

SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
Sociology 272
Fall 2015
T/F 10:20-11:40
Tillett Hall, Room 257

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Office Hours: Thursday 10-12 noon at 112 Paterson Street, Room 460 (Rutgers Health Institute -- <http://www.ihhpar.rutgers.edu/directions.asp>) or by appointment

Course Website: sakai.rutgers.edu (course designation: “Family Soc (272): Fall2015”)

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 Bookstore and will be put on reserve at Kilmer Library. I know that this edition is relatively 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. You need to read the assigned material *prior* to class. Although I do not take attendance, it is highly unlikely that you can pass the course without regularly attending lectures. If you miss a lecture, you need to get lecture notes from a classmate, not from the instructor. 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.

EXAMS

Most (75%) of your grade will be comprised of three non-cumulative, closed-books, closed-notes exams consisting of multiple choice and true/false questions. 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. 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 December 22nd from 8am to 11am. **The exam will not take the full time and I am therefore starting the final at 9am – not 8am.** Unfortunately, **I am unable to reschedule the final exam. If you cannot make this exam time, please find another class to take.** 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).

GROUP WORK

The remaining 25% of your grade will be based on group-related projects. One point of these projects is to provide an opportunity for you to discuss the course material in a smaller, more intimate setting. Another point is for you to be able to link the course material to current events –

and in doing so to see the utility of applying a sociological perspective to current news stories related to the sociology of the family.

During the first week of class, students will be divided into small groups of 6 or 7. These groups will remain the same throughout the semester to enable students to get to know one another. Throughout the course of the semester, each group will meet regularly during class to discuss a current news article related to the topic of a previous week. The specific assignments and the corresponding grades will be as follows:

1. Each student will need to submit a news article to their group (via their group's resource folder labeled with the date e.g. "Article_092515_Group_1") and to me (via the assignments section in sakai) once during the semester **at least 24 hours before** the start of class. Students also need to submit the article coversheet to me via the assignments section in sakai when submitting their article. The news article must conform to the requirements articulated below.

Students will earn 7% of their grade for the article submissions based on: submitting the article and coversheet on time, finding an article that fits the specific requirements outlined below, and finding an article related to the topic of the week.

2. The students will meet in their groups during class and will discuss how the article (which everyone should read before class) relates to the sociological concepts from the course. Everyone should participate. Each group is expected to create an attendance sheet in their resources folder and the person handing in the write-up should update it every week. Attendance, participation, and your co-members' evaluation (see below) will count for a portion of your course grade.
3. One student from each group (not the student who submitted the article) will write-up a half-page to one-page summary of the class discussion. The student will also need to articulate at least **two** ways that the articles relate to the material discussed in class. This summary will be due to the assignments section in Sakai within **48 hours after the discussion**. I'd strongly suggest that students write up the discussion during group time or immediately after. Each student will need to do this once during the semester and this assignment will be worth 8% of their grade. This grade is based on timely submission, coherent writing, and articulating how the group linked the article to the course content.
4. At the beginning of the next class I may ask people to volunteer useful information from their group discussion.
5. At the end of the semester (and perhaps also before if I feel it is needed), I will have each group evaluate each member. This information, my observations, and attendance/participation as measured above will count for 10% of your grade.
6. There will be 7 possible days to sign up. I'd like everyone to sign up for the first six options. If you have a group with 7 people, please utilize all days. If you have a group with only six people then I will give you an article to discuss in class on the 7th day.

The following are dates/topics. During the first week of class, each group will meet and decide which person is responsible for the article and write-up for each week. Please post this schedule in your resources folder.

9/18: Public and Private Families
9/25: History of the Family
10/16: Social Class
10/23: Race
11/6: Gender
11/13: Sexualities or Violence
12/4**: Work and Family

**only sign up for if you have 7 people in your group

ALL ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO SAKAI AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PROPER DOCUMENTATION.

Article Selection Guidelines:

Family-related issues are often the subject of news coverage, and incorporating these stories into class can provide contemporary real-world examples of course topics. Furthermore, analyzing news stories about families is an ideal way to practice applying sociological ideas and family perspectives to current events. 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 newspaper. It is also fine to draw from reputable international newspapers. Schools papers (i.e. the *Targum*) do not count as news sources.

The article must be on the topic of your assigned week and must have appeared in the news during the *three* weeks preceding your due date.

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

COMMUNICATION

SMART CLASS

Students are expected to regularly access their Rutgers e-mail and 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/>).

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have **zero** tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I follow the Rutgers University's policy on academic integrity. Familiarize yourself with the policy at this website: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and I am obligated to report such conduct and violations of this policy to the Undergraduate Director and Office of Academic Integrity.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS*

September 1	Introduction to the Class: Overview of Topics and Requirements
September 4	Public and Private Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 1
September 8	No Class – Switch Day
September 11	Public and Private Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 1
September 15-18	The History of the Family Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 2
September 22-25	Social Class and Family Inequality Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 4
September 29	Academic Integrity Presentation
October 2	Exam Review
October 6	Exam 1
October 9-13	Race, Ethnicity, and Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 5
October 16-20	Gender and Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 3
October 23	Sexualities Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 6
October 27	Guest Lecture: Violence Prevention Lisa Smith Coordinator, Domestic Violence Department of Sexual Assault Services and Crime Victim Assistance
October 30	Exam Review
November 3	Exam 2
November 6-10	Cohabitation and Marriage Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 7
November 13-17	Work and Families Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 8

November 20-24 **Children and Parents**
Reading: Cherlin textbook: Chapter 9

November 25 **Switch Day – no class**
November 27 No Class

December 1- 8 **Catch-up, Special Topic, and/or Exam Review**

December 22 (9am – 10am) Exam 3

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