Welcome and Introduction:

The 2002 workforce comprises almost equal numbers of men (51%) and women (49%). The proportion of married employees who live in dual-earner couples has increased substantially over the past 25 years, as have the combined work hours of couples. Men in dual earner couples with children appear to have taken more responsibility for managing family work. Though women are still much more likely to shoulder greater responsibility. It appears that employees who experience higher levels of negative spillover from work into their home lives rely more heavily on technologies. We find that when more supportive work-life policies and practices are available, employees exhibit more positive work outcomes.

Bond et al., 2002; The 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce

American women have not simply traded on mystique for another—moving from strictures about the “good” mother or the “good” wife to those embodied in the “good” worker; rather, many are trying to be it all—the good wife, the good mother, and the good employee. Growing numbers of American men are trying to be all as well—egalitarian husbands and caring fathers as well as productive and competitive on the job. They, too, find it almost impossible to do so. Very few men or women can live by the old rules. One job per family... is often a ticket to economic privation given that wages have not kept pace with inflation or living costs, the minimum wage is a poverty wage, and “middle class” today means something very different in today’s consumption economy.

Moen and Roehling, 2005, The Career Mystique: Cracks in the American Dream

There is little question that the way Americans work and live has changed in recent years. The fast-paced, global 24/7 economy, the pressures of competition, and technology have blurred that traditional boundaries between work life and home life. Furthermore, this new economy calls for new skills—skills like responding quickly to competing demands and jumping from task to task. Our[2001] study revealed that 1 in 3 U.S. employees experienced feeling overworked as a chronic condition. For a significant group of Americans, the way we work today appears to be negatively affecting their health and effectiveness at work.

Galinsky et al., 2004 Overwork in America: When the Way We Work Becomes Too Much

A central question for American democracy... is how to simultaneously enhance equality and ensure that adults can be productive at work, rear the next generation well, and participate in civic life. In theory, there are three possible approaches: (1) place the responsibility solely on individuals and families, (2) rely on the private sector alone, or (3) have the public sector also support families that work... The evidence to date provides a clear answer: all three groups need to be involved in finding a solution. Families play an essential role, and workplaces have critical responsibilities, but a balance between work and family needs will not be achieved without a public role.

Heymann and Beem; 2005; Unfinished Work: Building Equality and Democracy in an Era of Working Families
Course Description:
The way we work and our relationship to work is changing dramatically in 21st century America. The global economy with an international workforce, the importance of information technology, and the decreased likelihood of secure employment frame our work lives today. Real wages have declined, minimum wage is not a living wage, and hours spent in the workforce have risen over the last 20 years. Increased inequality of opportunity has left the least advantaged Americans without credentials to get secure jobs, while those with high education typically work long hours in order to enhance their job security. The workforce is increasingly diverse in regard to sex, ethnicity, and age. The aging baby boomers have called into question the expectation of a long and secure retirement.

At the same time, there have been related changes in families. The last part of the 20th century saw the rapid increase of women into the labor force, more divorce and one-parent families, and increased tensions between men and women about the allocation of family work. Less time at home has had profound implications for the quality of family life as well as for the ability of families to provide care to dependents. Moreover, reliance on technology such as e-mail and cell phones has made it less possible to establish boundaries between employment and home. Social policy has not addressed these problems in an effective way. Despite the greater intrusion of work into families, we still expect families to be self-sufficient financially and in regard to caregiving. As a culture, we do not acknowledge fully the incompatibility between employment and family life.

One way to think about these issues is that in American society, we have created a cultural contradiction in values. On the one hand, our cultural values are clear that families need to have workers in order to survive as families; indeed, the ideal of the “self-sufficient family” is enacted in social welfare policy. On the other hand, our culture does not readily acknowledge that the economic institution also needs families in order for work to survive. It is much less acknowledged that the economic institution depends on the family institution to bear and raise the next generation of workers, and to care for present and past workers. There is little support in the workplace for workers to take time to care for families, and in general, family work is not defined as “real” work.

How do we, as a culture, manage to perform the essential tasks of caregiving on the one hand, and produce the goods and services necessary for survival, on the other hand? How did we come to this situation of incompatibility between two essential social institutions? And what might we do as a culture to change this incompatibility?

This course will consider these questions at length. The course organization and readings are designed to help us understand how families and the economy are interconnected social institutions, and how changes in both institutions, as well as in individual choices, political trends, and cultural values have resulted in incompatibility between work and family life. We’ll discuss some possible policy responses that might help to change the incompatibility as well as shift the way we think about the place of both work and family in our lives.

Books and Readings, and Their Place in the Organization of the Course:
The two course books serve to provide the basis for the organization of the course and our discussions. The reader, edited by Jody Heymann and Christopher Been, is a result of the Work, Family, and Democracy Initiative at Harvard University, which was led by the book editors. This project’s goal was to provide ways of thinking differently about the incompatibility between work and family in the broader context of how to create a better society. I think it is a good, thoughtful collection of articles that will help us understand the history of work and family, the inequalities that cause people to have different experiences in work and family life, some obstacles to changing the way we “do” work and family, and finally, some possible solutions to this important problem.
The second book by Phyllis Moen and Patricia Roehling, is again, a thoughtful look at how we think about work, and how our thinking has affected our ability to lead fulfilling lives both on and off the job. The authors look at how work affects our lives throughout the life course, and end with some ideas about how we might think about changing the way we think about “the career mystique,” that is, our definition of a good worker and a good job.

Finally, we’ll use four research reports from the Families and Work Institute (http://www.familiesandwork.org) that contain a good amount of quantitative data: their 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce, their 2004 study, Feeling Overworked: When The Way We Work Becomes Too Much, and their 2005 reports, Generation & Gender in the Workplace and Older Employees in the Workforce throughout the semester to provide comparison to the two course books, and to frame course assignments.


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**Course Structure and Class Meetings:**

We’ll meet two times a week for the semester, a total of 26 class meetings, and we’ll have specific goals for every one of them. Much of class time will be spent in group discussion, both large and small, and your input is valuable and required—your group depends on you, and you depend on your group. Additionally, some of the writing will take place in class. I will create permanent group of three or four students each, and these groups will meet regularly to interpret and discuss the readings as well as complete some writing assignments. On other occasions, we will discuss various readings and concepts as an entire class.

To do well in this course, it is best to attend all classes, and stay on top of all assignments. Attendance will be taken, and I expect that absences from class will be rare and precipitated by justifiable circumstances.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

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There are five different types of assignments in this course that are designed to help you focus on the readings, continue to improve your discussion and critical thinking skills, and write effectively. However, there are no exams. Each type of assignment is described below.

**Reading Questions:** As we read each chapter of Moen and Roehling’s *The Career Mystique*, I will distribute several questions for you to answer and turn in for a grade. Sometimes you will need to turn in answers to multiple chapters on the same day, because we will discuss them together. Each chapter assignment will be graded separately, however, on a scale from 1 – 10. There are eight chapters in all, and I will count seven of them in your final grade.

Because the purpose of these assignments is to keep you reading and critically evaluating, I will not accept any late assignments. These assignments are due in class, and must be typewritten. I will not accept electronic (e-mailed) assignments. Together, seven of these assignments will constitute 15 percent of your course grade.

**Article Analyses:** As we read through the Heymann and Beem reader, *Unfinished Work*, you will be required to write analyses of four different articles, one from each section of the reader. We will decide in class who is responsible for each article, so that equal numbers of students are reading each article.

You will be asked to write an analysis of your article, which will be turned in and graded. The analysis should include the following information. First, you need to concisely state the main point of the article (in no more than a few sentences). After the main point of the article is briefly described, you should mention two or three things that you find interesting about the article, and discuss these points. The main purpose of these analyses, though, is for you to relate the article to the topic of the section of the reader, and also to discuss how the article reflects the course themes and class discussion. These analyses should be between two and three double-spaced, typewritten pages in length.

On the day these Article Analyses are due, we will meet in groups, where you will first, discuss your analysis with others who have analyzed the same article, and second, discuss your article with students who have analyzed different articles. Each student will summarize her/his paper to the group so that everyone will be able to understand all articles in each section. After your discussion, each group will make a report to the class about their discussion. As a class, we’ll discuss similarities and differences between each article and how each uniquely and similarly reflects course themes and class discussion.

Each of these written Article Analyses will be graded on a 10-point scale. Papers are due in class on the dates listed. **Please note:** I will not accept any late papers, regardless of the validity of the excuse. Instead, I will count three of the four analyses in your final grade. Together, these analyses constitute 25 percent of your course grade.

**In-class Participation Activities:** To enhance your abilities to understand quantitative data, we will devote five classes throughout the semester to analyzing and interpreting the data in the four reports from the Families and Work Institute. On those days, you will work in groups to explore the data to answer specific questions that relate to other course readings. Groups will report their findings to the class. Four of these exercises will constitute 15 percent of your course grade.

**Critical Review Essay:** You are required to write a critical review essay about *The Career Mystique*. This critical review is not a chapter-by-chapter book summary, but 5 - 8 page essay that attends to the analysis of the central themes of the book (through Chapter 6) and compare them to the Families and Work research reports. We will talk at length about this essay in class, but a few general guidelines are provided here.

The critical review essay asks you to compare *The Career Mystique* with the data from the Families and Work Institute’s research reports, especially *Feeling Overworked, Generation &...*
Gender in the Workplace, and Older Employees in the Workforce that we will have discussed. In this essay, I want you to compare Moen and Roehling’s ideas to the quantitative data found in the research reports. To do this, you’ll need to summarize the first two chapters of The Career Mystique, and then choose two of the next four chapters (Young Adults, New Parents, School Age Families, or Mid-life Families), and compare those chapters to the data found in the national studies done by the Families and Work Institute. Do the national studies extend and lend support to Moen and Roehling’s ideas? Are there contradictory findings? How does each source illustrate the themes of this course? Discuss the compatible and contradictory points from the perspective of public discourse about the work and family life. This comparative critical essay is due. It will count 15 percent of your course grade.

White Paper Assignment: Your final writing assignment is to write a “White Paper” using sociologically based thinking and research about how to resolve the incompatibility between work and family. “White Papers” are background reviews that policymakers use to create policy. They are brief and to the point and make use of bullets and “bottom line” information. We will discuss the format of white papers at length.

Using information from the last two chapters of The Career Mystique and from Sections 3 & 4 of Unfinished Work, your white paper will consider public policy and economic challenges to “moving forward” with an effective response to work and family issues, and suggest strategies to address these challenges. For this essay, you’ll have to integrate the course readings and discussions along with the data from the Families and Work research reports. So you’ll review the situation of incompatibility, summarize the obstacles within American culture to address the incompatibility, and offer some solutions. Of course, you should use information from the entire course in these papers as well. These papers will reflect your understanding of the policy implications of work-family incompatibility, and I look forward to reading them. The White Paper assignment will count 30 percent of your course grade.

PLEASE NOTE: For both of these longer written assignments, I will accept only paper copies, and no electronic submissions. These papers must be grammatically perfect, and proofread. Pay attention to organization and to writing skills in general. If you need help with any aspect of writing skills, please let me know.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

September 8 Introduction to the course; general discussion of themes

September 13 – September 15

Defining work

Work-Family linkages in a “good society”

Assignment: Heymann and Beem: Introduction and Chapter 3

9/13 Introduction

9/15 Chapter 3

September 20—September 22

Historical changes

Assignment: Heymann and Beem: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

9/22 Writing assignment due in class

September 27 – October 4

The Feminine Mystique versus the Career Mystique: gender issues in work and family
Assignment: Moen and Roehling Chapter 1; *Generation & Gender*

9/29  Writing assignment due in class; class discussion
10/4  *Generation & Gender* in-class group assignment

October 6 –October 11

*The way we work today*

Assignment: *Feeling Overworked, National Study of the Changing Workforce*
In-class group assignment (both days)

October 13

*Social class issues*

Assignment: Heymann and Beem: Chapters 4, 5, 6
Writing assignment due in class

October 18 – 20

*PBS Video: Juggling Work and Family*

Assignment: Reflections on video
Group discussions about *Generation and Gender* and *Juggling*

October 25

*Life course issues: Young adults and new parents*

Assignment: Moen and Roehling, Chapters 2, 3, & 4
10/25  Writing assignment due in class

October 27 –November 1

*Life course issues: School-age families and mid-life families*

Assignment: Moen and Roehling, Chapters 5 and 6
*Generation and Gender; Older Workers*
11/1  Writing assignment due in class

November 3

*Summary of The Career Mystique and life course issues*

Assignment: Discussion of Critical Review

**November 8**  Critical Review Due

November 8—November 10

*Work, family, and caregiving*

Assignment: Heymann and Beem, Chapter 7
*Generation and Gender; Older Workers; National Study*
11/10  In-class group assignment

November 15—November 17

*Challenges to balancing family and economic institutions*

Assignment: Heymann and Beem: Section 3
11/15  Writing assignment due in class
November 22  

*White Paper discussion*

November 29 – December 1  

*Policy responses*

  Assignment:  Moen and Roehling: Chapters 7 & 8  
  Heymann and Beem: Section 4  
  
  11/29  
  Writing assignment due in class (Moen and Roehling)  
  12/1  
  In-class group assignment (Heymann and Beem)

December 6 – 8  

*What is an “Effective Workplace”?*

  Assignment:  National Study of the Changing Workforce  
  In-class group assignment

December 16  

White Paper due