

SOCL 220: Marriage & Family Summer 2017: May 15 – June 9

Contact Information:

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*This course fulfills the Colonnade Connections: Social & Cultural hours.

Course Description

The sociology of families is deceptively hard to study. The topic of family is familiar, as most everyone spends time in a family. Because of this familiarity, the family may seem easy to study – you can call on their own personal experiences and personal knowledge of this subject. To be sure, your insight into the social forces that shape your personal experiences of family is a worthwhile objective. However, this familiarity may fog ideas and perceptions of the family. It is therefore important to draw on personal experiences of the family as a beginning point only. As a class, a sociological lens through which we will ultimately understand the family, as a larger social concept, will be developed. We will evaluate families as both public and private institutions full of diversity.

As young scholars, we will initially approach this course from an elementary level. However, by the end of the semester, you will be able to

- define “family,” and describe the implications of such a definition;
- explain the historical context from which the family has evolved;
- describe the major demographic processes of the American family & justify why they are important; &
- analyze families and family processes from a sociological perspective.

Course Policies

Respect:

The climate of this class should be open, warm, and professional. Every student is to show respect for me and their classmates at all times. Everyone is entitled to ask as many questions as necessary to understand the material. There are no stupid or silly questions. The discussion board questions may spark some controversy. You are entitled to your opinion and to disagree with each other but please do so in a professional, respectful manner. Remember to always use course material or supplementary material to support your opinions. Personal information may be used as examples so we should all maintain professionalism and confidentiality. No racist, homophobic, sexist, or other alienating comments will be tolerated.

Technological professionalism:

You are required to check any assignments that you upload to BB to make sure that it uploaded correctly. Corrupt files will result in a zero for the assignment. Additionally, if you claim to have a technology problem during an exam or when an assignment is due, I will check with IT to see if BB had any issues and check whether you were logged in.

You are responsible for all of your work online. While I recognize that there are problems with technology at times, you need to make sure that these problems are minimized by using a reliable computer and internet service, having all required software and checking that it is updated, and completing work early to avoid these issues.

Communication Policy:

I recommend that you ask questions that may pertain to everyone (e.g., clarification on an assignment) through the designated discussion board Questions about the Course. I will respond to questions within 48 hours during the week (questions posted after noon on Fridays may not receive a response until Monday). I recommend that you check that discussion board to see if another student may have already asked a similar question and received a response. For individual or personal question, please send an email. The same time frame for expected responses applies.

Note about Email:

Please send proper emails. Make sure to put "SOCL 220" or "Marriage & Family" in the subject line and to include your full name in the text. Also, use proper capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Emails should come from a wku.edu address (emails from other accounts will not be opened).

Writing Guidelines for Typed Work:

I will only accept work through BlackBoard. All papers are to be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, and with one inch margins. You must have page numbers. **Papers that do not follow this format will be docked points!!!!** Grammar, spelling, and punctuation count; points will be deducted for more than a few errors. I strongly encourage you to consult the Writing Center or the Learning Center for help on improving your work.

Assignment Late Policy:

One part of being responsible students and employees is being able to meet deadlines; therefore, all assignments are expected to be turned in on time. However, if for any reason you have to turn in an assignment late, you will be docked a half letter grade for every **day** that it is late (this includes weekend days). No assignment will be accepted after seven days or after it has been graded for other students. If there is a problem or a situation presents itself, please let me know before the assignment is due.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

The academic dishonesty policy prohibits cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. I take academic dishonesty VERY, VERY seriously. Students who violate this policy will automatically receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to their academic dean for disciplinary action.

From the Office for Student Disability Services:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by

phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

The Learning Center (TLC):

Should you require academic assistance with your WKU courses, [The Learning Center](#) (located in the Downing University Center, A330) provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. TLC @ DUC offers certified, one-on-one tutoring in over 200 subjects and eight academic skill areas by appointment or walk in. Online tutoring is offered to distance learners. TLC is also a quiet study area (with side rooms designated for peer-to-peer tutoring) and offers a thirty-two machine Dell computer lab to complete academic coursework. Additionally, TLC has three satellite locations. Each satellite location is a quiet study center and is equipped with a small computer lab. These satellite locations are located in Douglas Keen Hall, McCormack Hall, and Pearce Ford Tower. Please call TLC @ DUC at (270) 745-6254 for more information or to schedule a tutoring appointment. [TLC website](#)

WKU QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan):

Our theme is "Evidence and Argument." As such, please be sure to read and be prepared for discussions and use evidence to make your arguments.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement:

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

Required Text and Materials

Technology:

You are required to have your own computer for this course. You need to be able to access the course on a regular basis and will need to be on the computer to do work for extended periods of time, therefore, using another person's computer or a publically available (e.g., library) may not allow you the time and flexibility for reliable access to the course or to programs needed to do work. There are also a number of software programs you may need to download, which you may not be able to do on someone else's computer or a public computer.

- You are **required** to have a word processing program. I suggest Microsoft Word but other programs may work as well.
- If you do not have Microsoft Office, I **require** you to download the readers for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint at the WKU IT website for free. Also download Adobe Reader for free.
- Log into BB and click on IT Training. If you have not already done so, please complete the BlackBoard Student Training on the left. This will help you learn how to navigate BB so that you feel more comfortable using BB.
- For your course project, you will need to use the program MediaSite. **A webcam and microphone are required.** You do not need to download anything as it is a plugin in BB. Click on MediaSite Campus at the top of your BB screen to go there. Go to the IT Training page and watch the tutorial on how to use MediaSite.

Textbooks:

There are two required textbooks for this course, available for purchase at the WKU Bookstore:

Cherlin, A. (2013). *Public and Private Families: An Introduction 7th Edition*. McGraw-Hill: New York, NY. (C)

Risman, B. (2010). *Families as They Really Are*. W.W. Norton Company. (R)

*This book is in a second edition – please be sure you get the first edition!

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard in the folder for that unit (see schedule) (BB).

Course Requirements

Exams (15% each X 3 = 45% total)

The class will consist of three examinations. Each exam will predominately cover material from the readings, however, questions may be drawn from supplemental materials such as videos. All exams will consist of multiple choice questions. *In order to take the examinations, you must close every program on your computer and then open the Lockdown Browser. You may then log into Blackboard from the Lockdown Browser and take the exam.*

Exams will need to be completed by a certain time (as per the schedule). To avoid any issues (illness, technological, family emergencies), please complete the exams as early as you feel comfortable doing so once they become available. Students who know that they will miss an exam due an excused “absence” are required to contact me *before* the scheduled exam date via email. A make-up exam will ONLY be given if permission has been granted PRIOR to exam time. If you are ill, you must send me an email prior to the exam time to request a make-up exam. You must schedule a make-up exam as soon as possible, and be aware that your exam will be different from that of the other students. At my discretion, an additional assignment may be required for students who miss an exam. If you have missed an exam due to an unexcused absence or you have failed to contact me prior to the scheduled exam date, you will not be eligible for a make-up.

Family Research Project (25%)

You will research and present on a family-related SOCIOLOGICAL topic (a topic that we have NOT discussed in class). You will need to sign up for a topic on BlackBoard. *Only one person will work on each topic so please sign up as soon as possible.* To complete this project, you will

- research the chosen topic – for example, the history of the topic, the current issues/problems related to the topic, the policies surrounding the topic, and other such subtopics
- *prepare a brochure* on your topic to be posted to Blackboard
- *present your research* to the class by recording an uploading a video presentation using Mediasite
- *watch your classmates’ videos and view their brochures and respond to at least five.*

*Please see the full guidelines and other valuable information in the Project tab on BlackBoard.

Weekly Discussion Board Posts (20%)

Every week, we will cover 3 to 4 topics for which you will be assigned readings from Cherlin (C), Risman (R), and/or articles posted to Blackboard (BB). Once you have read all the readings for the week, you are to post to the discussion board the most interesting or surprising thing you learned. You may also use the space to ask about something you did not understand. These posts should be well thought out and demonstrate that you have read the course material and are making connections between the readings. If you ask a question, it should show that you have thought about it and explain why you do not understand. Writing here should be clear yet concise, thus posts should be between 150-200 words. You MUST include a word count at the end of the post. Please view the rubric on BB so that you know what I will be looking for when grading these posts. Only after your original post can you view your classmates’ posts. I encourage you to post before Thursday at midnight to give your classmates’ time to respond to you and for you to respond to them. Responses to your classmates’ posts will be graded in the Active Participation category below.

Active Participation (10%)

The active participation grade will be calculated by your active involvement in

discussions. Grades are based on participation on the discussion board and will be graded on **quantity** and **quality** of comments. Thus, grades will be based on participation in the weekly discussions by questions and comments to classmates on their posts, ability to answer *and* ask questions on the Questions about the Course discussion board, and commenting on more than five classmates' final projects. ***Note that each discussion board comment will not be graded individually*** – I will consider all responses to classmates and other ungraded posts in this category. As a suggestion, to gain maximum points in this category, thoughtfully respond to 2-3 classmates' posts per week. One or two word comments (such as 'cool' or 'I agree') will not count.

Weight of the Course Requirements:

Exams (3 X 15%)	45%
Family Research Project	25%
Weekly Discussion Board Posts	20%
Active Participation	10%
Total	100%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Reading	Tasks and Due Dates
1 May 15 – May 21	Course Introduction	Syllabus Watch Welcome Video Review all content on the First Day tab	<i>Syllabus Quiz and My Family Blog</i> – Due by Wednesday at noon (you cannot access the rest of the course until these are completed!) <i>Weekly Discussion Board Post</i> – Due by Thursday midnight <i>Topic preference for project</i> – Due Friday by noon – sign-up on BB in the Project tab <i>Exam 1</i> – available Friday 12am – Sunday at 11:59pm
	Introduction to Studying Families	(C) Intro, Ch. 1 (R) 1, 2, 3, 4, <i>Not Much Sense in those Census Stories</i> (p. 24), 8	
	History of the Family	(C) Ch. 2 (BB) The Way We Never Were (R) 5, 6, In the New: A “Golden Age” of Childhood? (p. 59), In the News: How We Took the Child Out of Childhood (p. 61)	
	Cohabitation and Marriage	(C) Ch. 7 (R) 12, 13, 15 (BB) Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006; Manning & Cohen, 2012	
2 May 22 – May 28	Divorce	(C) Ch. 12 (R) 16, In the News: “How to Stay Married” (pg. 170), Briefing Paper: “The Impact of Divorce on Children’s Behavior Problems” by Li (pg. 173), In the News: “Divorce May Not Cause Kid’s Bad Behavior” (pg. 178), In the News: “The Good, Bad, and Ugly of Divorce” (pg. 180)	<i>Weekly Discussion Board Post</i> – Due by Thursday midnight <i>Exam 2</i> – available Friday 12am – Sunday at 11:59pm
	Step Families	(C) Ch. 13 (BB) Brown & Manning, 2009; Sweeney, 2010	
	Social Class and Families	(C) Ch. 4 (R) 23, 25, 26, 28, 19, In the News: Both Sides of Inequality (p. 299), In the News: Book Examines Trends of Unmarried Parents (p. 321)	
	Race/Ethnicity and Families	(C) Ch. 5 (R) 7, 10, 11, In the News: Interracial Marriage A Cultural Taboo Fades (p. 115) (BB) Crowder & Tolnay, 2000	
3 May 29 – June 4	Work and Families	(C) Ch. 8 (R) 33, 34, In the News: Chores for Two? (p. 406), 36, In the News: Working Moms More the Norm than Exception (p. 425)	<i>Weekly Discussion Board Post</i> – Due by Thursday midnight <i>MediaSite Practice Video</i> – Due by Friday at midnight -Watch and comment on at least 2 classmates’ videos by Sunday at midnight. <i>Exam 3</i> – available Friday 12am – Sunday at 11:59pm
	Gender and Families	(C) Ch. 3 (BB) “Doing Gender” by West and Zimmerman (R) 30, 31, 37, 38, In the News: Matrimonial Bliss Lies in the Mop Bucket & Broom (p. 433)	
	Sexualities	(C) Ch. 6 (R) 9, 20, 21, Fact Sheet: Myths & Realities about Same-Sex Families (p. 228) (BB) Amicus Brief – Same Sex Marriage	

4 June 3 – June 9	Project		<i>Brochure and MediaSite Video Presentation</i> - Uploaded by Wednesday at noon <i>View all classmates' video presentations and post comments to at least FIVE students in the discussion board</i> – Due by Friday at 5pm
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