The New Worlds of Work and Care

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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 transformation that is reshaping both the daily lives and life pathways of 21st century women and men.

To explore the causes, consequences, and significance of the twin revolutions 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 coping with these conflicts? What are the implications for the future? And what can we do to enhance the opportunities and limit the insecurities and inequalities of these new arrangements for women, men, and children?

The class takes a two-pronged approach. For the first half of the semester, we will read, analyze, and discuss cutting edge research. During the second half, everyone will conduct their own original research project (which will require additional reading on your chosen topic).

In Part I, short “reflection” memos are due each week to help prepare for class discussion focused on core issues in the work-care debate. These 2–3 page memos (typed, double-spaced) should contain a brief discussion of the central questions or main arguments raised by the readings. The memos, due in class on the day of the assigned topic, will be assessed in general categories (e.g., pass, pass+, redo, or failure to submit). Everyone is expected to participate by discussing the content, significance, and reactions to the readings. Knowledgeable, thoughtful participation is essential!

In Part II, everyone will develop and carry out an original research project based on a topic or question raised in the first part of the class. 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, due in class on the day of the assignment, will provide a guide through all the 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 (about 60%), class participation (about 10%), and submission of weekly memos (about 30%).

Readings include articles available on the course website, independent reading on the topic of your original research project, and selections from the following books (which can be purchased at the bookstore):

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)

**CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS**

**Part I: Understanding the New Worlds of Work and Care**

**Welcome, Introduction, and Overview**

Distribute syllabus and work-family survey.

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

Sweet, *The Work-Family Interface*

Chapter 1: The Origins of Contemporary Work-Family Dilemmas

Chapter 2: Diversity of Work, Family, and Work-Family Arrangements


Cohen, “Family Diversity as the New Normal”

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”

*Work-family survey due*
The Private Side of Work-Care Conflicts: The Family & Gender Revolutions

Furstenberg et al., “Growing Up is Harder To Do”
Glynn, “Breadwinning Mothers, Then and Now”
Pew, “Breadwinner Moms”

Damaske, *For the Family?*
Chapters 1-3: The Need and Choice Myths; The Shape of Women’s Work Pathways; A Major Career Woman: How Women Develop Early Expectations About Work

Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution*
Chapters 1-4: The Shaping of a New Generation; Families Beyond the Stereotypes; The Rising Fortunes of Flexible Families; Domestic Deadlocks and Declining Fortunes

Risman & Rutter, *Families as They Really Are*

*Reflection memo 1 due.*

The Public Side of Work-Care Conflicts: Workplace Intransigence & Its Consequences

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

Gerson, “Different Ways of Not Having It All”
Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All”
Council on Contemporary Families, “Gender Rebound Symposium”

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

Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution*
Chapters 5-6: High Hopes, Lurking Fears; Women’s Search for Self-Reliance; Men’s Resistance to Equal Sharing; Reaching Across the Gender Divide

*Reflection memo 2 due.*
Unequal Transformations Across Gender, Class, & Age Divides

Williams and Boushey, “Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict”
Pew, “Parenting in America”

Risman & Rutter, Families As They Really Are
Chapter 21: Williams, “Promoting Marriage Among Single Mothers: An Ineffective Weapon in the War on Poverty?”

*Reflection memo 3 due.*

The Challenges of Work & Family Change: Work-Family Policies & Possibilities

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

Boushey, “The Role of the Government in Work-Family Conflict”
Pedulla & Thebaud, “Can We Finish the Revolution?”
Jacobs & Gerson, “Unpacking American Views on Parental Employment”

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

Gerson, The Unfinished Revolution
Chapter 9: Finishing the Gender Revolution

*Reflection memo 4 due.*
Part II: Investigating the New Worlds of Work and Care

Getting Started: Formulating a Question & Developing a Research Design

Damaske, *For the Family?*
Appendix

Damaske and Gerson, *The Art and Science of Interviewing*
Chapter 1: Why Interview?
Chapter 2: Getting Started: Posing a Question and Constructing a Research Design

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.

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

Damaske and Gerson, *The Art and Science of Interviewing*
Chapter 3: Interviews with Whom? When a Big Question Meets a Small Sample
Chapter 4: Constructing an Interview Guide
Chapter 5: Conducting Interviews
Research Memo 2 due:

Describe your planned research design and its rationale. Include a description of your research setting(s), 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? The sample, population to be studied, along with controls & variations
Where? Where, how will you find your sample?
What? What kind of information will you collect? Independent, intervening, & dependent variables?

Collecting Data (continued)

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

Analyzing Data: Making Sense of Things

Damaske and Gerson, The Art and Science of Interviewing
Chapter 6: Making Sense of Messy Material: Finding the Shape in the Stone

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?

Collecting & Analyzing Data (continued)

Research Memo 5 due:

Update your progress in data collection and analysis.

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?
Writing It Up

Damaske and Gerson, *The Art and Science of Interviewing*
Chapter 7: Finishing

*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.

Last Class, Last Chance

Review and revise your “article”!

“Articles” due

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.