We live in a time of revolutionary social change. New technologies have blurred the boundary between home and work. New economic opportunities and pressures have sent women into the workplace worldwide. The rise of a new, globalized economy has created jobs with more short-term flexibility but less long-term security. And new options in intimate relationships have created more diverse, fluid, and voluntary family ties. These intertwined shifts in the public world of work and the private world of domestic life are intertwined aspects of a social and economic revolution that is reshaping the life options and pathways for new generations in the 21st century.

To explore the causes, consequences, and significance of this revolution in work and personal life, 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?

To answer these questions, this class takes a two-pronged approach. For the first half of the semester, we will read, analyze, and discuss cutting edge research on the current state of work and family life in the 21st century, with a focus on U.S. trends and their consequences.

During the second half, everyone will conduct their own original research project, focusing on a topic that has sparked their interest. The experience of developing, conducting, and completing a research project provides a chance to learn how to produce knowledge and not just consume it. This portion of the course will entail some additional reading tailored to each person’s chosen topic as well as some shared reading on the basics of social research.
Part I: Weekly Readings and Memos

To prepare for class discussions, memos are due each week that summarize and discuss the central questions and main arguments raised by the assigned readings.

The memos should be brief – 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages – and are due in class on the day of the scheduled topic. They will be assessed in very general categories, including “pass” (for satisfactory work); “pass plus” (for extraordinary work); “pass minus” (for borderline satisfactory work); and “resubmit” (for work that is clearly not acceptable). Failure to submit a memo will considered a “fail.”

It is equally important to arrive in class prepared to participate actively and thoughtfully, sharing your insights as outlined in the memos.

Part II: Formulating and Conducting an Original Research Project

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 (of about 12-15 pages). These “research memos” will be graded pass/fail.

Grading:

The final grade will reflect the degree and quality of all contributions, including the research paper (about 30%), the weekly reflection and research memos as a whole (about 55%), and the quality and quantity of class participation (about 15%).

Some Class Rules:

• No laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices are allowed (except when needed for a classroom purpose). The use of an electronic device during class will be penalized.

• Class attendance is required, and everyone is expected to arrive prepared and to participate knowledgeably in discussions. Failure to do so will be penalized.

• All assignments – including assigned readings and memos – are due on time, with penalties for late submissions.
Assigned Readings:

- Scanned articles available in the “Resources” tab on the course website on Classes. The “Readings” folder lists each assignment in order, with the readings distributed according to date we will discuss them in class.

- Independent reading on the topic of your original research project

- 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*

Disability Disclosure Statement:

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosecsrd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.
CLASS SCHEDULE & WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

1: Welcome, Introduction, and Overview

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

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

*Work-family survey responses due.*

_Sweet, The Work-Family Interface_
Chapter 1: “The Origins of Contemporary Work-Family Dilemmas” (pp. 1-16)
Chapter 2: “Diversity of Work, Family, and Work-Family Arrangements” (pp. 17-42)

*Articles on Classes website:*
Cooper, “From Shared Prosperity to the Age of Insecurity”
Pew Research Center, “Women’s and Men’s Aspirations”
Pew Research Center, “Parenting in America”

3: The Family & Gender Revolutions as Private Sources of Work-Caregiving Conflicts

*Reflection memo 1 due.*

_Sweet, The Work-Family Interface_
Chapter 3: “Individual and Family Frontiers: Personal Responses to Strained Schedules (pp. 43-63)

*Articles on Classes website:*
Cohen, “Family Diversity as the New Normal”
Glynn, “Breadwinning Mothers, Then and Now”
Payne, “Children’s Family Structure, 2019”

_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” (pp. 3-64)

_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” (pp. 1-99)
4: Institutional Resistance & Economic Uncertainty as Public Sources of Work-Caregiving Conflicts

*Reflection memo 2 due.*

Sweet, *The Work-Family Interface*
Chapter 4: “Employer Frontiers: Organizational Intransigence and Promising Practices” (pp. 64-87)

Damaske, *For the Family?*
Chapters 4-6: “Working Steadily”; “Pulling Back”; “A Life Interrupted” (pp. 67-141)

Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution*
Chapter 5-7: “High Hopes, Lurking Fears”; “Women’s Search for Self-Reliance”; “Men’s Resistance to Equal Sharing” (103-188)

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 Between & Within Families

*Reflection memo 3 due.*

Articles on Classes website:
Corse and Silva, “Intimate Inequalities: Love and Work in the 21st Century”
Myers and Demantas, “Being a Man Without Having a Job and/or Providing Care Instead of Bread”
Powell et al., “Changing Counts, Counting Change: Americans’ Movement toward a More Inclusive Definition of Family”
Sullivan, “Men’s Changing Contribution to Family Work”
Williams and Boushey, “Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict” (pp. 1-10)

Reflection memo 4 due.

Sweet, The Work-Family Interface
Chapter 5: “Global Perspectives on the Work-Family Interface” (pp. 88-113)
Chapter 6: “Work-Family Interface as a National Priority” (pp. 114-130)

Damaske, For the Family?
Chapters 7-8: “How Women Account for Work Decisions”; “Having It All: Egalitarian Dreams Deferred” (pp. 145-172)

Gerson, The Unfinished Revolution
Chapters 8-9: “Reaching Across the Gender Divide”; “Finishing the Gender Revolution” (pp. 189-226)

Articles on Classes website:
Collins, “Making Motherhood Work” (and “Tables”); “Politicizing Mothers’ Work-Family Conflict”
Council on Contemporary Families, “Parents Can’t Go It Alone: What to Do for Parents to Help Our Next Generation”

Part II: Investigating the New Worlds of Work and Family

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

Research Memo 1 due:

Describe your research topic and question(s). Choose a topic that has sparked your interest in class and that 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.

On Classes website:
Gerson and Damaske, The Science and Art of Interviewing
Chapter 1: “Interviewing as Science and Art”
Chapter 2: “Getting Started”
8. Developing Research Instruments

*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 and why? What are the controls and variations within your sample?

Where? How will you find your sample?

What? What kind of information will you collect? What are your independent, intervening, & dependent variables?

On Classes website:
Gerson and Damaske, *The Science and Art of Interviewing*
Chapter 3: “Interviews with Whom?”
Chapter 4: “Constructing an Interview Guide”

9. Collecting Data

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

On Classes website:
Gerson and Damaske, *The Science and Art of Interviewing*
Chapter 5: “Conducting Interviews”

10. Collecting Data (continued)

*Research Memo 4 due:*
Update your progress in data collection and findings.

11. Analyzing Data: Making Sense of Things

*Research Memo 5 due:*
Describe any emerging trends, relationships, and insights. What have you discovered that is surprising, new, and/or especially interesting?

Gerson and Damaske, *The Science and Art of Interviewing*
Chapter 6: “Analyzing Interviews”
12. Collecting & Analyzing Data (continued)

*Research Memo 6 due:*
Update your progress in data collection and analysis.

13. Reaching Conclusions

*Research Memo 7 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?

Gerson and Damaske, *The Science and Art of Interviewing*
Chapter 7: “Pulling It All Together”

14. Writing It Up

*Research Memo 8 due:*
Submit an outline of your final paper, including:

- Statement of the research question(s).

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

- 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, with more technical details placed in either endnotes and or an appendix.

- Presentation and analysis of significant findings. This section should be the bulk of your paper and contain numerous headings and subheadings. Present strategically chosen data to demonstrate your key findings and use them to advance your argument.

- Conclusion. This is the place to summarize your key findings and use them to support your overall argument and its significance for understanding the research topic.

- Appendices: Attach any relevant appendices that provide information about your methodology, sample, research instruments, and/or other relevant descriptions, documents, or tables not included in the main text.
Papers due

Aim for an approximate length of 15–20 pages (double spaced, not including appendices).

Be careful not to plagiarize by using quotation marks, endnotes, and references to the work of others.

Upload a digital version to the “Assignments” tab on the Classes website, in the folder labeled “Final Paper.” In addition, submit a hard copy at the Sociology Department, either at the front desk or in my mailbox.

Submit by 5:00 pm. Late submissions will be penalized.