We live in a period of immense social change in the public world of work and the private world of family life. New technologies have blurred the boundary between home and work. New economic opportunities and pressures have sent women into the workplace. The rise of the “new economy” has created jobs with more short-term flexibility, but less long-term security. And new options in intimate relationships have created more diverse and voluntary, but less predictable family ties. These intertwined shifts signal a social revolution that is reshaping the daily lives and life paths in the 21st century.

To explore the revolution in work and care, the class will address several questions: What does an overview of changes in work, family, and gender patterns tell us about where we are now and where we are going? What are the major dilemmas and dislocations created by these changes, and how are people responding to these conflicts? What are the prospects for the future? And what can we do to enhance the opportunities and limit the insecurities and inequalities of these new arrangements?

The class takes a two-pronged approach. In the first half, we will read, analyze, and discuss cutting edge research. Short “reflection” memos will be due each week to prepare for class discussions focused on core issues in the work-care debate. These 3-4 page memos (typed, double-spaced) should contain a brief discussion of the central questions or main arguments raised by the readings.

During the second half, everyone will conduct their own original research project based on a topic or question raised in the class (and which will require additional reading on the chosen topic). You may use any method suitable for gathering original data, such as face-to-face interviews, small scale surveys, ethnographic observations, or some combination of these methods. Weekly memos will provide a guide through all stages of the research process, from developing a question and formulating a research design to collecting and analyzing data to presenting findings and conclusions in an “article” length paper.

The final grade will reflect a combination of all contributions, including the research paper, class participation, and submission of weekly memos.

Readings will include articles available on the course website, independent reading on the topic of your original research project, and selections from books that can be purchased at the bookstore, including:

Sarah Damaske, *For the Family? How Class and Gender Shape Women’s Work*
Kathleen Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution: Coming of Age in a New Era of Gender, Work, and Family*
Stephen A. Sweet, *The Work-Family Interface: An Introduction*
Barbara J. Risman and Virginia E. Rutter, *Families as They Really Are* (2nd edition)
COURSE SYLLABUS:

Part I: Understanding the New Worlds of Work and Care

1. Welcome, Introduction, and Overview

   Distribution of syllabus, work-family survey, and other course materials.

2. The Rise of Work-Family Conflicts: Where Are We Now & How Did We Get Here?

   Work-family survey due.

   Sweet, *The Work-Family Interface*
   Chapter 1: “The Origins of Contemporary Work-Family Dilemmas”
   Chapter 2: “Diversity of Work, Family, and Work-Family Arrangements”

   Risman & Rutter, *Families as They Really Are*
   Chapter 5: Coontz, “The Evolution of American Families”
   Chapter 8: Powell et al., “Changing Counts, Counting Change: Americans’ Movement toward a More Inclusive Definition of Family”

   Articles on Classes website:
   Cooper, “From Shared Prosperity to the Age of Insecurity”
   Pew Research Center, “Parenting in America,” pp. 15-26

3. The Private Sources of Work-Care Conflicts: The Family & Gender Revolutions

   Reflection memo 1 due.

   Sweet, *The Work-Family Interface*
   Chapter 3: “Individual and Family Frontiers: Personal Responses to Strained Schedules”

   Articles on Classes website:
   Cohen, “Family Diversity as the New Normal”
   Glynn, “Breadwinning Mothers, Then and Now”

   Damaske, *For the Family?*
Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution*

Risman & Rutter, *Families as They Really Are*
Chapter 14: Davis & Owen, “Life in a Dual-Earner Couple Before, During, and After the Great Recession”

4. **The Public Sources of Work-Care Conflicts:**
   Workplace Resistance & Economic Uncertainty

Reflection memo 2 due.

Sweet, *The Work-Family Interface*
Chapter 4: “Employer Frontiers: Organizational Intransigence and Promising Practices”

Damaske, *For the Family?*
Chapters 4-6: “Working Steadily”; “Pulling Back”; “A Life Interrupted”

Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution*
Chapter 5-7: “High Hopes, Lurking Fears”; “Women’s Search for Self-Reliance”; “Men’s Resistance to Equal Sharing”

Articles on Classes website:
Furstenberg et al., “Growing Up is Harder To Do”
Gerson, “There’s No Such Thing as Having It All”

5. **Unequal Transformations: Gender, Class, & Family Divides**

Reflection memo 3 due.

Articles on Classes website:
Corse and Silva, “Intimate Inequalities: Love and Work in the 21st Century”
Williams and Boushey, “Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict”

Risman & Rutter, *Families As They Really Are*
Chapter 32: Roy and Cabrera, “Not Just Provide and Reside: Engaged Fathers in Low-Income Families”
Chapter 37: Myers and Demantas, “Being a Man Without Having a Job and/or Providing Care Instead of Bread”


Reflection memo 4 due.

Sweet, The Work-Family Interface
Chapter 5: “Global Perspectives on the Work-Family Interface”
Chapter 6: “Work-Family Interface as a National Priority”

Damaske, For the Family?
Chapters 7-8: “How Women Account for Work Decisions”; “Having It All: Egalitarian Dreams Deferred”

Gerson, The Unfinished Revolution
Chapters 8-9: “Reaching Across the Gender Divide”; “Finishing the Gender Revolution”

Articles on Classes website:
Council on Contemporary Families, “Millennials, Gender, and the Future”
Pew Research Center, “Women’s and Men’s Aspirations”

Part II: Investigating the New Worlds of Work and Care

7. Getting Started: Formulating a Question & Developing a Research Design

Damaske, For the Family?
Appendix

Gerson, The Unfinished Revolution
Appendix 2: “Studying Social and Individual Change”

Risman & Rutter, Families As They Really Are
Chapter 2: Cherlin, “1049 Reasons Why It’s Hard to Know When a Fact is a Fact”
Chapter 3: Cowan, “When Is a Relationship between Facts a Causal One?”
Chapter 4: Burton, “Uncovering Hidden Facts That Matter When Interpreting Individuals’ Behaviors: An Ethnographic Lens”
Research Memo 1 due:
Describe your research topic and question(s). Choose a topic that has sparked your interest in class and points toward an accessible research setting (e.g., students, organizations, contacts through friends, etc.).

Your question should ask not only what, but also why and how. It should pose and aim to clarify a puzzling “social fact” that might vary in the “real” world. To the extent possible, include a summary of the core debate(s) you will address.

8. Doing Research: Developing Research Instruments, Getting Into the Field, & Collecting Data

Research Memo 2 due:
Describe your planned research design and its rationale. Include a description of your research setting(s), the type of data you will collect, how you will gain access, the central comparisons you will make, and the range of factors you will measure.

Who: Whom will you study? Why? What are the controls and variations?
Where: How will you find the sample?
What: What kind of information will you collect? What are the factors and outcomes you wish to measure (i.e., the independent, intervening, & dependent variables)?

9. Collecting Data (continued)

Research Memo 3 due:
Summarize your progress in data collection and your findings so far.

10. Analyzing Data: Making Sense of Things

Research Memo 4 due:
Update your progress in data collection and findings. Describe any emerging trends, relationships, and insights. Considering others’ findings and/or your own expectations, what have you discovered that is surprising, new, and/or especially interesting?

11. Collecting & Analyzing Data (continued)

Research Memo 5 due (continued)
Update your progress in data collection and analysis.

12. Reaching Conclusions

Research Memo 6 due:
Present your analytic strategy for making sense of your findings. What are the major findings, and what is their theoretical significance? How do they add to, clarify, or challenge current understandings of your topic? All in all, what is your emerging argument – or your answer to the question(s) posed?
13. Writing It Up

Research Memo 7 due:
Submit an outline of your final paper, including:

A. Statement of the research question(s).

B. Brief overview of competing approaches to answering the research question(s),
including an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses and your own approach to the
problem.

C. Brief description and rationale for the methods and a summary of the sample and
analytic categories used to answer the question(s). This is the place for a general
discussion. More technical details should be placed in either endnotes and or an
appendix.

D. Presentation and analysis of the significant findings. This section should form the
bulk of your paper and should contain numerous headings and subheadings. It should
present strategically chosen data that demonstrates your key findings and uses them to
advance your argument.

E. Conclusion. The conclusion should summarize your key findings and use them to
draw and support your overall argument and its relevance for understanding your
research topic.

F. Appendices: Attach relevant appendices that include a fuller explanation of your
methodology, a detailed summary of your sample, copies of any research instruments,
and any other relevant descriptions, findings, or tables not included in the main text.

14. Last Class, Last Chance

Review and revise your “article”

Aim for an approximate length of 15–20 pages (double spaced, not including
appendices). Be careful not to plagiarize in any way and to use proper notation for
endnotes, footnotes, and references. Submit both hard & electronic copies.

If you wish, you may include a brief abstract at the beginning at the beginning of the
paper – i.e., under the title and before the text begins.
INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Kathleen Gerson is Professor of Sociology and Collegiate Professor of Arts & Science, where she studies work-family connections and their links to the structuring of gender inequality. Now at work on a study of how rising job insecurity and relationship uncertainty are reshaping work-care strategies in the new economy," she is the author of numerous books and articles. Her most recent book, The Unfinished Revolution, is an award-winning study of how new generations have responded to the gender revolution of the last several decades. Her other books include Hard Choices: How Women Decide About Work, Career, and Motherhood; No Man’s Land: Men’s Changing Commitments to Family and Work; The Time Divide: Work, Family, and Gender Inequality (with Jerry A. Jacobs), and a forthcoming book, The Art and Science of Interviewing: How to Learn About Society by Talking with People. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Distinguished Career Award from the Family Section of the American Sociological Association, the ASA’s Jessie Bernard Award for distinguished contributions to the study of women and gender, and the Rosabeth Kanter Award for excellence in work-family research. In addition to her many years at NYU, Kathleen has held visiting positions at the Stanford Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, the Russell Sage Foundation in New York City, and the Center for Status Passages in the Life Course at Bremen University, Germany.