HHS4U Introduction   
to Family Sociology

**Seminar 1**

**Tasks**

1. Read… Introduction to Family Sociology   
   by Maureen Baker
2. Complete the work below…

**Terms - Minds On**

cross cultural moralistic gendered socialization monogamy  
objective subjective\* nuclear family extended family census family

economic family household ‘families of choice’ socio-economic modified extended serial monogamy ‘Western’ industrialized polygyny polygamy polyandry  
marriage markets dowries bride price patriarchy matriarchy  
matrifocal bilateral descent patrilineal descent matrilineal matrilocal   
neolocal demographics conjugal cohabitation ‘living apart together’  
total fertility rate crude birth rates Quiet Revolution secularized matrimonial fault  
lone parent homogenous group blended families static

\*this term isn’t in the reading but if we are going to look at “objective” research we might as well talk about “subjective” research as well.

**Summary**

Write a five sentences summary of the chapter “*Introduction to Family Sociology*”. Try to be as comprehensive as you can in these five sentences. Include as much of the key information as possible. There will be a prize for the best one! NOTE: Do this first so you don’t forget, it is worth marks on its own.

**Discussion Questions - Action***Introduction and Defining Families*

1. What is (are) the main point(s) Baker is trying to make with her introduction?
2. Which type of family is the most prevalent in Canada?
3. What definition of family does Stats Canada use? Most definitions focus on structure and functions when defining family – which do you think is the most relevant?
4. How has this definition changed recently? Who is still left out? Why? Why the other changes?
5. When is a precise definition needed and why?
6. On page 4 Baker (2006) states that different cultural groups tend to organize their living arrangements based on traditions, religious beliefs, socio-economic background, immigrant or indigenous status, and historical experiences. Provide examples of how these factors would or could influence living arrangements.
7. What % of Canadian households include three generations? What percent live with relatives in households? If many immigrants come from cultures where extended family households are the norm, why aren’t these numbers higher in Canada?
8. Why have rates of polygyny decreased over the last six decades around the world? Why is polygyny more prevalent than polyandry around the world? What are the pros and cons of each?
9. Why is polygamy illegal in Canada and the US?

*Learning Goal (Begin with the End in Mind): I will know what family sociology is, specifically how families have been and are defined in Canada, and how families differ cross culturally and over time. Additionally, I will know what the current trends are regarding marriage, fertility, divorce, blended families and the evolving family.*

1. In North America who has a high marriage market value? What are the possible implications of these?
2. Why arrange a marriage for your offspring? How has this been modified more recently?
3. What is a dowry? What purpose do they serve? What impact does the dowry system have on which sex children are preferred? What are the more far reaching implications of this preference?
4. How is bride price different? Why do you think it has had less of an impact on gender preference?
5. What are the symbolic remnants of both dowries and bride price that we see commonly in North America?
6. What is the difference between patriarchy and matriarchy when it comes to families? Who wears the pants in your family? What’s wrong with this expression?

*Family Trends*

1. What has happened to the marriage rates in Canada? How has the age of first marriage changed as well? Are these connected?
2. How do the success rates compare between those who marry and those who cohabitate? What are some of the possible reasons for this?
3. How many women between the ages of 35 to 44 live as part of a couple?
4. Summarize the fertility trends for Canadians. Compare these crude birth rates for Canada: 1851, 1901, 1931, 1951, 1981, and 2001. Explain the dips in the 30s and 40s and the peaks in the 50s and 60s. What are the reasons for the recent declines? (see total fertility rates)
5. How do immigrant women in Canada differ in terms of fertility rates?
6. In terms of fertility, how do we compare globally?
7. In terms of fertility, how has Quebec specifically shifted over the last 30 to 40 years?
8. Look over the 8 reasons for more maternal employment. Identify at least one that is a plus, one that is a negative and one that is interesting. Has this trend resulted in less gendered practices at home?
9. What has happened to teen birth rates since the 1950s? Why? Coincidentally, what has happened to the adoption rates? How are these connected? Where are our adopted babies coming from?
10. List the reasons for some couples’ infertility.
11. How do our divorce rates compare to the US? Some European countries? Have our rates been steadily increasing since the 1920s? Explain the bumps or increases in the late 60s and post 85. What re the risk factors for divorce?
12. What causes lone parenting? Which gender is more likely to be a lone parent? Why? Which are more vulnerable to poverty?
13. When it comes to divorce and the impact on children, what are the age differences? What is it better than? What is it worse than?

**Reflection Questions - Consolidation**

1. What is your definition of family? Is it the same or different as the census? What do you think about broadening it?
2. In your opinion, since Canada has loosened restrictions against same sex marriage, should Canada allow polygamy? Consider a world renowned brain surgeon is recruited to Toronto Sick Kids hospital. He is from a country where polygyny is practiced, and he has two wives and 5 children. What now?
3. What are the most positive trends? What are the least positive trends?
4. What is something that affirmed your understanding? What is something that challenged it? What was surprising?