

**SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY  
SOCIOLOGY 3343  
SPRING 2013**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Carol Cirulli Lanham, PhD

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**OFFICE HOURS:**

**MW – 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

**CLASS TIME AND LOCATION:**

**MW 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

**SOM 2.115**

**COURSE PRE-REQUISITES, CO-REQUISITES AND/OR OTHER RESTRICTIONS:**

None

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

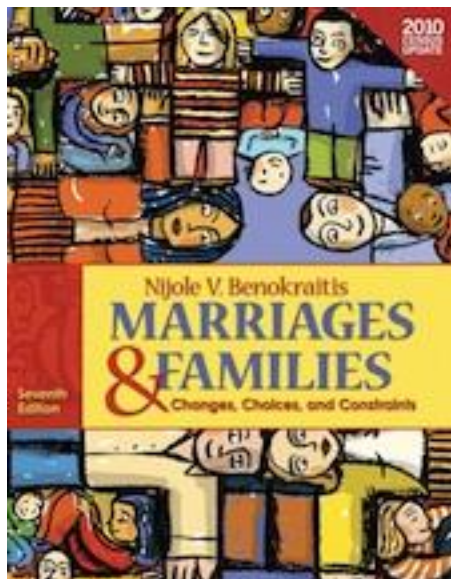
Even though we experience family life as individuals, our decisions and choices are influenced by the social environment in which they occur. In this course, we will examine the family from a sociological perspective. By using recent sociological research and other empirical data on the family, we will gain a deeper understanding of one of society's most pervasive social institutions. In the first half of the semester, we will explore what is meant by "family," and how this differs across race, class, gender and sexuality. We also will examine the diversity of family patterns over time and how they continue to evolve today. In the second half of the course, we will focus on decisions related to love, sex, relationships, marriage and parenthood. While these choices are deeply personal, they are influenced by social, cultural, historical, and even political factors. We also will discuss the complications of marriage and parenting like divorce, remarriage, and family violence.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the sociological perspective and methods of sociological inquiry.
- Identify essential theories, concepts, and research used in sociology to analyze the family.
- Think critically about the diversity of families, including how experiences are shaped by race, class, ethnicity, gender and sexual preferences.
- Analyze marriage and family norms and dynamics with a focus on how macro level factors are connected to interpersonal or micro level influences.
- Discuss causes and consequences of sociologically relevant problems within contemporary families

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:



Nijole V. Benokraitis, Marriages and Families Census Update (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Pearson, 2011

ISBN: 0205960073 (Packaged with My SOC Lab)

Also available as an [eTextbook](#) through CourseSmart.

This book is also available for [rent](#).

Additional readings will be available on library reserve or eLearning.

## CLASS FORMAT AND INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATIONS

This course will consist of lectures, discussion, student-led debates, and a variety of assignments to be completed both inside and outside of class. Completion of assigned readings is a key requirement of this course. It is important to read and become familiar with the material before coming to class so that we can discuss key ideas. Other class requirements include three exams and an 8-page research paper. Detailed instructions on the research paper will be provided in class and posted on eLearning. The exams will consist of essay, multiple choice, and/or short answer questions.

## GRADING

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Debate and Evaluations       | 15%        |
| Three exams (worth 20% each) | 60%        |
| One 8-page paper             | <u>25%</u> |
|                              | 100%       |

### Letter Grade Percentage Points

|    |        |    |       |    |       |   |              |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|---|--------------|
| A+ | 97-100 | B  | 84-86 | C- | 70-73 | F | 59 and below |
| A  | 94-96  | B- | 80-83 | D+ | 67-69 |   |              |
| A- | 90-93  | C+ | 77-79 | D  | 64-66 |   |              |
| B+ | 87-89  | C  | 74-76 | D- | 60-63 |   |              |

## **CLASS DISCUSSION**

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

This class will include extensive in-class discussions of the readings, and active participation is encouraged. However please note that we will be discussing sensitive issues that might make some students uncomfortable. We will read texts and watch movies that may explore sensitive topics such as sex, reproductive rights, and violence. While at times you may feel uncomfortable, the expectation is that you will be able to watch in-class movies and read assigned texts, and discuss them in an academic manner. Please come and see me if you have any questions, concerns, or special needs.

## **CLASS DEBATES**

Marriage and family-related topics often elicit very strong opinions. This semester, we will explore various issues in a debate format using empirical data as evidence. Debate teams made of four students (two on each side of an issue) will take part in a formal debate in front of the class on their assigned day. They then will take questions raised by the class. Students who are not assigned to debate on a particular day will complete a peer evaluation of the student-debaters. These evaluations will be turned in on the class day following the debate and will count towards your debate grade. If you are absent on a debate day, you will not be able to turn in the questions and will receive no points. More details on the debate format will follow in class.

## **RESEARCH PAPER**

Each of you will be required to complete one 8-page research paper. You will be able to choose from a variety of topics related to family, and you will also have a choice of due dates. If you choose an earlier due date, you will receive extra credit. More detailed information on the research papers will follow in a separate handout. Keep in mind that the quality of your writing will be an important component of your grade, therefore you might want to allow time to visit the UTD Writing Center for assistance. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit <http://www.utdallas.edu/GEMS/writing/index.html>

## **EXAMS**

You will have three exams with essay, multiple choice, and/or short answer questions. They will cover only the material since the last exam (i.e. non-comprehensive).

## **MAKE-UP EXAMS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

The dates of exams and due dates for other assignments are listed on the class schedule. Make-up exams will only be given for legitimate reasons (for example, illness) and with proper written documentation. If you fail to take an exam or turn in an assignment without a reasonable excuse, you will receive a "0" for that portion of the course.

## **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**.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The faculty expects a high level of responsibility and academic honesty from students. 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**

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. 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. Your research papers will be checked on **TURN IT IN**.

## **EMAIL ACCOUNT**

**Please be sure that you know how to access your UTD email account and can check it regularly.**

The university provides students with free email accounts in order to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of individuals corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. Therefore, the university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's UT Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. For help with your UTD email account, call 972-883-2911 or go to <http://www.utdallas.edu/ir/helpdesk/>

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The University of Texas at Dallas has developed a number of policies and procedures designed to provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. For UT Dallas policy related to the following go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

**Field Trip Policies**

**Student Conduct & Discipline**

**Email Use**

**Withdrawal from Class**

**Student Grievance Procedures**

**Disability Services**

**Religious**

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Please note that not all reading assignments are posted in this syllabus. Articles on current news events that relate to our topics will be posted on eLearning to supplement the list below. Also \*(R) indicates readings that are on library reserve.

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b><br><b>1/14-1/16</b> | <b>Overview of the Course</b><br><b>The Changing Family</b><br>Benokraitis, Chapter 1<br>E.J. Graff: "What is Marriage For?"  |
| <b>Week 2</b><br><b>1/21-1/23</b> | <b>Monday, January 21 – No Class – MLK Day</b><br><b>The Changing Family (continued)</b><br>Kotkin: "The Rise of Post-Familialism"  |
| <b>Week 3</b><br><b>1/28-1/30</b> | <b>Monday, January 28 – No Class – Video Lecture</b><br><b>Studying the Family</b><br>Benokraitis, Chapter 2  |
| <b>Week 4</b><br><b>2/4-2/6</b>   | <b>The Family in Historical Perspective</b><br>Benokaraitis, Chapter 3<br>Cootnz: "The Way We Weren't"<br><i>Group Debate: Three Opposing Views on the Family</i><br><i>The Family is Deteriorating</i><br><i>The Family is Changing</i><br><i>The Family is Stronger than Ever</i> |
| <b>Week 5</b><br><b>2/11-2/13</b> | <b>Romance, Love, and Loving Relationships</b><br>Benokaraitis, Chapter 6<br><i>Group Debate: Is there still a double standard for men and women when it comes to loving relationships?</i>   |
| <b>Week 6</b><br><b>2/18-2/20</b> | <b>Monday, February 18 – No Class – Video Lecture</b><br><b>Romance, Love (continued)</b><br>Laner: "Egalitarian Daters/Traditionalist Daters"<br><b>Exam 1 –Wednesday, February 20</b>   |
| <b>Week 7</b><br><b>2/25-2/27</b> | <b>Sexuality and Sexual Expression Throughout Life</b><br>Benokaraitis, Chapter 7<br><i>Group Debate: Should Texas schools teach students about safe sex?</i>   |
| <b>Week 8</b><br><b>3/4-3/6</b>   | <b>Sexuality and Sexual Expression (continued)</b><br>Bailey, "Sexual Revolutions" (R)<br>England & Thomas, "The Decline of the Date & the Rise of the College Hookup." (R)<br><i>Group Debate</i>  |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Week 9</b><br><b>3/11-3/13</b>  | <b>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>   |
| <b>Week 10</b><br><b>3/18-3/20</b> | <b>Choosing Others: Dating and Mate Selection</b><br>Benokaraitis, Chapter 8<br>Igoldsby: “Mate Selection and Marriage around the World”<br><i>Group Debate: Should couples cohabit before/instead of marrying?</i>  |
| <b>Week 11</b><br><b>3/25-3/27</b> | <b>Singlehood, Cohabitation, Civil Unions and Other Options</b><br><br><i>Group Debate: Should homosexual couples be allowed to marry?</i>   |
| <b>Week 12</b><br><b>4/1-4/3</b>   | <b>Singlehood, Cohabitation, Civil Unions and Other Options</b><br><b>Exam 2 – Wednesday, April 3</b><br><b>(Chapters 7, 8 and 9)</b>  |
| <b>Week 13</b><br><b>4/8-4/10</b>  | <b>Marriage and Communication in Intimate Relationships</b><br>Seccombe, Chapter 9<br>Bengston et al, “How Families Still Matter” (R)<br><i>Group Debate: Should parenting require a license?</i>  |
| <b>Week 14</b><br><b>4/15-4/17</b> | <b>To Be or Not to Be a Parent</b><br>Seccombe: pp. 287-292<br><b>Raising Children: Promises and Pitfalls</b><br>Seccombe: pp. 293-297<br><i>Group Debate: Is daycare bad for children?</i>  |
| <b>Week 15</b><br><b>4/22-4/24</b> | <b>Separation and Divorce</b><br>Benokaraitis, Chapter 15<br><i>Group Debate: Should it be more difficult for couples to divorce?</i>  |
| <b>Week 16</b><br><b>4/29-5/1</b>  | <b>Remarriages and Stepfamilies</b><br>Benokaraitis, Chapter 16<br>Mason, “The Modern American Stepfamily” (R)<br><i>Group Debate: Should stepparent-stepchild relationships have the same protection in law as biological parent-child relationships?</i> |
| <b>5/11</b>                        | <b>EXAM 3 –</b><br><b>(Chapters 9, 12, 13 and additional readings)</b><br><b>8 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.</b>   |

**NOTE: This schedule is tentative and may be subject to change.**