Welcome to Social Perspectives on Parenting! I am excited to be studying with you this semester, particularly something as significant and socially complex as parenting. In this course, we will examine how parenting, the seemingly most intimate and personal of experiences, is deeply influenced by economic structures and culture. We will examine the social history of “good parenting,” the effects of capitalist structures on family life, the physically embodied nature of parenting and how that interacts with its social construction, and how racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and class differences, as well as different global contexts, influence parenting. We will also highlight gender and ask: 1) How do men’s and women’s different social positions create gender differences in parenting?, 2) Why are women typically the primary rearers of children?, and 3) How does this arrangement differently affect the lives and outcomes of women and men?

COURSE READINGS
Readings are entirely found in our course reader. I will give you instructions on how to purchase these in class. The first two weeks’ readings are also available on Latte.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai ). Using the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher, Wikipedia, or a classmate – must include a proper acknowledgement of that source with quotes or footnotes.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY
If you are a student who has academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please see me this week and give me a copy of your letter of accommodation so I can provide you the appropriate support for your success in this class. If you have questions about documenting a disability, contact Beth Rodgers-Kay at Undergraduate Academic Affairs (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu).
COURSE CALENDAR

WEEK 1: Jan 13, 15, 16
A Social-Historical Perspective on Parenting
• Thurer, Shari. Myths of Motherhood
• Coltraine, Scott. “Fathering: Paradoxes, Contradictions & Dilemmas”
• Dizard, Dan & Howard Gadlin. The Minimal Family
• Mead, Margaret. Culture and Commitment (commentary)

“GOOD” OR “BAD” PARENTING

WEEK 2: (MLK Jan 20, no class), Jan 22, 23
Norms, Morality, and the Debate about Parenting in Decline
• Coontz, Stephanie. The Way We Never Were
• Angier, Natalie. “The Changing American Family”
• Hochschild, Arlie. “So How’s the Family”
• Liedloff, Jean. The Continuum Concept

WEEK 3: Jan 27, 29, 30
The (Upper-Middle-Class) Social Construction of “Good Parenting”
(i.e. Intensive Mothering)
• Warner, Judith. Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety
• Nelson, Margaret. Parenting Out of Control
• Chua, Amy. “Why Chinese Mothers are Superior,” Wall Street Journal
• “Fast-Tracking to Kindergarten?” NY Times
• “How to Land Your Kid in Therapy,” Atlantic Monthly

WEEK 4: Feb 3, 5, 6
“Bad (Stigmatized) Parenting”: Poor, Single Fathers & Mothers
• Edin, Kathryn & Timothy J. Nelson. Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City, 70-102
• “The Case of Marie and her Sons,” NY Times Magazine (15 pages)

***Thursday, February 6, 3:30-5pm***
Kathryn Edin, Harvard Professor of Social Policy and Management, and author of our readings on poor inner city parenting, will be speaking at the Brandeis Sociology colloquium in Pearlman Lounge. Please attend!

WEEK 5: Feb 10, 12, 13
The Parenting Industrial Complex
• Hochschild, Arlie. The Outsourced Self, 104-115, 119-130, 157-164, 168-171
WEEK 6: FEBRUARY BREAK

WEEK 7: Feb 24, 26, 27 (Midterm Examination February 27)
Child-Raising & Fear (& Resistance to Helicopter Parenting)
  • Villalobos, Ana. “Introduction,” Motherload: The Heavy Weight of One
    Redeeming Relationship
  • Skenazy, Lenore. Free Range Kids
  • Anonymous. “I Can’t Believe We Made It!”

GENDER & PARENTING

WEEK 8: Mar 3, 5, 6
Division of Parenting Labor
  • Hochschild, Arlie. Second Shift
  • Susan Walzer, 1996. “Thinking About the Baby: Gender and the Division of
    Infant Care,” Social Problems
  • Keverne, Barry. “Neural & Endocrine Mechanisms of Maternal Care,” and
    “Oxytocin and Maternal Behavior,” Neurochemistry and Maternal Behavior
  • Susan Allport. 1997. “Father Wolf, Mother Bear—Who Cares?,” A Natural
    History of Parenting
  • “In a Clubby World…Men Needn’t Apply,” NY Times

WEEK 9: Mar 10, 12, 13
Fatherhood
  • Ralph LaRossa. “The Culture and Conduct of Fatherhood,” Families in the
    U.S.: Kinship and Domestic Politics, Karen Hansen and Anita Garey (eds.)
  • Fatherhood 2.0, Time Magazine
  • Ehrensaft, Diane. 1995. “Bringing in Fathers: The Reconstruction of
    Mothering,” Becoming a Father: Contemporary, Social, Developmental, and
    Clinical Perspectives
  • “In Sweden, Men Can Have it All,” NY Times

WEEK 10: Mar 17, 19, 20
Economic Costs of Caring
  • Ann Crittenden. “The Mommy Tax” and “The Truly Invisible Hand,” The
    Price of Motherhood
  • Pamela Stone and Meg Lovejoy. “Fast Track Women and the ‘Choice’ to Stay
    Home,” Annals
WEEK 11: Mar 24, 26, 27

Work-Family Conflict

• Hochschild, Arlie. “‘Catching Up on the Soaps’: Male Pioneers in a Culture of Time,” Time Bind
• Williams, Joan. “The Three Faces of Work-Family Conflict,” ii-iii, 1-31
• Evans, Elrena & Caroline Grant (eds.) Mama Ph.D. (selected testimonials)
• “Work-family Conflict not just a Women’s Issue,” ILR Report, Cornell
• “When Work and Family Conflict, Men Are More Likely Than Women to Leave Their Jobs,” HRM Research Report

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON PARENTING

WEEK 12: Mar 31, Apr 2, 3

Parenting in Other Cultures

• Small, Meredith. “Other Parents, Other Ways,” Our Babies, Ourselves
• Joseph Tobin, David Wu, and Dana Davidson, Preschool in Three Cultures

WEEK 13: Apr 7, 9, 10

Outsourced Parenting and Global Inequalities

• Hochschild, Arlie. “Two-Way Global Traffic in Care” and “Children Left Alone,” So How's the Family?, 135-164
• Rudrappa, Sharmila. “India’s Reproductive Assembly Line,” Contexts

WEEKS 14 & 15: Apr 14, 23, 24 (Spring Break April 16 & 21)

Differences Within U.S. Parenting

• Comeau, Dawn, “Lesbian Nonbiological Mothering: Negotiating an (un)Familiar Existence,” Mother Outlaws
• Flynn & Levi. “Protecting Transgender Families”

WEEK 16: Apr 28

Synthesizing Essays Due
COMMUNICATION WITH PROFESSOR AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Office Hours: I invite you to drop by my office hours in Pearlman 208 during office hours (Mondays and Wednesdays, 10-11), even if just to stop by for five minutes to say hello and see where the office is. And during the semester, don’t be shy about coming in regularly to hash out what you’re learning in class or from the readings. That’s what I’m here for! Our teaching assistants, Margaret Clendenen and Sarah Zoloth, are also available to chat with, and are a great resource to help you in preparing for your student facilitation or to sort through substantive issues, which will be especially helpful as you prepare for your midterm and end of semester synthesizing essays. We will announce where/when this will take place or you can request a meeting with them.

E-mail: My e-mail is anavilla@brandeis.edu. For any substantive issue about the course, please come to office hours rather than communicate by e-mail. I reserve e-mail for quick practical things such as letting me know you’ll be missing class, and you should cc the teaching assistants.

Written letter: For any issues with your grade, I ask you to submit a hard copy written letter explaining why you believe there has been a grading error, along with a copy of the work in question, and both the course assistant and I will review it.
**EVALUATION OF PROGRESS**
Your grade will be based on the following:

*Midterm Examination 20%*
The in-class midterm will be an essay exam over the course readings *as well as over what has come to light in class* (such as lecture content, films, etc.).

*Synthesizing Essays 30%*
There will be several short essays (page length of all essays combined should be less than 5 single space pages) which you will have one week to complete the last week of the semester. These essays will require you to integrate and apply what you have learned throughout the course, and while you may collaborate with other students *before* the essay questions have been assigned, once they have been given out, you must work on them entirely on your own.

*Assignments 25%*
This category includes weekly reflections on the readings posted to Latte by Sunday night (you may choose two busy weeks in the semester when you do not want to send these, and you will not be penalized, and **you do not need to submit reading reflections for the week in which you facilitate the class**), and occasional other assignments. You can post your reading reflections late, however they will be docked 20% for every day late.

*Participation and Facilitation 25%*
Participation includes your co-facilitation of one class session as well as your day-to-day engagement during class time. To get the most out of our diverse class, we will need to be respectful of the sometimes challenging views others have to offer, and also respectful of the fact that each of us (including YOU) has something to teach the rest of the class. Everyone’s full participation is needed to get the most out of the course, though I am well aware that different people have different ways in which they best participate, all of which are valid. Some of these methods of participation include active listening, thoughtful preparation for class, sharing a well-formulated idea after a long pause for thought, off-the-top-of-your-head reactions to new ideas, helping a classmate understand a difficult concept, asking interesting questions, engaging with another student who has made a comment, coming to office hours, bringing relevant news or magazine articles to class to share, and engagement with the various assignments. While participation can take many different forms, it cannot take any form if you are not present! Thus, except for religious holidays or exceptional circumstances, I expect you to make every effort to attend *all classes* and to arrive on time for all class meetings. If you miss three classes, your participation grade will go down 5% and an additional 5% for each absence. Three tardies counts as one absence as well in this formula—so please be on time!
TIPS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION

There is no uniform way to facilitate discussion. Nonetheless, here are some tips that might guide your ingenuity as you prepare for this task.

➣ Facilitators should read all of the reading responses submitted by the class to the Latte forum. Try to pull out the common themes and issues that sparked students’ interest (or share one particular intriguing response) and consider exploring these in your facilitation.

➣ Use the texts!! Point out or read aloud any moving, intriguing, or confusing excerpts from the readings and discuss them closely.

➣ Try to pull the readings together in an innovative way, like involving your classmates in creating a chart, diagram, table or map of the author’s concepts, perspectives, methods and/or arguments, and how they relate to each other. If you want to make handouts in advance, I can make the photocopies for free, provided you notify me in advance (my office hours are right before class, so I could do it then).

➣ Use your creativity! Consider devising a short in-class activity that explores an idea, issue or argument raised in the readings. The possibilities are endless (games, small group activities, role-playing activities, skits, debates, etc)! Jeopardy-style games are only acceptable as an occasional quick warm-up since they are more about factual recall and less about working with the material or taking it deeper or making it come alive.

➣ To stimulate discussion, you want to try to ask focused questions – “how” or “why” questions will elicit much more discussion than “yes”/”no” or recall questions. Examples: “Why do you think men are often excluded from traditionally female-dominated jobs?” “How does so-and-so’s theory apply or not apply to work today?” Come prepared with ideas for jumpstarting discussion in case the class falls silent.

➣ Make it personal. We learn best when we can APPLY what we learn, and drawing on examples from our personal lives and experiences can bring abstract materials to life.

➣ Have fun! The point of the discussion is to learn from each other and get our ideas and reactions to the texts out in the open. The most important thing discussion facilitators can do is to create a space that entices classmates to share their thoughts and questions about the material. I encourage you to focus less on impressing, more on encouraging!

YOUR GOAL: GET EVERY SINGLE STUDENT IN CLASS ENGAGED/TALKING!