

SO 100/235 Family and Social Change
Blocks 1-2, 2009

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Course Description: This course will look at family structures and relationships over time and across cultures, with continued focus on the wider social contexts, especially industrialization, feminism, race, class, sexual orientation, technology and social policy. What is family? How have our definitions changed? What social factors influence those changes? What are the current issues related to family and what lies ahead? Is the family in decline or undergoing social change? Which of these - decline or change – translates to chaos and which to order?

The first block will explore sociological thinking in general, including basic theory, methods, and an introduction to the terminology and themes in the field. The goal will be to provide the tools and set the context for deeper sociological analysis. The second block will focus specifically on sociology of family. Assignments will include classic and contemporary readings, debates over controversial issues, as well as data collection in local courts. 2 units

Required Texts:

All texts should be available in the bookstore. Be sure, if buying used books, that you have the correct edition. Changes are made often, and can be significant.

- Ferguson, Susan J. *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*, 5th ed.
- MacLeod, Jay. *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood*, 3rd ed.
- McIntyre, Lisa. *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*, 4th ed.

- Aulette, Judy R. *Changing American Families*, 2nd ed.
- Cherlin, Andrew. *Public and Private Families: A Reader*, 5th ed..
- Hertz, Rosanna. *Single by Chance, Mothers by Choice: How Women are Choosing Parenthood Without Marriage and Creating the New American Family*.

Eleven individual chapters are also required reading. They can be accessed through Prowl.

- Engels. "The Family," chapter in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, 1884.
- Gough, Kathleen. "The Origin of the Family," chapter in *Toward and Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna R. Reiter, 1975.
- Karraker, Meg Wilkes. "Global Change and Demographic Shifts" and "Transnational Employment," chapters in *Global Families*, 2008.
- Loseke, Donileen R. "Through a Sociological Lens," chapter in *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, edited by Donileen Loseke, Richard Gelles and Mary Cavanaugh, 2005.

- Loseke, Donileen R. and Demie Kurz. "Men's Violence Toward Women is the Serious Social Problem," chapter in *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, edited by Donileen Loseke, Richard Gelles and Mary Cavanaugh, 2005.
- Parsons, Talcott. "The American Family," chapter in *Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process*, 1955.
- Strauss, Murray A. "Women's Violence Toward Men is a Serious Social Problem," chapter in *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, edited by Donileen Loseke, Richard Gelles and Mary Cavanaugh, 2005.
- Struening, Karen. "Do Welfare Recipients Have a Right of Privacy?" chapter in *New Family Values*, 2002.
- Struening, Karen. "Feminist Family Policies," chapter in *New Family Values*, 2002.
- Yllö, Kertsi A. "Through a Feminist Lens," chapter in *Current Controversies on Family Violence*, edited by Donileen Loseke, Richard Gelles and Mary Cavanaugh, 2005.

Course Requirements:

1. Read! Participation in class is essential, so both attendance and preparation will be crucial.
2. You will be required to comment via e-essay on a number of the assigned readings. I will provide questions for each entry, to which you will respond. Comments should be well thought out and carefully written. Quotes should be kept to a minimum, and citations to specific statements in the texts can be made with simple parenthetical references. Try to write about 300 words, and post them the morning before they are due by 7am.
3. In addition to e-essays, you will hand in six formal assignments (details are attached or will be distributed later):
 - Block 1: Subculture Paper
"Doing Sociology" Paper
 - Block 2: 60+er Interview
Marriage/Coupling Contract
Court Reflection Paper
Family Research Poster
4. After a brief orientation/training (re: domestic violence in the legal system, courtroom procedures and protocol, and data collection), you will be assigned to observe three El Paso County courts: fast track (once), restraining orders (once), and misdemeanors/felonies (at least twice). We will collect data for *Justice Watch* (a local organization that monitors the courts) regarding courtroom culture and judicial demeanor. We will then discuss our observations in class. Hours will be logged and data sheets will be collected and entered into the *Justice Watch* database.
5. There will be two exams each block. Some portions may be taken in class, while other parts may be done at home and handed in on exam day. At least one of the final exams will be oral, taken in groups of four. Note when the exams are scheduled on the syllabus; no exceptions will be made for travel, so plan accordingly.

Grading:

There will be two separate grades for this course, one for each block. Final grades will be based upon the above requirements, weighted approximately as follows:

Block 1:

Attendance & participation	10%
E-Essays 1-5	19% (4 for 3 points; 1 for 7 points)
Subculture Paper	10%
"Doing Sociology" Report	21%
Mid-term exam	15%
Final exam	25%

Block 2:

Attendance & participation	10%
E-Essays 6-9	20% (4 for 5 points)
60+er Interview	10%
Marriage/Coupling Contract	10%
Court Data and Reflection Paper	10%
Family Research Poster	15%
Final exam	25%

Assignments handed in late will receive half a letter grade lower for each day late.

Attendance:

Because much of the learning that occurs in this course happens in the midst of class discussion, attendance is crucial. Life happens (health problems, family emergencies, etc.), and when it does, some students choose to miss class. You don't have to ask for permission – I won't give it; that is your choice. Do let me know though. An excused absence is much less problematic than simply "blowing off" class when I am figuring grades. Even so, keep all absences to a minimum; zero is best! If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out from another student what was missed. You WILL be tested on material covered in both readings and class sessions, so if you've missed any information, it may come back to haunt you – in fact, this is quite likely.

Please come to class on time, and try to remain until official break times. Points will be subtracted from your grade for late arrivals, and other disruptions to the class, including talking to your neighbor outside of the class discussion, cell phone ringing, and falling asleep (I will wake you up and ask you to leave – it's embarrassing. Be sure to study hard, play hard, but also to sleep hard.)

Honor Code:

In general, cheating on tests and plagiarism on papers will not be tolerated - period. For each assignment, we will agree upon time limits, resources allowed (books, notes, internet, etc.), individual work v. team work, and so on. If afterward, my final instructions are not clear, please ask for clarification. I take violations of the Honor Code very seriously, and will not hesitate to report any suspected infringements to the Honor Council. You must also include a statement of Honor Code compliance at the end of ALL written work.

Course Outline:

Monday, Aug. 31: Introduction to the Course

Tuesday, Sept. 1: The Sociological Perspective

McIntyre, ch. 1-4

Ferguson, readings 1-3

Wednesday, Sept. 2: Research Methods

McIntyre, ch. 5-6

Ferguson, readings 4-6

* Prowl Orientation: 1:30 pm - 2 in Palmer Lab

Thursday, Sept. 3: Culture

McIntyre, ch. 7

Ferguson, readings 7-10

DUE: Subculture Topic

* Library Orientation: 1:30 pm – 3 in Tutt Library

Friday, Sept. 4: Structure

McIntyre, ch. 8

Ferguson, readings 15-18

DUE: E-Essay #1 (due by 7am)

DUE: Doing Sociology Topic

*Writing Center Orientation in class

Gather for peer editing of Subculture papers in the afternoon or over the weekend

Monday, Sept. 7: Writing Day

Tuesday, Sept. 8: Institutions

DUE: Subculture paper

McIntyre, ch. 9

Ferguson, readings 47-49

Wednesday, Sept. 9: Socialization

McIntyre, ch. 10

Ferguson, readings 11-14

Thursday, Sept. 10: Deviance and Social Control

McIntyre, ch. 11

Ferguson, readings 19-22

DUE: E-Essay #2

Friday, Sept. 11: Stratification and Power

McIntyre, ch. 12

Ferguson, readings 35-37, 41-43

Monday, Sept. 14: Mid-term Exam

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Class and Media
 McIntyre, ch. 13
 Ferguson, readings 23-26, 38-40

Wednesday, Sept. 16: Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Age
 McIntyre, ch. 14
 Ferguson, readings 27-34
DUE: E-Essay #3

Thursday, Sept. 17: Religion and Education
 Ferguson, readings 44-46, 50-52

Friday, Sept. 18: Social Change
 Ferguson, readings 56-60
DUE: E-Essay #4

Monday, Sept. 21:
 MacLeod
DUE: E-Essay #5 (7 points)

Tuesday, Sept. 22: Wrap-up
DUE: "Doing Sociology" Paper and Presentations

Wednesday, Sept. 23: Final Oral Exam

BLOCK BREAK!!!

Monday, Sept. 28: Sociological Perspectives on Family

Tuesday, Sept. 29: Theory
 Parsons and Engels
 Aulette, ch. 1
 Cherlin, ch. 1
DUE: E-Essay #6

Wednesday, Sept. 30: History and Cultures
 Gough
 Aulette, chs. 2 & 3
 Cherlin, ch. 2

Thursday, Oct. 1: Love and Marriage
 Aulette, ch. 9
 Cherlin, chs. 7, 8, & 9
DUE: 60+er Interview

Friday, Oct. 2: Divorce and Remarriage

Aulette, ch. 10

Cherlin, chs. 12 & 13

DUE: Research Question

Monday, Oct. 5: Domestic Violence

Aulette, ch. 11

Yllö

Loseke

Strauss

Loseke and Kurz

DUE: E-essay #7

Tuesday, Oct. 6: Child Abuse and Court Observation Prep

Cherlin, chs. 14 & 15

Tuesday, Oct. 6 afternoon – Friday, Oct. 9 morning: Data Collection in Court

DUE: Marriage/Coupling Contracts (by Friday at 4pm)

Monday, Oct. 12: Race, Gender and Class

Aulette, ch. 5

Cherlin, chs. 3, 4, & 5

DUE: Court Reflection Papers

Tuesday, Oct. 13: Work and Housework

Aulette, chs. 6 & 7

Cherlin, ch. 10

Wednesday, Oct. 14: Economics and Globalization

Aulette, ch. 4

Karraker

Thursday, Oct. 15: Public Policy: Poverty

Aulette, ch. 14

Struening

DUE: E-essay #8

Friday, Oct. 16: Public Policy: Gay Couples

Cherlin, ch. 16

Monday, Oct. 19: Public Policy: Reproduction

Hertz

DUE: E-essay #9

Tuesday, Oct. 20: Poster Presentations

DUE: Poster

Wednesday, Oct. 21: Final Oral Exam

Assignments: (marriage/coupling contract and court observation guide on separate handouts provided in Block 2)

Subculture Paper: Select a subculture to which you belong or with which you are familiar. It can be a religious, racial, or ethnic group, an athletic or social club, or an occupational or work-related subculture. In an essay of 3-4 pages, demonstrate your understanding of ALL of the following concepts by describing the values and beliefs; folkways and mores and their respective sanctions; rituals and customs of the subculture you have chosen. Assume your audience does not know the meanings of these terms, so define them briefly before illustrating them with your subculture. How does one become a member of this subculture (initiation rite)? What are the outward symbols and behaviors that might indicate to others that one is a member? Begin with a general definition of a subculture, and end by noting how any of these concepts differ from the dominant culture. If there is no difference, is this really a subculture, or something else?

Note that I use the term "subculture" quite loosely to include most small groups. The main criterion for evaluation will be your ability to illustrate the key concepts listed above for whatever group you choose.

I will assign peer editing groups, in which you will gather on Friday afternoon (or some other agreed upon time) to discuss each other's papers so as to make improvements to your own paper, as well as hear the descriptions of other subcultures.

"Doing Sociology" Paper: In teams of two, develop a brief survey, field study or content analysis on a conceptually sound topic of interest to you. Survey/observe/interview at least 20/6/4 persons respectively, or do a content analysis of a given medium. After conducting a literature review of previous work done on your topic, briefly identify and discuss the main theory that is relevant to your topic as well as the independent variable, the dependent variable, and your hypothesis. Describe your methods as clearly as possible. Collate your data into a table and analyze it in terms of your hypothesis. Was there a pattern to your results? What results surprised you? Interpret the results: What is the significance of your results? Can you make any general statements about the population from which you drew your sample? Were other issues raised that would be important for further study?

Report your results in a 7-10 page paper. Methods and results will be shared on the due date, so be prepared to discuss your work. The papers will follow this standard sociological format:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Data
- Findings and Conclusions
- Future Research

There will be time set aside for peer editing of these papers. I NEVER want to read a first draft!

Interview of 60+er: Find someone 60 years old or older who is willing to talk with you about his/her family through the life course. Students usually use a grandparent or other relative. You might begin by explaining the course and our interest in family structures of the past.

Ask what they felt family and societal expectations were for them when they were young regarding:

- when and whom to marry
- the ideal number of children
- gender roles
- Were they very aware of societal expectations at the time?
- How were these expectations communicated to them?
- Did they conform to these expectations? Which ones? Why or why not?
- Be sure to include the following demographic data:
 - gender
 - level of education
 - type of community they lived in when young (rural, suburban, urban, outside the U.S., etc.)
 - marital status
 - number of children

You may write up the data in any way that you think best lends itself to an analysis of the responses. A few students have reported very brief conversations verbatim, but most have described the most important points in a narrative. After reporting the data, include 1-2 pages of analysis related to any pertinent sociological perspectives studied thus far in class or in readings. The paper is not the data alone, but the sociological analysis of the data.

Family Research Poster Presentation: You will research a subtopic within the larger subject of sociology of family, ideally something we have only touched on in class or something we didn't have time to cover. In groups of 2, choose a topic and prepare a poster as if for a professional meeting. Information will be displayed on large, bi-fold poster boards. On the due date, we will spend part of class walking around to see each poster and ask questions of the researchers.

Develop a concise and focused research question which:

- lends itself to sociological analysis
- has information from more than one perspective
- you can get the information to answer

You must use at least 10 different sources of information, including at least:

- 2 websites
- 4 scholarly essays/journal articles
- 3 books, or portions of 3 books
- 1 popular source (magazines are the most common)

Attach your reference list, properly formatted, to the back of the poster. You will be graded on the quality of your work, and you will also be given the opportunity to grade each other's work.