

SOAN 325: Sociology of Assisted Reproductive Technology and Adoption

Professor: Liz Raleigh

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Individual Student Hours: Tue 3:30-4:30 CST, Wed 3:15-4:15 CST (link available in my email signature)

SOAN 325 Student Hour: Thurs 12:30-1:30pm on gather.town (no appointment necessary)

Link to [Gather.town lounge](#)

Course Description:

Where do babies come from? Whereas once the answer was relatively straight forward, the growth of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and adoption has changed the field of potential answers. Nowadays babies can come from birthmothers, egg donors, and surrogates. In this course we will examine the meaning and making of families across these different types of formations and contextualize the popularity of ART relative to the decrease in adoption. We will take a sociological approach to analyzing these issues, paying particular attention to questions surrounding women's rights, baby "markets", and the racialization of children placed for adoption in the US.

Student Learning Outcomes:

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has specified six student learning outcomes (SLOs) that we want students to acquire. In this course, our focus is on the following three:

Learning how to connect information about historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena;

Applying sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena;

Drawing upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world.

Required Course Materials:

Several articles can be downloaded from the course's Moodle page. The following five books are also required, but *they are all available online via catalyst*

1. Almeling, Rene. 2011. *Sex Cells: The Medical Market for Eggs and Sperm*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2. Briggs, Laura. 2012. *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*. Durham: Duke University Press.

3. Dorow, Sara. 2006. *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship*. New York: New York University Press
4. Mariner, Kathryn. 2019. *Contingent Kinship: The Flows and Futures of Adoption in the US*
5. Rudrappa, Sharmila. 2015. *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India*. New York: New York University Press.

Additional readings on moodle

Assignments and Evaluation:

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on the following activities:

Assignment	Percent of Grade	Due Date (all in CST)
Paper 1	9%	Friday January 8, 12:30pm
Papers 2-6	5@11% each	Fridays at the start of class*
Class facilitation	3%	TBD
Panel presentation	3%	March 8 or March 10
Final Paper	20%	Monday March 15, 12:30pm
Attendance, Communication	10%	Ongoing

*unless using an extension day

Grades will be allocated according to these parameters:

A	100-94	B+	<90-88	C+	<80-78	D+	<70-68
		B	<88-84	C	<78-74	D	<68-60
A-	<94-90	B-	<84-80	C-	<74-70	F	<60

Policy on late work: Under business as usual, deadlines are meant to keep people on task, since falling behind during a 10 week term is a recipe for disaster. *But this is not a normal term*, so I am going to be a lot more flexible. Here is how I envision due dates:

Students without restrictions (not quarantined or in isolation):

Do your best to stick to the schedule. You can have **two days of extensions** – in essence, students will be able to allocate two grace days across all of the analytic paper

assignments. For example, for your Friday paper, you could hand it in Saturday by 12pm, and that would be one point. The student would still have another day to play with throughout the term. **This policy does not apply to the final paper** since I cannot grade anything handed in after finals without an extension from the Dean of Students' Office.

Quarantined or asymptomatic isolated students: *I know that it is harder to function. If you are quarantined when an assignment is due, you can automatically have an additional day (i.e. for papers due Friday at 10am, you can hand it in Saturday by 12pm). You can still use your extension days on top of that.*

Students who are ill: We will make a new schedule depending on the situation. *I am more than willing to work with you.* Please reach out to me so we can set up a plan.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer ('10), Accessibility Specialist (x4464) or Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services (x5250) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Class Presentations and Public Speaking: Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Support for speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.) can be arranged. Depending on your goals, you can also work on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. For more information, contact Kathy Evertz, director of the Academic Support Center, at kevertz@carleton.edu.

Inclusion: I strive to create an inclusive and respectful classroom that values diversity. Our individual differences enrich and enhance our understanding of one another and of the world around us. This class welcomes the perspectives of all ethnicities, genders, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities.

Academic Integrity: In line with Carleton's policy on academic integrity, it is assumed that the student is the author of all coursework. Please refer to Carleton's full policy for additional information or see me if you have questions.

<http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>

Communication/Respectful use of electronic devices:

What do I mean by communication?

Communication with me (i.e. your professor): More than ever, communication will be vital. Please let me know how you are doing and what is going on with you. If you are quarantined, not feeling well (Covid or not), or if there is something going on for you that impedes your ability to function in class, **to the extent that you feel comfortable, please let me know.**

Email:

This term, a lot of communication will take place over email. **Make sure to use proper email etiquette** (i.e. Dear Liz or Dear Professor Raleigh). **Close the email and sign your name.** Please don't refer to me as Mrs. Raleigh or Ms. Raleigh: It is a funny cultural capital thing – either Liz or Professor is fine.

Respectful Use of Electronic Devices

It should go without saying but in addition to being present, students should refrain from inappropriately using electronic devices during class time. The same goes for multi-tasking during our online class. I find this type of behavior disrespectful and distracting.

Camera on during class

Unless you have a technical issue (please let me know *before* class), your camera needs to be on. FYI, in gather.town, there isn't an option for a virtual background. *Please don't worry if your background is less than optimal :*)

Respect for each other: Have you learned everyone's names? When it comes time for class discussion, are you aware of how your actions are interpreted by the class? If you are always among the first to speak, considering standing down to make room for others. If you rarely talk in class, consider taking a risk and sharing your voice.

Participation:

The "default" participation grade is 5 out of 10, so students who actively and productively contribute to class will substantially increase their grades. Note: this does not mean that people who talk more get more points. I appreciate students who listen thoughtfully and think about when and how to speak up. **Those who are always first to speak will not get full credit.** Students in quarantine and isolation will be eligible for full credit in this domain. Please contact me to make a plan.

Calendar – Readings should be done for class the day listed

NOTE: As the term goes on, I reserve the right to change up some of the readings, if need be.

Week 1

Monday January 4:

- Introduction to the Course: Assisted Reproductive Technologies, Adoption, Transracial Adoption
- Watch Baby M and the Question of Surrogacy

Wednesday January 6. Setting the Stage

- Relatives
- Reproductive justice for the invisible infertile: A critical examination of reproductive surveillance and stratification
- Normal parents: Trans pregnancy and the production of reproducers
- Reproducing while Black

Friday January 8.

- I know that you could be preparing to travel this day.
- Asynchronous class -- work on your papers. You can find me on gather.town during class time if you have questions about your papers. **Please turn them in by 12:30pm.** Anything after is considered late.

Week 2

Monday January 11: Gamete Donation

- Making parents -- Is man to father as woman to mother?
- Strategic naturalizing
- Introduction to Sex Cells

Wed January 13: Sex Cells

- Chapters 2-4

Friday January 15: Wrap-up

- Watch Google Baby pt. 1 in class
- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)

Week 3

Monday January 18: Global Surrogacy

- Discounted Life, Introduction, Chapters 3-4

Wednesday January 20: Global & U.S. Surrogacy

- Discounted Life, Chapter 6 and Conclusion
- Labor of Love: Gestational Surrogacy and the Work of Making Babies (chapter 4)

Friday January 22: Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa in class

- Make sure to post questions to the google doc by 10pm the night before class
- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)

Week 4

Monday January 25: Assortative Adoption

- An assortative adoption marketplace
- Selling Transracial Adoption Introduction & Chapter 2
- Somebody's Children introduction

Wednesday January 27: Somebody's Children

- Somebody's Children: Chapter 3, 7, & epilogue

Friday January 29: asynchronous class

- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)
- Watch the end of Google Baby (available online)

Week 5

Monday February 1: Private Domestic Adoption

- Dear Birthmother
- Contingent Kinship: Introduction & Chapter 1

Wednesday February 3: Contingent Kinship Continued

- Contingent Kinship: Chapters 4, 5, & conclusion

Friday February 5: Kathryn Mariner in class

- Make sure to post questions to the google doc by 10pm the night before class
- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)

Week 6

Monday February 8: Midterm Break Day

Wednesday February 10: Foster Care

- Adoption Tax Credit
- Afcars Report
- Child Protection as surveillance of African American families
- Catching a Case chapters 3 & 5

Friday February 10: Foster Care wrap up

- Watch Tough Love part 1 in class
- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)

Week 7

Monday February 15: Focus on Fatherhood

- Grasping at fatherhood in abortion and adoption (selected sections)
- The meaning of the sperm donor for heterosexual couples
- Constructions of surrogates, egg donors, and mothers

Wednesday February 17:

- In the name of the child -- race, gender, and economics in Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl

Friday February 19:

- Tough Love part 2 in class
- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)
- Start reading Dorow's Transnational Adoption for Monday

Monday February 22: Transnational Adoption from China

- Dorow Introduction, chapters 1, 3, 4

Wednesday February 24: Transnational Adoption continued

- Dorow chapters 5, 6, pgs. 216-231, conclusion

Friday February 26:

- Screen Somewhere between part 1
- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)

Monday March 1: All-request playlist → Readings to be determined

Wed March 3: All-request playlist → Readings to be determined

Friday March 5: Somewhere between part 2

- Paper due by start of class (if not using extension or the skip week)

Monday March 8: Class Presentations Panels 1 & 2

Wed March 10: Class Presentations Panels 3 & 4

Final Papers Due Monday March 15 by 11am