Partnering, Cohabitation   
& Marriage

**Seminar 5**

**Tasks**

1. Read… Partnering, Cohabitation, and Marriage p. 95 -131 by Sue Wilson
2. Use any or all of the reading strategies VIP, *Highwriting*, and APE to answer at least three of the questions. Identify these with an \* beside them.

**Summary**

**Terms - Minds On**

**individualism**… a social theory that emphasizes independence and self-reliance and that favours the free action of individuals

**conjugal**… relationship involving sex

**boomerang kids**… adult children who leave and return home several times before creating a separate permanent household of their own

**revolving door**… suggested by Dinnerstein, Dudley and Guthrie as more appropriate term than boomerang to refer to the same

**exchange theory**… uses market analogies to explain attraction and commitment, assuming that individuals maximize rewards and minimize costs

**cohabitatio**n… an intimate union between a couple living together in marriage like circumstances

**pure relationships**… highly intimate, egalitarian, but fragile relationships, sustained only as long as they are satisfying for both parties

**plastic sexuality**… flexible sexuality, it can be shaped according to needs, desires or wants – it is sexuality freed from reproduction and male dominance – women being free economically and socially and having safe and effective contraceptives available –this is a fluid and evolving type of sexuality which extends to both straight and queer relationships – sexuality on a spectrum, based on desire and not constraints or demands

**sexual liberation 60s 70s**… profound shifts in the mores and attitudes towards women's sexuality, homosexuality, and freedom of sexual expression - At the core of the sexual revolution was the concept -- radical at the time -- that women, just like men, enjoyed sex and had sexual needs. Feminists asserted that single women had the same sexual desires and should have the same sexual freedoms as everyone else in society. For feminists, the sexual revolution was about female sexual empowerment. For social conservatives, the sexual revolution was an invitation for promiscuity and an attack on the very foundation of American society -- the family.

**sexual revolution 2010s**… delinking of marriage, family, heterosexuality and sexual repression or desire – factors that have been linked for the past two centuries – sexual liberation separating marriage and family from sexuality and desire

**homogamy**… the similarities in the age, social class, race, and ethnicity of couples

**endogam**y… refers to marriage within one’s group which may include ethnicity, relation, race, caste or socioeconomic status

**sexual autonomy**… sexual independence or freedom

**auto eroticism**… self-interested - stimulated

**exogamy**… marriage outside the group

**mating gradient**… the mating of attractive young women with older, more prosperous men or the mating of tall women with taller men – the more status a person has impacts their desirability in the market

**marriage market**… an economic analogy to describe the availability of potential marriage partners and how they are valued in a particular culture or period

**marriage squeeze**… the numerical imbalance between men and women that prevents some from finding partners ex. Young men in China today, young women during WWII and so on

**hooking up**… a range of intimate and sexual behaviours replacing dating as a way for young people (particularly post-secondary students) to meet potential romantic partners > sex first dating later

**speed dating**… an organized social activity in which people seeking romantic relationships have a series of short conversations with potential partners in order to determine whether there is mutual interest.

computer mediated relationships…

gating features…

**arranged marriages**… partner is selected by older family members but the young people may have the right to veto their choices

**selectivity hypothesis**… suggests that marriages following cohabitation are more likely to end in divorce because people who select cohabitation share values and characteristics harmful to marital stability

**experience hypothesis**… suggests that marriages following cohabitation are more likely to end in divorce because the experience of living together influences perceptions of marriage, which negatively impacts on marital stability

**marry up**… to marry someone of a higher social class than oneself

**Discussion Questions - Action**

1. I know we have already looked at and talked about the many changes to family life in Canada over the last 50 years, briefly list the ones mentioned in the first two and a half pages that are related to partnering and marriage.

* this generation will marry later and have smaller families and be more likely to divorce than their parents
* more likely to become sexually active in adolescence, to cohabit both before 1st marriage and after separation or divorce
* more likely to single parent
* more accepting of child birth outside of marriage and lgbtq relationships
* most Canadians will have a number of romantic relationships
* more Canadians live singly
* crude marriage rate is dropping
* greatest changes in the transition to adulthood stage – now longer – includes boomerang or revolving door situations, impacts age of partnering

1. How does having an intimate partner affect the development of a young adult?

* According to Erikson, young people reach a stage of readiness for intimate relationships – this process is a part of the stage in the family life cycle that coincides with the maturation of the young adult
* People who are living together need to negotiate economic, social, sexual and child rearing dimensions of their lives together – helps a person to mature

1. Why are individualistic societies more likely to emphasize romantic love over collectivist?

* Individualism is a social theory that emphasizes independence and self-reliance and that favours the free action of individuals the ability to choose one’s own partner freely would follow suit, if we emphasize personal freedom and individuality and independence – they should be able to choose and are more likely to look to romance for making the connection

1. Which came first the chicken or the egg? Is love a cause for relationship development or an outcome derived from an intimate relationship? Explain how both could be true. Also, explain why the latter can be used to help understand at least in one way, how arranged marriages might be successful.

In developing relationships it seems reasonable to view love as both a cause for relationship development and outcome derived from an intimate relationship

Cause… feelings of love contribute to our attraction to the partner, our willingness to trust the partner and our commitment

Outcome… love is an emotion that emerges from the positive and intimate interactions we have with a partner

If love can emerge from intimacy this may explain how love may grow in an arranged marriage

1. According to Cherlin do we only marry for love?

No, we marry for love but not only for love – other factors include – wanting to appear successful, marrying up, making a commitment to someone, wanting to grow up and so on

1. Even though China has been among the cultures that have arranged marriage, why do Dion and Dion think that this may change?

Because China had the one child policy in effect, and may have fostered an increased sense of individualism which may result in those children by default being more individualistic

1. What does Gidden mean by a “pure relationship”? What are the pros and cons of these?

A highly intimate, egalitarian, but fragile relationships, sustained only as long as they are satisfying for both parties

☺Pros – greater equality, more intimacy and more disclosure

☹Cons – more fragile and combustible, less stable – risky because either partner can pull the plug if they no longer feel fulfilled

1. What is Jamieson saying about this shift to “pure relationships”? What is the difference between public discourse (dialogue or talk) and private relationships?

* She says that it is not as extensive as Giddens implies and she argues that both greater equality and greater intimacy are more evident in what people say than how they really are in private eg. on Facebook they look amazing but not so great as that when it comes to being home day in and day out

1. When it comes to sexual mores, describe the differences between the over and under 50 crowd. What does Rubin think is at the heart of these changes?

* In the over 50 crowd
* both men and women valued virginity in women
* casual sex was uncommon
* maintaining a good reputation was important
* men were assumed to have a higher sex drive and might be forgiven for transgressions
* good girls didn’t have sex before a commitment was firmly established

In the under 50 crowd

* more likely to have been sexually active in adolescence
* more likely to value sexual variety
* and more likely to be involved in same sex relationships

1. What is the connection between contraception development and availability and plastic sexuality?

When women were freed up from being pregnant > eg. the development of the pill, it freed them sexually to be more active if they desired – plastic sexuality is fluid or flexible sexuality – orientation, types of sex and so on, not so binary and not so limited – eg. don’t just have sex with the man you are married to because otherwise you might find yourself pregnant and just to be on the safe side it would be good to be married

1. Describe the differences between the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 70s and the revolution of the 2010s. What has the current revolution caused in Castell’s opinion? Include information from the bottom of page 72 and the top of page 73 to answer this part. [Hint APE might work well for this question]

**sexual liberation 60s 70s**… profound shifts in the mores and attitudes towards women's sexuality, homosexuality, and freedom of sexual expression - At the core of the sexual revolution was the concept -- radical at the time -- that women, just like men, enjoyed sex and had sexual needs. Feminists asserted that single women had the same sexual desires and should have the same sexual freedoms as everyone else in society. For feminists, the sexual revolution was about female sexual empowerment. For social conservatives, the sexual revolution was an invitation for promiscuity and an attack on the very foundation of American society -- the family.

**sexual revolution 2010s**… delinking of marriage, family, heterosexuality and sexual repression or desire – factors that have been linked for the past two centuries – sexual liberation separating marriage and family from sexuality and desire

* According to Castell, this freedom has not been so liberating, instead, he refers to current sexual expression as sexual poverty – while the age at first intercourse has declined, the amount of sex people are having decreases with age, and begins to decline in year two of any relationship; common law report more often sex but not necessarily more satisfying, intercourse is declining but oral sex, auto eroticism and masturbation have become more frequent modes of sexual expression

1. What are the demographics included for relationship homogamy or endogamy? Which factors seem to be linked to the higher levels of marital satisfaction? Which seem to be less connected? Why is sharing the same religion particularly helpful?

**homogamy**… the similarities in the age, social class, race, and ethnicity of couples

**endogam**y… refers to marriage within one’s group which may include ethnicity, relation, race, caste or socioeconomic status

* differences in age and education are more problematic
* differences in race or religion less problematic
* religious homogamy is helpful particularly if one or more partners view religion as important
* if one or more is religious and both share that religion it is linked to higher levels of satisfaction and this may be particularly helpful, because it means that potentially both family of origins share that religion and are there to support the couple and their success

1. Why is exogamy also important – so much so that incest is clearly a taboo in many if not all cultures?

* You don’t want a shallow gene pool, need lots of genetic diversity to avoid genetic disorders that could occur with recessive genes – meaning you both would need to be a carrier – if you are from a shallow gene pool this increases your chances of sharing genetic defects that might be recessive and could appear if you are together but might not if you go outside your gene pool

1. If romance dictates that we look for our one true match or soul mate, what does the exchange theory propose? Lists costs and benefits that may come into play when finding a mate.

That we choose our soul mate based on maximizing the benefits to us and minimizing the costs

1. Compare and contrast the traits that young males and young females ranked in order of preference, in the University of Kent study. According to Townsend and Levy how do each differ when it comes to appearance?

Goodwin (1990)   
Males ranked in this order of preference… friendship, honesty, personality, attractiveness, and kindness

Females ranked in the order of preference… friendship, honesty, companionship, love and personality ***see next page***

Townsend and Levy (1990)

Female students will consider men who are less physically attractive, equally acceptable as a mate if they have high social status

Male students are less likely to find less attractive women acceptable in spite of high social status

1. Apparently this is true in all cultures. What might that mean for straight women and gay men? What about lesbians?

Straight women have it harder if they are less attractive, so do gay men who are less attractive, lesbians have it the easiest if they are in good social standing potentially,

1. Who are more likely to marry up, men or women? What are the consequences for undereducated men and highly educated women?

* Women are more likely to marry up especially if they are attractive
* The consequences are that undereducated men and highly educated women are more likely to stay single, just like women who are very tall and men you are very short

1. What is a marriage squeeze? Read excerpt from Macleans on the women shortage. What are the concerns regarding sex selected abortion, if male babies are preferred?

A marriage squeeze occurs when one or the other gender is less available, ex. Men during a war or women in China today

1. Who is most likely hooking up? Why?

* Post secondary students – both men and women
* Because they socialize in groups rather than pairs, and hooking up after parties has replaced dating
* Students feel safer socializing on campus hooking up with other students – less likely to make formal dates with someone they might meet in a bar or at work

1. Internet connections can work for some, and others find them less promising. Look up Instagram Bye Felipe, read over and comment. Warning – these are explicit and offensive, pass if you prefer.

Pros – allows individuals to gain more information before meeting than speed dating, can reveal personal views and so there is more to consider than just appearance, can build trust and get to know each other in advance of meeting, more freedom regarding gender roles and greater scope (opportunities), less risky than meeting strangers face to face, chat rooms can lessen the importance of gating features like appearance

Cons – some individuals take these sorts of relationships as less serious, trolls, outdated info and photos

1. What are the four stages in the acceptance of cohabitation as proposed by Kiernan? In Canada, what role do cultural and religious beliefs play in this?

* These stages are where different cultures, countries, and so on would fit regarding the acceptance of cohabitation

Stage 1 – cohabitation is rare, and only engaged in by a small portion of the population (Spain, Italy, Greece)

Stage 2 – cohabitation is seen as a prelude to marriage

Stage 3 – cohabitation is an acceptable alternative to marriage (US, the rest of Canada)

Stage 4 – cohabitation and marriage are indistinguishable (Nordic countries, Quebec)

* In Canada cultural and religious beliefs impact acceptance, young people with British or northern European backgrounds are more accepting, less than 20% of Chinese or Indo Canadian young people are accepting though

1. Why are cohabitating relationships less stable?

* Lower commitment to marriage as an institution
* More likely to express the value of individual freedom within marriage
* Less committed to the ideal of marital permanence
* Less conventional about their ideas about family life
* Less conventional family backgrounds SEE 25 as well

1. While many propose that arranged marriages are quite successful, what did Ralston discover when interviewing South Asian immigrant women about their expectations for their children?

Mothers may not necessarily want arranged marriages for their children, they want their children to have greater freedom in selecting a life partner than they experienced

1. What does Cherlin mean about the deinstitutionalization of marriage? How do we know it is still valued in Canadian society?

* Building on the ideas of Burgess and Locke who described a transition from institutional to companionate marriage,
* Companionate marriage was based on a sexual division of labor and a strong partnership (the norm at midcentury – 1950s)
* According to Cherlin there has been another shift to individual marriage where roles are more flexible, with this shift came later ages for marriage and more single living, cohabitation and same sex marriage began to gain traction (could even say that cohabitation has become institutionalized as marriage has become deinstitutionalized)
* We know it is still valued, because most children in Canada are born to married couples (outside of Quebec) so many couples tend to marry before having their children, celebrations and ceremonies remain very important
* Marriage has symbolic value

1. What does selectivity hypothesis and experience hypothesis say about the lack of stability for marriages that follow cohabitation?

* According to Canadian General Social Survey data from 2001 – common law unions are twice as likely to separate than married unions are to divorce
* Couples who marry after cohabitation are less likely to succeed, which does seem counterintuitive given that common law first could be argued to be a screening process
* **selectivity hypothesis**… suggests that marriages following cohabitation are more likely to end in divorce because people who select cohabitation share values and characteristics harmful to marital stability
* **experience hypothesis**… suggests that marriages following cohabitation are more likely to end in divorce because the experience of living together influences perceptions of marriage, which negatively impacts on marital stability
* both these hypotheses have empirical support (research based statistics or findings)

1. What are the various reasons for Canadians living single?

* More formal education to find sustaining work
* Changing values, particularly about premarital sex
* It is not a universal goal
* Some prefer to be single
* Some can’t find the right partner
* Some women in their twenties and thirties feel pressure to date only men who are interested in a potentially permanent relationship though do enjoy their independence – open to the idea of a divorcee

1. According to Kurdek, there are five dimensions of relationships and differences in how same sex marriages and cohabiting gay or lesbian relationships experience these. Describe Kurdek’s study, findings and conclusions, in detail.

* 5 dimensions of relationship quality – intimacy, autonomy, equality, constructive problem solving, barriers to leaving the relationship
* According to Kurdek there might be differences in how same sex marriages or cohabiting gay and lesbian couples experience these dimensions
* Report higher levels of intimacy than is reported by straight couples
* Higher levels of autonomy
* More equality (maybe because the experience so much inequality in other relationships)
* No discernible difference in problem solving
* Fewer barriers to leaving relationships than straight couples (could be argued to be less supported by society in the first place)
* Although there were higher rates of relationship satisfaction than reported by straight couples these couples are more likely to dissolve their relationships as well – back to the idea that there are less supports culturally and socially and also perhaps similar to the reasons that common law straight relationships are more likely to dissolve

1. What is the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act? Why is this helpful? Why is it not enough?

Passed in June of 2000 extends benefits and obligations to same sex couples on the same basis as common law straight couples and married couples – preceded legalization of same sex marriage –helpful to those looking to have these rights and responsibilities for sure, still not the whole enchilada in terms of equality – symbolism and commitment and so on

1. What are predictors of marital happiness or success? What factor(s) are not?

Predictors of marital happiness…

* Similarities
* Not living together ahead of time
* Knowing each other for a long time before getting married
* Having affection between couples
* Not having a dynamic where the wife is demanding and the husband withdrawing
* Avoiding criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (evading, obstructing)

**Reflection Questions - Consolidation**

1. Do you think romantic love is biological or a social development?
2. According to Cherlin we marry for love among other things, what are these other things?

* wanting to appear successful, marrying up, making a commitment to someone, wanting to grow up and so on

1. Are “pure relationships” possible? Can they be sustained?
2. Do you agree that the changing double standard, and women being more involved in sex, has caused a shift in overall views and actions? If so why? What do you think the connection is?
3. “Marriage is the only family relationship we swear is forever and the only one that we swear is exclusive; yet is the one relationship that is least likely to be either exclusive or forever” What do you think McGoldrick meant by this? What do you think?