

SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

Soc 214A, Spring 2006

Lecturer: Melissa Barnett

Room: Wolfe 103

Meeting Time: 10:00-11:15, Tues. & Thurs

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs., 12:30-2:00

(or by appointment)

Office Phone: 243-2063 (to contact me at Wass 30A during scheduled office hours)

REQUIRED TEXTS & READINGS:

1. Newman, David M. and Liz Grauerholz. 2002. *Sociology of Families, 2nd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
2. Gilbert, Kathleen R. (ed.). 2005. *Annual Editions: The Family 05/06, 31st edition*. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill / Dushkin.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & GOALS:

What is a family? This seems like a rather straightforward question. This course, however, will demonstrate the complexity of this question, and its variety of answers. Throughout this semester, we will explore the changing nature and the multiple formations of family (as well as the road along which individuals travel to become a 'family') in a variety of historical, cultural, and demographic contexts. The word 'family' means something different to everyone, which is something we must all respect. However, whether you are an only child living with a single parent or are one of several siblings with two parents, we all have families. But, we most likely have different viewpoints on what exactly a family consists of.

By the end of this class, you should be able to understand the ways in which different family formations are created and sustained, as well as be able to critically assess your position within your family and your own family's uniqueness relative to others' families. Most importantly, this class aims to introduce and to explore families from three main sociological perspectives: gender, race and class. These three lenses will be interwoven throughout the course readings. While we may think we understand why something occurs, everything is not always at it seems. We will dig further into several contemporary family issues and see how individuals of a different gender, races, ethnic backgrounds, cultures and classes experience familial issues. In many instances, these 'identifiers' intersect--meaning, individuals do not experience only one at a time. Rather, for example, one may experience his or her gender, race and class simultaneously. By the conclusion of the class, you will possess a better understanding of those intersections and their outcomes. Additionally, your choice of a topic/research question dealing with the family early in the course will thoroughly familiarize with your topic via presenting your findings to the class and a course paper that you will work with me one-on-one.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Two (2) Exams | 20 & 30 percent = 50 percent |
| 2. Topic Proposal | 5 percent |
| 3. Presentation | 20 percent |
| 4. Final Paper, 10-15 pages | 25 percent |

Final Letter Grades will be based on the following scale: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; anything below 60 = F

[NOTE: There will be no 'rounding up' or 'curving' in this class. However, if your final grade, for example, is an 89.999, it will be to my discretion to assign an 'A,' 'B,' etc. grade. Additionally, if there is a pop quiz or exam question that consistently causes problems for most students, I will consider throwing it out. Finally, if you are concerned about your grade, it is your responsibility to come and see me as early in the term as possible. Lastly, for the two exams, I will incorporate a *sliding scale*, where your lower test score will be weighted 20 percent and your higher test score will be weighted 30 percent.]

- EXAMS (2):** During the semester, 2 exams will be administered, which I will create from our readings and discussions in-class to-date for that specific section(s). Both exams will include multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions and an essay portion. The essay portion will include multiple questions from which you will choose a specified number of questions to answer. Each exam will be 'section-oriented' (i.e., not cumulative). The class day prior to each exam will include a brief review of the material to be on the exam. I suggest you prepare questions for this period.
- TOPIC PROPOSAL (1):** Each student will chose a specific topic related the family and will develop an argument around that topic. You are required to submit your answers to the following exercise by **Tuesday, February 7th**. Your grade will be based on the thoroughness and of your answers, which includes a rational claim, 2-3 initial sources that serve as your evidence and establishing a legitimate, alternative explanation you've found during your initial search of the literature.

<u>Readers' Potential Questions</u>	<u>You Answer</u>
a. What is your point?	I claim that...
b. What evidence do you have?	I offer as evidence...
c. Why do you think your evidence supports your claim?	I offer this general principle...
d. But how about these reservations?	I can answer them. First...
e. Are you entirely sure?	Only if...and as long as...
f. No reservations here at all?	I must concede that...
g. Then just how strong is your claim?	I limit it...

[NOTE: This will aid you to develop a logical and rational argument around the topic you have chosen. It will also help you to understand where you need to focus your research (i.e., Are you having a difficult time conveying your claim? Are you having difficulty finding support? Etc.)]

- PRESENTATION (1): Presentations will be scheduled during class time on Thursday, April 20th through Tuesday, May 2nd, with Thursday, May 4th reserved for presentation time but only if needed.** Time slots will be decided on a first-come first-served basis, where 5 students will be scheduled to present per day. If you are not presenting on a given day, you are still expected to attend class because attendance during presentations will contribute to your grade. Your grade will depend on your ability to professionally convey the following: 1). Introduction of your topic and your claim, 2). A brief background on your topic, 3). Providing solid support for your claim, 4). Providing and thoroughly addressing alternative explanations/theories and, 5). Concluding your presentation by discussing the future of your topic.
- FINAL PAPER (1 FINAL PAPER/THREE SECTIONS OF 3-PAGES):** The final paper will be no less than 10 pages but no longer than 15 pages. Your final paper MUST have the following sections, all of which determine your final paper grade: 1). Introduction, 2). Literature Review, 3). Empirical support/findings, 4). Alternative Explanations and 5). Conclusion. Each section will be worth 20 pts / 20% of the total grade. All papers must have a cover page where you list your title, name and date AND a reference page where your sources are properly notated.

Your first installment will include your working draft of sections 2 & 3. Your second installment will include your working draft of section 4, and your third installment will include your working draft of sections 1 & 5. Since you are expected to take my comments and incorporate them into your sections, you are required to submit your revised working draft along with the 'new' section. In other words, for the second installment you will submit your working draft of section 4 AND the revisions you've made to sections 2 and 3.

All installments must be sent via e-mail because you will receive comments directly imbedded into your paper. While you will not receive a permanent grade per se on installments 1-3, I will assign the paper a grade 'as is.' In other words, I will grade your installment as if it were submitted as part of the final paper.

NOTE: Your grade will be determined on your ability to convey and support a logical argument and **not** mere opinion.

3 DEADLINES FOR 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD PAPER INSTALLMENTS:

(ALL INSTALLMENTS **MUST** BE SENT VIA E-MAIL. NO EXCEPTIONS.)

1. Tuesday, February 21st
2. Tuesday, March 14th
3. Tuesday, April 11th
4. Thursday, May 4th [FINAL PAPER DUE]

CLASS CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR:

1. *Class Format*

This is primarily a discussion-oriented class. While I will provide background information on readings and pertinent concepts, **I expect students to actively participate in class discussion.** Additionally, sociological topics touch upon several sensitive issues. Students will likely differ in their opinion on issues. However, differences of opinion do not give any student the right to engage in inappropriate language that attacks others. Derogatory comments are unacceptable in this class. This includes remarks that demean others by virtue of race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical appearance, etc. If you are unsure what exactly this means, please see me and ask for further clarification.

2. *Attendance & Participation*

Though not graded, daily readings are central to each day's class. It is crucial that you read the assigned readings *prior* to coming to class. Attendance & participation are expected. It is doubtful you will do well in class if you miss class frequently and / or do not read the assigned material. Everyone forms his or her own opinions by reading the material individually and not by relying on classmates or class discussion(s) to serve as a reading substitute. We meet and discuss the readings so we can learn from one another. For each class, I aim to assign a manageable amount of reading. **If you have difficulty with the material, come to speak with me ASAP. Otherwise, I will assume you have read the material.**

3. *Missed Classes, Missed Exams & Lateness to Class*

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to gather the information from another classmate. I will not 're-play' the class for you, but I will discuss questions you might have concerning specific topics covered. However, if you know in advance you will need to miss class, you might consider having a classmate tape record the class for you. Others are also encouraged to tape record class discussions, if you believe it will aid you in preparation for exams, pop quizzes, the group presentations and / or final papers.

1). Only students who can provide documentation for excused absences will be allowed to make-up exams. 2). However, if you know you will need to miss class on an exam day, it is your responsibility to contact me 24 HOURS BEFORE the scheduled exam and discuss your situation with me to gain permission to take a make-up exam. If you miss an exam for any other than the two reasons listed, you will not be eligible to take a make-up exam. **All make-up exams will be given AFTER the scheduled exam.**

4. *Final Notes*

- Talking with or speaking to other classmates while others (the instructor or a classmate) is highly frowned upon.
- All e-mail correspondence will be sent to your Lasell e-mail account. If this is not your 'main' e-mail account, be sure to check it for course up-dates or communication. Additionally, when sending me e-mail, please indicate who you are so that I don't have to 'figure out' who you are.

- Cell phones & other electronic devices: I understand the difficulty of always remembering to turn off your cell phone or pagers, etc. before class. However, to the best of your ability, please remember to turn it off before entering the classroom. Nothing is worse than a ringing / ‘singing’ phone while someone is speaking, taking an exam, etc. Please make it a habit to turn off cell phones & any other electronic devices that make noise so your classmates can concentrate on the task at hand.
- Preparation for exams: Our main textbook provides on-line quizzes for each chapter. If you’d like to test your comprehension of a specific chapter go to the following address and click on the drop down box and select the chapter for which you would like to take a quiz. These are not graded but may prove helpful in gauging your knowledge. < <http://www.pineforge.com/newman2studyfamilies/index.htm> >

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is a serious infraction. Acquaint yourself with the following paragraph from the catalog, as well as further information contained in the catalog pertaining to plagiarism. If you have any questions concerning plagiarism, see me for further details.

“Students have a responsibility to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. They are expected to perform educational tasks with the highest moral and ethical conduct. Academic dishonesty, depending on the severity of the infraction, may produce consequences, which range from a reduction in grade for the particular assignment involved to a failing grade for the course. The catalog contains a more completed description of academic dishonesty.”

ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS:

If you have special needs due to a learning disability or other condition(s) that requires special arrangements for testing or meeting assignment due dates, let me know as soon as possible (preferably during the first week of class). ***You must approach me about your situation and not assume arrangements made with other professors or the Learning Center during the current semester or past semesters apply to this course.*** The Learning Center has technology that can help you with reading and writing needs, and we can also arrange special testing sessions. My goal is to make it possible for all students to have a successful experience in this class.

SCHEDULED CLASS READINGS & OTHER DUE DATES*

(NOTE: ALL READINGS ARE TO BE READ PRIOR TO CLASS FOR THE DATE INDICATED.)

Tuesday, Jan. 24th -- Introduction to course and syllabus

Thursday, Jan. 26th -- Read Part 1, Issue 1 ‘What Is a Family?’
Read Unit 1, #1
Read Unit 3, #21

SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS, THEORIES AND LENSES THROUGH WHICH TO VIEW THE FAMILY

Tuesday, Jan. 31st -- Read Part 2, Chp. 1, ‘The Sociological Study of Family Life’

Thursday, Feb. 2nd -- Read Unit 2, #10

Tuesday, Feb. 7th -- Read Part 2, Chp. 2 ‘Gender and Families’
PROPOSAL FOR PRESENTATION & PAPER TOPIC DUE

Thursday, Feb. 9th -- Read Unit 2, #3
Read Unit 2, #4
Read Unit 2, #5

- Tuesday, Feb. 14th -- Read Part 2, Chp. 3 ‘Race, Ethnicity and Families’
- Thursday, Feb. 16th -- Read Unit 2, #9
Read Unit 3, #24
- Tuesday, Feb. 21st -- **FIRST 3-PAGE INSTALLMENT OF PAPER DUE**
We will review how to use and site references, how to use the library, where to get additional help on your working draft, and other questions related to conducting research.
- Thursday, Feb. 23rd -- Read Part 2, Chp. 4 ‘Wealth, Poverty, and Families’
- Tuesday, Feb. 28th -- Read Unit 4, #35
We will review major topic covered on Exam #1. Come prepared with questions.
- Thursday, Mar. 2nd -- **EXAM #1**

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER IN EVERDAY LIFE & THROUGHOUT ONE’S LIFE EXPERIENCES

- Tuesday, Mar. 7th -- Read Part 3, Chp. 6 ‘Couplehood and Marriage’
- Thursday, Mar. 10th -- Read Unit 3, #19
Read Unit 3, #20
- Tuesday, Mar. 14th -- Read Part 3, Chp. 7. ‘Work Life and Family Life’
SECOND 3-PAGE INSTALLMENT OF PAPER DUE
- Thursday, Mar. 16th -- Read Padavic and Reskin, Chp. 7 ‘Paid Work and Family Work’
(This Reading will made available on course web site)
- Tuesday, Mar. 21st -- **SPRING BREAK; NO CLASS**
- Thursday, Mar. 23rd -- **SPRING BREAK; NO CLASS**
- Tuesday, Mar. 28th -- Read Part 3, Chp. 8 ‘Parenthood and Parenting’
Read Unit 3, #25
Read Unit 3, #30
- Thursday, Mar. 30th -- Read Unit 2, #13
Read Unit 2, #14
Read Unit 2, #16
- Tuesday, Apr. 4th -- Read Part 3, Chp. 10 ‘Intimate Violence’
- Thursday, Apr. 6th -- Read Unit 3, #22
Read Unit 4, #31
- Tuesday, Apr. 11th -- Read Part 1, Issue 2 ‘Is the Institution of Family Breaking Down – And Society With It?’
Read Unit 1, #2
THIRD 3-PAGE INSTALLMENT OF PAPER DUE
- Thursday, Apr. 13th -- Read Part 3, Chp. 11 ‘Divorce and Remarriage’
- Tuesday, Apr. 18th -- Read Part1, Issue 3 ‘How Private Should Family Life Be?’
Read Unit 4, #40 AND Read Unit 4, #42

Thursday, Apr. 20th -- PRESENTATION DAY #1

Tuesday, Apr. 25th -- PRESENTATION DAY #2

Thursday, Apr. 27th -- PRESENTATION DAY #3

Tuesday, May 2nd -- PRESENTATION DAY #4

Thursday, May 4th -- **FINAL 10-15 PAGE PAPER DUE**

*We will review major topics covered on Exam #2. Come prepared with questions.
Also, Final Presentation Day, only if needed.*

Thursday, May 11th to Tuesday, May 16th -- **FINALS PERIOD—EXAM #2 TBA**

***This schedule is tentative. Every effort will be made to adhere to the schedule. However, if changes are necessary, students will be given ample notice.**