

SOC 495/ CCS 580 Gender and Family in East Asia
University of Michigan, Fall 2022

Instructor: Prof. Yun Zhou (zhouyun@umich.edu)

1 Course Description

Who marries whom in contemporary East Asian societies, and how have patterns of cohabitation and marriage timing changed? How do individuals make decisions about childbearing, negotiate work-family demands, and divide housework and childcare? Why are China, Japan, and South Korea experiencing extremely low fertility rates? Why is low fertility considered a “problem,” and for whom? What are the consequences of various policies that seek to govern individuals’ sexual and reproductive behavior?...

In this course, we explore in depth the dynamics of gender and family in contemporary East Asian societies—we ask: What do patterns and changes about what goes on in the “private sphere” tell us about a society’s norms and beliefs about gender? We focus on China, Japan, and South Korea, and adopt a comparative perspective. The course is divided into four thematic sections, we examine the dynamics of gender and family in its relation to 1) work and the labor market; 2) state and governance; 3) intimacy, and 4) globalization.

2 Learning Objectives

- This course sits at the cross-section of family sociology, social demography, gender studies, and Asian studies. It is intended for upper-level undergraduate students as well as early graduate students who are interested in learning about social demography, gender and family systems, and population policies in East Asia. There are no language prerequisites for this course.
- The readings consist of both theoretical and empirical pieces. Through this course, you are expected to develop a reasonable grasp of the major theories, concepts, and facts.
- We will read works that have used a variety of methodological approaches. You are expected to develop the ability to interpret data (quantitative and qualitative) in order to build and critique arguments.
- The course will also provide resources and some methodological training that prepare you to write a research paper in the future.

3 Course Material

All required readings are electronically available through either the course site, or the UM library.

4 Requirements and Assessments

4.1 Course discussant (20%)

Participation is critical for a class like ours. Our **in-person** Tuesday meetings will mostly be lectures from me. Starting the second week (Sept 6th), you are expected to come to class having read and reflected on that week's assigned readings.

On Thursdays, we will have round-table seminar-style discussions, with some of you being the discussants each week. Everyone is expected to lead the discussion for **one** Thursday. A sign-up sheet will be sent out in the second week of class. To make sure everyone have adequate time to adjust, **we start students-led discussions on Sept 15th (the third Thursday).**

As the discussant, you are expected to 1) briefly present your thoughts on the week's readings (e.g., what you learnt from/enjoyed the most about them, your critiques, etc.) and 2) suggest prompts and questions for the group. For some of us, leading discussions can feel intimidating. In the week that you are the discussant, I encourage you to come to office hour and I will guide you through this process.

In-person participation is expected for this course. Of course, COVID-19 continues to bring uncertainty and disruptions. If the situation calls for, we will make adjustments to our meeting modality as needed.

4.2 Reading response (75%)

Starting the second week (Sept 6th), each Tuesday, you will receive a prompt that helps you to think more about the material covered and write that week's response. You are free to choose **any five weeks** to write a response, which should be submitted to the course Canvas site by **the following Wednesday 11:59pm.**

Your reading response should be **2-4 pages in length, using double space and 12-pt font.** You are evaluated on the thoughtfulness of your response: A thoughtful response does not simply summarize/recap the readings, but reflect on them (e.g., asking questions, connecting them with world events or other readings). A thoughtful response is concise, coherent, and to-the-point.

Because there is flexibility built in already (i.e., you can choose which weeks that you want

to write the response), **no extension** will be granted. In extenuating circumstances (e.g., sickness, caring for a sick loved one, etc.) that you are unable to turn in responses for multiple weeks, please reach out to me to discuss alternative plans. You are welcome to write additional responses and I am happy to engage you in discussions and provide feedback—however, only the **first five** submissions count toward your final grade.

4.3 Office hour check-in (5%)

Office hours offer a great space to build intellectual connections and get support, whether you have questions about the course or simply want to chat. I invite everybody to **at least one** brief office hour check-ins.

Office hours are not meant to be evaluative—meaning that you don’t have to worry about “sounding smart” for your professor, and you receive the full 5% as long as you show up. If you feel more comfortable setting up the meeting as a group (2-3 people), you are welcome to do so as well. In addition, you are welcome to set up any number of additional meetings beyond the first check-in.

To set up a meeting, use the link on Canvas site. If none of the available time slots works for you, please reach out to me to discuss alternative plans.

5 Grade Composition and Conversion

Course discussant $1 \times 20\% = \mathbf{20\%}$

Reading response $5 \times 15\% = \mathbf{75\%}$

Office hour check-in $1 \times 5\% = \mathbf{5\%}$

Letter grade conversion:

A+ 97% and above	A 92-96%	A- 88-91%
B+ 85-87%	B 81-84%	B- 78-80%
C+ 75-77%	C 71-74%	C- 68-70%
D+ 65-67%	D 61-64%	D- 58-60%
E 55-57%	F 54% and below	

6 Support, Resources, and Inclusive Learning

6.1 Writing support

I strongly encourage everyone to utilize the services provided by the Writing Center. You could meet with a writing consultant to improve your assignments.

6.2 Inclusive learning

The university and I are committed to fully include all students. Diverse perspectives are a valuable asset in the learning process—they strengthen our engagement with and understanding of the course material.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) can provide support services and academic accommodations to students with disabilities. Please inform me and contact SSD as soon as possible (<https://ssd.umich.edu/topic/our-services>) to request any accommodations.

If religious observances conflict with any course activities, please let me know early in the semester.

Additional resources on inclusive teaching can be found here:

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/home/campus-resources-2/>

Please reach out to me if you need support and resources, particularly in light of the pandemic.

6.3 Difficult and challenging topics

Some topics surrounding dating, marriage, fertility, and reproduction can feel especially challenging, contentious, or frustrating to engage with. These feelings and experiences are valid—and as a class and as a community, part of the learning process is finding our own path to and language for productive engagement with difficult topics. Again, please reach out to me if you need support and resources.

7 Course Schedule

PRELUDE

Week 1 Welcome to the Course

8/30 Introduction the course and to each other

9/1 The big picture

Readings:

- Raymo, James M., Hyunjoon Park, Yu Xie, & Wei-jun Jean Yeung. 2015. "Marriage and family in East Asia: Continuity and change." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 471-492.
- Whyte, Martin. 2020. "Confronting puzzles in understanding Chinese family change: A personal reflection." *Chinese Journal of Sociology*.
- West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing gender." *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125-151.

GENDER, FAMILY, & WORK

Week 2 Myth of the "Ideal Worker"

9/6: Lecture

9/8: Discussion

Readings:

- Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations." *Gender & Society* 4(2): 139-158.
- Brinton, Mary C, & Eunmi Mun. 2016. "Between state and family: Managers' implementation and evaluation of parental leave policies in Japan." *Socio-Economic Review* 14(2): 257-281.
- Oh, Eunsil, & Eunmi Mun. 2022. "Compensatory work devotion: How a culture of overwork shapes women's parental leave in South Korea." *Gender & Society* 36(4): 552-77.

Week 3 Women's Decision to Work

9/13: Lecture

9/15: Discussion

Readings:

- Damaske, Sarah. 2011. "A major career woman? How women develop early expectations about work." *Gender & Society* 25: 409-430.
- Oh, Eunsil. 2018. "Who deserves to work? How women develop expectations of child care support in Korea." *Gender & Society* 32(4): 493-515.
- Zhou, Yun. 2020. "Good mothers work: How maternal employment shapes women's expectation of work and family in contemporary urban China." *Journal of Social Issues*.

Week 4 Gender, Work, and Social Class

9/20: Lecture

9/22: Discussion

Readings:

- Chuang, Julia. 2016. "Factory girls after the factory: Female return migrations in rural China." *Gender & Society* 30(3): 467-489.
- Jacka, Tamara. 2012. "Migration, household, and the well-being of left-behind women in rural Ningxia." *China Journal* 67: 1-22.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. 1995. "Engendering the worlds of labor: Women workers, labor markets, and production politics in the South China economic miracle." *American Sociological Review* 60(3): 378-397.

Week 5 Stalled Revolution I: Gender, Education, and Marriage

9/27: Lecture

9/29: Discussion

Readings:

- Hong, Leta. 2012. "China's 'leftover' women." *NYT*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/opinion/global/chinas-leftover-women.html>
- Rich, Motoko. 2019. "Craving freedom, Japan's women opt out of marriage." *NYT*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/world/asia/japan-single-women-marriage.html>
- England, Paula, & Jonathan Bearak. 2012. "Women's education and their likelihood of marriage: A historic reversal."
- Nemoto, Kumiko . 2008. "Postponed marriage: Exploring women's views of matrimony and work in Japan." *Gender & Society* 22(2): 219-237.

Week 6 Stalled Revolution II: Work-Family and Low Fertility

10/4: Lecture

10/6: Discussion

Readings:

- Brinton, Mary C., & Eunsil Oh. 2019. “Babies, work, or both? Highly educated women’s employment and fertility in East Asia.” *American Journal of Sociology* 125(1): 105-140.
- McDonald, Peter. 2000. “Gender equity in theories of fertility transition.” *Population and Development Review* 26(3): 427-439.
- Zhou, Yun. 2019. “The dual demands: Gender equity and fertility intentions after the one-child policy.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 28(117): 367-384.

GENDER, FAMILY, & STATE

Week 7 Gender and the State

10/11: Lecture

10/13: Discussion

Readings:

- Gal, Susan, & Gail Kligman. 2012. *The politics of gender after socialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Read Chapters 1, 3.
- Wang, Di. 2020. “Jia, as in Guojia: Building the Chinese family into a filial nationalist project.” *China Law and Society Review* 5(1): 1-32.
- Wang, Zheng. 2005. “‘State feminism’? Gender and socialist state formation in Maoist China.” *Feminist Studies* 31(3): 519-551.

Week 8 Film Screening

10/18: No Class Fall Break

10/20: Film

Week 9 Governing Divorce

10/25: Lecture

10/27: Discussion

Readings:

- Alexy, Allison. 2020. *Intimate disconnections: Divorce and the romance of independence in contemporary Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Read Chapters 1, 3.

- Michelson, Ethan. 2019. "Decoupling: Marital violence and the struggle to divorce in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 125(2): 325-381.

Week 10 Governing Reproduction: The Case of One-Child Policy

11/1: Lecture

11/3: Discussion

Readings:

- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2001. "Fresh winds in Beijing: Chinese feminists speak out on the one-child policy and women's lives." *Signs* 26(3): 847-886.
- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2008. "Science, modernity, and the making of China's one-child policy." *Population and Development Review* 29(2): 163-196.
- Zhou, Yun. 2021. "The personal and the political: Gender equity and attitudes toward birth restriction in contemporary urban China." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*. DOI: 10.1177/23780231211032743
- Whyte, Martin, Wang Feng, & Yong Cai. 2015. "Challenging myths about China's one-child policy." *China Journal* 74: 144-159.

GENDER, FAMILY, & INTIMACY

Week 11 Challenging Heteronormativity: Queering Family

11/8: Lecture

11/10: Discussion

Readings:

- Zhou, Yun. 2022. "Visualizing gendered attitudes toward same-sex sexual behavior in China over a decade." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*. DOI: 10.1177/23780231221117401
- Zhu, Jingshu. 2018. "Unqueer' kinship? Critical reflections on 'marriage fraud' in mainland China." *Sexualities* 21(7):1075-91.
- Brainer, Amy. 2019. *Queer kinship and family change in Taiwan*. Rutgers University Press. Read Chapters 1, 3, 4.

Week 12 Beyond Femininity: Fatherhood

11/15: Lecture

11/17: Discussion

Readings:

- Brinton, Mary C, & Nobuko Nagase. 2017. "The gender division of labor and second births: Labor market institutions and fertility in Japan." *Demographic Research* 36: 339-370.
- Kim, Allen, & Karen Pyke. 2015. "Taming tiger dads: Hegemonic American masculinity and South Korea's father school." *Gender & Society* 29(4): 509-533.
- Li, Xuan. 2020. "Father involvement in Chinese societies: Increasing presence, uneven progresses." *Child Development Perspectives* 14(3), 150-156.

Week 13 Film Screening

11/22: Film

11/24: No Class Thanksgiving Break

GENDER, FAMILY, & GLOBALIZATION

Week 14 Asia in the World

11/29: Lecture

12/1: Discussion

Readings:

- Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2014. "Flirting with capital: Negotiating perceptions of Pan-Asian ascendancy and Western decline in global sex work." *Social Problems* 61(4): 507-529.
- Otis, Eileen M. 2008. "Beyond the industrial paradigm: Market-embedded labor and the gender organization of global service work in China." *American Sociological Review* 73(1): 15-36.

Week 15 Concluding Remarks

12/6: Lecture

12/8: Film

Readings:

- Mohanty, Chandra. 1988. "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses." *Feminist Review* 30: 61-88.