

Course Syllabus

Course Information

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY SOCIOLOGY 3343 SPRING 2008

Professor Contact Information

(Professor's name, phone number, email, office location, office hours, other information)

INSTRUCTOR: MERYL G. NASON

OFFICE: GR 2.612

OFFICE HOURS: MWF 10:30-11:00AM and by appointment

OFFICE PHONE: (972) 883-6722

E-MAIL: Mnason@UTDallas.edu

Please Note: I do NOT Use WebCT for e-mail

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

(including required prior knowledge or skills)

While there are no pre-requisites, I assume a basic understanding of sociological perspectives and terminology. Sociology 1301—Introduction to Sociology gives students a good background.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine the institution known as the family. The course is designed to make students aware of the contemporary changes in society and the family and to encourage students to think about the many critical issues that confront the family of the twenty-first century. Topics include: gender, love, sexuality, dating, marriage, parenting, race/ethnicity, work, domestic violence, divorce, remarriage, and aging

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

1. Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the sociological perspectives on marriage and the family.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the issues in research design and research methods when studying the family.

3. Be familiar with how families are changing, including demographic characteristics, race, and ethnicity.
4. Be able to identify the basic functions of the family and understand the different forms a family can take.

Required Textbooks and Materials

The major texts for the course will be: Nijole V. Benokraitis, Marriages and Families: Changes, Choice and Constraints, 6th Edition, Prentice Hall, 2008. (required)

Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick, Families in Transition, 14th Edition, Allyn and Bacon, 2007. (required)

Themes of the Times For Marriage and Family, 2005. (required)

Suggested Course Materials

Naima Cherie Prince, Student Study Guide for Marriages and Families, 6th Edition, 2008. (recommended)
My FAMILY LAB by Prentice Hall

Assignments & Academic Calendar

(Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Exam Dates)

Week 1 Introduction and The Changing Family
1/7–1/11 Benokraitis (B): Chapters 1 and 2
Skolnick (S): Introduction, 1 and 2
Themes of the Times (T): 1, 3

Week 2 Studying Marriage and the Family
1/14-1/18 B: Chapter 2
S: 3, 6

Week 3 Racial and Ethnic Families
1/21-1/25 B: Chapters 4
S: 32, 33
T: 15
NO CLASS—MONDAY, JANUARY 21st

Week 4 1/28-2/1	Love and Loving Relationships B: Chapter 6 S: 10 PAPER #1 DUE—MONDAY, JANUARY 28th
Week 5 2/4-2/8	EXAMINATION #1 ESSAYS DUE—WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6th—11:30AM MULTIPLE CHOICE—WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6th
Week 6 2/11-2/15	Choosing Others: Dating & Mate Selection B: Chapter 8 S: 12 T: 6 EXTRA CREDIT #1 DUE—WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13th
Week 7 Arrangements 2/18-2/22	Singlehood, Cohabitation and other Nonmarital Living B: Chapter 9 S: 14 T: 17 PAPER #2 DUE—FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd
Week 8 2/25-2/29	Marriage and Communication in Intimate Relationships B: Chapter 10 S: 13, 15 T: 4, 5, 16 MIDTERM GRADES DUE—FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29th
Week 9 3/3-3/7	To Be or Not to Be a Parent: Choices and Constraints B: Chapter 11 S: 5, 19 T: 13, 14, 21
Week 10 3/10-3/14	SPRING BREAK
Week 11 3/17-3/21	EXAMINATION #2 ESSAYS DUE—WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19th—11:30AM MULTIPLE CHOICE—WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19th
Week 12 3/24-3/28	Raising Children: Promises and Pitfalls B: Chapter 12 S: 20, 21, 22, 37

T: 22, 24, 25

EXTRA CREDIT #2 DUE—WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26th

Week 13 Balancing Work and Family

3/31-4/4 B: Chapter 13

S: 24, 27, 28

T: 20

PAPER #3 DUE—FRIDAY, APRIL 4th

Week 14 Separation and Divorce

4/7-4/11 B: Chapter 15

S: 16, 17

T: 27, 28

Week 15 Remarriage and Stepfamilies

4/14-4/18 B: Chapter 16

S: 18

T: 31

PAPER #4 DUE—FRIDAY, APRIL 18th

Week 16 Families in Later Life

4/21-4/25 B: Chapter 17

T: 24, 25, 26

Week 17 Review

4/28 **LAST CLASS—MONDAY, APRIL 28th**

Week 18 **FINAL EXAM—MONDAY, MAY 5th—11AM**

5/5

Grading Policy

(including percentages for assignments, grade scale, etc.)

Grades will be determined on the basis of the following point scale:

Three Exams Each Worth 200 points	600 points
2 Short Papers each 150 pts	300 points
Class Participation	100 <u>points</u>
TOTAL POSSIBLE	1000 points

1. Exams: There will be three examinations for the class, the first, the week of FEBRUARY 4th, the second, the week of MARCH 17th, and the Final on MAY 5th. Each exam will count 20% toward the final grade.

Exams will consist of multiple choice, matching, true/false and essays unless otherwise instructed. They will cover only the material since the last exam (i.e. non-comprehensive). The essay portion will be take home.

Exam material will come from lecture and assigned readings. Any handout materials supplied by the instructor may also appear on that section's exam. Prior to the exam, a part of the class will be devoted to questions and answers as a review.

2. Research Project: There will be TWO short papers required. Each paper will be worth 15% of your grade for a total of 30%. More information will be forthcoming on the papers.
3. Participation: Class participation will be worth 10% of your grade. You should plan to attend class regularly, come prepared, and participate in class discussions.

Course & Instructor Policies

(make-up exams, extra credit, late work, special assignments, class attendance, classroom citizenship, etc.)

MAKE-UP EXAMS:

The dates of exams and other assignments are indicated on the class schedule. Only extreme and unusual physical or emotional circumstances will be considered as an excuse for not taking an exam or completing assignments by the due date, or receiving an Incomplete grade in the course. You MUST either telephone or e-mail me on the day of

an exam if you will be absent in order to discuss the possibility of a makeup. If you fail to take an exam or turn in a paper or assignment without reasonable excuse, you will receive

an "O" for that item. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day. No make-up exams will be given except in rare cases, with written documentation needed. Students who request Incomplete grades must do so in writing by the last regularly scheduled meeting of the class.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Cheating is defined as the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized

manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance,

using someone else's work for assignments as if it were your own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of the course.

Plagiarism is defined as the use of an author's work or ideas as if they were one's own without giving credit to the source, including but not limited to failure to properly acknowledge a direct quote or paraphrase. Punishment for cheating and/or plagiarism is outlined in the Scholastic Dishonesty section of the current Undergraduate catalogue. Students are expected to read and understand their rights and responsibilities under the Code.

Any student in this class accused of cheating or plagiarism will be given an automatic grade of "0" (zero) on the test or assignment and will be turned over to the appropriate college authorities for possible further disciplinary action (which could include suspension or expulsion from the college). Cheating and plagiarism are very serious offenses and will not be tolerated.

RESEARCH PROJECT

You will be required to select two short papers. The papers must be a minimum of 5 pages double spaced and 10 or 12 pt font. Each paper will be worth 15% of your grade for a total of 30%. You will be able to choose which projects you want to do; however, you may not complete a project once its due date has passed. You may choose from the following projects:

1. DUE: JANUARY 28th Cyber dating or searching for a mate online

Objective: To become more aware of the characteristics most people search for in a mate and to examine the pros and cons of Internet dating. Locate an online dating service and investigate what kinds of information one must disclose to participate, whether there are certain qualities or audiences that the site might appeal to, whether or not there is a fee involved, and what is your overall impression of the site. Which theory or theories from the textbook can be applied to this type of dating? Are some sites more "reputable" than others? How can this be determined? Sites such as <http://www.eharmony.com/core/eharmony?cmd=home> offer a "free" personality profile. Does this help in mate selection? Why or why not?

OR

"Mail Order" brides

Objective: To explore another method of mate selection and apply appropriate theories to it. Many students do not believe "mail order" bride "catalogs" exist and are stunned to see what is available online. Investigate the following or similar websites: <http://www.goodwife.com/>, or <http://www.loveme.com/>. Consider who the most likely "consumer" of

these services might be? Are there more “catalogs” available from certain countries or regions and what does this mean? Do you think relationships formed in this fashion will last? Why or why not? What theories can be applied to this method of mate selection?

2. DUE: FEBRUARY 22nd

Cross cultural wedding customs

Objective: To help students understand cross cultural ideas about wedding customs.

Investigate ONE of these websites and discuss in detail the wedding rituals associated with each culture.

Indian: http://www.weddingsutra.com/us_index.asp

Jewish: <http://www.mazornet.com/jewishcl/>

African American: <http://www.africanweddingguide.com/>

Mormon: <http://www.lds weddings.com/>

Eastern Orthodox: http://askginka.com/religions/eastern_orthodox.htm

What kinds of clothes do the participants wear and how important do these choices seem to be? What kinds of locations are popular for this tradition? Why do you think wedding traditions vary so much between cultures or do they? What aspects of the tradition you investigated are most like the one you are familiar with and what seems most different?

OR

Covenant marriage movement

Objective: To increase awareness about this current trend and to discuss what the covenant marriage movement is by investigating the following sites: (<http://www.familyfi.org/CMM.htm>, <http://www.divorcereform.org/cov.html>, <http://www.covenantmarriage.com/>) Who would most likely be drawn to it, what political implications there may be from it, and how this may effect families in the future. Consider whether or not you feel this is a solution to the rising divorce rates in the U.S.

3. DUE: APRIL 4th

Families and Work

Objective: To learn about the issues concerning families and work.

The goal of this project is to gain an understanding of how career decisions are affected by family responsibilities. You will need to interview your mother and

father about their educational backgrounds, career aspirations when they were young adults – particularly those they held prior to marriage, their work histories, and their family responsibilities. Write a 5-page paper summarizing your findings using sociological theory.

Be sure to discuss issues such as: trailing spouse, commuter marriages, two-paycheck families, dual-career marriages, the “mommy track”, the “daddy penalty”, comparable worth, gender pay gap and sexual harassment.

4. DUE: APRIL 18th

Divorce Rituals

Objective: To help students understand the function of ritual and the process of divorce

Most marriages begin by observing a number of rituals (i.e. engagement, showers, bachelor parties, rehearsal dinners and the ceremony itself). Friends and family often offer their support via these rituals. Divorce, on the other hand, is often a solitary experience. Yet, divorce often marks a new direction or experience in a person’s life. Some institutions are now encouraging “divorce rituals” to help this transition process. Investigate one or more traditions discussed at http://www.beliefnet.com/story/75/story_7560_1.html and other websites. Write a paper discussing these newer traditions. Do they help to bring closure? Why or why not?

OR

Dads and custody issues

Objective: To bring awareness to differences in gender and custody issues

Imagine that you are going through a divorce, have young children, and want custody of those children. What issues might be important to convince a judge that the father would be the best parent? Investigate resources at <http://www.fathers4kids.org/html/home.htm>
<http://www.fatherhood.org/>
<http://www.divorcesource.com/>
<http://www.parentswithoutpartners.org/>

Write a paper analyzing these sites and discussing the custody issue.

Field Trip Policies

Off-campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the

Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22

PO Box 830688

Richardson, Texas 75083-0688

(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

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