I was very interested by the content in this module. I very much enjoyed watching the videos and thinking about how cultural phenomena like feminism and toxic masculinity have shaped family and parenting expectations over time.

I was very surprised by a lot of the information in the article “Rethinking Work-Life Balance for Women for Color” by Kimberly Seals Allers. I was particularly disappointed to learn that the wage gap between white women and women of color continues to grow. This article also made me think about the recent shooting in Atlanta which targeting Asian American women working in a massage parlor. The article discusses how for decades, women of color have been relegated to lower paying service jobs, such as Asian American women working in nail salons or massage parlors. In the case of the Atlanta shooting, that kind of job “profiling” combined with the fetishization of Asian women and stigma around massage parlors and sex work (though there is no evidence that that massage parlor participated in sex work) ultimately contributed to the killing of 6 Asian American women.

In “The Second Shift” video, I thought it was really interesting to hear about the idea that women basically come home and start a second shift. I had never thought about it that way, but it certainly makes sense. In addition to being expected to do most of the housework, I think many mothers also end up having to work from home, even after leaving work for the day, if they had to leave early to pick up their children from school, or for other similar reasons. I grew up in a household where both parents basically work 70-hour weeks and work from home almost every night. As a kid, my parents would put me in as many after school activities as possible just so I would be supervised, and I was used to both my parents taking phone calls at the dinner table most nights. That said, both of my parents lived this way, and housework and parenting duties were split evenly between them. I can’t imagine what it would have been like if my mom had had to do that without my dad’s help.

In “The Mommy Wars” video, it was very clear how much societal pressure there was on women to be stay at home mothers. I thought it was interesting to consider that a lot of the “mommy wars” debate was happening during the Reagan administration, when they also pushing the idea of “welfare queens,” essentially a very demeaning and racist idea that African American women would have kids then sit at home collecting welfare checks instead of working to provide for their families. This shows a very clear double standard. If white women stayed home with their kids, they were seen as good wives, mother and homemakers, but if African American women did the same thing, they were accused of being lazy and leeching off of the government.

I think a big solution to the issues discussed in this module is instating more progressive policies like child tax credits, universal pre-K, subsidized childcare, and more comprehensive maternity and paternity leave policies.