

Department of Sociology
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
DATING, MARRIAGE, AND FAMILY
Fall 2009

Course Information:

Course Number:	SOCI 208	Lecture Times:	M, W 12:30-1:45 pm
Credits:	3 Hours	Lecture Room:	Mather Memorial 225
Prerequisites:	None		

Contact Information:

Instructor:	Professor David Warner	TA:	Sara Kennedy
Office:	Mather Memorial 223C	Email:	sara.e.kennedy@case.edu
Phone:	216.368.2697	Office Hours:	M 2:00- 4:00 pm (held in the Sociology Library, 2 nd Fl. Mather Memorial)
E-mail:	david.warner@case.edu		
Office Hours:	W 10:00-11:15 am and by appointment		

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The family has long been considered the bedrock of all social organizations, the primary and enduring institution. Yet, there is growing concern over "the decline of the family" as telling of the decline of society. Some argue that growing individualism is undermining a once stable component of human existence. Others counter that the family is not in decline, but that it is in transition. This contemporary debate will guide us in our examination of the family.

In this course, we will learn about the functions of the family and the diverse forms that it has taken over time and across different groups. As early socialization and care-giving usually take place within this institution, many of our ideas about the world are closely tied to our families. However, by examining the family from a sociological perspective, including studying national family trends in the United States, we will see how the family institution is connected to larger social factors like race, gender and social class. At the end of the course, students will be able to provide empirically based answers to the question: "Is the modern family in decline?"

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students successfully completing this course will:

- Describe the role of the family institution in society currently and in the past;
- Understand that the family institution functions as a vehicle of socialization, economic exchange, social norms and social support affecting our personalities, attitudes, values and life choices;
- Understand and describe how social trends and forces, such as population composition, economic restructuring, political change and public policy, affect the family institution as well as individuals, both historically and contemporarily;
- Be familiar with the empirical methods of family sociologists, including how data are gathered and interpreted;
- Critically evaluate the issues surrounding the family decline/transition debate and apply those perspectives to discussion of policy initiatives and implications.

COURSE FORMAT:

As an introduction to family sociology, this course is primarily lecture based. However, lectures will not be passive learning environments as class participation is encouraged and expected (See *Course Requirements* below). I reserve the right to call on students during class to facilitate participation. Lectures will be supplemented periodically with in-class activities, discussions/debates and videos. **Electronic recording of lectures is not permitted.**

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

There is one required textbook for this course, available for purchase at the Case Western Reserve Bookstore (Thwing Center, 11111 Euclid Ave.):

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2008. *Public and Private Families (5th Edition)*. New York: McGraw Hill. ISBN: 978-0-07-352808-0

In addition to the textbook, students are also required to read several scientific articles, which I have made available via the Course Blackboard Site. These supplemental readings are:

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2003. "Should the Government Promote Marriage?" *Contexts* 2:22-29.

Edin, Kathryn, Maria J. Kefalas, and Joanna M. Reed. 2004. "A Peek Inside the Black Box: What Marriage Means for Poor Unmarried Parents." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66:1007-1014.

Reed, Jen'nan Ghazal. 2004. "Family, Religion, and Work Among Arab American Women." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66:1042-1050.

Lambert, Tracy A., Arnold S. Kahn, and Kevin J. Apple. 2003. "Pluralistic Ignorance and Hooking Up." *Journal of Sex Research* 40:129-133.

Scott, Ellen K., Andrew S. London, and Allison Hurst. 2005. "Instability in Patchworks of Child Care When Moving from Welfare to Work." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67:370-386.

Sultan Ahmed, Sania and Sally Bould. 2004. "One Able Daughter Is Worth 10 Illiterate Sons": Reframing the Patriarchal Family." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 2004:1332-1341.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students successfully completing this course will carefully integrate the course material and not simply memorize "facts." This emphasis may be different from other courses with which you are familiar, and is one of the challenges of this course. In this end, I will use the following methods of evaluation to measure careful integration and analysis of the course material.

1) Class Participation and Assigned Readings:

Each class session has a set of readings matched to it. You should complete these readings before the class session for which they are assigned, as they will allow you to follow the

lecture more effectively. Students are expected to demonstrate their proficiency with the readings through class participation. I will monitor and record students' participation in class activities and assess the overall quality of participation at the end of the semester. Students with regular and *relevant* participation will receive the maximum credit.

To facilitate your reading of the course textbook, and in preparation for the examinations, you are *strongly* encouraged to complete the **Chapter Study Guides** (available in the "Course Documents" tab on the course Blackboard Site).

2) **Short Writing Exercises:**

At least **6** in-class writing assignments will be assigned at random throughout the semester. These exercises will generally be one paragraph in length and will require you to reflect on the topic being covered at the time the exercise is announced. The scores of your five (5) best assignments will be used in the calculation of your final grade. As you are allowed to miss one of these assignments without penalty, no make-up assignments will be given. *No exceptions.*

3) **Mid-Term Examinations:**

Two mid-term examinations will be administered in-class; the first on **Monday, September 28th** and the second on **Wednesday, November 4th**. Each exam will cover material from lecture, readings and class discussion. The exams will consist of multiple choice and essay questions.

Students who miss an exam due to an unanticipated excused absence (i.e., illness or family emergency) will have the opportunity to take a make-up exam within *one week* of notification of an excused absence or return to class, whichever comes first.

Students who know that they will miss an exam due an excused religious observance or extra-curricular activity will be required to take a make-up examination *before* the exam is administered in-class. Students in this situation should see the instructor at least 2 weeks before the scheduled exam date to register for the make-up exam.

Please note that all make-up examinations will be essay format. (See *Attendance* below for the definition of an *excused* absence and other attendance policies).

3) **Final Examination:**

The final course examination will be administered during the University defined Final Examination Period and *only* on the day and time specified by the University. The Final Exam for this course will be held **Tuesday, December 15th from 8:30 to 11:30 am**. The exam will be cumulative in nature, although special emphasis will be given to materials covered since the second mid-term. Students will be required to synthesize the material from the entire course for some portions of the exam. The format of the final exam will be similar to the midterm exams.

The final exam will be administered *only on the day and time specified by the University*. **No make-up exam** will be administered except in the case of a conflict with another *University* scheduled activity. Students are encouraged to make their end of the semester travel plans accordingly.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular class attendance is essential and expected. Given the breadth of family sociology, it is unrealistic to expect that everything assigned for reading will be covered in class and that everything covered in class will come from the readings. The lectures will introduce factual and explanatory material not covered in the assigned readings. Therefore, regular attendance is necessary for successful completion of this course.

Students who are absent from lecture are responsible for finding out about the material—including getting notes—from a fellow student. *I do not release my notes to students; please do not ask.* Students who are absent from a midterm examination are responsible for informing me about their excused absence within *one week* following their absence from class (except where prior notification is required, as in 3 and 4 below).

In general, excused absences exist only for illness, death/personal crisis, participation in athletic events or other extra-curricular activities, and religious holidays.

- 1) **Illness:** Students who wish to claim an excused absence due to illness will be required to submit a statement from a health professional briefly describing the illness and the dates ill. University Health Services (UHS) "...will provide written verification of the date of a student's visit, and with student permission will communicate with the appropriate dean's office in the event of hospitalization or prolonged illness" (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual 1999*, p. 11).
- 2) **Death or personal crisis:** "In the event of a death in the family or other personal crisis requiring the student's absence from class, the student should notify the Office of Undergraduate Studies, 368-2928, which will provide documentation of such absences to instructors" (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual 1999*, p. 12).
- 3) **Athletic events or other extra-curricular activities:** "Students who are involved in athletic or other extra-curricular activities may present written explanations of an event-related absence provided by the coach or sponsor. Such explanations are not automatically excuses for absences from class. Any such events are scheduled well in advance; students should let the instructor know about the absence *ahead of time and make prior arrangements* to make up work" (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual 1999*, p. 12, emphasis added).

Thus, students participating in athletic events or other extra-curricular activities must make arrangements to take examinations *early* should a scheduling conflict exist. Students who seek exemption after the fact will **not** be permitted to make up the examination.

- 4) **Religious holidays:** "Any student who is unable to attend classes or participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day because of his or her religious beliefs is excused from any such activity. The student will be given the opportunity to make up the examination or work that was missed, to the extent possible, at the discretion of the instructor" (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual 1999*, p. 11).

As the dates of religious observances are known well in advance, religious observances, you must make arrangements to take the examination *early*. If you will miss lecture due to religious observances, you should inform me the class period prior to the absence.

I reserve the right to submit a report "to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for such action as the dean considers appropriate" if I feel "a student is jeopardizing his or her class work by absence..." (*CWRU Undergraduate Instructor's Manual*, p. 11).

GRADING:

Students will earn their final grade in this course based on their level of class participation and their performance on each of the examinations.

Weight of the Course Requirements:

Class Participation	50 points
Short In-Class Writing Exercises (5@ 10 points each)	50 points
Midterm Exam #1	100 points
Midterm Exam #2	100 points
Final Examination	150 points
Total Possible:	<u>450 points</u>

In constructing the grading system for this course, I have considered two things: (1) the highest point total earned and (2) the lowest minimum competence needed to pass. Therefore, the highest grade earned on any given examination will become the maximum score for that exam and grades will be determined as the percentage correct relative to the highest score. For example, if the highest score on the first midterm is 90 points out of 100 then 90 becomes the highest possible score and other scores are evaluated relative to this. In this scenario, if a student had a raw score of 80, her or his grade on the first midterm would be 89% and she or he would earn 89 points toward the final course grade. Final grades will also be determined in this manner with the top-scoring student(s) setting the maximum number of points possible.

This system is not a “curve” because there is no set number of As, number of Bs, etc. It is possible for everyone in this class to earn an A.

Here are the highest point totals I will use to assign exam and final grades in this course:

To earn a(n)	A	students need at least	90%	of highest point total
	B		80%	
	C		70%	
	D		65%	

These percentage cut-offs are absolute. Students must earn the minimum percentage of the highest point total listed for each grade; I will not “round-up” final grades. A student who accumulates 89.9% of the highest point total has earned a B. *No Exceptions*

**Students that elect the Pass/No Pass grade option must earn at least 70% of the highest point total (a ‘C’) to receive a Pass in the course.

GRADE PETITIONS:

Occasionally, there may be an error in how an exam was scored or in the recording of your grade (grades will be regularly posted on the course *Blackboard* site and students are responsible for monitoring the online gradebook). If you believe an error in scoring has been made, you may resubmit the exam *within one week of its return* with a written memo detailing why you believe

an error was made. I will re-grade the exam (which means your score may increase, stay the same, or decrease) and return it to you. In the event that you are dissatisfied with the response or if you dispute your final grade in the course, you are welcome to petition—in writing—the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Sociology.






EXTRA CREDIT:

In the interest of fairness to all students, **No Extra Credit** will be awarded in this course; students are advised to put in the amount of preparation necessary to complete successfully the course requirements as outlined in this syllabus.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT:

Learning cannot occur in a classroom environment devoid of respect. Therefore, I place the utmost premium on respectful conduct in the classroom, representing diversity, and acknowledging different experiences and opinions. Respectful classroom conduct means:

1) Engaging in classroom behavior that is not disruptive to lecture and the educational goals of your fellow classmates. Accordingly, students enrolled in this course will:

- a. Arrive in class and be prepared to begin the lesson on-time.
-  b. Turn **off** all cell phones, pagers and other electronic personal communication devices **prior to** modes.
-  c. Turn **off** all MP3 players, IPODs and other portable audio/video devices **prior to entering the classroom**. Students will also remove the headphones, earpieces, etc. associated with these devices. Electronic recording of classroom activities is not permitted.
-  d. **Stow-away** laptop computers, Tablet PCs, or other personal computing devices. Students are not permitted to take notes electronically in this course unless it is medically necessary and the student is registered with the Coordinator of Disability Services.
-  e. Direct their attention to the lesson and participate in all classroom activities. Students will **not** read newspapers, magazines, books or other materials during class, unless directed to do so as part of a class exercise.
-  f. Refrain from eating during class. Students may consume beverages during class, so long as they are not disruptive.

2) Engaging in behavior that respects the opinions of all members of the class. We will cover and discuss controversial issues involving family and family policy. We all have experiences and opinions about the family as a social institution. I welcome differing viewpoints and encourage students to share their opinions in a respectful manner that does not personally attack or belittle the opinions of others.

Students who choose to engage in disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and repeated disruptions will be reflected in lower class-participation scores. I reserve the right to define additional behavior as disruptive on a need-be basis.

These policies are designed to comply with the Standards of Conduct outlined in the *Case Western Reserve University General Bulletin*, which reads in part:

“A student enrolling in the University assumes an obligation to behave in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution. It is clear that in a community of learning, willful disruption of the educational process, destruction of property, dishonesty, and interference with the rights of other members of the University cannot be tolerated. The University retains the power to maintain order within the University and to exclude those who are disruptive to the educational process.” (p.41).

I encourage students to read the Standards of Conduct policy in its entirety. The General Bulletin is available at <http://www.case.edu/bulletin/casegenbulletin04-06.pdf> .

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

“The University's mission rests on the premise of intellectual honesty: in the classroom, the laboratory, the office, and the solitary examination desk. Without a prevailing ethic of honor and integrity not only in scientific pursuits but also in all scholarly activity, the very search for knowledge is impaired....[E]ach of us must therefore accept individual responsibility for our behavior and our work, and refrain from taking credit for the work of others.” (from the *CWRU Statement on Ethics*, <http://studentaffairs.case.edu/office/judicial/policies/ethics.html>).

I strongly encourage students to familiarize themselves with the entirety of the University's Academic Integrity Policy, including what constitutes an academic integrity violation (<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/office/judicial/policies/integrity.html>). It is my policy that any student found committing acts of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade in this course at minimum. There are no exceptions to this policy.

OFFICE HOURS:

I encourage students to come to office hours not simply to address difficulties they may be having in the course, but to discuss a reading you found particularly interesting, ask about further reading on a subject, if they have questions about the material covered in class, or to simply talk about their experiences in this class and at the University. If you cannot make the scheduled office hours listed on page 1, please e-mail me or the Teaching Assistant to set up an appointment. Students with disabilities who are registered with the Coordinator of Disability Services (368-5230) and who may need individual arrangements are especially encouraged to make an appointment with the Instructor. Appointments are available only on days when this course meets. *Please note that both we ONLY respond to email between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday–Friday when classes are in session.*

CONFIDENTIALITY:

In compliance with *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* (FERPA), all confidential course materials, including examination scores, will be provided directly to each student and will not be posted, displayed, or otherwise made available in a public forum. Although students may sign a FERPA Waiver consenting to the release of educational records to a parent, it is my policy not to discuss the grades or progress of any student in this course with anyone but that student except as necessary to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Coordinator of Disability Services, the Academic Integrity Board or other agents of Case Western Reserve University as outlined in this syllabus.