

SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
Sociology 272
Spring 2013
M/W 2:15-3:35pm
Loree Hall, Room 024

Professor: Kristen W. Springer
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Office Hours: Wednesday 3:45pm-4:45pm or by appointment
Course Website: sakai.rutgers.edu (course designation: "Family Soc (272): Spr2013")

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines one of the most important institutions in social life, an institution with which we all have experience and familiarity – the family. We will look at the family from a sociological perspective. The goal of this course is to teach you *how* (not what) to think about the family as a public and private social institution. Families are where we spend much of our private lives, however families also serve important societal functions and are shaped by public perception, social conventions, and laws.

During the semester we will examine major themes studied by sociologists of the family. We start the course with a discussion of what family means, including an examination of historical trends and changes that led to the current Western family. During the semester, we will spend substantial time examining how the most significant structures of social inequality (social class, race/ethnicity, gender) affect family lives. We will also explore sexuality, partnerships, marriage, parenting, and family-related social policies with a particular focus on gender inequality and struggles with work-family balance.

REQUIRED TEXT

Andrew J. Cherlin: *Public and Private Families. An Introduction*. 7th edition. McGraw-Hill, 2013. (ISBN: 9780078026676)

The textbook is available at the Rutgers Barnes and Noble Bookstore (100 Somerset Street in New Brunswick) and is on reserve at the Douglas Library. I know that this edition is new and very expensive. If you purchase an older version, please make sure you compare your version with the one on reserve at the library, and read the updated/new sections from the book on reserve.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

LECTURES

The course is organized around readings, lectures, and videos. Lecture time is used to clarify the reading material, to present additional material related to the readings, to present guest speakers and videos, and to discuss the course material. It is highly unlikely that you can pass the course without regularly attending lectures. Furthermore, you need to read the assigned material *prior* to class. If you miss a lecture, you need to get lecture notes from a classmate, not from the instructor.

EXAMS

Your grade will be comprised of three non-cumulative, closed-books, closed-notes exams consisting of multiple choice and true/false questions. They will each be worth the same amount and will therefore each be worth 1/3 of your grade. The tests are designed to gauge not only your ability to memorize pertinent facts about the sociology of family but also your ability to connect theories learned in the course to real world

applications. The exams will cover all course material including the readings, my lectures, guest lecturers, and videos shown in class. I will provide a review sheet and a review session to help you prepare for each test. I would be delighted if everyone in this class gets an “A” on every test.

Please bring pencils and your RUID to the tests. The last test is scheduled during the final exam period but is not cumulative and will be the same length as the first two exams. Exams start at the beginning of class and finish at the end of class. You will not get extra time if you arrive late to an exam. If you arrive at an exam after the first student has finished and left, you will not be permitted to take the exam. This is to ensure the integrity of the examination and reduce the temptation to cheat.

Students must take exams when they are scheduled. Please notice that our final exam is on Tuesday May 14th at noon. Unfortunately, **I am unable to reschedule the final exam.** Make up exams will only be allowed under extraordinary circumstances with approved excuses. Approved excuses include a medical excuse or family emergency that can be properly documented (e.g., doctor’s note, police report, funeral program). If you have a religious observation that conflicts with a scheduled exam, please notify me no less than two weeks prior to the exam. University athletes with *prior approval* for events are also excused. Personal holidays, broken alarm clocks, weddings, jobs, exams in other courses, and the Rutgers bus system are not acceptable reasons for missing an exam. Make up exams will be given during the Sociology Department scheduled make up times and will be harder than regular exams.

Cheating will result in at least a failing grade on the exam and a referral to the Undergraduate Director of the Sociology Department (or Women’s and Gender Studies).

EXTRA CREDIT

In addition to the tests, there will be the option of earning three extra points. In order to earn these three extra points, you will need to do a brief report (< 2 pages) on a current news event (presented in a newspaper or online news source *within the past month*) related to the course material *being discussed within the last two classes*. You will need to submit a copy of the news article along with your write up (via “assignments 2” on our Sakai site). It is important to emphasize that this assignment is focused on *news* articles from reputable sources. These reputable sources can include, but are not limited to, the *New York Times*, *CNN.com*, or your local news paper. It is also fine to draw from reputable international newspapers. Schools papers (i.e. the *Targum*) do not count as news sources.

In addition to submitting a copy of the article, you must write a short report (< 2 pages, 12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) on the news story. In order to receive full credit, the report must: a) briefly summarize the article, b) analyze the article in light of the course material, and c) explain how the article contributes to our understanding of the sociology of families. Analyzing the news article in light of the course material means explicitly describing how you can apply what you’ve learned in class to understand the news article. For example, how can you read the article differently now that you are trained as a family sociologist? In asking you to explain how the news article contributes to sociology of the family, I am asking you to articulate whether/how the news article supports/refutes/elaborates something we discussed or read.

Students should also be prepared to present their article and their interpretation of their article, if called on to do so. This “oral report” will be very short and informal – no more than one minute. I do appreciate that some people are very uncomfortable speaking in front of groups. Please let me know when submitting your material if you do not want to present in class.

The extra credit assignment can be submitted anytime up through April 24th.

GRADES

Tests and the final course grade will be based on the standard grading scale.

A	90 – 100 pts.
B+	85 – 89 pts.
B	80 – 84 pts.
C+	75 – 79 pts.
C	70 – 74 pts.
D	60 – 69 pts.
F	59 pts. and less

GRADES CAN NOT BE NEGOTIATED

ATTENDANCE

You will be tested on material presented in class and are expected to attend all classes. However, I do not take attendance. If you miss class, you must gather materials missed by contacting your colleagues in class. I have also enabled the chat room feature on our Sakai site. This can be a good way to ask each other about class material.

COMMUNICATION

SMART CLASS

Students are expected to regularly access their Rutgers e-mail and/or the course website at sakai.rutgers.edu. Important information will be disseminated to your Rutgers account (unless you change your e-mail address through the Rutgers' system) and will be posted on the sakai course website. Furthermore, the Powerpoint lecture *outlines* will be posted on the course web-site by midnight before class. The lecture outlines are not full lecture notes and do not substitute for your own note-taking. Furthermore, if posting the lecture outlines prior to class deters students from attending class, I will cease posting my outlines.

E-MAIL AND OFFICE HOURS

This is large lecture course and as such, there will be limited opportunities for one-on-one student/Professor engagement. There are, however, several ways to contact me. Students should feel free to ask questions before, during, or after class. In addition, I will hold office hours and I encourage you to come by. If you have a conflict with this time, you can arrange to meet with me at another time. Finally, I am happy to correspond by e-mail within the following guidelines.

Please do not e-mail me with questions that can be answered by looking at the syllabus. In addition, if you miss a lecture, you need to get lecture notes from a classmate. I prefer that you e-mail me from an account that *lists your name* as the sender. The subject heading should signal that you are one of my students. You may begin the subject with Soc 272 Family Student, or the like. I also ask that you include your full name in the text of the e-mail so I can be sure I am responding to the correct student!

I receive so many e-mails each day that even important e-mails may not receive a reply for 48 hours – though I will make every effort to return your e-mails within 24 hours. If you have not received a reply from me within 24 hours, please feel free to e-mail me again. However, please do not e-mail me at the last moment (that is 24 hours before exams, deadlines, etc.) with questions regarding the material and assignments. These questions should be raised in class or in my office hours.

To reply to as many e-mails as possible, I convey my responses in as few words as possible. Please do not view my parsimonious responses as discourteous. I respond to all students with the same brevity.

CLASS CONDUCT AND GROUND RULES

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted and strongly encouraged.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. **Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings.** The University Code of Student Conduct <http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu/>

A FURTHER NOTE ON THE USE OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT IN CLASS

I do not want to see or hear any electronic device during class, with the exception of laptops. Further, laptops may only be used to in class to take notes. Please do not use laptops for other reasons including, but not limited to, surfing the web, checking Facebook, or writing emails during class. If I notice or suspect someone using laptops for reasons other than note taking, I will ask the student to leave and/or ban laptop use.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT DISABILITY

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact me at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I follow the Rutgers University's policy on academic integrity and you can familiarize yourself with this policy at this website: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and I am obligated to report such conduct and violations of this policy to the Undergraduate Director of the Sociology Department (or Women's and Gender Studies).

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS*

January 23	Introduction to the Class: Overview of Topics and Requirements
January 28-30	Public and Private Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 1
February 4-6	The History of the Family Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 2
February 11-13	Social Class and Family Inequality Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 4
February 18	Academic Integrity Presentation
February 20	Guest Lecture: Violence Prevention Lisa Smith Coordinator, Domestic Violence Department of Sexual Assault Services and Crime Victim Assistance

February 25	Exam Review
February 27	Exam 1
March 4-6	Race, Ethnicity, and Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 5
March 11-13	Gender and Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 3
March 18- 20	SPRING BREAK
March 25-27	Sexualities Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 6
April 1-3	Cohabitation and Marriage Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 7
April 8	Exam Review
April 10	Exam 2
April 15-17	Work and Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 8
April 22-24	Children and Parents Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 9
April 29-May 1	The Family, the State, and Social Policy Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 14
May 6	Exam Review
May 14th at 12 noon	Exam 3

***This schedule may be modified throughout the course. Students will be given ample notice of any changes.**