

The Family
Sociology 021 -- Section 1001
MWF 10:00-10:50 am - Room 392LL
Fall 2008

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Office Room/Phone: 352LL/ 8-3440
Office Hours: talk 2 me

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course puts a sociological lens on historical and current family trends and patterns, such as family structure, fertility, age at marriage, divorce and remarriage, nonmarital and alternative family lifestyles, and violence. Although this is not a "how to have a happy marriage and family" class, the information you gain in this class will help you understand what factors are associated with marital satisfaction. By the end of the semester, you will have an overview of the history of American family life and an understanding of the effects of major economic/occupational changes on family life and structure. You will also become aware of the diverse ways of "doing family" around the world. You will better understand and be able to explain trends related to family life, and you will be better able to understand and explain how and why family experience varies across class, gender, race, and age lines. This course is also approved for the University's Common Core as an Individual and Social Behavior course, which has the following learning objectives: 1) Understand central concepts, theories, and methods used to explain individual and social behavior in one of the social and cultural disciplines, 2) Use knowledge of social scientific methods to analyze examples of individual and social behavior, and 3) Evaluate the applicability of social scientific knowledge for understanding individual & social behavior in particular contexts.

The format of the class is a combination of interactive lecture, small-group discussion, self-exploratory and researched writing. I will act as your textbook, and your assigned readings illustrate or debate specific issues discussed in class. I look forward to learning together with you.

CLASS RULES

Attendance. Marquette policy allows professors to reduce the course grade for more than 4 absences and/or to drop a student from the class for excessive absences.

Late Assignments. If for any reason (the computer crashed, you were vomiting all night, you had a job interview, etc.) you cannot turn in an assignment on the due date or before, you can hand it in up to one class session late but with a deduction of one grade level (from an A to an AB, for example). If it is a printer problem, you can always email the assignment to me to make sure it gets to me on time. To make up exams or missed assignments due to illness, death in family, acts of God, etc., you must provide proof of excuse (doctor's/counselor's/adviser's/Dean's note on letterhead or an email).

Class Decorum. If you need to come to class late or leave early, do so discreetly. I cannot guarantee that your tardiness will not be counted as absences. There are a couple things that irritate me to no end: side discussions and people gathering up their belongings in anticipation of the close of class while others are trying to speak. Those are both rude and contagious. You may be asked to leave the class if either of these becomes a pattern. From the time the bell rings until the end of class, follow this rule: Do unto others politely, even if you don't give a hoot how they treat you.

REQUIRED TEXT

You can legally purchase the following book at BookMarq or Sweeney's (1634 Wisconsin Ave.)

Deborah R. Connolly. 2000. *Homeless Mothers*. (Minn: U of Minnesota Press)

Susan Ferguson. 2007. *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. 3rd Ed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

I. The written segment of your grade. (20% of your grade) is based on two 3-pp essays. At least one of them must be turned in during the first half of the semester, before Fall Break. The second one must be turned in on or before the last day of class. For each essay, you must choose two readings. Briefly summarize them (no more than half the paper). Then react to/comment on any aspect of those articles. Your essays are graded with the following in mind.

whether they indicate comprehension of the author's arguments;

the extent to which they show reflection on consideration of various factors and perspectives;

the logic of your answer;

and, importantly, the incorporation and application of course material (concepts, theories, information from lecture, video, readings). Make connections among the various factors and issues discussed in this class (and others).

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE GRADED ON WRITING STYLE, GRAMMAR, ETC.

II. The participation segment of the grade (15 points) is based on your participation during large group discussions of videos and readings, or in contributions made in the form of questions or comments during lectures, through e-mail, after class, in my office, etc. If you come to class regularly but make no contribution to the group's learning endeavor, you will end up with a D. If you combine this with being absent, it is possible to end up with a negative grade for this segment.

Participation requires that you be in class and have read the material and hopefully thought about the issues to some extent. You should have read and be prepared to discuss assigned readings. Real learning requires communication between student and teacher and among students. It also makes the class more interesting for all of us (students can bore their teachers just as teachers can bore their students!). I will be helping you fulfill your participation grade by assigning people to be prepared for certain articles.

III. Two exams will be given (Worth 65% your grade-- 25, 40%). These will consist of multiple choice, short answer and/or essay. Generally, the exams are not cumulative, except for the essay section. When essay questions are included (usually for the last exam), the questions will be distributed about a week before the exam.

Although I use a lot of statistics in the course, I do not test you on specific numbers or dates, but you should understand what the numbers are saying, what trend or pattern they are illustrating. You should understand how those statistics can be interpreted and what their limitations are. I rarely ask you to define concepts, but rather I will ask you to apply them, identify examples of them, or to explain what conditions are conducive to producing the particular phenomenon. In studying for exams, look for patterns among groups of people (race, class, gender, age), trends over time, and explanations for these patterns and trends. I do not give exam reviews or study guides, but you are more than welcome to ask questions before an exam seeking clarification, additional material, etc.

SUMMARY OF GRADING

2 Exams:	65%	(25, 40 %)
2 Commentaries:	20	(10% each)
Participation:	15	
Total:	100%	

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

(Subject to change if necessary)

- M, 8/25: Review syllabus (fill out survey). Class discussion on family issues & values.
- W, 8/27: Family Policy
Discuss: Nijole Benokraitis "How Family Wars Affect Us." (ER)
Ch. 48 Is there Hope for America's Low-Income Children?
- F, 8/29: Theoretical approaches and functions.
- M, 9/1: LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)
- W, 9/3: Theoretical approaches
- F, 9/5: Terms & Cross-Cultural Examples
- M, 9/8: **Discuss: Ch. 1 The Family in Question**
Ch. 5 Historical Perspectives on Family Diversity
- W, 9/10: Family Over Time—Colonial/Agricultural Family
- F, 9/12: Industrialization and Happy Days
- M, 9/15: Service Economy families
- W, 9/17: Families by Race and Class and Family Structure
Video: "Family Matters" (30 minutes)
- F, 9/19: Video: Homeless in Paradise
- M, 9/22: **DISCUSS: Homeless Mothers.** Have whole book read.
= Chs 1-3
= Chs 5-6

- W, 9/24: Family Problems--Poverty/Homelessness
- F, 9/26: Video: "Baby Love" (60 min)
- M, 9/29: Teen pregnancy & nonmarital births
- W, 10/1* Singleness
- F, 10/3: Cohabitation
DISCUSS Families Formed Outside of Marriage (Seltzer) ER
- M, 10/6: Video: Daddy and Papa (60 minutes)
- W, 10/8: Nonmarital Lifestyles—Gay & Lesbian Families
- F, 10/10: The history of Love & Marriage
Discuss: Ch. 9 Choosing Mates—The American Way
- M, 10/13: **Midterm Exam**
- W, 10/15: Dating & Mate Selection
- F, 10/17: FALL BREAK (no class)
- M, 10/20: The Marriage Experience: Legal parameters, Satisfaction
- W, 10/22: Catch up
- F, 10/24: Discuss interrelationship between work and family
- M, 10/27: Division of labor in household
Discuss: Ch. 14: Peer Marriage
- W, 10/29: Dual-income couples and their children
- F, 10/31: Parenting styles
Discuss: Ch 21: Invisible Inequality
- M, 11/3: Sex for pleasure & reproduction
- W, 11/5: Family Problems: Divorce--Changes in law and rates

- F, 11/7: Societal and Individual Factors
- M, 11/10: Impact on Parents
Video: Women and Divorce
- W, 11/12: Impact on Children
Discuss: Ch. 31: No easy answers (Ahrons)
- F, 11/14: Remarriage and Stepfamilies
Discuss: Ch. 35: Modern American Stepfamily (Mason)
- M, 11/17: Video "Stepfamilies" (30 min)
- W, 11/19: Partner Violence Video: (30 min)
- F, 11/21: Causes, effects of domestic violence
- M, 11/24: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
- W, 11/26: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
- F, 11/28: Child, Sibling and Elder Abuse
- M, 12/1: Families in Later Life
- W, 12/3: Video: "Grandparents' rights"
Discuss: Ch. 28: Grandparenting
- F, 12/5: Catch up
- Final Exam: Tuesday, December 9, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.**

Family Survey (Fall 2006)

1. Male Female Age: _____ Racial Identification: _____
2. In which socioeconomic class would you consider your family to be?
Lower income Working class (blue collar) Middle Class Wealthy
3. What religion is your family? Catholic Protestant Muslim Jewish Other None
4. How many children are there in your original home? _____
5. Are you the oldest, youngest, middle?
6. Are your parents married, divorced, widowed, never married remarried
7. If married, is this their first second third marriage?
8. How long have they been (or were they) married? _____
9. Are you currently living in a stepfamily? Yes No
10. Which of your parents are employed? Mother Father Both
11. Before kindergarten, did you attend preschool, nursery school, or daycare? Yes No
12. Other than your parents and siblings, has anyone else lived in your household? Yes No
13. If yes, who? _____
14. How many grandparents are still living? _____ Greatgrandparents? _____
Greatgreat? _____
15. Have any of the following occurred in your family?

	Yes	No
A. extended unemployment of parent	___	___
B. adoption of children	___	___
C. death of parent or sibling	___	___
D. unwed pregnancy or birth	___	___
E. gay or lesbian	___	___

- F. interracial marriage _____
- G. marriage outside of religion _____
- H. domestic violence _____
- I. homelessness _____
- J. need to rely on welfare _____
- K. need to use nursing home _____
- L. commuter marriage _____

16. I am very close close not so close distant to/from my mother.
17. I am very close close not so close distant to/from my father.
18. How often does your family have company over for dinner?
 weekly 2X/monthly monthly less than 6 times/yr rarely
19. Is the company usually family, usually friends or usually neighbors?
20. Before coming to college, how many nights a week did your whole family have dinner together?
 _____ Breakfast? _____
21. We feel closest to my (mother's father's equally both equally neither) side of
 the family. We live closest to (mother's father's equally both equally neither) side.
22. Does either of your parents (mom dad neither both) do volunteer work in the
 community?
23. If so, what do they do?
24. I would say the state of my family relations is poor fair good excellent.
25. I would say that the state of American families is poor fair good excellent.