

Course Syllabus

Course Information

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY SOCIOLOGY 3343 SPRING 2007

Professor Contact Information

INSTRUCTOR: MERYL G. NASON

OFFICE: GR 3.516

OFFICE HOURS: T 5:00 - 5:30 PM, R 2:00-2:30 and by appointment

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

This course has no pre-requisites or co-requisites. There is a need, however, for good writing skills as each exam has an essay component as well as a required research project. There is an assumption that the student has a basic knowledge of sociological concepts.

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, 5th Edition, Prentice Hall, 2005.

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

Themes of the Times For Marriage and Family, 2005.

Suggested Course Materials

Naima Cherie Brown, Study Guide for Marriages and Families, 5th Edition, 2005. (recommended)

Assignments & Academic Calendar**RESEARCH PROJECT**

You will be required to select two short papers. The papers must be a minimum of 5 pages. 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: FEBRUARY 1st**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: MARCH 1st

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: MARCH 29th

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: 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 19th

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.

Week 1 1/11	INTRODUCTION
Week 2 1/18	The Changing Family and Studying Marriage and the Family Benokraitis (B): Chapters 1 and 2 Skolnick (S): Introduction, 1 and 2 Themes of the Times (T): 1, 3
Week 3 1/25	The Family in Historical Perspective and Racial and Ethnic Families B: Chapters 3 and 4 S: 4, 6, 32, 33 T: 15
Week 4 2/1	Love and Loving Relationships and Dating and Mate Selection B: Chapters 6 and 8 S: 12 T: 6 PAPER #1 DUE
Week 5 2/8	Singlehood, Cohabitation and other Nonmarital Living Arrangements B: Chapter 9 S: 14 T: 17
Week 6 2/15	Marriage and Communication in Intimate Relationships B: Chapter 10 S: 13, 15 T: 17
Week 7 2/22	MIDTERM Essays Due—2:30PM To Be or Not to Be a Parent: Choices and Constraints B: Chapter 11 S: 5, 19 T: 13, 14, 21
Week 8 3/1	Raising Children: Prospects and Pitfalls B: Chapter 12 S: 20, 22, 37 T: 22, 24, 25 PAPER #2 DUE
Week 9 3/8	SPRING BREAK

Week 10 3/15	Guest Speaker
Week 11 3/22	Families and Work B: Chapter 13 S: 24, 27, 28 T: 20
Week 12 3/29	Family Violence and other Crisis-Related Issues B: Chapter 14 S: 38 T: 29, 30, 33 PAPER #3 DUE
Week 13 4/5	Separation and Divorce B: Chapter 15 S: 16, 17 T: 27, 28
Week 14 4/12	Remarriage and Stepfamilies: Life After Divorce B: Chapter 16 S: 18 T: 31
Week 15 4/19	Aging and Family Life, The Family in the 21 st Century B: Chapters 17 and 18 S: 31 T: 9, 26
Week 15-continued	PAPER #4 DUE
Week 16 4/26	FINAL

This schedule is tentative and will be modified as necessitated by class discussions and outside speakers.

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Grading Policy

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

Midterm	300 points
Final	300 points
2 Short Papers each 150 pts	300 points
Class Participation	100 <u>points</u>

TOTAL POSSIBLE

1000 points

1. Exams: There will be two examinations for the class, the Midterm on FEBRUARY 22, and the Final on APRIL 26. Each exam will count 30% 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

The format will be lecture/discussion with the addition of visiting speakers and films. The instructor of this course makes several assumptions about the students enrolled in this course. As a student in this course, you will be expected to:

1. Attend class on a regular basis.

2. Be prepared for class (i.e., have a writing instrument and paper in your possession; have read the assigned materials prior to class).

3. Participate in class. Students are expected to actively participate and will be assigned a grade for participation (10% of final grade). If something is covered in lecture or in the text or readings which you do not understand, ASK A QUESTION (chances are at least one or more of your colleagues will have the same or similar question). You will be held responsible for the assigned materials on the examinations, so it is in your best interest to ask questions.

4. Be present and prepared for all examinations. The term "prepared" in this context means not only having studied the materials you are to be tested on and showing up at the appropriate time, but also having a BLUE BOOK, SCANTRON, and a Blue or Black Pen in your possession on the day of the exam.

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 "0" 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.

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.