



The University of Western Ontario
Department of Sociology
SOCIOLOGY 3368F
Marriage markets
Fall 2025

Delivery Method – In-Person

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This is a DRAFT copy only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Course Description: This course examines how increasing inequality and shifts to a service economy contribute to changes in marriage market conditions. It also explores how these shifts shape dating, union formation, family formation, and the well-being of couples and their children.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Anti-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives

Course Material:

The purpose of this course is to

- Discuss how marriage market conditions have changed
- Investigate how the resulting changes in marriage market conditions affect dating, union formation, and family structure
- Ascertain how shifts in inequality are affecting the wellbeing of couples and their offspring.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Understand how economic transformations over the last 50 years has altered the availability of marriageable mates and family life
- Identify how marriage market conditions influence the timing of marriage
- Increase awareness of the implication of union formation and mate selection on the financial and emotional wellbeing of couples and offspring.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course [OWL Brightspace](#) site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students enrolled in the course.

The best way to reach the instructor will be via e-mail (kate.choi@uwo.ca). Please allow 24 hours during the week and 72 hours during weekends before sending a follow-up e-mail. If there is a question relevant to many students, the instructor reserves the right to address the question during the next class period.

Office hours are by appointment only. You *must* arrive 3-4 minutes before the appointment starts and leave once the appointment ends. Access to appointments will be *limited* following repeated no-shows.

Course Schedule and Readings:

The reading list and weekly schedule is available on the course Brightspace site.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

I believe that students should have agency in how they are being evaluated. I also believe that the best way to attain equity in the classroom is by offering all students options about (a) how they will be evaluated and (b) how they will manage their time given their time constraints at the onset of the class. To offer students agencies in their program of education, students can opt for one of two options of evaluation.

Option A:

Midterm (50%)

Final exam (50%) – TBA by the Registrar's Office during the final exam period.

Option B:

Midterm (33.3%)

Optional Paper (33.3%)

Final exam (33.4%) – TBA by the Registrar's Office during the final exam period.

Note: Each assignment is curved to a predetermined and uniform class average. The choice of Option A or Option B will not affect your overall grade.

Midterm Exam

- Date: October 21, 2025, 1:30-4:30pm
- Format: In-person
- Material: 75% lecture notes + 25% from readings and in-class discussion
- Number of questions: 30 questions multiple choice, 1 short answer questions

- Duration: 150 minutes + 20 minutes (grace period)
- Grades: Exams will be graded on a curve. With some exceptions, the class average will be 78-80%. I am employing a two-tier grading system. A grader who does not know you marks the exams first (“blind grading”). I will double-check the grader's marks to ensure that you have received all the requisite points.
- Review: The class before the midterm.
- Communication during the exam: No substantive questions will be addressed by the professor or grader, just procedural questions.
- Late exams: Because students are offered a 20-minute grace period, 1 point will be deducted for each late minute after 170 minutes. This ensures fairness in the amount of time that students must take the exam.
- Submission: Need to e-mail kate.choi@uwo.ca and the grader. Both e-mail addresses can be found on the first page of your exam.
- Accommodations:
 - Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course, the midterm has been designated as the assessment requiring supporting documentation.
 - Students who cannot take the exam on the designated time must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office, adhering to their rules and regulations about the format and timeline for the submission of set documentation. To the extent possible, I will honor the recommendations of Academic Counselling.
- Makeup exam: If a student misses the midterm with proper documentation, a make-up exam will be administered during the departmental make-up exam date (Date, Time, and Location: TBA). It will be an in-person exam. It will ask 1 broad essay question. Students will be graded in absolute terms. The professor (not the grader) will mark the exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will be 150 minutes in duration and have a 20-minute grace period. It will cover the same material as the original test. The course professor will not be available during the makeup exam to answer questions.
- Missed exam and make-up exam: If you cannot make the test date and the departmental make-up date for a documented reason, then you must write the optional paper and the final exam. Each component will be worth 50% of your final grade.

Final Exam

- Date: Final exam period (Specific date/time is TBA by Registrar's Office)
- Eligibility for the the final exam: Student must have completed the midterm exam or the optional paper by the last day of class (i.e., December 5, 2025, 5pm EST)
- Format: In-person exam, lasting 150 minutes with a grace period of 20 minutes.
- Material: 75% lecture notes + 25% from readings and in-class discussion
- The number of questions: 25-30 multiple choice questions, 1 short answer
- Grades: Exams will be graded on a curve. With some exceptions, the class average will be 78-80 percent. The course professor will apply a two-tier marking system. A grader who does not know you marks it first (aka "blind grading"). The course professor will double-check the grader's marks to ensure that you have received all requisite marks.
- Late exams: Because students are offered a 20-minute grace period, 1 point will be deducted for each late minute after 170 minutes. This ensures fairness in the amount of time that students must take the exam. Students can allocate the grace period time as they see fit.
- Incorrect versions of the exam will automatically receive a 0.
- Submission: Need to e-mail kate.choi@uwo.ca and the grader. Both e-mail addresses can be found on the first page of your exam.
- Accommodation: If a student is unable to take this exam, you need to go to Academic Counselling or the Dean's Office to obtain the necessary documentation to take the make-up exam. Please note that the final exam is not subject to self reported absences.
- Makeup exam: If a student misses the midterm with proper documentation, a make-up exam will be administered during the departmental make-up exam date (Date, Time, and Location: TBA). It will be an in-person exam. It will ask 1 broad essay question. Students will be graded in absolute terms. The professor (not the grader) will mark the exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will be 150 minutes in duration and have a 20-minute grace period. It will cover the same material as the original test. The course professor will not be available during the makeup exam to answer questions.
- Missed final exam and make-up final exam: If a student misses the exam with the proper documentation, they will write a 6,000-word essay on a topic designated by the professor. The paper will be graded by the course professor and will not be curved. Due date: TBD

Optional paper

- Date: December 2, 2025, at 1:30pm EST. Grace period: 3 days. No points will be deducted if you turn in your optional paper by December 5, 2025, 1:30 pm EST.
- Format: 2,500-word essay.
- Description: A detailed description and rubric will be provided to students 2 or 3 weeks ahead of the due date.
- Grades: Optional paper will be graded on a curve.
- Feedback: General feedback will be offered to all students who submit the paper by November 29, 1:29pm EST. These will be general comments and offer feedback about ways to improve the paper. The professor will not do line-by-line edits on your essay, nor will the course professor write paragraphs. Because it is graded on a curve, the course professor cannot guess the student's grade, nor can the professor offer a list of things that they may want to address to get a precise grade.
- Late essays: This paper is optional. Failure to turn in the paper by the end of the grace period will automatically transition the student into Option 1 (midterm + final) without any penalty.
- Communication: There is no need to declare whether or not you will be writing the optional paper. There is also no need to let me know that you will be taking the grace days. You must write in your final exam answer sheet that you wrote the optional paper for inventory purposes.

Extra Credit: Participation

- Attendance: I do not take attendance.
- Philosophy about participation: Participation is an important aspect of all my classes. It is also the part that students find very enjoyable. It also helps develop mastery in verbal skill sets necessary to help students perform better in job interviews, team meetings upon employment, and when they enroll in law/graduate schools.
- Prerequisite to receive participation marks: Must fill out the weekly participation inventory. You will receive a score of 0 (not completed), 5 (needs to write more), and 10 in this assignment. No feedback will be provided, as it is an extra credit assignment.
- Participation grade: 60% of the marks come from verbal discussions. 40% of the marks come from the participation diary in OWL. Up to 10 percentage points can be added to your exams and/or optional exam.
- Expectations: You will receive a rubric and will be graded before the beginning of the second class accordingly. Below are some noteworthy expectations:
 - Length of participation: The skill set being developed is (a) accurate and concise description of a social phenomenon and (b) the construction of an effective argument. This is an important skill to develop for job interviews or to get advanced degrees. If a person is verbose, they seldom can accomplish (a) or (b). I am going to ask that you stay within 2 minutes *unless* prompted to elaborate.

- Number of times students participate: There is no set amount the student needs to speak to receive a good grade. Nevertheless, active listening is an important element of participation. If a student seeks to dominate class discussion, I reserve the right to not call on the student when they raise their hand.
- Relevance of participation points: This is a class where we discuss structural correlates of family formation behavior. Learning how to stay on topic is an extremely important skill to have for your transition into the labor market or higher learning. The student will earn no marks for irrelevant points.
- Disruptive behavior: I care a lot about all my students. Part of caring for my students is ensuring that the classroom is a safe environment for everyone. Politically incorrect speech about the union formation behavior of marginalized groups will be considered disruptive behavior. Although students may provide anecdotal evidence to make a point, they cannot use the classroom to discuss personal dating issues or make assertions about dating/marriage/cohabitation that is unsupported by the academic literature. The determination of what is/is not disruptive behavior is at the discretion of the course professor.
- Consequences to disruptive behavior: To ensure that our class is a pleasant learning environment for everyone, there is a zero-tolerance policy towards disruptive behavior in class. The first time - you will receive a warning in writing; the second time- you will forfeit your right to any extra credit marks. The third time – you will be asked to leave the class and I will request that the student be considered for disciplinary action. It is at my sole discretion to determine what is and what is not disruptive.
- Requests for accommodations for extra credit assignment: This is an extra credit assignment. It also includes flexibility in the assessment: you can also forgo participating in two of the courses without any impact on your extra credit participation marks. As such, I will not offer any alternate assignments for this portion of the class, nor will I honor any requests for accommodations for this component of the course.

Grade negotiations

- To contest your grade, there needs to be an academic basis for why you feel like you need a higher grade.
- The grader (who has never met you) marks the exam. I review the exams to ensure that they are graded reliably and validly and decide on a curve. The two-tiered process ensures greater accuracy.
- **Process to negotiate grades:**
 - Research suggests that the likelihood of approaching faculty to verbally negotiate grades are lower for women than for men, more disadvantaged than advantaged students, younger relative to older students, and visible minority relative to other students. As someone committed to fairness, I will not entertain verbal grade negotiations.

- **Within 14 days of receiving your grade**, you must write a memo contesting a section of the grade; write down what your answer was, indicate what the written answer was, and explain why your grade deserves to be raised. This approach is taken to ensure that the process is fair and a learning experience.
- It is also worth noting that I cannot alter grades on grounds of compassion.
- If you submit another student's grade as an excuse, I will review both students' grades. Simply put, Student B's answer and grade can serve as a rationale for why Student A's grades deserve to be raised, but also a rationale for why Student B's grades should be lowered. Student B – proceed at your own risk.
- **Invalid basis to contest grades**: I am a true believer in meritocracy and fairness of opportunity. As such, I will not honor student requests to adjust grades on the basis of
 - Compassion. (If you are under duress, please contact Academic Counseling for accommodation with the requisite documentation. Do not ask for a grade adjustment).
 - Student's future career or educational aspirations
 - Self-proclaimed "A-student" status.
 - Parent requests. (Provincial and federal privacy laws preclude me from discussing/negotiating student grades with parents.)
 - Student's "truth": Exams are places where we test empirically supported findings. They are not places where students get to receive grades for speaking "my truth".
- Some students seek to avoid writing the memo by saying that "they need advice on whether or not that they should pursue this course of action and then contest grades in the process". If you want to discuss having your grade change, you must submit the memo first.
- **Strategic assistance**: I want all students to do well. Thus, the week after the test, I will meet with students individually, review their midterm exam, and discuss strategies with the student on how to do potentially do better in the final exam and optional paper.

Completing the course with a "pass"

- To receive a number grade and potentially pass in the course, students must complete at least 2 of the 3 major components of this course (i.e., midterm, final exam, optional paper) to receive a grade.
- If during the semester, you foresee a circumstance precluding you to complete 2 out of the 3 components of the course, consider dropping the course by the Fall official drop deadline.

Grading guidelines

- The Sociology Department has grading guidelines. For a 3000-level class, the class average is between 73-80%.
- Subject to some exception (e.g., exceptionally low grades from a student), I will curve so that the class average falls in the 78-80% range.

Student Absences:

- If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.
- University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the professor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.”
- Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the professor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.
- Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for spelling/grammar and information gathering purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all them to produce original written contributions.

Electronic Devices:

Computers are allowed in class, but they must be kept mute to minimize disruption. Cell phones can only be used during break. No electronic devices including smartwatches are not allowed during in-person exams.

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Copyright: Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Absence from Course Commitments: Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration](#) – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP) https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html . Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described in the course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf> or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup text/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty Academic Counselling Office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Religious Accommodation: Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf. Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or University approved emergency during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL Brightspace for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Code of Student Conduct: It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf. Sanctions for non-compliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University.

Student Responsibility: Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and

that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf and the Registration and Progression policy https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf. Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf.

Support Services:

Office of the Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

[Faculty Academic Advising](#) - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html.

[USC services](#) offers information about student the health/dental plan, Bus Pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

[Mental health](#) – Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

[Health & Wellness Services](#) – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>. Additional on-campus services are also available <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html>.

[Accessible Education](#) provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

[Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](#) – Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

[Western Libraries](#) – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html>. Research support is available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.

[Writing support](#) – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>

Bookstore: Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>