Crittenden’s book aims to convince the reader that the social and cultural revolution of the 1960s has brought women equality and opportunity, but that feminism has also made women unhappy because it neglects core needs and values that women share. This is not an academic text, but as social scientists we should engage the author’s assertions by asking: “what is the evidence for this argument?” “are there alternative explanations for the outcomes Crittenden observes or has she presented a convincing case for the chain of causality she describes?” “what does scholarly research say on this subject?” and “what are the unstated theoretical assumptions underlying her case?”

There are 6 chapters: Sex, Love, Marriage, Motherhood, Aging, and the Political and the Personal. There will be roughly six people self-assigned to each chapter. Each group will be split by Professor Turchi into a team that will defend Crittenden’s positions and a team that will provide a counter-argument. The pro and con groupings will each be responsible for making their argument in light of the list of issues at the end of this document. You do not need to touch on all of them, but they should provide the framework for the critique or support of Crittenden’s positions.

Each pro and con group will have five minutes to present the research supporting their position and the conclusions they draw from that research. Subsequently, there will be ten minutes for general discussion about the chapter and the presentations. The pro and con presentations can be structured however the three members wish. This means that over the course of two days we will spend approximately 20 minutes on each of six chapters.

FOCAL POINTS: remember, these are guiding questions to help you frame your analysis. This is an economics course, but this is not a formal research project. Be open to searching for data that supports or refutes Crittenden—and we frame the questions to make this easy—but don’t worry about presenting a formal analysis. In reading the book and preparing the pro and con arguments, all presentations should consider Point 1 as the framework for their critical reading and analysis. After that, consider carefully the questions that most interest you as you read and choose some of the ones below to address in the class discussion.

1. **Power:** In exploring Crittenden’s assertions, be sure to investigate definitions of power in society: from an economic perspective particularly, but also perhaps from a sociological or political perspective. Allow your conclusions about the position of women vis-à-vis men, in terms of power, to inform your analysis. In terms of race and class, and perhaps other dimensions, there are differences among women and they influence decision-making, options and constraints, and utility maximization. Choose one of the topics below, discuss what Crittenden says about the subject (in regards to differences among women) and then address the question specifically from the perspective of differences or similarities based on race and class (i.e. if race and class—in this case operationalized as income and/or self identification—are independent variables, what impact do they have on a given outcome Y?).

2. **“Happiness”:** what are the qualitative measures that Crittenden offers for arguing that women are less happy than they used to be? Operationalize the concept of happiness for yourself and use the literature to explore what evidence there is for women being happier or unhappier than they were previously. Discuss the similarities or differences you find with Crittenden’s analysis.

3. **Sex:** Consider issues like sexual relationships under different conditions (with or without consent within marriage, cohabitation, or less formal situations), harassment, domestic violence, commodification (both in society/public sphere and within relationships as a commodity for bartering or leverage). Consider the evidence you find on your own: sexual harassment statistics, changes in kind or level of domestic violence, survey or interviews on the issue of commodification or the use of sex as a way to leverage power in different kinds of relationships (by women or men), or even the question of what impact sexual activity for girls or young women has on health or education indicators for later life.
4. **Equality:** equal pay for equal work, non-discrimination (in education and hiring, retention, and promotion), legal equality (rights and responsibilities in relationships, alimony, child support, inheritance, etc), equality of legal outcomes (“”). If you choose to look at aspects of legal equality, be sure to also assess outcome.

5. **Optimization and family formation:** What has changed from the 1950s/1960s to today? How do women and men make decisions about when and if to marry, have children, divorce or separate? What does survey research tell us about what people consider to be important and how does this compare to what Crittenden argues? Follow up by considering WHY these changes may have taken place from an economic perspective and how this fits into, or doesn’t, Crittenden’s explanatory framework.

6. **Distribution of Household Production:** What evidence is there regarding the breakdown of domestic production (this could include cooking, cleaning, maintenance, child care, etc but should not include market production that takes place in the home) between men and women and its evolution over time? Do men and women who share a household give consistent answers on surveys of domestic work? If Crittenden were to write a response to Becker, what would her position be? Evaluate opinion research on how men and women feel about the distribution of labor (are they optimizing their personal utility? What might the relationship be between a household utility function and a personal utility function?).

7. **Policy:** If there were unwanted inequalities between men and women, what would be the role of public policy? Crittenden believes that formal equality will give men and women the tools to be equal in the ways that are fundamentally important to society, and to choose to what extent they want to be “equal” in other ways. What are some examples of either explicit or implicitly gendered policy? Assess Crittenden’s argument that the public sector should not offer gender-specific legislation except where absolutely necessary and support your conclusion with data on the impact or non-impact of having such policies (be specific, choose a particular policy area).

8. **The Man Shortage:** Articulate and critique Crittenden’s argument about a man shortage. What evidence is there that finding a mate for marriage is more difficult for women than it used to be? Develop a theory about what causal factors influence this outcome (existence or not of a man shortage) and support it with evidence that you find compelling.

9. **Homosexual Households:** What does public opinion research tell us about how feelings have changed (or not) regarding the social acceptability of homosexual households since the 1950s? It is possible that finding data on this may be a challenge. Ignore the question of whether homosexuality is or is not a choice and consider what the social and economic impact of changing tolerance for homosexuality might mean in terms of individual family formation decisions, economic impact, etc. What does Crittenden believe about the role of homosexuality in social changes since the 1950s? For this question, explore what the social and economic implications would be if she were right and if she were wrong.

10. **Comparative Analysis:** Look at evidence for the United States on questions of equal pay for equal work, female labor force participation, choices about child bearing and marriage, etc. Consider these questions primarily from the perspective of economic and policy incentives/support for certain choices. Consider other countries that contrast in policy and socio-economic outcome with the United States or with each other. What role do you think employment, tax, and social policy have had in each situation and make an argument for what you think works best from the perspective of freeing individuals to maximize personal utility. If the data is available, look at whether there seem to be differences in preferences for number of children, work and family balance, etc between these countries.