

**SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
SOCIOLOGY 3343
SPRING 2016**

INSTRUCTOR: Carol Cirulli Lanham, PhD

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OFFICE HOURS:

T – 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CLASS TIME AND LOCATION:

T TH 1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. JSOM 2.802

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 and remarriage.

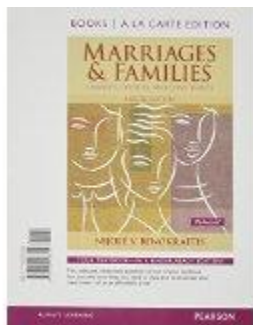
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Employ the sociological perspective and methods of sociological inquiry.
- Apply essential theories, concepts, and research used in sociology to analyze the family.
- Describe 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 MATERIALS:

TEXTBOOK



Nijole V. Benokraitis, *Marriages and Families* (8th Edition)
Pearson, 2015 (My SOC Lab not required)
ISBN: 978-0205918195

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

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

Additional readings will be available on library reserve or eLearning.

CLICKER:

Students are expected to have a clicker by Week 2 and bring it to every lecture session for the duration of the semester. A clicker is an audience response device that resembles a small calculator. This allows you to provide real-time feedback to your instructor during class. Class summary results are displayed graphically, providing students and the instructor a gauge as to how well the class is grasping the material as well as providing documentation of attendance and class participation. You will use the clicker in class to take course-relevant quizzes and evaluate the debates. You can rent or purchase (and sell back) your clicker at the UT Dallas Bookstore or Off Campus Books.

CLASS FORMAT AND INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATIONS

This course will consist of lectures, quizzes, 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

Class citizenship	5%
Quizzes (via clickers)	15%
Three exams (worth 15% each)	45%
Debate	10%
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

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 videos that may explore sensitive topics. The expectation is that you will be able to watch videos 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 to six students (two or three on each side of an issue) will take part in a formal debate in front of the class on their assigned day. 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. 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>

QUIZZES AND EXAMS

Quiz questions will be incorporated into the lecture, and your grade for that portion of the course will be calculated based on your clicker responses. You also 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

Reading assignments listed below are from the textbook or posted on eLearning or library reserve. Required readings for in-class quizzes will be announced in advance. 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.

Week 1 1/12-1/14	Overview of the Course The Changing Family Benokraitis, Chapter 1 Angier: “The Changing American Family”
Week 2 1/19-1/21	Studying the Family Benokraitis, Chapter 2 Golder & Macy: “Digital Footprints: Opportunities and Challenges for Online Social Research”
Week 3 1/26 -1/28	The Family in Historical Perspective Benokraitis, Chapter 3 Cootnz: “The Way We Weren’t”
Week 4 2/2-2/4	The Family in Historical Perspective (cont.) <i>Group Debate: Are “family values” outdated?</i> Racial and Ethnic Families: Strengths and Stresses Benokraitis, Chapter 4 Cohen et al. “Moynihan’s Half Century: Have We Gone to Hell in a Hand Basket?” (pgs 5-18)
Week 5 2/9-2/11	Racial and Ethnic Families: Strengths and Stresses (cont.) <i>Group Debate: Should marriages be arranged?</i> Exam 1 –Thursday, February 11 Chapters 1, 2, 3 4 and additional readings
Week 6 2/16-2/18	Love and Loving Relationships Benokraitis, Chapter 6 Jackson: “Even Sociologists Fall in Love”
Week 7 2/23-2/25	Love and Loving Relationships (cont.) <i>Group Debate: Is social media ruining love?</i> Sexuality and Sexual Expression Throughout Life Benokraitis, Chapter 7 Ogras & Gaddam: “A Billion Wicked Thoughts”

- Week 8**
3/1-3/3
Sexuality and Sexual Expression Throughout Life (cont.)
Group Debate: Should schools teach students about safe sex?
Choosing Others: Dating and Mate Selection
Benokraitis, Chapter 8
Smith & Duggan: “Online Dating and Relationships”
- Week 9**
3/8-3/10
Choosing Others: Dating and Mate Selection (cont.)
Group Debate: Online dating: yay or nay?
- Week 10**
NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- Week 11**
3/22-3/24
Singlehood, Cohabitation, Civil Unions and Other Options
Benokraitis, Chapter 9
Klinenberg: “Going Solo”
- Week 12**
3/29-3/1
Singlehood, Cohabitation, Civil Unions and Other Options (cont.)
Group Debate: Should couples cohabit before/instead of marrying?
Exam 2 – Thursday, March 31
(Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and additional readings)
- Week 13**
4/5-4/7
Marriage and Communication in Intimate Relationship
Benokraitis, Chapter 10
Williams: “Promoting Marriage Among Single Mothers”
Group Debate: Is it better to be married than single?
- Week 14**
4/12-4/14
To Be or Not to Be a Parent
Benokraitis: Chapter 11 (pp. 311-331)
Raising Children: Promises and Pitfalls
Benokraitis, Chapter 12
Group Debate: Should limits be placed on reproductive technology?
- Week 15**
4/19-4/21
Balancing Work and Family Life
Benokraitis, Chapter 13
Harrington et al: “The New Dad: A Portrait of Today’s Father”
Group Debate: Should mothers stay home and raise their children?
- Week 15**
4/26-4/28
Separation, Divorce, Remarriage and Stepfamilies
Benokraitis, Chapter 15
Manning: “Remarriage in the United States”
Group Debate: Should it be more difficult for couples to divorce?
- Week 16**
EXAM 3
(Chapters 11, 12, 13, 15, and additional readings)
Time, date and location to be announced.

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