

SOC 334: GENDER, WORK, AND FAMILY IN EAST ASIA

University of Wisconsin-Madison Fall 2025

Wednesdays 2:25-5pm

Eunsil Oh

Contents

1 Basic Information and Communications	2
2 Course Description and Lecture Overview	2
3 Learning Outcomes	4
4 Course Workload and Assignments/Exams	5
5 Lectures, Readings, and Weekly Schedules	7
6 Grading	11
7 Course Policies	12
8 Department and University-wide Policies	12

1. Basic Information and Communications

Classroom: SOCIAL WRK 114

Class: Wednesday 2:25-5pm

Instructor: Eunsil Oh (eunsil.oh@wisc.edu)

Office: 8116B Social Science Building

Office Hours: Wednesdays by appointment (please email)

Email Policy & Office Hours

If you have a logistic question, please first consult the syllabus and Canvas. The best way to communicate with me is via email (eunsil.oh@wisc.edu) or Canvas message. Try writing your email with a proper title and greeting and make sure to write your name as you prefer to be called. Please show your respect by being professional through email and avoid being casual (i.e. Hi there, Hey, etc). Email me with the course number (i.e. Asian 334) in the subject line to talk about accommodations or to schedule an appointment if my office hours do not work for you. I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the workday (9AM-5PM). If you have to miss a lecture, please contact the professor and contact a fellow student for notes. If you will be missing more than four lectures, email the professor. Also, if you have any questions or comments about course material, it is best to visit me during my office hour (please make your appointment by sending me an email).

2. Course Description and Lecture Overview

Course Description

Utilizing theoretical and analytical tools from sociology, this course provides social science *lens* in understanding and analyzing contemporary East Asia (mainly South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and China). This is a sociology course, but the nature and orientation of the course are interdisciplinary, incorporating readings in history, anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and law. This course pays careful attention to the intersection of multiple structures of inequality such as gender, race/ethnicity, citizenship, class, and sexuality.

Two main goals of the class are to examine major theoretical debates in the study of gender inequality and to gain empirical knowledge about gender, work, and family in contemporary East Asia. Readings include theoretical and empirical studies. We will also situate theories and empirical findings in diverse mediums including literature, media, film, and art. Societies that we will cover are Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and China and in order to understand issues of gender inequality in the context of historical change, the time framework for this course is from Post-war period to present.

The course is organized in three parts. In the **part 1** of the course, we establish basic knowledge about theories and ongoing debates in the field of gender studies, sociology of family, and East Asia. After familiarizing ourselves with key concepts, perspectives, and findings in the literature, we will move on to **part 2** and examine the patterns of gender

inequality and of working lives of men and women in four countries. Each week will be dedicated to one particular country. Towards the end of part 2, students will submit their life course essay. In the **final part** of the course, we connect part 1 and part 2 of the course to explore the working lives of men and women in East Asia with a comparative lens. Exploring differences and commonalities across East Asian societies, we not only use existing theories but also aim to develop theories derived from empirical and historical patterns in East Asia.

Each week will consist of half lecture and half discussion. During lectures, the assigned readings are placed in a larger framework. During our discussion time, we are going to understand, apply, and creatively develop sociological concepts using the case of contemporary Korea. We will utilize a means including Canvas and Zoom when needed. In addition, we will do small group exercises. This will allow you to better work through challenging concepts and theories, and to apply these theories to your own experiences. Come prepared to participate and to share your thoughts and questions with the rest of the class.

Lecture Overview

Introduction

W1: Introduction
Gender, Work, and Family in East Asia

Part 1: Theories and Conceptual Toolkits to Understand East Asia

W2: Geographical and Theoretical Positioning
Orientalism and Intersectionality

W3: Sociological Lens
MaMi-MiMa and Beyond the Two Spheres

W4: Theories Explaining Work and Family Decisions
Economic, Structural, and Cultural Foundations

Part 2: East Asia as our Empirical Cases

W5: General Trends in East Asia
The Great Transformation, Gender Inequality, and Familism

W6: South Korea
Compressed Modernity, Hyper-Competition, and Overwork

W7: Japan
Hegemonic Masculinity and Internal Labor Market

W8: Taiwan
Intergenerational Support and Extended Families

W9: China
Class Inequality and Marriage

Part 3: Leveraging our Comparative Lens

W10: Sociological Topic (1): Educational Expansion and Gender
Education Fever and the Paradox of Stalled Gender Revolution

W11: Sociological Topic (2): Low Fertility
South Korea, Japan, and China

W12: Sociological Topic (3): Social Movements
Abortion and LGBTQ+ Marriage

W13: Thanksgiving Week

W14: Sociological Topic (4): Son Preferences
Taiwan, China, Korea, and Japan

W15: Discussion Leading Week
Review and Feed-forward: Sociological Perspective and Contemporary East Asia

3. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain how institutional processes, including the labor market, family, and education generate, maintain, and change the cultural understandings of gender.
- List past and current studies on how and why female labor force participation and gender wage gap are different across Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and China.
- Answer the question of “Can women in East Asia *have it all?*” and of how social development influence women’s aspirations and choices, producing the patterned behaviors that we observe.
- Develop a comparative lens in constructing your own argument on whether – if so, how - different speeds of social change and development influence institutions and cultures of a society.
- Draw a conceptual map of cultural and structural foundations of gender inequality in the context of East Asia.

4. Course Workload and Assignments/Exams

Course Workload

This is a 3-credit course. In accordance with the UW-Madison credit hour policy standards, this credit load is equivalent to the following:

- 150 minutes of classroom instruction (lecture and discussions)
- A minimum of 6 hours of out of class student work each week (on average).
- Your readings and assessment tasks have been selected accordingly.

Assignments and Exams

	Points
Weekly Synthesis	100
Weekly Quiz	200
Life Course Essay / Field Statement	300
Final team project	400

Meta Calendar

September 03 rd – December 10 th	Two Weekly Assignments Every Tuesdays: Synthesis + Discussion Questions Every Wednesdays: In-class Quiz
October 3 rd	Assignment 1: Progress Report (1) due by 5pm
October 17 th	Assignment 1: Progress Report (2) due by 5pm
October 31 st	Assignment 1: Life Course Due by 5pm
November 14 th	Assignment 2: Progress Report (1) due by 5pm
November 21 th	Assignment 2: Progress Report (2) due by 5pm
December 5 th	Assignment 2: Slides (drafts) due by 5pm
December 10 th	Assignment 2: Presentation during class

Attendance and Class-Participation (Impact on the Final Grade). Attendance is mandatory and there will be free **two** passes, meaning you can feel free to use your free passes. From your third absence, there will be grade reduction where your final grade falling by one-half of a grade (e.g. from A to AB, B to BC, etc.). Also, persistent tardiness will have a negative effect on your evaluation. Your active participation is essential for the success of a course of this kind.

Weekly Synthesis (100). Points for participation are evaluated based on your participation in Canvas. All students – regardless of the anticipated attendance - have to upload a weekly synthesis. Upload a synthesis (limiting to 250 words) of all the readings for the week by 5pm Monday (before Tuesday class). The weekly posting starts from Week 2 (so, the first posting should be uploaded by Monday 5pm on Sep. 9th).

Weekly Quiz (200). There will be weekly quizzes. These quizzes will mainly be on the course assignments/readings, and lectures. These quizzes will take place every Thursday at 9:30am in class (if you cannot attend the class, you can still take the quiz online) via Canvas. Our first quiz will take place on our second week (Sep. 12th).

Micro-Macro Essay (300). Write a 6-7 page-long (double-spaced) essay that connects **three** individuals' lives and macro patterns in the society. This is an exercise to develop analytic ability to connect micro experiences with macro social change and pattern. Guidelines for this essay will be uploaded on the course Canvas site.

Field Statement Project: East Asia-Lecture (400). Students will work on a topic they are interested in related to gender, work, and family in East Asia and will prepare a field statement. This is an exercise to develop skills to do a systemic literature review and deliver a conceptual map/landscape of the literature on a given topic. Students will present their work on Week 15. Guidelines for this field statement will be uploaded on the course Canvas site. Final projects will be worth 400 points, but there will be four different progress reports/assignments for this project.

Example of your 2nd Week

Thursday – Monday (09/04 - 09/08)	Tuesday (09/09)	Wednesday (09/10)
Read readings and write a synthesis for W2 reading(s)	Upload a weekly memo for W2 reading(s) by 5pm	Class 2:25-5pm Take your in-class weekly quiz at 2:30pm. Bring your laptop to take the quiz

5. Readings, Lectures, and Weekly Schedules

Readings and Lectures

All reading and other materials (newspaper, films, novels) are posted on Canvas (under 'Files'). For your convenience in taking notes and reviewing course materials, PowerPoint as well as whiteboards/blackboards will be used often in the lectures. The instructor will upload PowerPoint slides to Canvas after the lecture.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1. Introduction: Gender, work, and family

Topic: Why are we here? Why are we interested in gender, work, and family?

Task: Please be ready to do one thing for the class: Introduction (Why are you taking this course? What will be your key word(s)/main topic(s) of interest for this course?)

PART 1: THEORIES AND CONCEPTUAL TOOLKITS

WEEK 2. Geographical and Theoretical Positioning:

Topic: Why East Asia? What perspectives should we know to study GWF in East Asia in 2025?

Conceptual Toolkit: Orientalism, Colonial Discourse, and Intersectionality

- 1) Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses." *Feminist review* 30 (1988): 61-88.
- 2) Choo, Hae Yeon, and Myra Marx Ferree. "Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities." *Sociological theory* 28, no. 2 (2010): 129-149.

WEEK 3. Sociological Lens

Topic A: How does macro structure shape groups' and individuals' lives?

Conceptual Toolkit A: Macro-Micro-Micro-Macro (AKA Coleman's Boat)

Topic B: Two spheres in a society? How can public and private spheres influence each other?

Conceptual Toolkit B: Beyond the Separate Spheres of Private and Public

- 1) Hedström, Peter, and Peter Bearman. "What is analytical sociology all about? An introductory essay." *The Oxford handbook of analytical sociology* (2009): 3-24.
- 2) Cha, Youngjoo. "Reinforcing separate spheres: The effect of spousal overwork on men's and women's employment in dual-earner households." *American Sociological Review* 75, no. 2 (2010): 303-329.

*Additional Reading: Ferree, Myra Marx. "Beyond separate spheres: Feminism and family research." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 52, no. 4 (1990): 866.

WEEK 4. Hard Decisions: Gender, Work, and Family

Topic: What shapes individual's decisions related to work and family?

Conceptual Toolkit: Economic, Structural, and Cultural Foundations of Work and Family Decisions

- 1) Damaske, Sarah. 2011. *For the family? How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1
- 2) Killewald, Alexandra and Margaret Gough. 2010. "Money Isn't Everything: Wives' Earnings and Housework Time." *Social Science Research* 39(6):987-1003.

- 3) Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and In Paik. "Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty?" *American journal of sociology* 112, no. 5 (2007): 1297-1338.

*Additional Reading: Rivera, Lauren A. 2017. "When Two Bodies Are (Not) a Problem: Gender and Relationship Status Discrimination in Academic Hiring." *American Sociological Review* 82: 1111-1138.

PART 2. EAST ASIA AS OUR EMPIRICAL CASES

WEEK 5. General Trend in East Asia

Topic: What changed? What did not change? The gap between theories of family change and what is happening in East Asia.

Conceptual Toolkit: Second Demographic Transition and Compressed Modernity

- 1) Raymo, James M., Hyunjoon Park, Yu Xie, and Wei-jun Jean Yeung. "Marriage and family in East Asia: Continuity and change." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (2015): 471-492.
- 2) Ji, Yingchun. "Asian families at the crossroads: A meeting of east, west, tradition, modernity, and gender." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77.5 (2015): 1031-1038.

*Additional Reading: Kyung-Sup, Chang. "Compressed modernity and its discontents: South Korean society in transition." *Economy and society* 28, no. 1 (1999): 30-55.

WEEK 6. South Korea

Topic: Class, gender, and (extended) families in S. Korea.

Conceptual Toolkit: Neoliberalism, Hyper-Competition, and Overwork

- 1) Abelmann, Nancy. *The melodrama of mobility: Women, talk, and class in contemporary South Korea*. University of Hawaii Press, 2003. Chapter 1
- 2) Oh, Eunsil. 2018. "Who Deserves to Work? How Women Develop Expectations of Childcare Support in Korea." *Gender & Society*. Volume: 32 issue: 4, page(s): 493-515.

WEEK 7. Japan

Topic: Persisting gender inequality in the labor market in the context of Japan.

Conceptual Toolkit: Organizational Processes and Hegemonic Masculinity

- 1) Nemoto, Kumiko. *Too few women at the top: The persistence of inequality in Japan*. Cornell University Press, 2016. Chapter 5. Production and Navigation of Gender Bias: Heroic Masculinity, Female Misogyny, and Queen Bees.
- 2) Mun, Eunmi, and Jiwook Jung. "Change above the glass ceiling: Corporate social responsibility and gender diversity in Japanese firms." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (2018): 409-440.

WEEK 8. Taiwan (Yes quiz, but no class on Thursday)

Topic: Family structures and theories that explain how families operate.

Conceptual Toolkit: Intergenerational Support and Extended Families

- 1) Wang, Ying-Ting, and Wen-Shan Yang. "Changes and Trends in Family Structure in Taiwan, 1990 to 2010." *Journal of Family Issues* 40, no. 14 (2019): 1896-1911.
- 2) Yean-Ju Lee, William L. Parish and Robert J. Willis. 1994. "Sons, Daughters, and Intergenerational Support in Taiwan" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 99, No. 4.

WEEK 9. China

Topic: Is China currently an equal society based on its founding values and principles? If not, what are the structural and cultural foundations of social inequality?

Conceptual Toolkit: Class Inequality and Marriage

- 1) Ji, Yingchun, Xiaogang Wu, Shengwei Sun, and Guangye He. "Unequal care, unequal work: Toward a more comprehensive understanding of gender inequality in post-reform urban China." *Sex Roles* 77, no. 11 (2017): 765-778.
- 2) Zhou, Yun. 2019. "Economic Resources, Cultural Matching, and the Rural-Urban Boundary in China's Marriage Market." *Journal of Marriage and Family*.
- 3) Yu, Jia, and Yu Xie. "Changes in the determinants of marriage entry in post-reform urban China." *Demography* 52, no. 6 (2015): 1869-1892.

*Additional Reading: Ji, Yingchun. "Between tradition and modernity: "Leftover" women in Shanghai." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, no. 5 (2015): 1057-1073.

*Xie, Yu and C Zhang. 2020 "The long-term impact of the Communist Revolution on social stratification in contemporary China." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (39), 19392-19397.

*Hu, Yang, and Jacqueline Scott. "Family and gender values in China: Generational, geographic, and gender differences." *Journal of Family Issues* 37, no. 9 (2016): 1267-1293.

PART 3. EAST ASIA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

WEEK 10. Sociological Topic (1): Educational Expansion and Gender

Topic: Educational expansion and its consequences. What is the role of education in gender, work, and family? How about rise in women's educational attainment level?

Conceptual Toolkit: The Reversal of the Gender Gap in Education and Cultural Beliefs

- 1) Sinha Mukherjee, Sucharita. "More educated and more equal? A comparative analysis of female education and employment in Japan, China and India." *Gender and Education* 27, no. 7 (2015): 846-870.
- 2) Read, Jen'nan Ghazal, and Sharon Oselin. "Gender and the education-employment paradox in ethnic and religious contexts: The case of Arab Americans." *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 2 (2008): 296-313.

*Additional Reading: Claudia Goldin. "The U-Shaped Female Labor Force Participation Function in Economic Development and Economic History."

WEEK 11. Sociological Topic (2): Low Fertility in South Korea, Japan, and China

Topic: East Asian societies share similar problems such as low fertility and high gender inequality. How are these aggregated levels produced and reproduced?

Conceptual Toolkit: Gender equity theory, overwork, and the lowest-low fertility rate

- 1) Brinton, Mary and Eunsil Oh. 2019. "Babies, Work, or Both? The Interdependence of Women's Employment and Fertility in East Asia." *American Journal of Sociology*.
- 2) Kan, Man-Yee, and Ekaterina Hertog. "Domestic division of labour and fertility preference in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan." *Demographic Research* 36 (2017): 557-588.

*Additional Reading: Shen, Y and L Jiang. 2020. "Labor Market Outcomes of Professional Women with Two Children after the One-Child Policy in China." *Journal of Social Issues*.

WEEK 12. Sociological Topic (3): Social Movements

All podcast groups will share the outline of their project and receive feedbacks from the peers.

Topic: Abortion and Sexuality

- 1) Kim, Sunhye, Na Young, and Yurim Lee. "The role of reproductive justice movements in challenging South Korea's abortion ban." *Health and human rights* 21, no. 2 (2019): 97.
- 2) Jung, Minwoo. "Embracing the nation: Strategic deployment of sexuality, nation, and citizenship in Singapore." *The British Journal of Sociology* (2021).

WEEK 14. Sociological Topic (4): Mechanisms Explaining the Decline of Son Preferences

Topic: Theorization of the increase and decrease of son preference.

- 1) Choi, Eleanor Jawon, and Jisoo Hwang. "Transition of son preference: evidence from South Korea." *Demography* 57, no. 2 (2020): 627-652.
- 2) Fuse, Kana. "Daughter preference in Japan: A reflection of gender role attitudes?." *Demographic Research* 28 (2013): 1021-1052.
- 3) Chung, Woojin, and Monica Das Gupta. "The decline of son preference in South Korea: The roles of development and public policy." *Population and development review* 33, no. 4 (2007): 757-783.

*Additional Reading: Chun, Heeran, and Monica Das Gupta. "'Not a bowl of rice, but tender loving care': from aborting girls to preferring daughters in South Korea." *Asian Population Studies* (2021): 1-21.

*Ling, Minhua. "Precious son, reliable daughter: Redefining son preference and parent-child relations in migrant households in urban China." *The China Quarterly* 229 (2017): 150-171.

*Yu, Wei-hsin and Kuo-hsien Su. 2006. "Gender, Sibship Structure, and Educational Inequality in Taiwan: Son Preference Revisited," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68:1057-1068

*Rauscher and Song. "Learning to Value Girls: Balanced Infant Sex Ratios at Higher Parental Education in the United States, 1969–2018." *Demography* 2022

WEEK 15. Student Presentation and Feed-forward

Topic: *Sociological Perspective and Contemporary East Asia*

Students will share their work.

6. Grading

Total of 1000 points

	Points
Weekly Synthesis	100
Weekly Quiz	200
Life Course Essay / Field Statement	300
Final team project	400

Letter grades and the total points

	Grades
92-100%	A
87-91.9%	AB
82-86.9%	B
77-81.9%	BC
70-76.9%	C
60-69.9%	D

Late Policy for Assignments. The instructor does not accept late submissions. Please try your best to send what you have by the deadline.

7. Course Policies

Number One Rule

- We will try our best to be critical about the privileges that we have and have benefited from. Ignoring the existence of systemic racism and sexism will be considered as an intellectual humiliation in this course.

General In-class and Online Rule

- You are responsible for reading all assigned materials before coming to class, and you should make your best effort to contribute positively to class discussion.

Assignments and Exams

- Turn in your own work.
- There is zero tolerance towards sharing answers (amongst the classmates) or plagiarizing others' work.

Classroom Etiquette

- When class begins, please use your electronic devices responsibly and only for class-related tasks.
- Respect classmates, instructors, and yourself. Provocative ideas and questions are encouraged; do not be afraid to voice your opinion just because it may be different. However, avoid language whose sole purpose is to provoke or disparage others.
- We are building a conversation. Learn and use your classmates' names. Add to the current conversation. If you contribute frequently, allow others to speak before speaking again.
- Refrain from packing up or leaving until class is over; lecture will end on time.

8. Department and University-wide Policies

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Through McBurney Connect, students generate a Faculty Notification Letter for each class section in which they are requesting accommodations. The notification letters will replace the laminated student VISAs (Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations plan) and will be sent to course instructors of record via email. Instructors will receive customized information about classroom accommodations that are specific to each course, as students will select just those accommodations that are needed for each class. Students will still be instructed to meet with faculty to discuss their accommodations.

Overview of the Accommodation Process

1. Students approved for disability-related accommodations are entered into McBurney Connect based on individualized review and eligibility process.
2. Students [log in to McBurney Connect to select their accommodations and schedule Faculty Notification Letters](#) specific to each class.
3. McBurney Connect will email Faculty Notification Letters to instructors two weeks before classes start, and then on an ongoing basis after that.
4. Students will still be expected to meet with instructors in a timely manner, even though their accommodation plans are delivered via email.

5. [Instructors can log into McBurney Connect](#) to see a list of students who have requested accommodations for each of their courses, including their Faculty Notification Letters

Diversity & Inclusion

Institutional statement on diversity: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/>

Departmental Grievances & Appeals

The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, Eric Grodsky egrodsky@ssc.wisc.edu.