

Race and Family
Sociology 166--Section 1001
MWF 12:00 - 12:50 p.m. Room LL392
Fall 2005

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This is primarily a course on the family structure 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 regard to each group. We focus on the structural factors that contribute to the diversity of family patterns we find in the world and in our country. We will end the course with a look at multiracial families and issues. This course cannot cover all viewpoints nor all relevant groups; you are encouraged 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. I will act as your textbook, and your assigned readings are mostly personal narratives from the perspective of a member of each of the four main ethnic groups. Videos and student speakers are incorporated as well. I look forward to learning with you.

Class Rules

Attendance. According to Marquette policy, every absence after 4 can result in a grade deduction. Also, students can be dropped from a course for excessive absences. You will receive a warning in such a case. Attendance on days designated by an * on the schedule below are required; any absence on those days will result in two points deducted from your participation grade.

Late Assignments. If for any reason (you were vomiting all night, partying late, the computer crashed, your cat peeed (sp?) on it) 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. 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).

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 I or any other class member is talking and people are gathering up their belongings to leave.

Required Texts

These are available at Book Marq or Sweeney's

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.

Reddy, **Crossing the Color Line**

Assignments and Grading

1. Discussion: Your discussion grade is divided into two parts. One is a grade (6%) for facilitating a discussion. All students will be assigned to small groups. There are five 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 opinion of the contents. A copy of the questions should be handed in to me AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS on that day. I will visit each small group, and the facilitator's grades will be based on the quality of the discussion, but mostly on the questions, which are graded on their ability 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:

- a) what family structure is present?
- b) What types of family rituals and traditions do you see?
- c) What gender relationships, child-parent relationships, community relationships do you see?
- d) How is the family or the author affected by historical experiences, discrimination?
- e) How does this reading inform, change or confirm your previous perceptions?
- f) Given what you read in this book, what public policies, if any, would help or hinder the experience of this group?
- g) Comparing and contrasting 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* (12%). Everyone will pick a topic from the list on p. 7 of the syllabus to do a literature review on. You will do a search for academic articles since 2000 on the chosen topic. You will supply copies (either hard copies or electronic) of the five articles and a 5-pp. summary of the articles, noting common and contrary patterns of findings among the articles and suggestions for future research in that area.

3. *Autobiographical Narrative* (15%): You can choose one of the following 3 topics. Use specific examples from your family life. The following questions should guide your narrative. You can adapt them and/or add others that are more suited to your situation. There are articles and/or books related to these

topics on electronic reserve or regular reserve. Incorporate ideas from at least one of these sources (or you may use your own sources) in your paper. Each topic asks you to interview a family member (recorded on tape). You need to hand in the tape with two copies of your paper (one without your name). On both papers, identify your age, race, gender, class, and your place in siblings birth order.

Family stories. Describe up to three stories that are told and retold in your family. They can be true stories or fiction. They can be about family members or strangers. They can be told orally or read. Tell the stories. Who tells each story in your family? If only one person tells the stories, why do you think others don't? Why is it told and retold? What are the purposes of this storytelling? What do the teller and the listeners get out of the story? What are the reactions to the stories? Interview two other family members to see what they think about these stories? When are these stories most likely to be told? Who is present? Will you tell these stories or other stories?

Racial Socialization. What race and ethnicity do you identify with? When did you first become aware of your race & ethnicity and that other people had other racial identities? How did those identities impact your life? Where did you get most of your information and perceptions of race from? What have your parents or other family members taught you about your race/ethnicity, in terms of history, culture? What have they told you about the character, culture, history of other races? How have your family members conveyed these messages to you (direct conversation, travel, videos, interaction with others, etc.)? What have they told you about dealing with/interacting with people of other races? Does this differ by race or gender? Any specific incidents? What have they told you about how your race would affect you (for better or worse) in life? Which of your family members have regular interaction with people of other races? Interview a parent to see if s/he remembers talking to you about race and what his/her message was.

Naming. What are all the names that you have or ever had? Where did you get them and why? What their meanings if any? Ethnic origin? How do you feel about the names that people give you? What does someone's naming you signify to you? Are there some that you like better? Or that you use in different situations? Are there any that you rejected? Do the names have any affect on you? Would you like to rename yourself? Will you change your name for marriage or expect your spouse to do so? Why or why not? Have you given names to others? Which and why? Interview your parents about why they picked that name and who thought of it or interview a sibling (if married or if a different gender than you) to see how they feel about their name and changes to it).

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE GRADED ON WRITING STYLE, GRAMMAR, 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:	6%	
Participation:	12%	
Annotated Bibliography:	12%	
Autobio Narrative:	15%	
Two Exams:	55%	(25% for midterm, 30% for final)

Total: 100%

Schedule of Lectures, Readings, and Assignments
(Subject to change)

- M, 8/29: Introduction and review of syllabus. Fill out note cards. Group Assignments
- W, 8/31: Meet small groups. Basic concepts. Do race and ethnicity matter?
- F, 9/2: Theory: Structure v. Culture
- M, 9/5: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
- W, 9/7: The "American" family: changes over time
- F, 9/9: Video: Dadi's family
- M, 9/12: Family patterns around the world
- W, 9/14: **Lit review and narrative topics due**
- F, 9/16: African American families: Historical overview
- M, 9/19: Demographics
- W, 9/21: Extended families
- F, 9/23: Video: teen pregnancy
- M, 9/26: Single parent households
- W, 9/28:* SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: **Maggie's American Dream**
- F, 9/30:
- M, 10/3: Student Panel
- W, 10/5: Hispanic-Americans: Historical overview
- F, 10/7: Video: Migrant families in Wisconsin
- M, 10/10: MIDTERM
- W, 10/12: Demographics
- F, 10/14: Familism and Communalism

M, 10/17: Biculturalism

W, 10/19: Gender

F, 10/21:

M, 10/24:* SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: **Almost a Woman**

W, 10/26:* Student Panel

F, 10/28: Asian Americans: historical overview of East Asians

M, 10/31: Video: Family gathering

W, 11/2: Southeast Asians

F, 11/4: Video: Cambodians in America
Final annotated Bib due

M, 11/7: Religion and Model Minority

W, 11/9:* SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: **Hmong in the Heartland**

F, 11/11:* Student Panel

M, 11/14: Native Americans: History, demographics

W, 11/16: Intergenerational Relations Parent-Child

F, 11/18: Intergenerational Relations Adult Child-Elderly

M, 11/21: Video: Winds of Change

W, 11/23: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

F, 11/25: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

M, 11/28:* SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION—**Lakota Woman**

W, 11/30:* Panel or video?

F, 12/2: Multiracial issues & racial socialization and identity

M, 12/5:* SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION—**Crossing the Color Line**

W, 12/7:* Student panel

F, 12/9:*

Final Exam: Friday, Dec. 16th, 1-3 pm

**Possible Topics for Annotated Bibliography
(All must be related to racial minorities)**

Pacific Islanders

Middle Easterners (Arab, Turkish, Iran, Muslim)

Southeast Asians

Central/Southern Americans

Gender relations & roles

Familial piety/familism/communalism

Extended families

Divorce/remarriage/stepfamilies

Racial socialization/identity

Biculturalism/accluturation/assimilation

Single-parent households (mom or dad)

Family violence (child abuse/spousal, elderly)

Late life (grandparents, elderly death)

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

Interracial marriage/exogamy

Parenting styles/socialization/discipline

Transracial adoption

LIFE CONDITIONS OF ETHNIC MINORITY FAMILIES
(Think in terms of various levels: individual, family, ethnic group)
Use this as a resource when writing discussion questions

- I. Wider Social Conditions
 - A. Historical Conditions
 - 1. Mode of "entry" of ethnic group into U.S.
 - 2. "immigration" and migration patterns
 - 3. history of relations with white America
 - 4. history of oppression
 - B. Contemporary economic conditions
 - 1. economic opportunity and disadvantage
 - 2. social class diversity
 - 3. poverty
 - 4. demographic conditions (age structure, gender ratio)
 - C. Socio-political conditions
 - 1. government policies and programs
 - 2. racism and discrimination
 - 3. political participation and exclusion
 - 4. various legal restrictions (jobs, residence, school, marriage)
 - D. Dominant culture and acculturation
 - 1. characteristics of dominant, white culture
 - 2. attempts to force ethnic group to embrace dominant culture
 - 3. extent of desire to assimilate and areas in which most assimilation has occurred
 - E. Ethnic Culture
 - 1. common themes, orientations, and characteristics within a culture
 - 2. contributions of ethnic culture to American culture
- II. Community and Neighborhood Conditions
 - A. Geographical segregation; ethnic diversity of community inter-ethnic relations
 - B. Housing conditions
 - C. Communal order and sense of community, including churches and schools
 - D. Local economy
- III. Family Life
 - A. Means of Livelihood
 - B. Gender relations between women and men
 - C. Parenting, childrearing, and intergenerational relations
 - D. Extended kin ties, including fictive kin and social networks
 - E. Family ethnic culture: how families personalize culture, cultural beliefs and practices, ethnic identity of members, acculturation and biculturalism