



GENDER, SOCIETY, & POLITICS

Course # GST 3303-001, SOC 3354-001 (cross-listed)—Spring 2013

Course Meetings: MW 4-5:15 p.m.

Classroom: Hoblitzelle Hall 2.502

Professor Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Jillian M. Duquaine-Watson

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays—Noon to 2:00 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays—11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
and by appointment (schedule via email)

Course Description

This course addresses the ways gender—coupled with race, class, sexuality, and other social identities— intersects with social, political, and economic institutions. We will focus specifically on the gendered, social, and political dimensions of **the family** in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Doing so will enable us to explore more traditional notions of rights and citizenship as conceptual underpinnings for contemporary political and legal debates. We will also investigate how families are defined, normalized, coerced, limited, promoted, excluded, embraced, “othered,” controlled, influenced, and manipulated through social interactions, legislation, politics (including both “formal” politics as well as social movements), commerce, and diverse media sources. Ultimately, we will challenge the notion that family is somehow “natural” and, instead, demonstrate that American families are socially (and historically) constructed, a product of gender, social institutions, and political forces.

NOTE: This is a discussion-intensive course in which all members of our learning community are expected to be prepared, engaged learners who contribute significantly to our collective-learning process. While course sessions will include lecture from time-to-time, the majority of our class sessions will be “seminar” style and involve discussion, debate, and dialogue about key themes from the readings and the application of those themes to contemporary society, including its gendered and political dimensions.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Distinguish between individual and institutional concepts of family;
2. Explain how family is shaped by race, class, sexuality, religion, and other social identities;
3. Compare and contrast various historical periods, particularly as they relate to gender, politics, and social identities/roles within families;
4. Compare and contrast family in various global contexts;
5. Identify and explain key pieces of legislation as they pertain to family;
6. Identify and explain key judicial decisions as they pertain to family;
7. Explain the gendered dimensions of contemporary political debates as they pertain to family, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Students will also be provided with opportunities to enhance their skills in the following areas:

1. Critical thinking and analysis;
2. Written communication (both formal and informal);
3. Oral communication (both formal and informal);
4. Academic research.

Required Textbooks and Materials

The following books are required for this course. They are available for purchase at the UTD bookstore. You may also be able to find copies (used or new) via various online sources.

- Stephanie Coontz, ed. *American Families: A Multicultural Reader*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 1998. (referred to as AMFR in course calendar)
- Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas. *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women put Motherhood before Marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Emily W. Kane. *The Gender Trap: The Pitfalls of Raising Boys and Girls*. New York: NYU Press, 2012.

In addition to the above texts, there are a variety of journal articles, books chapters, and other required readings for this course. These are available on the course eLearning site in a folder marked “Readings” that appears under the learning modules tab.

Although not required, it is suggested that you have a **USB drive** or some other reliable method of saving the work you produce for this course.

Assignments & Grading Policy

Your final grade in this course will reflect your performance on the following:

Attendance (100 points): Attendance is important to your success in this course. Material will be covered in class that cannot be replicated through Powerpoints, readings, or other methods of teaching/learning. Thus, attendance will be taken every day at the beginning of class. You should strive for perfect attendance and miss class only in rare and unavoidable circumstances. Work assigned for this class carries no less priority than work you may have to complete for any other class or your job. If you miss a class because of illness, major religious observances, family emergency, or excused university activities, it is your responsibility to notify me in advance and provide official documentation. If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for finding out all assignments, content, activities, and changes in due dates covered in class. Your final attendance grade will reflect the percent of total courses you attend during the semester—in other words, if you attend 75% of our class sessions, your final attendance grade will be 75 points.

Participation (100 points): I do not believe in “passive” learning. Thus, I expect students enrolled in my classes to be fully engaged during class sessions. Class participation is a vital part of the learning process in this course, particularly as this class revolves around discussion and interactive group activities. It will be very difficult to do well in this course if you fail to participate actively. Individuals who fail to participate in an active, engaged manner will earn a low participation grade as will those who dominate discussion to the point that other voices and viewpoints are silenced.

Participation takes various forms in the classroom, including:

- summarizing key points from the assigned material
- offering comments and observations
- asking questions about points you do not fully understand or wish to contest/critique
- making connections between various readings
- offering alternative explanations and perspectives
- drawing on your experiences (as appropriate—remember, this is REsearch, not MEsearch)
- participating in small group activities
- being an attentive listener
- respecting the viewpoints and beliefs of others.

Although I prefer it when individuals participate voluntarily, I will not hesitate to call on students at random (as a means of augmenting and diversifying our discussion). Students who are called on may offer their ideas or opinions, may

expand upon a previous comment, or may provide an example (when appropriate). You also have the option to “pass” when I call on you; however, you should be aware that if you develop a pattern of doing so, I will question your level of preparedness for class and your participation grade will suffer.

Exams (300 points): You will complete three exams in this course. Each is worth 100 points. All exams are “closed book” meaning that you may NOT use any books, journal articles, notes, or any other materials during exams. Exams will take place in class.

My approach to exams is fairly simple. I do not believe there is anything to be gained from exams that attempt to “trick” or “confuse” students. Neither do I believe there are any benefits to “curving” exams or designing them in an effort to achieve a “standard grade distribution” wherein the majority of students are assigned the grade of “C” and the remaining students fall fairly evenly on either side of the distribution. Instead, I regard exams as an opportunity for each student to demonstrate his or her understanding of course materials and concepts. If you keep up with course readings and assignments, take appropriate notes, maintain active participation, and devote an appropriate amount of time and effort to preparing, you will likely find the exams an enjoyable experience and do well on them.

Group Presentation and Discussion (200 points): Working in small groups, you will conduct a semester-long research project that focuses on “the family”—including its gendered, social, and political dimensions—in one of the following countries:

- Costa Rica
- Afghanistan
- India
- Kenya
- Thailand
- China

Your research will culminate in a 45-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute discussion with the entire class. I will provide further details about this assignment throughout the semester and we will have several class sessions that are devoted to “small group work time” (either the entire class session or a portion of the class session).

NOTE #1: The points value of this assignment is significant—be sure to devote the appropriate amount of time and attention to this project. Also, I have no tolerance for “dysfunction” or “slacking” when it comes to group assignments. Therefore, anyone who fails to contribute their fair share will be referred to the UTD Office of Judicial Affairs for Scholastic Dishonesty and may receive a zero on this assignment.

Note #2: I am available to support your group. This means I can point you in the direction of resources, give you advice about how best to organize your presentation, and help with “problem-solving.”

Points and Grading Scale

There are 700 points possible in this course as determined by the following assignments:

- Attendance (100 points)
- Participation (100 points)
- Group project/presentation (200 points)
- Exams (300 points)

Final course grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

| <u>Points</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|---------------|--------------|
| 630 – 700 | A range |
| 560 – 629 | B range |
| 490 – 559 | C range |
| 420 -489 | D range |
| 419 and below | F |

NOTE: grades of + and – will be assigned as per UTD grading guidelines

Course & Instructor Policies

Late Work

Deadlines are important in the academic world. Missed deadlines cause delays and administrative headaches. In the professional world, they can also compromise professional reputations and careers. For these reasons, late or incomplete work is not acceptable in this course. Technological problems are not valid excuses for late work, so plan accordingly.

Extra Credit

I do not curve individual items, nor do I offer “extra credit” work or “special consideration” to allow students a chance to raise their grade.

Classroom Citizenship

All members of our classroom learning community are expected to communicate in a civil and professional manner. Disagreement is acceptable (and even expected in college-level courses); disrespect, however, has no place in this or any classroom.

Technology Requirements

The course is taught using eLearning, and you should develop the habit of checking both eLearning and your UTD email often for assignments and announcements. Reliable and frequent internet connectivity is indispensable. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to the course through eLearning for the duration of the semester. Failure to check UTD or eLearning email, errors in forwarding email, and email bounced from over-quota mailboxes are not acceptable excuses for missing course-related emails or announcements. Additionally, to protect your privacy rights, I will only send email through your official UTD email address or eLearning email. If you choose, you can redirect both of these addresses to external addresses.

Classroom and Equipment Use Policies

• **No laptops, cell phones, pagers, or other electronic messaging services may be used in the classroom.** In my experience, these devices do nothing to enhance the learning experience; on the contrary, they pose a significant distraction to both users and those in the vicinity. If you cannot comply with this policy, I suggest you find another course that is better suited to your needs. **If you use these devices in my classroom, I will pursue sanctions through the UTD Dean of Students Office and you may be dropped from the class without refund.**

A Note for Students who are Parents

If circumstances arise that necessitate your absence from class—such as the illness of your child, the closing of your child’s daycare center due to inclement weather, etc.—please contact me as soon as possible so we make arrangement to keep you up-to-date with course material and activities.

For information about UTD academic policies, including student conduct and discipline, incomplete grading policy, and similar matters, please visit:

<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

We will make every effort to maintain the following schedule. However, adjustments may need to be made in the event of adverse weather or similar situations. Please check the course eLearning site for any changes to our schedule of activities.

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Week 1

Monday, January 14

Introduction to course, requirements, expectations...and one another

Wednesday, January 16

Readings:

- Fineman, “Our Sacred Institution: The Ideal of the Family in American Law and Society” (pp. 387+, eLearning)

Week 2

Monday, January 21

MLK, Jr. Holiday—No class

Wednesday, January 23

Readings:

- Holstein and Gubrium, “What is Family? Further thoughts on a Social Constructionist Approach” (pp. 3-20, eLearning)

GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT—form groups/sign up for topics

II. FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP: FAITH, FAMILY, and FREEDOM

Week 3

Monday, January 28

Readings:

- Trattner, “Chapter 2: Colonial America” (pp. 15-29, eLearning)
- Mintz and Kellogg, “Chapter 1: The Godly Family in New England and its Transformation” (pp. 1-24, eLearning)

Wednesday, January 30

Readings:

- Trattner, “Chapter 3: The Era of the American Revolution” (pp. 30-46, eLearning)
- Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An American Perspective” (pp. 187-205, eLearning)

Week 4

Monday, February 4

- **EXAM #1 (in class)**

Wednesday, February 6

GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT--training session with research librarian

III. AMERICAN FAMILIES: DIVERSE AND UNEQUAL

Week 5

Monday, February 11

Readings:

- Thornton Dill, “Chapter 1: Fictive Kin, Paper Sons, and Compadrazgo” (pp. 25-38 in AFMR)
- Wallace Adams, “Ch. 2: Education for Extinction” (pp. 39-58 in AFMR)

Wednesday, February 13

Readings:

- Jones, “Ch. 3: Born a Child of Freedom, Yet a Slave” (pp. 59-80 in AFMR)
- Mellinger, “Postcards from the Edge of the Color Line: Images of African-American in Popular Culture, 1893-1917” (pp. 413-433, eLearning)

Week 6

Monday, February 18

In-Class Viewing and Discussion—“Visualizing Otherness”

Wednesday, February 20

Readings:

- Nakano Glenn, “Ch. 4: Split Household, Small Producer, and Dual Wage Earner” (pp. 81-95 in AFMR)
- Mintz, “Ch. 5: Huck’s Raft, Laboring Children” (pp. 96-106 in AFMR)

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Week 7 Monday, February 25

Readings:

- Moran, “Ch. 7: Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race & Romance” (pp. 126-145 in AFMR)

Wednesday, February 27

Readings:

- Solinger, “Race, Class, and Reproductive Politics in American History” (pp. 146-152 in AFMR)

Week 8 Monday, March 4

EXAM #2

Wednesday, March 6

GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT—work time, meetings with instructor

March 11 & 13—Spring Break, No Class

THE POLITICS OF SINGLE MOTHERHOOD

Week 9 Monday, March 18

Readings:

- Duquaine-Watson, “Pretty Darned Cold: Single Mother Students and the Community College Climate in Post-Welfare Reform America” (pp. 229-240, eLearning)

Wednesday, March 20

Readings:

- Raley, “Ch. 23: Avenue to Adulthood” (pp. 338-350 in AFMR)
- Williams, “Race, Rat Bites, and Unfit Mothers: How Media Discourse Informs Welfare Legislation Debate” (pp. 1159-, eLearning)

Week 10 Monday, March 25

Readings:

- Edin and Lein, *Promises I Can Keep*
 - “Chapter 1: Before We Had a Baby”
 - “Chapter 2: When I Got Pregnant”

Wednesday, March 27

Readings:

- Edin and Lein, *Promises I Can Keep*:
 - “Chapter 3: “How Does the Dream Die?””
 - “Chapter 4: What Marriage Means”

SMALL GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT: “check in,” last 30 minutes of class

Week 11 Monday, April 1

Readings:

- Edin and Lein, *Promises I Can Keep*:
 - “Chapter 5: Labor of Love”
 - “Chapter 6: How Motherhood Changed my Life”

Wednesday, April 3

Video Viewing and Discussion: Episodes of “Teen Mom”

GENDER AND PARENTING (Or, is it possible to avoid the “gender traps”?)

Week 12

Monday, April 8

Readings:

- Kane, *The Gender Trap*:
 - Introduction, “Glamour Babies and Little Toughies”
 - Chapter 1: “Wanting a Boy, Wanting a Girl: Conceptual Building Blocks”

Wednesday, April 10

Readings:

- Kane, *The Gender Trap*:
 - Chapter 2: “It’s in their Nature: Naturalizers”
 - Chapter 3: “I think a lot of it is us, parents and society: Cultivators”
- **SMALL GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT: “check in,” last 30 minutes of class**

Week 13

Monday, April 15

Readings:

- Kane, *The Gender Trap*:
 - Chapter 4: “You Applaud all the Other Stuff: Innovators”
 - Chapter 5: “Surviving in a Gendered Culture: Resisters”

Video Viewing and Discussion: “Clip from Toddlers and Tiaras”

Wednesday, April 17

EXAM #3

GROUP RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Week 14

Monday, April 22: Group presentation #1

Wednesday, April 24: Group presentation #2

Week 15

Monday, April 29: Group presentation #3

Wednesday, May 1: Group Presentation #4

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Friday, May 10, 2-4:45 p.m.:

- **Group presentation #5**
- **Group presentation #6**