

**Carework & Inequality:
At the intersection of race, class, gender and
globalism**

Sociology 590: Tuesday 4:30-7
Carney 302

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Course Overview

What is carework? Is it work? Is it a private or a public "good"? What does love have to do with carework? As a society, *who* do we believe should do the work of taking care of children, family life, people who are sick or disabled, and the frail elderly? If we accept that care is a commodity to be purchased, how much is it worth and who pays? And finally, who are caregivers and what is their view on how care is constructed in American society.

We begin the course by examining historical patterns and social forces that circumscribe care labor. The class traces carework as a form of "reproductive labor" primarily provided by women and girls, the "commodification" of care in the form of hired labor, and the development of a global class of careworkers. Throughout, we will probe the complex intersections of race, gender, class and immigration as critical factors in the construction of American carework. As our nation faces a crisis in caring labor and the middle class grows increasingly "hungry" for care, complex, familiar issues surface. We will examine the clash between care as attachment and acts of love and care as a product to be bought and sold - at the lowest price - in the global market place.

Course Readings

- Care Work: Gender, labor and the welfare state. (2000) M. H. Harrington-Meyer (Editor) New York: Routledge
- The Invisible Heart: economics and family values. (2001) Folbre, Nancy. New York: The New Press.

- Mothering: Ideology, experience, agency. (1994) Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang and Linda Rennie Forcey (Editors) New York: Routledge.
- Global Women: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy. (2002) Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild. Henry Holt: New York.
- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence. U of California Press.
- *All other readings are available as hand-outs or online through Ereserve at the library.*

Course outline

Part One

The meaning of carework: Gender roles and social reproduction

January 17th: ***What is carework?***

- Roster & introductions- Do you have a specific interest in carework?
- Overview of course, syllabus, expectations and assignments
- Discussion of the "care story" that will open each class.
- Current events: At the start of each class anyone may bring up a topic, news story, etc. for general discussion.
- Random assignment of class leading/presentation on readings- pass the hat.
- Lecture
- Handouts for next week

January 24th ***The labor of caring***

We will begin to examine the current scholarship on caregiving by looking into the "gendered" construction of care labor, family roles, and the relationship of carework and social reproduction.

1. Current event/news story?
2. Care stories
3. Student led discussion

Readings:

- Marjorie L. DeVault, 1991. *Feeding the Family*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. pgs 1-30, 77-91. Handout.
- Romero, Mary. (2003). *Maid in the USA*. Routledge: New York pgs 47-61.
- Himmelweit, Susan. (1999) "Caring Labor" in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* V561: 52-63. Handout.

Discussion questions to consider: Why is carework so hard to describe?

January 31st **Carework: Gender scripts and the social reproduction of society**

This week we move beyond the locus of the family to examine the relationship between carework, social hierarchies and larger economic forces, using critical examination of unpaid and paid carework.

How do we - do we -- reconcile the "gendered nature" of carework? What are the meanings of "dependency" and how have those changed overtime?

1. **Distribution of paper topics**
2. Current event/news story?
3. Care stories
4. Student led discussion

Readings:

- Fraser, Nancy and Linda Gordon 1994. "A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State." *Signs* 19:309-36
- Folbre, Nancy. 2001. "Introduction" pp xi-xv in *The Invisible Heart: economics and family values*. New York: The New Press.
- Folbre, Nancy. 2001. "The Milk of Human Kindness" Pgs. 1-21 in *The Invisible Heart: Economics and family values*. New York: The New Press.

Do we value or eschew dependency, and for whom?

Part Two: The development of an American care class

February 7th
carework

Class, race, family care and paid

This week we begin to explore care as wage labor, largely filled by low-wage women, disproportionately women of color and immigrants. Additionally, we will examine the development of the "cult of domesticity" and intensive mothering and the growing contrast between middle class family life and the care labor among working class, African American, and ethnic minority families.

1. Current event/news story?
2. Care stories
3. Student led discussion

Readings:

- Abel, Emily. (2000) *A Historical Perspective on Care*. Chapter 1 in Meyer
- Collins, Patricia Hill (1994) *Shifting the Center: Race, class and feminist theorizing about motherhood*. Chapter 3 in Glenn et al
- Romero, Mary. (2003). "Gender and Class in Domestic Work" in *Maid in the USA* Routledge: New York. (Chapter 3 pages 77-99) HANDOUT

How do socioeconomic status/identity, race and culture affect mothering or motherwork? Why does this difference matter?

February 17

Carework: Slaves, women of color and working class women

Contrasting histories and conceptualizations of family and carework continued.

1. Current event/news story?
2. Care stories
3. Student led discussion

Readings

- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. (1992) *From Servitude to Service Work: Historical continuities in the racial division of paid reproductive labor*. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture in Society, Vol 18, No. 1.
- Wong, Sau-ling. (1994) *Diverted Mothering: Representations of caregivers of color in the age of "multiculturalism"*. Chapter 4 in Glenn et al.
- Naples, Nancy (2002) *Activist mothering and community work: Fighting oppression in low-income neighborhoods*. Chapter 14 in Child care and Inequality: Rethinking carework for children and youth. Editors Francesca M. Cancian, Demi Kurz, Andrew S. London, Rebecca Reviere, and Mary C. Tuominen. Routledge: New York

How has the historic transfer of mothering/carework from low-income to upper income families affected social expectations of working class women, especially women of color? Has this affected the whole society?

Part Three: Mothers "go to work" and the care gap

February 24 ***The care vacuum and a growing demand for "substitute" care***

In this section of the course we examine the "transformation" of family -- specifically the middle class family -- with the dramatic increase in women's/mothers' labor market participation resulted in an escalating need for a variety of "substitute careworkers." We will analyze Williams' model of the *ideal worker* and how that served to increase the divide between middle class and low-income women/women of color.

1. Current events
2. Care story
3. Student-led discussion

Readings:

- Crittenden, Ann (2001) The Price of Motherhood: Why the most important job in the world is still the least valued. Henry Holt: New York. Chapters 3& 4
- Williams, Joan (2000) Unbending Gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it. Oxford

University Press: New York. Chapters 3 (pages 64-113)
HANDOUT

- Kurz, Demi (2000) *Paying for care*. Chapter 12 in Meyer.

*What do we gain/lose when we try to be "ideal workers"?
Does the meaning of ideal worker change based on class and ethnic/racial culture?*

February 31st
mothers to work

Welfare reform and getting poor

This week we examine carework in the context of welfare reform and the successful conservative argument that "family values" were eroding creating a moral imperative to "get (poor) mothers to work."

1. Current events
2. Care story
3. Student-led discussion

Readings:

- Oliker, Stacy (2000) *Examining care at welfare's end*. Chapter 11 Meyer.
- Dodson, L. & Dickert, J. (2004). *Girls' family labor in low-income households: A decade of qualitative research*. Journal of Marriage and the Family. 66 (318-332)
- Roberts? Welfare's ban on poor motherhood

What is the connection between valuing care and welfare reform?

Part Four: Care as a product and keeping prices down

March 14th **The commodification of care**

This week we discuss care as a market product and consider the ways this product is translated into units for sale that must be standardized, evaluated and assigned a cost.

1. Current events
2. Care story

3. Student-led discussion

Readings:

- Stone, Deborah (2000) *Caring by the Book* Chapter 7 in Meyer.
- Cancian, Francesca M. (2000) *Paid Emotional Care* Chapter 9 in Meyer.
- Folbre, Nancy. 2001. "The Care Penalty" pgs. 22-52 in *The Invisible Heart: economics and family values*. New York: The New Press.

What is the meaning of care penalties?

March 21st ***Immigrants: A growing source of carework***

We explore current patterns of carework within the global marketplace and examine care "crossing borders" away from workers' own families into the families that can afford to purchase caring labor.

Readings:

- Chang, Grace (2000) "The Nanny Visa" and "Global Exchange" (pages 93- 150) in *Disposable Domesticity*. South End Press: MA
- Anderson, Bridget (2002) *Just another job? The commodification of domestic labor* (pages 104-114) in Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (eds.), Global Women: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy. Editors Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild. Henry Holt: New York.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell (2002) *Love and Gold* (pages 15-31) in Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (eds.), Global Women: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy. Editors Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild. Henry Holt: New York.

Transnational motherhood and the community left behind

March 28th

The trends, conditions and experiences of immigrant careworkers are only one half of the story when parents leave their homes to fill the void with the dramatic increase in women's participation in labor market in advanced industrial nations.

**Speakers: Janet Smith and Maria Dejesus, Doctoral Students,
Lynch School of Education (additional affiliations)**

No current events

No care story

Student led discussion 6-7

Readings:

- Parrenas, Rhacel Salazar (2002) *The Care Crisis in the Philippines: Children and Transnational Families in the New Global Economy*. Third essay (pages 39-54) in Global Women: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy. Editors Barbara Ehrenrieck and Arlie Hochschild. Henry Holt: New York.
- Saskia Sassen, *Global Cities and Survival Circuits*. In Global Woman (Pages 254-274)
- Schmalzbauer, Leah (2004) *Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The Case of Honduran Transnational Families* *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 66 (Pages 1314-1328)

Part Five: Contemporary Lives of Wage Poor Careworkers

During this section of the course, we will examine the experiences of contemporary careworkers, "up close." Using life stories from our own research and other readings we will focus on different care job against the readings and themes introduced earlier in the course.

April 4th
America's homes

Domestics: The people who keep

Readings:

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence. U of California Press.

April 11th
Nannies & Childcare Workers: The people who care for America's

children

(Short Film)

Readings:

- Macdonald, Cameron. (1998) *Manufacturing Motherhood: The Shadow Work of Nannies and Au Pairs*. Qualitative Sociology 21:1.
- Nelson, Margaret K. *Family Day Care Providers: The Dilemmas of Daily Practice*. Chapter 9 in Glenn et al.
- Folbre, Nancy. 2001. "The Nanny State", pp 83-108 in *The Invisible Heart: economics and family values*. New York: The New Press.

April 18th

The elder care workforce: The people who care for America's

and frail

elderly

Speaker: Rebekah Zincauge, Doctoral Candidate, Brandeis University and researcher on the lives of elder care workers

April 25th

ethic of care

Toward an international

Paper is due

We will considering themes in contemporary scholarship about care and society.

Readings:

- Paula England and Nancy Folbre (2002) *Care, Inequality and Policy*. Chapter 9 in Cancian et al.
- Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2000) *Creating a Caring Society*. Contemporary Sociology 29:1 (84-94).
- Harrington, Mona. 1999. *Care and Equality: Inventing a new family politics*. New York: Knopf. Pgs 44- 60

May 2nd

Open at this point

- Current care events?
- Care story.
- Evaluation
- Open discussion

Course Requirements

Participation and attendance (35%)

- Class attendance each week is required and grades will reflect attendance. Close and thoughtful reading of all assigned materials is essential for this seminar.
- **Each student will be expected to contribute one "care story/history" as is explained below.**

One paper (30%)

- Paper should reflect your analysis of readings and class discussion as a foundation that you will build upon to discuss a specific topic.
- This 10-12-page (double-spaced) paper is due on the date it is assigned. You will pick your topic by the fourth week of the term and it is due towards the end. You have only one paper and many weeks to do it **so there is no reason to hand it in late**. Plan ahead and leave yourself plenty of weeks in the semester to get your paper done. You may send me an outline of your paper -- by the end of March - if you want early feedback

Planning and leading the seminar (35%)

- Everyone will lead one class as assigned (through random assignment, but you may trade with other students if you work it out amongst yourselves.)

Details about expectations:

Each of you will lead an hour-long class discussion. You may exchange your topic with someone else if you choose. You may also collaborate with someone else, rather than lead alone (but that means the two of you would have 2 weeks to lead, together).

The point of leading a class discussion is not to simply to repeat the readings but to really engage (challenge, deepen, expand upon) the main themes in those readings, drawing in your classmates. *Take liberties with this assignment with the goal of stimulating class participation!* Prepare carefully and well in advance; in the past those who prepared this assignment the day or two had weak classes. Email me **by Friday morning, the week before your class**, with your plan so I can comment/assist you.

To cover the time allotted some students have used more than one approach. Some past examples included dividing the class into debating teams. For example one debate was: There should be wages for family carework versus family work should remain "free." And another could be: Primary parents (usually mothers) should have a different job benefit level - more sick, vacation and family care days off --versus all workers should be treated

the same. And still another could discuss guest worker rules, addressing the issue of immigrant careworkers. If you decide to structure your class as a debate, investigate current discussions on the topic to inform the way you set up the class. *Not all readings/weeks lend themselves to debates.*

Some students have located short films or parts of films relevant to their topics and used those as a jumping off point, *along with carefully prepared activities.* I am very open to any structure for this so long as you use the readings and engage each other.

You must depend on each other to do the reading and participate or these don't go well so exert some peer pressure!

Each of you will start one class with a care story.

These are informal - do not require reading unless you wish to-- but do require that you reflect upon care that you have known, see(n), heard about, experienced or done in your life. *Example:* One care story I could tell is based upon a woman who takes care of children in a family on my street. I see her get off the bus on mornings that I work at home. She has done so for the 10 years I have lived in my home and I have come to know her a little. I have listened to her talk about her way of doing the job, her attachment to the children and also concerns about her own children, when they get home from school, etc. She is an African American woman with a high-school education caring for an affluent (and she says very nice) family, dual-career; dentist and lawyer. There are many nuances in her account that reveal a great deal about paid private-home carework in the US.

Another source is newspaper stories about the need for good eldercare and abuses; cost issues and care needs as "causing a budget deficit"; preferences for immigrant as "domestics"; public policy debates; childcare issues/choices; work and family conflicts, the "problem" of undocumented workers, most of whom do domestic/care work, and so forth...it is endless! Think about the meaning of care creatively for this assignment.

And, you may certainly draw from your family, friends, literature, the media, arguments or revelations you've had...really any source. But tell a thoughtful story that is rooted in how this society or particular people within the society are grappling with (or trying to ignore or screwing up, etc.) the issue of providing care that all people need

- and some need more. I want this to be a reflective - not-academic reading - time. We can discuss this more.

Paper

I will give you a choice of 3 topics in our 4th week of class and ask that you make your choice by the fifth class (February 17th).

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