

LER/WMNST 472: Work-Life Practices and Policies^{1,2}
Tuesday & Thursday 10:35- 11:50 am, Sackett Bldg 309

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 pm & by appointment

Course Objectives:

Have you ever wondered: What happens when a worker's child is sick? Are mothers discriminated against in the labor market? What happens to men at work when they have children? How is a person's health influenced by their work? Does the division of labor at home benefit some people more than others? This course will provide answers to these questions and more through an in-depth investigation of the institutions that structure work-family life in 21st century America. First, we consider how work and families have changed in the last 50 years. Second, we investigate how inequalities based on gender, race, class, and family structure manifest at work. Third, we investigate how work responsibilities impact home life and how this differs according to race, gender, class and family structure. Finally, we ask what solutions may fix some of today's most pressing work-life dilemmas.

Student Objectives:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- *Critically think, discuss, and write about the topics of this course.
- *Investigate how *structural* inequalities are reproduced at home and at work.
- *Understand how social institutions such as the economy and the government influence individuals, workers, and families.
- * Use library sources for secondary research.

Course Format:

This course will be run as part-lecture and part-discussion seminar. The class will open with a discussion of the day's topic that we will then connect to the assigned readings through class discussion. Participation in class discussion is critical. I encourage you to think of the class discussions as an opportunity to critically engage the texts, your classmates and me. These discussions require your thorough reading of these texts and I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss *all* readings due for that day.

Assigned Journal Articles and Book Chapters:

There are a number of journal articles and book chapters required reading for the course. These readings are listed in the syllabus and available via our Canvas page.

¹ For the creation of this syllabus, I drew from many materials from the Sloan Foundation Work and Family Research Network website: <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/>. I thank all of the researchers associated with the site for generously sharing their syllabi and other materials. I also thank Brianne Pragg for graciously sharing her front-end materials.

² Syllabus is subject to change.

Course Requirements: (Please note more detailed assignments will be discussed in class and are available on Canvas.)

The Balancing Life Assignment will be worth **20%** of your final grade. This requires you to fill out Part 1 of the worksheet before class, fill out Part 2 during our class meeting, and write a reflection (Part 3) on the assignment. You **MUST** complete all three components.

The Hunger Project will be worth **20%** of your final grade. Students will will “shop” for three days’ worth of food for your family at a local food store on a SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) budget. To report on your findings, you will write a short report and an evaluation of the equity of the SNAP program.

Group Debates will be **20%** of your final grade. Students will be split into groups of three to four and divided into debate teams. The basic model for our in-class debates will be loosely based on the Lincoln-Douglas Debate formats used in forensics tournaments. Each team (Affirmative (“pro”) and Negative (“con”)) will advance and defend arguments in favor of their assigned positions, while also attempting to articulate objections to their opponents’ positions.

Your Debate Response will be **15%** of your final grade. Each student will have the chance to write a 2-3 page reflection on the debate topic. This is an opportunity to expand on what you learned in preparing for the debate.

Your Debate Rubrics will be **5%** of your final grade. Each student will evaluate the debates as they happen live! The rubric can be found on Canvas as part of the debate packet and I will have them available in class during the debates. Your participation as a supportive and encouraging audience member in the debates is a crucial part of the debate success. You will also help choose the “winner” of each debate.

Reading Response will be worth **10%** of your final grade. All students must post a response to the week’s reading by 10 am on Wednesday to the class Canvas page. This response must provide a summary of the main argument of the week’s reading (1-2 paragraphs, NO copying directly from the reading please) *and* must provide at least **two** discussion questions/statements. You will not receive a grade on this—you will either receive full or no credit (all students can drop 1 reading responses). The reading responses should provide a good stepping stone for class participation.

Classroom Participation is worth **10%** of your final grade. Classroom participation is an essential part of this class and a great opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the class readings and your ability to connect these readings to concepts from the lectures. If you are shy, please come speak to me about strategies for participation.

Extra Credit is not generally given, with **ONE** exception. I encourage you to stop by my office hours to say hello and get to know me (and let me get to know you). Everyone who stops by office hours will receive **1 point of extra credit** to use towards any assignment.

Class Attendance Policy

My experience in teaching is that there is a definite link between attendance and performance. While there are no guarantees, students who come to class and pay attention during lectures and discussions, tend both to learn more and receive higher grades. For this reason **I strongly suggest** you attend **every** class session. Missing class is inadvisable as it will influence your class participation grade *and* your understanding of the material. If you must miss class, obtain a copy of the lecture notes from another student in class (I only provide the PPT).

Exam/Paper Policy: All students are hand in papers/participate in the debates at the dates and times assigned. Only illness or personal emergency will be accepted as excuses for participating and an alternative exercise will be substituted. These should be reported to the instructor or the teaching assistant, **prior** to the period and documentation is required.

Late papers will be penalized and will not receive the extensive feedback that papers handed in on time will receive. **The penalty for late assignments is a 1/3 of a grade per day** (for example, a B would become a B-, etc.). If there are circumstances (illness, family emergency, etc.) that are interfering with your ability to complete assignments in a timely manner, it is your responsibility to inform me as **before** the assignment is due (NOT after assignment due dates).

NOTE: On-time papers **MUST** be handed in on-line on Canvas by the time they are due.

Academic Dishonesty: Any instance of academic dishonesty (as defined in the [student handbook](#), including cheating on exams, plagiarism, or collaboration on written assignments) will result in **failure of the course**. Violations will also be reported to the appropriate University authorities for further action.

****If you are thinking about taking a short cut with your work, COME SEE ME INSTEAD!**
Students most often get in trouble with academic dishonesty when they feel overwhelmed (either by coursework or something else). This is a work-life class—I understand that this may happen. PLEASE come talk to me before taking a step that has serious repercussions.

Note to students with disabilities: Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: www.equity.psu.edu/ods/. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

Classroom Etiquette:

*Students are expected to come to class on time and to stay until class ends.

*In general, laptops are ok, **ONLY** when you are taking notes. I highly recommend putting them aside, so that you can better participate in course discussions.

***BUT** absolutely **NO** texting or use of the computer for other purposes, please. You think it doesn't disrupt the class or bother your classmates. It does. Please refrain, thank you.

Communication. I prefer to be called either “Professor Damaske” or “Dr. Damaske” in both written and oral communications. If you need to contact me with a **BRIEF** question, the

best/fastest way to reach me is to email: sarahdamaske@psu.edu. During the week, I will respond to emails within 48 hours—weekends and conference travel might delay my response. For tips on how to best communicate by email with your professors, see this helpful link: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>. Please note, I do NOT discuss grades over email; I only talk about grades during office hours.

For questions that require longer than a TWO-sentence response, I HIGHLY recommend you come to my office hours! Or we can schedule a time to meet outside of them if necessary.

Grades:

All students, including those taking the course on a Pass/Fail basis, must submit ALL required work to receive a passing grade.

1. Balancing Life Reflection (20%)
2. Reading Reflections (10%)
3. Project Hunger Paper (20%)
4. Group Debates (20%)
5. Debate Response (15%)
6. Debate Rubrics (5%)
7. Class Participation (10%)

Grading Scale:

- A 94-100
- A- 90-93.9
- B+ 87-89.9
- B 84-86.9
- B- 80-83.9
- C+ 77-79.9
- C 70-76.0
- D 60-69.9
- F 59 and below

What kind of work receives an “A” grade?

This is a fair question. Unlike grading that is done where there is an absolutely “right” and a “wrong” answer, grades in this class depend both on your understanding of course material *and* your ability to demonstrate this understanding through well-organized and thoughtful written and oral work. While this makes the process somewhat subjective, you also gain the benefit of partial credit. Below I describe my expectations about grading standards.

A range **Excellent work.** Demonstrates superior ability to creatively and thoughtfully organize and express ideas. Displays excellent comprehension of all course material and provides a well-considered and thorough response to the assignment.

- B range** **Good work.** Demonstrates good organization and expression of ideas. Displays a good understanding of course material and provides detailed response to the assignment, although there may be some oversights or missing connections.
- C range** **Fair work.** Demonstrates uneven skills in organization and expression of ideas, and displays a satisfactory understanding of general course concepts, but with significant gaps in understanding of details, applications, or connections.
- D-F range** **Marginal to Unacceptable work.** Demonstrates little ability to organize and express ideas in an understandable manner, displays little comprehension of course concepts or provides an incomplete assignment.

PART I: Historical Change and Work-Life Spheres

WEEK 1: Introduction & Overview, 8/27 & 8/29

Tuesday: Intro

Thursday: Folbre, Nancy. 2001. Chapter 1 in *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*

WEEK 2: Historical Division of Labor, 9/3 & 9/5

Tuesday: It's ALWAYS Been This Way...

May, Martha. 1987. "The Historical Problem of the Family Wage." In Naomi Gerstel and Harriet Gross (Eds.), *Families and Work*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1992. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18(1):1-43.

Thursday: Understanding the Time Crunch

Gerson, Kathleen, and Jerry A. Jacobs. 2004. "The Work-Home Crunch." *Contexts* 3(4):29-37.

WEEK 3: How Has our Time Use Changed?, 9/10 & 9/12

Tuesday: The 24/7 Economy

Gerstel, Naomi and Dan Clawson. 2015. "Normal Unpredictability and the Chaos in Our Lives." *Contexts* 14(4):64-66.

Thursday: ****Balancing Life Part 1 Due** We will do Part 2 in class TODAY.**

Part II: Workplace Inequalities

WEEK 4: Economic Transitions –Impact on Working-Class Families, 9/17 & 9/19

Tuesday: When the Family Wage Disappears

Cooper, Marianne. 2014. *Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times*. Chapter 3. Univ of California Press.

Thursday: Vulnerable Employment

Young, Alford. 2008. "The Work-Family Divide for Low-Income African Americans." In *The Changing Landscape of Work and Family in the American Middle-Class*, edited by E. Rudd and L. Descartes. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Balancing Life Reflection—All 3 parts DUE

WEEK 5: Women, Motherhood, & Work, 9/24 & 9/26

Tuesday: Why do Women Work?

Dow, Dawn Marie. 2016. "Integrated Motherhood: Beyond Hegemonic Ideologies of Motherhood." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 78(1):180–196.

Stone, Pamela. 2007. "The Rhetoric and Reality of 'Opting Out.'" *Contexts* 6(4):14–19.

Thursday: Variation in Women's Work

Barnes, Riche. 2016. Chapter 2. *Raising the Race*. Rutgers University Press: New Jersey.

Damaske, Sarah. 2011. Chapter 3. *For the Family? How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work*. Oxford University Press: New York.

WEEK 6: Inequalities in Health, 10/1 & 10/3

Tuesday: Working Parents' Health

Marsiglio, William. 2009. "Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids." *Contexts* 8(4):22–27.

Simon, Robin W. 2008. "The Joys of Parenthood, Reconsidered." *Contexts* 7(2):40–45.

Thursday: No Class, Meet in Groups with your Debate Team

WEEK 7: Men, Fatherhood, & Work, 10/8 & 10/10

Tuesday: Fathers at Work

Cooper, Marianne. 2002. "Being the Go-To Guy": Fatherhood, Masculinity and the Organization of Work in Silicon Valley. *Families at Work*.

Thursday: Fathers at Home?

Kane, Nazneen. 2015. "Stay-at-Home Fatherhoods." *Contexts* 14(2):74–76.

WEEK 8: Sexuality and Work, 10/15 & 10/17

Tuesday: How Gay & Lesbian Families Divide Work and Family Responsibilities

Moore, Mignon. 2008. "Gendered Power Relations among Women: A Study of Household Decision-Making in Black, Lesbian Stepfamilies." *American Sociological Review* 73(2): 335-356.

Thursday: Bringing LGBT Families to Work

Balay, Anne. 2014. *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers*. Chapter 2. UNC Press Books.

Part III: Inequalities at Home

WEEK 9: Gender and Household Labor, 10/22 & 10/24

Tuesday: Division of Household Labor

Bowen, Sarah, Sinikka Elliott, and Joslyn Brenton. 2014. "The Joy of Cooking?" *Contexts* 13(3):20–25.

Thursday: Intensive Mothering

Artis, Julie E. 2009. "Breastfeed at Your Own Risk." *Contexts* 8(4):28–34.

WEEK 10: Single-Parent Families & Welfare in the United States, 10/29 & 10/31

Tuesday: Why Are They Single Parents?

Dodson, Lisa and Wendy Luttrell. 2011. "Families Facing Untenable Choices." *Contexts* 10(1):38–42.

Randles, Jennifer. 2018. "Making Men into 'Responsible' Fathers." *Contexts* 17(2):34–39.

Thursday: What Challenges do Single-Parents Face?

Edin, Kathryn and Tim Nelson. Chapter 3. 2013. *Doing the Best I Can*.

WEEK 11: Paid Household Labor, 11/5 & 11/7

Tuesday: Paid Work Inside the Home

Hondagneu-Sotelo. 2001. Chapters 1 in *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thursday: The Challenges for Paid Household Workers

Ramirez, Hernan and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. 2009. "Mexican Immigrant Gardeners: Entrepreneurs or Exploited Workers?" *Social Problems* 56(1):70–88.

Part IV: What Solutions Are There?

WEEK 12: Government Policies & Practices, 11/12 & 11/14

Tuesday: What Role Should Government Play?

Boushey, Heather. 2011. "The Role of Government in Work-Family Conflict." *Work and Family* 21(2).

Thursday: Why Do we Need Solutions?

Halpern-Meehin, Sarah, Laura Tach, Jennifer Sykes, and Kathryn Edin. 2016. "A Hand Up for Low-Income Families." *Contexts* 15(2):52–57.

Play Spent

HUNGER PROJECT DUE

WEEK 13: Business Solutions to Work-Family Dilemmas, 11/19 & 11/21

Tuesday: What kinds of Business Solutions Are There?

Muse, Lori A. 2011. "Flexibility implementation to a global workforce: a case study of Merck and Company, Inc." *Community, Work & Family* 14:249-256.

Thursday: Flexible Work Arrangements

Time to Go Over Debates

WEEK 14: Thanksgiving BREAK—NO Class, 11/25-29

WEEK 15: Group Debates, 12/3 & 12/5

WEEK 16: Group Debates & Final Wrap Up, 12/10 & 12/12

Finals Week: Monday, 12/16, Debate Write-Up DUE

Additional Information and Resources

Educational Equity and How to Report Bias:

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).

Counseling and Psychological Services:

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park \(CAPS\)](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/)

(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at [Commonwealth Campuses](http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/)

(<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response

Federal law, Title IX, and Penn State policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential counseling support through PSU's Gender Equity Center (204 Boucke, 814-863-2027) or the Centre County Women's Resource Center's 24/7 hotline (877-234-5050). Alleged violations can be reported non-confidentially to the PSU Title IX Coordinator (814-867-0099, titleix@psu.edu). Reports to law enforcement can be made to PSU's Police Department (814-863-1111).

Mandated Reporting Statement

Penn State's policies require me, as a university employee, to report incidents of sex-based discrimination and harassment (discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation) with Penn State's Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinators, regardless of whether the incidents are stated to me in person or shared by students as part of their coursework. Additionally, I am required to make a report on any reasonable suspicion of child abuse in accordance with the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law.

Please keep this in mind during our discussions (in and out of the classroom) and as you complete your assignments. If incidents of sex-based discrimination and harassment are disclosed

to me, then I must report them to the Title IX office. That said, if you are in an unsafe situation and need help/resources, please talk to me and I will assist you in navigating through the proper channels.

The Lion's Pantry

The Lion's Pantry welcomes undergraduate and graduate students who have a valid Penn State ID. The facility is stocked with non-perishable food items, ranging from canned vegetables, breakfast items, snacks, fruit, pasta, and grains. In addition, the pantry has toiletries (soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.) available for students.

Located next to the Blue Band Building, The Lion's Pantry is accessible by foot or by taking the campus shuttle. The TransLoc Rider app is similar to the CATA app, providing real time updates on arrival times and where shuttle stops are located. The closest stop to the pantry is Lion Surplus. From there, a short walk across the parking lot will lead you to the facility. More information can be accessed at <http://transportation.psu.edu/campus-shuttle>.

During the school year, their hours are Tuesdays and Fridays from 3-5pm. Their web site provides additional information and can be accessed at <http://sites.psu.edu/lionspantrypsu/>.

Undergraduate Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center is a free resource for Penn State undergraduate students to receive tutoring in writing. In addition to assisting with class papers for any course, tutors can assist you with personal statements, scholarship applications, and more. Drop-in and appointments are available, as are online tutoring appointments. For more information, you can visit their website: <https://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/tutoring/writing>.