

Race and Family
Sociology 166--Section 1001
MWF 11 a.m.- 11:50 a.m. Room 272 Lalumiere Hall
Fall 2008

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Course Description

This is primarily a course on the family structures and dynamics of the major racial-ethnic minority groups in the U.S. We start off briefly talking about "the American family" and how our perceptions of that "model" influence our perceptions of minority families. From there we briefly look at families in other parts of the world to begin to "open" our minds to the fact that the American style is not the standard for the world. Most of the semester will be focused on the historical and current status of African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, and Native American families and the particular family patterns and dynamics that scholars have been most interested in for each group. We enumerate the structural factors that contribute to the diversity of family patterns found in the world and in our country. We end the course with a look at multiracial families and issues. This course can cover neither all viewpoints nor all racial-ethnic groups; I encourage you to explore more through reading on your own, and I would be happy to help you do so.

Generally the format of the course involves interactive lectures and small group discussions. Your assigned readings include a text and memoirs from the perspective of a member of each of the four main racial-ethnic groups discussed. Videos and student panels are incorporated as well. I look forward to learning with you. This course is also approved for the University's Common Core as a Diverse Cultures course, which has as its goals that students be able to identify differences and similarities between one's own culture and other cultures, explain how categories of human diversity influence identities and create inequity, and reflect upon one's personal and cultural presuppositions and how these affect one's values and relationships.

Class Rules

Attendance. Course policy follows Marquette policy, which allows a grade deduction or expulsion from the class for extensive absences. Attendance on days designated by an * on the schedule below are required; any absence on those days will result in a point deduction from your participation grade.

Late Assignments. If for any reason (you were vomiting all night, partying late, the computer crashed, your dog chewed your paper) you are unable to turn in an assignment on or before the due date, you may turn it in one class period late with a grade-level deduction (i.e. from an A to AB). After that, no late assignments will be accepted without a formal excuse. Printer problems can be solved by emailing the assignment to me. To make up exams or work for an extended period, you must provide proof of excuse (a doctor's/counselor's/ adviser's/Dean's note on letterhead or by email).

Class Decorum. If you need to come to class late or leave early, do so discreetly. Tardies may be

counted as absences. From the time the bell rings until the end of class, there should be no personal group discussions, and it irks me when people are gathering up their belongings to leave when others are talking.

Required Texts

These are available at Sweeney's and Book Marq

- Coles, Roberta. 2006. **Race & Family: A Structural Approach**. CA: Sage Publications.
- Comer, James P. Jr. 1988 **Maggie's American Dream: The Life and Times of a Black Family**. NY: New American Library of Penguin Inc.
- Crow Dog, Mary, and Richard Erdoes. 1990. **Lakota Woman**. NY: Grove Weidenfeld.
- Koltyk, Jo Ann. 1998. **New Pioneers in the Heartland: Hmong Life in Wisconsin**. Allyn & Bacon.
- Santiago, Esmeralda. 1999. **Almost a Woman**. NY: Vintage Books.

Assignments and Grading

1. **Discussion:** Your discussion grade is divided into two parts. One is a grade (8%) for facilitating a discussion. All students will be assigned to small groups. There are four small group discussion days, one for each book. On that day, a member of each group will be responsible for leading his or her group in discussion of the book. To do this, the facilitating member prepares a list of questions that s/he will pose to the small group for discussion purposes. These questions should be designed to help everyone understand the book in light of course material, as well as to discuss your experiences and opinions related to the contents. Bring enough copies for your group and me. A copy of the questions should be handed in to me AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS on that day. The facilitator's grades will be based on the quality of the questions, which should be structured to elicit discussion (they should not be yes/no or either/or questions), to connect the reading to class material (from lecture, videos, etc.), and on the scope and variety of the questions.

Discussion questions should be aimed not so much at "the plot" of the book nor at a critique of the writing, but rather at topics and social phenomena discussed in class, e.g.:

- a) What family structure is present?
- b) What types of family rituals and traditions do you see?
- c) How is the family or the author affected by historical experiences, discrimination?
- d) Given what you read in this book, what public policies, if any, would help or hinder the experience of this group?
- e) Compare and contrast this group to others we have previously discussed

Integrate other class material (concepts, theories, information from videos, readings) and/or outside material (from other classes, readings, news, etc.) into questions about the current reading.

Another 12% of your grade comes from your overall *class participation*--commenting, answering questions during lecture, asking questions of speakers, bringing outside related material to class, etc.

2. **Literature Review (20%).** Everyone will pick a topic from the list below to do a literature review on. You will do a search for academic articles since 2004 on the chosen topic. You will supply copies of the articles (minimum of 5). Literature review means that you write up a summary **and** synthesis of the articles: That is, what were the research foci/questions, what were the common themes, where do the findings diverge, what kind of methods (qualitative/quantitative) were used; what are the limitations of the findings and what would you suggest for future research? Should be about 5-10 pages. All written

assignments are always graded on writing style, grammar, organization, quality and synthesis of sources, etc.

Possible Topics for Annotated Bibliography

(ALL MUST BE RELATED TO RACIAL MINORITIES and FAMILY ISSUES)

Gender relations & roles

Homosexuality/gay families of color

Fatherhood in families of color

Family violence (child abuse or domestic abuse)

Late Life (grandparents, elderly, death)

Intergenerational relations (relations b/w adult children and parents)

Single-parent households (mom or dad)

Extended families

Biculturalism/assimilation

Parenting styles/socialization/discipline

Racial socialization/identity

Transracial adoption

Interracial marriage/exogamy

familial piety/familism

Divorce/Remarriage/stepfamilies among families of color

Pick a particular racial-ethnic group (Arab families, Vietnamese, Central American, etc.)

3. Two exams will be given. These primarily will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer or essay. Generally the exams are not comprehensive, though essay questions might be. In the case of essay questions, the questions are distributed about 1 week before the exam. Usually short answer and essay questions ask you to use course concepts to analyze a specific family pattern or to define concepts by identifying them or analyzing when they most likely occur. You are rarely asked to remember specific dates and statistics, but you will be asked to explain the pattern or trend that those statistics illustrate.

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Discussion Facilitation:	8%	
Participation:	12%	
Literature Review:	20%	
Two Exams:	60%	(25% for midterm, 35% for final)
Total:	100%	

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments

(Subject to change)

M, 8/25: Introduction and review of syllabus. Fill out note cards.

W, 8/27: Meet small groups. Basic concepts. Do race and ethnicity matter?

- F, 8/29: Theory: Structure v. Culture
Have read: Ch 2 in R&F
- M, 9/1 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
- W, 9/3: The "American" family: changes over time
Have read: Ch 3 in R&F
- F, 9/5: Continued
- M, 9/8: Video: Dadi's family
- W, 9/10: Family patterns around the world
Have read: Ch. 4 in R&F
- F, 9/12: African American families: Historical overview
Have read: Ch. 9 in R&F
- M, 9/15: Demographics
- W, 9/17: Video:
- F, 9/19: Extended families
Have read: pp. 63- 72 in R&F
- M, 9/22: Teen and nonmarital births
Have read: pp. 73-83 in R&F
- W, 9/24: Single parent households
- F, 9/26:* **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: Maggie's American Dream
 Lit Review Topic Due**
- M, 9/29:* Student Panel
- W, 10/1: Hispanic-Americans: Historical overview
Have read: Ch 11 in R&F
- F, 10/3: Demographics

- M, 10/6: Familism and Communalism/Collectivism
- W, 10/8: **MIDTERM**
- F, 10/10: Gender
Have read: Ch.6
- M, 10/13: Biculturalism
Have read: pp. 231-239 in R&F
- W, 10/15: Catch up
- F, 10/17: **Fall Break (no classes)**
- M, 10/20:* **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: Almost a Woman**
- W, 10/22:* *Video: Migrant families in Wisconsin*
- F, 10/24: Catch up
- M, 10/27:* Student Panel
- W, 10/29: Asian Americans: historical overview of East Asians
Have read: Ch. 12 in R&F
- F, 10/31: *Video: Family Gathering*
- M, 11/3: Southeast Asians
Literature Review due
- W, 11/5:* *Video: Cambodians in America or Monkey Dance*
- F, 11/7: Religion and "Model Minority"
- M, 11/10:* **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: Hmong in the Heartland**
- W, 11/12:* Student Panel
- F, 11/14: Native Americans: History, demographics
Have read: Ch 10 in R&F

- M, 11/17: Video: Winds of Change
- W, 11/19: Intergenerational Relations Parent-Child
Have read: Ch 7 in R&F
- F, 11/21: Intergenerational Relations Adult Child-Elderly
Have read: Ch 8 in R&F
- M, 11/24: **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION—Lakota Woman**
- W, 11/26: THANKSGIVING BREAK
- F, 11/28: THANKSGIVING BREAK
- M, 12/1: Multiracial issues & racial socialization and identity
Have read: pp. 239-254 in R&F
- W, 12/3:* Student panel
- F, 12/5:* Feast - Lit reviews, white panel/time to ask questions

Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 8th, 8-10 a.m.