

Diversity and the Canadian Family

Division of Sociology & Family Studies
Family Studies 3325B – Winter 2016
Friday 8:30-11:30
BR - 204

Course Description

This course explores contemporary issues of diversity like class, sexual identity, gender, race and ethnicity, disability, geographical location, work and religion within a Canadian, family context. While we will explore some aspects of diversity in their own right, we will also work to emphasize the importance of diversity and intersectionality by exploring many of these themes together - for instance, how do experiences of sexuality and work impact one another? How are race and religion intertwined? What is the relationship between disability and class? This approach will provide you with a more nuanced understanding of the immense range of diverse identities in Canada. While the course emerges from a number of theoretical perspectives relating to inequality, difference, identity and privilege, it will spend significant time focusing on empirical, qualitative research in the field in order to ensure that the lived experience of diversity (as well as the voices of diverse individuals!) are appropriately heard.

The course has also been designed by considering possible career paths you may choose to take after a Family Studies degree: for instance, sex educators, queer youth workers, occupational therapists, family counsellors, early childhood educators, or sex work activists. You may be interested in working with Aboriginal communities, the homeless population, or disabled individuals. Although this list is not exhaustive, it is worth taking into account that the course has been designed with the idea that some 'career prep' may be established here.

You will be strongly encouraged to think through your own diversity (and privilege!) throughout the course as many in-class activities/discussions will be organized around exploring these notions. By promoting an inclusive approach to teaching and learning, which, in turn, aims to enable a safe, comfortable environment, our classroom setting will aim to engage you in activities of self-reflection and in sharing experiences of difference/privilege with one another, while at the same time exploring the many diversities found within a broader Canadian, family context.

Contact Information:

Dr. Nichole Edwards

Email:

 nedwar7@uwo.ca

Office Hours:

 **Thurs 12-1:30pm**

Room:

 **UH – 352**

Please note that I also teach on main campus (with separate office hours) in the event that the hours listed above conflict with your class schedule.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Recognize the varying individual and group diversities within Canada and more specifically, understand these within a family context
- Reflect on and exercise self-awareness regarding your own set of diversities, and perhaps most importantly, your own set of privileges
- Unpack the link between diversity and intersectionality, and in particular, how aspects of difference often exist together or influence one another, thus painting a more well-rounded picture of diverse identities in Canada
- Understand how your own identity relates to or impacts the identities of other individuals and your relationships with them
- Evaluate the role of the media in relation to how it portrays aspects of diversity and difference

Textbooks

A custom course pack is available for purchase at the UWO bookstore.

Additional links and articles will be made available throughout the semester on the class OWL website.

A Few Important Bits to Remember...

- ✚ You will note that there is no mark for attendance in this class. However, it is proven that students who participate regularly (for which you *are* being assessed!) tend to have significantly higher grades at the end of the course. Rather than offer a grade for simply 'showing up', consider your participation mark as good as an attendance one. You are therefore expected to be actively present, not disengaged and 'multi-tasking'. This is disrespectful to both myself and your fellow students.
- ✚ Mobile phones are not permitted under any circumstance (unless I ask you to look something up on your phone for the sake of an in-class activity.) If you have a family or pet emergency, please speak to me before the class starts.
- ✚ Don't assume that a reading is the ultimate authority on an issue – by all means, disagree with authors and ideas! Being a good thinker at this stage of your undergrad career means not holding steadfast to initial opinions – be prepared to question certain conventions and examine different points of view!

Assignments and Evaluations

PARTICIPATION – 15%

Your participation is strongly encouraged in this course as each of you brings a set of experiences related to the elements of diversity, identity and privilege that we will discuss throughout the semester. You know by now that your overall grade can vastly improve by taking part in meaningful discussions and debates within the classroom and I hope you take that role seriously so that we can create a class environment that is equal parts productive, creative and engaging.

EXERCISE ON SELF-AWARENESS – 10%

Complete a profile of yourself describing in some detail (don't just list them!) the various identity groups to which you belong. Identify the role these aspects have played in your own socialization and experiences – in other words, how did you learn about each of these aspects of yourself? Consider messages you might have received from your family or friends; the role of the media; the impact of the culture in which you grew up, etc. What is important and not important about these aspects of yourself? Why are these aspects of you important? Why not?

The goal of this assignment is to critically think through your own identity and the privileges and oppressions that accompany aspects of your identity. Please ensure that you do this, rather than just simply describing different aspects of your identity. Due in class on Friday, Jan. 29th

GROUP PRESENTATION – 20%

From week 3 onwards, small groups will present on the previous week's topic. In other words, presentations will occur one week behind the lecture – in Week 3, the group presenting will cover the topic from Week 2, and so on. You will be responsible for a 30 minute presentation that is related to the lecture and readings – but, you must find supplementary sources on your own. Be creative! We don't want to hear a repeat of the previous week's lecture so find an angle that is original and exciting – get the class involved in activities if you so choose. Feel free to back up the core of your presentation with recent research on the topic, pop culture references, headlines from the media, advertisements that might speak to the themes you're presenting on, etc.

DIVERSITY PORTFOLIO – 30%

The Diversity Portfolio is a way for you to showcase how well you have understood the course objectives. You need to choose one aspect of diversity/difference to focus on for the entire portfolio. While the theme you choose will be broad in nature – for instance, sexuality – you must zero in on a specific issue relating to it and it is this issue which will be the focus of your portfolio. The easy thing to do here would be to choose an area that you are familiar with, or that you intend to focus on in your career. However, I strongly urge you to choose a topic with which you are less familiar, or that perhaps you are uncomfortable with. Doing so speaks more to the objectives of this course in terms of how we all bring our own set of assumptions and privileges when we study diversity. There are four aspects to this assignment, detailed below.

Your portfolio will be due in class on Friday Mar. 11th.

- 1) Summarize and evaluate the specific details of the topic you have chosen, being sure to relate this explicitly to a Canadian, family context. This section should be approximately 500 words.
- 2) How does the media portray the topic you have chosen? Find at least 2 articles or news stories relating to your topic from within the last year. Comment (critically, of course) about how you feel the media creates bias or is biased about this topic. This section should be 500 words max.
- 3) Offer personal reflections on the issue. Be sure to practice your own self-awareness here. This section should be 500 words max.
- 4) What is currently being done in Canada to change the inequalities experienced by the aspect of diversity you have chosen? Think at the level of policy change, social justice/activism, socially, culturally, politically, etc. What do you think *could* or *should* be done, but perhaps isn't? This section should be 750 words.

You can present the contents of your portfolio as creatively or straightforward as you like. In past years, students have turned in 'scrapbook'-like portfolios, interesting page layouts in Word, and so on. This is entirely up to you and how you prefer the creative process to unfold. This is personal preference and a way to encourage you to take control of how you present the information. You will not be given less marks for a lack of creativity – however, there are 'presentation' marks and you may find it makes the portfolio building process much more engaging!

EXAM – 25%

The exam will include short essay questions. Two weeks before the exam period, you will receive a list of questions that will appear on the actual exam (they will not be verbatim, but the themes will remain similar). You will be responsible for answering two of these during the exam, held during the formal examination period - April 9-30th.

Weekly Schedule

Course Section	Date	Topic
PART I – INTRODUCTION	Jan. 8	Introduction to Course & Talking About Difference, Diversity, Privilege and Inequalities
PART II – YOUNG PEOPLE	Jan. 15	The Birds and the Bees: Sex Education and the Family
	Jan. 22	Youth and the Gender/Sexuality Spectrum
	Jan. 29	Disability and Youth
PART III – GENDER & SEXUALITY	Feb. 5	Alternative Kinship Structures: Lesbian Parenting and Polyamorous Families
	Feb. 12	Mothers, Daughters, Sisters: Sex Work and Stigma
READING WEEK	Feb. 15-19	NO CLASS
PART IV – RACE, ETHNICITY & RELIGION	Feb. 26	Suspect Communities and the Politics of the Veil
	Mar. 4	Canada’s Aboriginal Housing Crisis
	Mar. 11	Addiction and the Aboriginal Community
PART V – CLASS INEQUALITIES	Mar. 18	Gender, Shame and Poverty
GOOD FRIDAY	Mar. 25	NO CLASS
	Apr. 1	(Young) Parenthood and Class Diversity in the Media & Exam Review

Detailed Schedule & Readings

Jan 8th – Talking about Difference, Diversity, Privilege and Inequalities

- Charon, J.M. 2004. “Afterword: Should We Generalize About People?” In: *Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective*. Nelson: Toronto, pp. 295-318.

Jan 15th – The Birds and the Bees: Sex Education and the Family

- Kidger, J. 2005. “Stories of Redemption? Teenage Mothers as the New Sex Educators.” *Sexualities*. 8(4), pp. 481-496.
- Weaver, A., Byers, S., Sears, H., Cohen, J., Randall, H. 2002. “Sexual health Education at School and at Home: Attitudes and Experiences of New Brunswick Parents.” *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*. 11(1), pp. 19-31.

Jan. 22nd – Youth and the Gender/Sexuality Spectrum

- Singh, A., Meng, S., and Hansen, A. 2014. "I am my own gender': Resilience Strategies of Transgender Youth." *Journal of Counseling & Development*. 92, pp. 208-218.
- Hall, H. 2006. "Teach to Reach: Addressing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender issues in the Youth Classroom." *The New Educator*. 2, pp. 149-157.

Jan. 29th – Disability and Youth

*Guest Lecturer in 2nd half: Dr. Shellie McParland (Disability Studies, King's College)

- Lindsay, S. and Yantzi, N. 2014. "Weather, disability, vulnerability, and resilience: exploring how youth with physical disabilities experience winter." *Disability & Rehabilitation*, 36(26), pp. 2195-2204.
- TBA

Feb. 5th – Alternative Kinship Structures: From Lesbian Parenting to Polyamorous Families

- Sheff, J. 2011. "Polyamorous Families, Same-Sex Marriage and the Slippery Slope." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 40(5), pp. 487-520.
- Kleese, C. 2006. "Polyamory and it's 'Others': Contesting the Terms of Non-Monogamy." *Sexualities*. 9(5), pp. 565-583.
- Lesbian Parenting reading – TBA *Guest Lecturer – Dr. Lara Descartes*

Feb. 12th – Mothers, Daughters, Wives, Sisters: Sex Work & Stigma

- Krüsi, A., et al. 2014. "Criminalisation of clients: reproducing vulnerabilities for violence and poor health among street-based sex workers in Canada—a qualitative study" *BMJ Open*. 4, Pp. 1-11.
- Read, K. 2014. "Sex work: constructing 'families' with community of practice theory." *Community, Work and Family*. 17(1), pp. 60-78.

Feb 15th – 19th – Reading Week – No Classes

Feb. 26th – Suspect Communities and the Politics of the Veil

- Blackwood, L., Hopkins, N., and Reicher, S. 2013. "I know who I am, but who do they think I am? Muslim perspectives on encounters with airport authorities." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 36(6), pp. 1090-1108.

- Nagra, B. 2011. "Our faith was also hijacked by those people': Reclaiming Muslim Identity in Canada in a Post-9/11 era." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(3), pp. 425-441.

Mar. 4th – Canada's Aboriginal Housing Crisis

- Ralston Saul, J. 2014. "History is Upon Us" and "Rights, Not Sympathy" in *The Comeback*. Toronto: Viking. *These two chapters are not in the custom course pack. I will post them on OWL. The book can also be found in the library.

Mar. 11th – Addiction and the Aboriginal Community

- Waldram, J. 2014. "Healing history? Aboriginal healing, historical trauma and personal responsibility." *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 51(3), pp. 370-386.
- TBA

Mar. 18th – Gender, Shame and Poverty

- Reid, C. and Allison, T. 2006. "Poor Women's Discourses of Legitimacy, Poverty and Health." *Gender & Society*, 20(3), pp. 402-421.
- Walker, R. et al. 2013. "Poverty in Global Perspective: Is Shame a Common Denominator?" *Journal of Social Policy*. 42(2), pp. 215-233.

Mar. 25th – Good Friday – No Classes

Apr. 1st – (Young) Parenthood and Class Diversity in the Media

- Duncan, S. 2007. "What's the problem with teenage parents? And what's the problem with policy?" *Critical Social Policy*. 27(3), pp. 307-334.
- Beggs Weber, J. 2012. "Becoming teen fathers: Stories of teen pregnancy, masculinity and responsibility." *Gender & Society*. 26(6), pp. 900-921.

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2015/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

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

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage 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 academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the 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.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she

may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This 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.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> . The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.html> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.