

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

SOCI 5408 [0.5 credit]
Feminism and Materialism.

Instructor: Alexis Shotwell

Office Hours: by appointment through <https://calendly.com/alexis-shotwell>, or email me if the times listed there don't work for you. We'll meet remotely, through the computer or phone, at your preference.

Email: alexis.shotwell@carleton.ca

Time: Mondays, 2:35-5:25

Pre-requisites & Precluded Courses: Graduate standing.

Method of Delivery: In person

Course description

In this seminar, we will consider recent developments in feminist materialist theory and analyses. Beginning from the understanding that human activity coproduces social reality, we'll focus on the nexus of "work" and "family" to anchor questions of care and kin, social reproduction and social transformation, control and waywardness. Centering power relations and struggle, key questions will include: What is the family? How is it situated in and shaped by relations of oppression and exploitation? What is the role of care work in making family and reproducing society? Is work necessary to human life? What does it mean to take up and resist our inheritances?

Learning objectives

- Students will leave the class with a more developed understanding of key debates and interventions in contemporary feminist materialist thinking.
- Students will strengthen their understanding of how to read, talk together about, and write about theoretical texts. We'll develop capacities to engage theory that we do not yet understand, interdisciplinary work, and work that uses a range of methodological and theoretical approaches.
- The class is organized in workshop form to nourish expressive and relational scholarly skills: Working with peers, building intellectual generosity, self-reflection, finding and following questions that interest you, research, writing, sharing inspiration, sitting with uncertainty. We will do in-class writing and collective editing, skill-practice, and discussing.

Course materials:

In this class we'll be reading four entire books instead of academic articles or selections of texts. We'll lose some breadth by doing this, but doing so allows us to practice, over and over again, the rare craft of working with a long-form argument that was written at book length. If it is workable for you, I encourage you to buy or borrow paper copies of these books so that you have the haptic experience of this kind of reading, annotation, and reflection. Reading these texts on screen is also fine, of course. All books will be available on reserve in the Carleton library, and so there are no required costs to you for course material. However, I list current list prices here.

Hartman, Saidiya. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019. (\$23.95 new)

Nadasen, Premilla. *Care: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2023. (\$26.53)

O'Brien, M. E. *Family Abolition: Capitalism and the Communizing of Care*. London: Pluto Press, 2023. (\$30.52)

Weeks, Kathi. *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke Univ Pr, 2011. (\$37.95)

Second-hand versions of any of these books will be just fine. I have requested the Carleton University Bookstore to order these course materials in.

Schedule:

Monday, January 6, 2025 - Introduction to the class and one another

Monday, January 13, 2025 - *Family Abolition* Part 1: The Impossible Family, pp 1-58

Monday, January 20, 2025 - *Family Abolition* Part 2: A History of Family Abolition, pp 61-160

Monday, January 27, 2025 - *Family Abolition* Part 3: Toward the Commune, pp 163-246

Monday, February 3, 2025 - *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* Book One, pp 3-157

Monday, February 10, 2025 - *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* Book Two, pp 161-214

Monday, February 17, 2025 – Winter Break, no class

Monday, February 24, 2025 - *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* Book Three, pp 217-349

Monday, March 3, 2025 – *Care* Intro, chapters 1 & 2, pp 1-72

Monday, March 10, 2025 - *Care* chapters 3, 4, & 5, pp 73-156

Monday, March 17, 2025 – *Care* chapters 6&7, pp 157-219

Monday, March 24, 2025 - *The Problem with Work* Intro, chapter 1, pp 1-77

Monday, March 31, 2025 - *The Problem with Work* chapters 2 & 3, pp 79-150

Monday, April 7, 2025 - *The Problem with Work* chapters 4, 5, & Epilogue, pp 151-233

General comments

- ✿ Learning during an ongoing pandemic, multiple wars, and in a world that is not okay: We can anticipate that the world will continue to be very stressful, and that we'll all be doing our best. It is meaningful and good to read, think, talk, and learn in this time, and because we're collectively experiencing difficult and traumatic ongoing world-historical events we need to take care and give room to the reality we're facing. I know that many of you have care giving responsibilities – for kids, loved ones, or elders – and that your own challenges are almost certainly spiking. I'm hoping that our class can be a space for nourishment rather than stress during this time, helping us think productively about how we collectively build capacity, understanding, and new worlds.
- ✿ Welcoming classroom: In this classroom, we collectively – students, any visitors, and teacher - try to make sure that everyone is safe enough to be present, learn, and share their understanding of course material. This means that talk or behavior that disrespects or demeans others is not accepted. For example, rape jokes, racist comments, the expressions “that’s retarded” or “that’s so gay” would be inappropriate. We all will refer to one another using correct names and pronouns. In some cases we’d talk about anything that comes up on the spot, and in other cases it could be addressed outside of class. As needed in relation to the readings we do and discussion we have I will aim to provide regular and appropriate content and trigger warnings, and welcome your input on what I can do to make this class workable for you.

- ✿ In this course, you are expected to learn from your texts, your teacher and from one another. This requires striving towards understanding each other but it does not imply striving towards finding agreement. Our class will be racially, religiously, politically, culturally, generationally, and economically diverse. We will be of different gender identifications and sexual orientations and our lived experiences and reactions to the course material will reflect this diversity. Sharing our perspectives and interpretations on the course material will enhance everyone's learning experience and you are encouraged to openly express any disagreements with the authors you will read, with your fellow classmates, or with the Professor in the different participation fora that are available for this course. However, you are expected to conduct yourself in such a way that shows the utmost respect to others who may – or may not – share your views. Derogatory comments and hateful behavior towards others (and their views) will not be tolerated.
- ✿ Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols.
- ✿ Participation: My experience is that classes are fruitful and delightful when most of the people in the group are actively engaged in the discussion, either talking or listening. Practically speaking, I will expect all of us to be mindful of our speech; those of you who tend to wander far afield in discussion, or talk too much, or too little, please monitor yourselves and work with me and the others in the class to stay on course, develop your listening skills, or weigh into the discussion. We each have wonderful things to contribute to the class – according one another and ourselves equal significance in this shared space will make for a good experience for everyone.
- ✿ If you have any trouble with the readings, completing work on time, or any aspect of the course, don't hesitate to email or phone me. I try to respond to all email within 48 hours, though I generally don't respond to work email on the weekends.
- ✿ The very best way to get answers to questions you have is to ask them on Brightspace, so that everyone can benefit from them.

ASSESSMENT & FINAL GRADES

All assignments will be turned in through Brightspace. I will be reading and commenting on your papers electronically. Please use the following format when you name your documents if you are uploading them:

LastNameFirstName_AssignmentName_Date.

(For example: "ShotwellAlexis_LongPaper_March30")

This helps me know whose paper I'm opening when I download the folder of assignments. Please also include your name on the first page of your written work. If you are simply uploading a TPQ or quote, those will go in the appropriate discussion section.

Citation Style: The Chicago author-date citation style (17th edition) is to be used in the assignments and papers of this course. For more information, please see:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

This course uses a **Mixed Contract Grading** approach to assessment. Many assignments will be graded Pass/Fail: A pass on a given assignment earns you all the points available for that assignment according to the table below. Your grade will be based on the number of points you earn by successfully completing assignments.

The course includes a longer paper, which will be graded using a conventional grading scale. This will be built from seeds you produce as in-class writing prompts. All papers will go through draft and revision stages, with opportunities to give and receive feedback and to develop your editing skills.

If you submit an assignment that does not pass, you will have the option to use a token (see below) to revise it in response to my feedback. Revisions are due one week from your receipt of my feedback. No revisions are possible for the longer final paper.

In this course, I expect you to write all of your own words, without using tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or any of the other many programs often called “generative AI.” You are allowed to use a spellcheck and grammar check. We’ll discuss this more in class.

Points-wise this will be:

Category 1: Self-Reflection & Basic Participation

Attendance	12x @ 1 point	12 points	P/NP
Self-reflections January 13, March 3, and April 7	3x @ 2 point	6 points	P/NP
		18 points total	

Category 2: Reading Preparation & Writing Process

(any of these can be done in collaboration with the others in your writing circle)

Quotes That Struck me	12 @ 1 point	12 points	P/NP
Circulation of ~250 word thought-provoking questions (IPQs)	6 @ 3 points	18 points	P/NP
Peer editing/input	3 @ 2 point	6 points	P/NP
In-class writing play	3 @ 2 point	6 points	
		42 points	

Category 3: Higher Order Analytical and Research Skills

Long paper	10-12 pages	10 points	Conventional Grade scale
		10 possible points	

Letter Grade: Points Equivalence (70 total possible points)

A+ = 67-70 points A = 60-66 A- = 58-65	B+ = 55-57 B = 51-55 B- = 48-50	C + = 45-47 C = 42-44 C- = 40-41	D+ = 37-39 D = 36-38 D- = 35-36 F = <34
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Due dates at a glance:

Attendance	Weekly
In-class writing	Periodic, in class – you will have more than three opportunities to earn the possible points
Quotes That Struck Me	Weekly
TPQs	Variable, three times during the term, dates depending on your preference
Self-reflections	January 13, March 3, and April 7
Long paper (10-12 pages) or other summative assignment (see instruction sheet)	A 500 word first sketch (due to your writing circle Feb 24th) Substantial progress amounting to half the work necessary for the project (due March 24 th) Final due: April 7th

Tokens:

Each student will start the class with 3 virtual “tokens,” which you may spend as follows.

4-day extension on any written assignment	1 Token
Revision and resubmission of any assignment, except for the final paper.	1 Token. Revisions are due one week from receipt of my feedback.

Unused tokens at the end of the semester can be applied as free points (1 per token) to make up for absences, or simply to boost your grade. Tokens are a built-in pressure-valve to help you manage disruptions in your semester due to illness, injury, planning difficulties, or any of the other things that come up. These, combined with generous points allocation for pass/fail assignments, give you multiple pathways to success. You do not need to explain to me why you’re using a token. To use your tokens, please email me.

Additional Information

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52

F = Below 50

WDN = Withdrawn from the course

DEF = Deferred

Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Academic Accommodations:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at **613-520-6608** or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*).

*The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for February/March examinations is **February 1, 2025** and **March 15, 2025** for April examinations.

For Religious Obligations:

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Pregnancy:

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Survivors of Sexual Violence:

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities:

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>). The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Students who infringe the Policy may be subject to one of several penalties.

What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: a grade of zero, a failure or a reduced grade for the piece of academic work; reduction of final grade in the course; completion of a remediation process; resubmission of academic work; withdrawal from course(s); suspension from a program of study; a letter of reprimand.

What are the Procedures?

All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and departmental chairs. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

Assistance for Students:

Mental Health: As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Academic and Career Development Services: <https://carleton.ca/career/>

Writing Services: <http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/group-support/pass/>

Important Information:

- Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).
- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
- Carleton University is committed to protecting the privacy of those who study or work here (currently and formerly). To that end, Carleton's Privacy Office seeks to encourage the implementation of the privacy provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) within the university.
- In accordance with FIPPA, please ensure all communication with staff/faculty is via your Carleton email account. To get your Carleton Email you will need to activate your [MyCarletonOne account](#) through Carleton Central. Once you have activated your MyCarletonOne account, log into the [MyCarleton Portal](#).
- Please note that you will be able to link your MyCarletonOne account to other non-MyCarletonOne accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid MyCarletonOne address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://students.carleton.ca/>.

WINTER TERM 2025 – Important Dates and Deadlines

Date	Activity
December 30, 2024	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in full winter and early winter term courses.
January 3, 2025	University reopens.
January 6, 2025	Winter term begins. Full winter and early winter classes begin.
January 10, 2025	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in early winter courses.

January 17, 2025	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in full winter and late winter courses.
	Last day to withdraw from early winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
	Graduate students who have not electronically submitted their final thesis copy to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs will not be eligible to graduate in winter 2025 and must register for the winter 2025 term.
January 24-26, January 31-February 2, 2025	Full fall and late fall term deferred final examinations will be held.
January 31, 2025	Last day to withdraw from full winter courses and the winter portion of fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
February 1, 2025	Last day for academic withdrawal from early winter courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for Feb/Mar final examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
February 7, 2025	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in early winter term undergraduate courses, before the official Feb/Mar final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
February 14, 2025	Last day of early winter classes.
	Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned in early winter courses, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
	Last day that can be specified by an instructor as a due date for term work for early winter courses.

	April examination schedule available online.
February 17, 2025	Statutory holiday. University closed.
	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in late winter courses.
February 17-21, 2025	Winter break, no classes.
February 22-23, March 1-2, 2025	Final examinations in early winter undergraduate courses will be held.
February 24, 2025	Late winter classes begin.
March 1, 2025	Last day for receipt of applications to Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Industrial Design, Bachelor of Information Technology (Interactive Multimedia and Design), Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Social Work degree programs for the fall/winter session.
	Last day for receipt of applications for admission to an undergraduate program for the summer term.
	Last day for receipt of applications for admission from candidates who wish to be guaranteed consideration for financial assistance (including Carleton fellowships, scholarships and teaching assistantships) administered by Carleton University. Candidates whose applications are received after the March 1 deadline may be considered for the award of a fellowship, scholarship or teaching assistantship (Graduate students only).
March 7, 2025	Last day to withdraw from late winter term courses with a full fee adjustment.
March 14-16, 2025	Early winter undergraduate deferred final examinations will be held.
March 15, 2025	Last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for April full winter, late winter, and fall/winter final examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may

	not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
March 25, 2025	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in full winter term or fall/winter undergraduate courses, before the official April final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
April 1, 2025	Last day for graduate students to submit their supervisor-approved thesis, in examinable form to the department.
	Last day for receipt of applications for admission to an undergraduate degree program for the fall/winter session from applicants whose documents originate from outside Canada or the United States, except for applications due March 1.
	Last day for receipt of applications from potential spring (June) graduates.
	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in late winter term undergraduate courses, before the official final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
April 8, 2025	Winter term ends.
	Last day of full winter, late winter, and fall/winter classes.
	Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
	Last day that can be specified by an instructor as a due date for term work for full winter and late winter courses.
April 9-10, 2025	No classes or examinations take place.
April 11-26, 2025	Final examinations in full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses will be held. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

