presse International, 6 December 2019.
- Tomás Sobotka, “World’s highest childlessness levels in East Asia,” Population & Societies 595 (11) (December 2021), 1-4.
- Wolfgang Lutz et al., “The low-fertility trap hypothesis: Forces that may lead to further postponement and fewer births in Europe,” Vienna Yearbook of Population Research 4 (2006), 167-192.
- Dominik Wodarz et al., “Evolutionary dynamics of culturally transmitted, fertility-reducing traits,” Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences 287 (1925) (29 April 2020).

Monday
April 24

Fertility and nationalism

- Uriel Abulof, The Morality and Mortality of Nations (2015), 17-43.
- Richard Togman, Nationalizing Sex (2019), 1-19, 177-228.

FAMILY POLICY

Thursday
April 27

The family and welfare state types

- Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies (1999), 47-72.
- Sigrid Leitner, “Varieties of familialism: The caring function of the family in comparative perspective,” European Societies 5 (2003), 353-375.
- Patricia Boling, The Politics of Work-Family Policies, 24-55.

Monday
May 1

France, Germany and Japan

- Patricia Boling, The Politics of Work-Family Policies, 56-146.

Thursday
May 4

Hungary and Poland

- Mitchell A. Orenstein and Bojan Bugarcic, "Work, family, Fatherland: The political economy of populism in Central and Eastern Europe," Journal of European Public Policy (2020), 176-195.
- Guglielmo Meardi and Igor Guardiancich, "Back to the familialist future: The rise of social policy for ruling populist radical right parties in Italy and Poland," West European Politics 25 (2022), 129-153.
- Linda J. Cook et al., "Trying to reverse demographic decline: Pro-natalist and family policies in Russia, Poland and Hungary," Social Policy & Society (2022).

Monday
May 8

The United States

- Patricia Boling, The Politics of Work-Family Policies, 147-228.

CONCLUSION

Thursday
May 11

Demographic fear

- Ivan Krastev, "The fear of shrinking numbers," Journal of Democracy 31 (2020), 66-74.
- Andreu Domingo, "'Demodystopias': Prospects of demographic hell," Population and Development Review 34 (2008), 725-745.
- Anna Degioanni et al., "Living on the edge: Was demographic weakness the cause of Neanderthal demise?" PLoS ONE 14 (5) (2019): e0216742.