

Sociology 120
Marriage and the Family
Spring 2011

Section 010: TR 1:30 – 2:50 pm OM 25
Section 020: TR 3:00 – 4:20 pm OM 25

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Office Hours: M/W 9-10 & 1:30-2:30; T/R 12-1, or by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

This class will require you to take an in-depth look at families from a sociological perspective. That is, we are going to examine how attitudes, behaviors, and identities related to kinship are shaped and influenced by society and social factors. My aim is to make this class informative, interesting, and applicable to your life. The course will focus on themes of diversity (particularly in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality) and contemporary issues related to the institution of the family. The primary goals of this course are for you to be able to:

- (1) Identify critiques of “the family” as culturally and historically universal.
- (2) Better understand how families and family roles are impacted based on differences across race, class, gender, and sexual orientation.
- (3) Compare and contrast your own experiences of family life (which include hearing about or observing other families) with the theories and patterns we examine in the course.

Related to these goals, a secondary goal for this course is for you to increase your awareness of influences on how families (whether your own, someone else’s, or the concept) are viewed by yourself and others. To meet this goal this course will encourage reflection on personal biases, listening to the viewpoints of others, and constructively critiquing the readings from the course.

You cannot succeed in this course if you do not do the readings. The course is centered in thinking about and relating to the readings. If that does not appeal to you, you should seriously reconsider taking this class.

Course Materials

Unless otherwise indicated, all reading for this course is required and must be completed at the time listed (see Course Schedule below). The textbook for the course is:

Risman, Barbara J. 2010. *Families as They Really Are*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Copies should be available through the campus bookstore and online booksellers.

Additional materials may be handed out in class or posted under the “Content” section of the D2L site.

Course Requirements

Class Introduction	5pts
Upload Picture to D2L Dropbox	5pts
Personal Bias Essay	10pts
Group Discussions (8 at 5pts each)	40pts
Final Paper (Submission at 30pts and Revision at 20pts)	50pts
Exams (3 at 30pts each)	90pts
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	200pts

A	more than 179pts
B	159-178pts
C	139-158pts
D	119-138pts
F	less than 119pts

Class Introduction

Go to the “Discussion” tab on D2L then post a short introduction to yourself under “Class Introductions.” Items I’d like you to include are detailed in the topic description.

Upload Picture to D2L Dropbox

Go to the “Dropbox” tab on D2L then upload a classroom-appropriate portrait of yourself under the “Picture” folder. This will help me to connect names with faces. If you don’t have a picture to post or need help uploading your picture, please come to office hours.

Personal Bias Essay

The personal bias essay will be a short (1-3 page) reflective essay critically examining your own personal attitudes and opinions about families. Further details regarding this assignment will be discussed in class and posted under the “Content” tab of the D2L site. The essay is to be turned in on D2L by Friday, February 4th (see Course Schedule below).

Group Discussions

Each student will be assigned to a small group and will remain in that group throughout the semester. Starting with Week 3, a portion of at least one day each week (except weeks with exams) will be reserved for small group discussions of that week’s readings for a total of 10 weeks. The purpose of these small groups will be to: make connections between the topic, readings, and our lives; tease out areas of critique or confusion in regard to the reading; tease out areas of curiosity regarding the broader topic; and learn how to engage in professional discussion. Students will take turns in the roles of facilitator for their small group. Facilitators will guide group discussion, ask me for group assistance, and grade regular participants. Participants will contribute to the discussion and grade the facilitator. Groups will submit a one-page report focusing on critiques, questions, and interesting connections that emerged from the group no later than **11pm** the day of discussion. Individual grades will be assigned based on the group report and peer grades (I will provide a guiding rubric under the “Content” tab). Your best 8 weekly grades will be used for your final Group Discussion grade (however, an unexcused absence when scheduled as facilitator may result in a final Group Discussion grade of “0”).

Final Paper

On April 8th you are expected to turn in a 5+ page paper via the D2L “Dropbox” by **11pm**. The purpose of this paper is to synthesize and apply ideas from the readings. On April 29th you are expected to turn in a revised paper (based on feedback from the original submission) via the D2L “Dropbox” by **11pm**. The revised submission is not optional. Paper ideas and a grading rubric will be available under the “Content” tab.

Exams

Exams will test knowledge and comprehension of key concepts and main arguments presented in readings, lectures, and discussion. There will be four exams, which may consist of essay, fill-in-the-blank, matching, multiple choice, and/or short answer questions (see dates for exams on Course Schedule). Exams will assume you understand earlier key concepts and ideas.

NOTE: If at any point during the course you find that you are not doing as well as you hoped or expected, you are encouraged to contact me and meet with me immediately; do not wait until the end of the semester.

Course Policies

Absences and Late Work

It is your responsibility to attend and participate in class as well as to ensure course requirements are submitted properly and on time. Do verify any submissions to the D2L system have in fact uploaded properly. Do not wait until the last minute. That said, I understand that during the semester some students may face obstacles to completing course requirements due to such things as personal illness, computer or internet problems, or family/work responsibilities.

General participation in group discussions has a built-in “cushion” for just such contingencies. Use that cushion wisely. I will not allow make-up of group discussion participation (with the exception of advance notification of excused absences for university-sponsored events). Likewise, if you miss a class session (excused or not), do not ask me for information about the missed class. You should make arrangements with one or more classmates in regard to sharing notes or other information missed because of absences. This makes it a good idea to exchange contact information with fellow students early in the course. I also encourage students to complete as much participation as possible early in the semester both to get early feedback on performance in the course and to ensure full credit by the end of the semester.

Absence from a small group discussion where you are scheduled as facilitator will only be excused under *exceptional* circumstances, and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If you have a known conflict in advance, you should arrange to trade dates with another student.

Students should make an effort to notify me *beforehand* if papers will be submitted late. If this is impossible, please contact me *as soon as possible*. Students that make arrangements within a reasonable time frame will receive full credit. Otherwise, papers may be accepted for partial credit on a case-by-case basis. **I do not accept unsolicited emailed papers.**

Exams may be made up only under *unusual* circumstances. Students should make an effort to notify me *beforehand* to request approval of a make-up exam. If this is impossible, please contact me by email as soon as possible. Students that make arrangements with me within a reasonable time frame will receive full credit. Otherwise, an opportunity to earn partial credit may be awarded at my discretion. Make-up exams will be administered during Final Exam Week.

Academic Honesty

You are responsible for familiarity with the Kutztown University Academic Honesty Policy: <http://thekey.kutztown.edu/academicHonesty.aspx>

At a minimum, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade.

During exams, all personal items should be put away other than the exam materials (exam sheet, answer sheet(s), and writing implement). Hats and caps with brims must be turned around or removed. Unapproved use of any electronic device for any reason during an exam may be considered unauthorized assistance and a breach of the Academic Honesty Policy.

Accommodations

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course (for example, due to disability, physical injury, PTSD, or TBI), please contact the Disability Services Office (215 Stratton) and/or contact me privately so that I can assist you and preserve confidentiality. Please plan to meet with me to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements may affect your ability to fully participate. More information is available at: <http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/humandiversity/disabilityservices>

Classroom Behavior

It is my policy to maintain a respectful, safe classroom and it is everyone's responsibility to help maintain such an atmosphere. A respectful, safe classroom ensures a positive learning environment in which everyone can explore class ideas fully. Respectful good practices include such things as coming to class on time and turning off cell phone ringers. (It is also good to practice these habits since they will be expected behaviors by most employers and graduate school supervisors.) Distracting or rude behavior may result in you being asked to leave the classroom. Consistently disruptive behavior will result in you being dropped from the course.

We all have different points of view, different personal values, different life experiences, and different personal preferences that we bring with us to the classroom. Course material may challenge attitudes and assumptions, exposing you to ideas that will require you to think critically, and perhaps differently. You may encounter ideas of which you have never heard or that make you feel uncomfortable. Each student has the right to respectfully disagree with an idea, concept, or opinion that is written or expressed by myself or other learners. While disagreement is expected, hostility is not. A climate of tolerance and respect is essential. Harassment, intimidation, or derogatory comments toward any individual or group will not be tolerated and will result in you being dropped from the course.

Extra Credit

Please do not request extra credit for this class. I do welcome notification of any campus or off-campus events that relate to sociology and will be happy to announce such activities in class. Any extra credit opportunities will be announced as such in class and the opportunity to earn extra credit will be available to all students.

Extreme Weather

If severe weather becomes an issue, you should check the Kutztown University website or hotline (610-683-4649) for information concerning the campus-wide cancellation of classes. I may also post a specific announcement on D2L.

Office Hours and Communications

You may make an appointment with me during or outside of posted office hours to discuss matters related to class or your college experience. You are also welcome to drop by and just chat during posted office hours. Email is the best way to contact me and I will generally respond within 24 hours. Class announcements may be made periodically via KU email and/or D2L, so be sure to check those accounts daily.

Questions

If you have questions about this course, please check this syllabus or D2L for answers first. If you ask me a question that is answered in the syllabus or on D2L, I will refer you to those sources.

Tentative Course Schedule

Note: I reserve the right to modify the schedule as deemed appropriate during the semester. Some things are bound to change due to class needs, how quickly students grasp material, and class dynamics. Any changes will be announced in the course website “News” section.

WEEK 1 (Jan 18 & 20) – Course Intro & How We Know What We Know About Families

Introductory Reading for Tuesday

- *Families As They Really Are*, Ch 1: “Springing Forward From the Past: An Introduction,” (p.2-9)
- D2L – Syllabus, “Introduction to your professor”

D2L Assignment for Tuesday

- Post a picture of yourself under the “Dropbox”
- Post an introduction to yourself under the “Discussion” tab

Readings for Thursday

- Ch 2: Cherlin, Andrew J. “One Thousand and Forty-Nine Reasons Why It’s Hard to Know When a Fact is a Fact” (p.10-14)
- Ch 3: Cowan, Philip A. “When is a Relationship Between Facts a Causal One?” (p.15-19)
- Ch 4: Burton, Linda M. “Uncovering Hidden Facts That Matter in Interpreting Individuals’ Behaviors: An Ethnographic Lens” (p.20-23)

WEEK 2 (Jan 25 & 27) – “The Family” as Social Construction

Readings

- Ch 5: Coontz, Stephanie. “The Evolution of American Families” (p.30-47)

WEEK 3 (Feb 1 & 3) – Families: Historical Influences and Cultural Variations

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS BEGIN

Readings

- Ch 8: Struening, Karen. “Families ‘In Law’ and Families ‘In Practice’: Does the Law Recognize Families as They Really Are?” (p.75-90)
- Ch 22: Aldarondo, Etiony and Edward Ameen. “The Immigration Kaleidoscope: Knowing the Immigrant Family Next Door” (p.231-245)

F Feb 4 PERSONAL BIAS ESSAY DUE @ 11PM (D2L submission)

WEEK 4 (Feb 8 & 10) – Marriage: Historical Influences and Cultural Variations

Readings

- Ch 7: Franklin, Donna L. “African Americans and the Birth of the Modern Marriage” (p.63-74)
- *Ch 9: Badgett, M.V. Lee. “Will Providing Marriage Rights to Same-Sex Couples Undermine Heterosexual Marriage? Evidence from Scandinavia” (p.91-96)*

WEEK 5 (Feb 15 & 17) – Marriage: Historical Influences and Cultural Variations (cont)

NO SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION FOR WEEK 5

Readings

- Ch 10: Rockquemore, Kerry Ann and Loren Henderson. “Interracial Families in Post-Civil Rights America” (p.99-111)
- *Ch 11: Rosenfeld, Michael. “The Steady Rise of Nontraditional Romantic Unions: The Case of Interracial and Intercultural Marriage” (p.112-114)*

R Feb 17 EXAM #1

WEEK 6 (Feb 22 & 24) – Intimate Relationships: Courtship, Dating, and Sexuality

Readings

- Ch 12: Schwartz, Pepper. “Why is Everyone Afraid of Sex?” (p.120-130)
- Ch 31: Armstrong, Elizabeth A. “Orgasm in College Hookups and Relationships” (p.362-377)

WEEK 7 (Mar 1 & 3) – Intimate Relationships: Partnership and Cohabitation

Readings

- Ch 13: Smock, Pamela J. and Wendy Manning. “New Couples, New Families: The Cohabitation Revolution in the United States” (p.131-139)
- *Ch 15: Gerstel, Naomi and Natalia Sarkisian. “Marriage Reduces Social Ties” (p.152-154)*
- Ch 20: Green, Robert-Jay. “From Outlaws to In-Laws: Gay and Lesbian Couples in Contemporary Society” (p.197-213)
- *Ch 28: England, Paula and Kathryn Edin. “Unmarried Couples with Children: Why Don’t They Marry? How Can Policy Makers Promote More Stable Relationships?” (p.307-312)*

HALFWAY POINT OF THE SEMESTER

WEEK 8 (Mar 8 & 10) – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

WEEK 9 (Mar 15 & 17) – Children and Families

Readings

- Ch 6: Mintz, Stephen. “American Childhood as a Social and Cultural Construct” (p.48-58)
- Ch 14: Coleman, Joshua. “Parenting Adult Children in the Twenty-First Century” (p.140-151)
- Ch 23: Cowan, Philip A. and Carolyn Pape Cowan. “Beyond Family Structure: Family Process Studies Help to Reframe Debates About What’s Good for Children” (p.252-271)

WEEK 10 (Mar 22 & 24) – Parenthood and Social Class

NO SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION FOR WEEK 10

Readings

- Ch 25: Furstenberg, Frank F. Jr. “Diverging Development: The Not-So-Invisible Hand of Social Class in the United States” (p.276-294)
- *Ch 26: Lareau, Annette. “Unequal Childhoods: Inequalities in the Rhythms of Daily Life” (p.295-298)*
- Ch 27: Roy, Kevin and Natasha Cabrera. “Not Just Provide and Reside: Engaged Fathers in Low-Income Families” (p.301-306)
- *Ch 36: Cotter, David, Paula England, and Joan Hermsen. “Moms and Jobs: Trends in Mothers’ Employment and Which Mothers Stay Home” (p.416-424)*

R Mar 24 EXAM #2

WEEK 11 (Mar 29 & 31) – Families and Work In and Outside the Household

Readings

- Ch 21: Moore, Mignon. “Independent Women: Equality in African-American Lesbian Relationships” (p.214-227)
- Ch 32: Gerson, Kathleen. “Falling Back on Plan B: The Children of the Gender Revolution Face Uncharted Territory” (p.378-392)
- Ch 38: Cooke, Lynn Prince. “‘Traditional’ Marriages Now Less Stable Than Ones Where Couples Share Work and Household Chores” (p.431-432)

WEEK 12 (Apr 5 & 7) – Families and Work In and Outside the Household (continued)

Readings

- Ch 33: Sullivan, Oriel. “Men’s Changing Contribution to Family Work” (p.393-401)
- Ch 34: Sullivan, Oriel and Scott Coltrane. “Men’s Changing Contribution to Housework and Child Care” (p.401-405)
- Ch 35: Lang, Molly Monahan and Barbara J. Risman. “A ‘Stalled’ Revolution or a Still Unfolding One?” (p.408-412)
- Ch 37: Gupta, Sanjiv. “Women’s Money Matters: Earnings and Housework in Dual-Earner Families” (p.426-428)

F Apr 8 FINAL PAPER SUBMISSION DUE BY 11PM (D2L submission)

WEEK 13 (Apr 12 & 14) – Divorce and Remarriage

Readings

- Ch 16: Rutter, Virginia E. “The Case for Divorce” (p.159-169)
- Ch 17: Li, Jui-Chung Allen. “The Impact of Divorce on Children’s Behavior Problems” (p.173-177)
- Ch 18: Heuveline, Patrick. “How Do They Do That? Estimating the Proportion of Marriages That End in Divorce” (p.182-184)

WEEK 14 (April 19 & 21) – Families and Social Problems: Family Violence

Readings

- Ch 39: Almeida, Rhea V. “Domestic Violence in Heterosexual Relationships” (p.435-447)

WEEK 15 (Apr 26 & 28) – Families and Social Problems: Poverty and Crime

Readings

- Ch 19: Coontz, Stephanie and Nancy Folbre. “Marriage, Poverty, and Public Policy” (p.185-193)
- Ch 29: Brown, Andrae L., Melina Dimitriou, and Lisa Dressner. “Rituals as Tools of Resistance: From Survival to Liberation” (p.328-336)

F Apr 29 FINAL PAPER REVISION DUE BY 11PM (D2L submission)

EXAM WEEK

Section 010: R May 5, 11am-1pm – EXAM #3

Section 020: T May 3, 2pm-4pm – EXAM #3