

Sociology of the Family
SOC/WGSS 364 (CRNs 43943 and 43948): *Writing Intensive*
Lehigh University
Fall 2017
10:45-12:00 T/Th (Credits: 4)

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Office Hours: By Appointment



Please note: This course is offered for four credits only. Due to a technical glitch, Banner initially allowed students to enroll in this class for either 3 or 4 credits. If you are enrolled for 3 credits, you must change your number of credits to 4.

Course Description:

So you think you're an expert on the family? You probably are, in a way! Almost all of us are members of families, and we all have our own personal observations and perspectives. In this class, we broaden those gazes, looking at these intimate institutions through a sociological lens.

We begin the semester by analyzing historical transformations in the structure, functions, and lived realities of "the family," while also highlighting ways in which families have remained the same over time. We then turn to various topics related to the family, including dating rituals, premarital and extramarital sex, social constructions of childhood, parenting, family violence, and the connections between gender, paid work, and family roles. Throughout the course, but particularly in the last few weeks, we examine the diverse family forms and practices that exist at various intersections of race, class, and sexuality. While our readings focus on families in a U.S. context, I invite and encourage students to draw upon other geographic and cultural contexts in their essays and in our class discussions.

Note: This upper-level undergraduate class fulfills Lehigh's "writing intensive" course requirement. Classes will be primarily student-centered (not lecture-based), with major emphases on essay-writing, peer review, and revision.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to... [continued on the next page]

...identify major historical transformations in the shape of “the family.”
...understand current debates surrounding the institution of the family.
...think critically about various narratives (and myths) related to families.
...locate their own families within a broader sociological framework.
...understand the diverse family forms and practices that exist at various intersections of race, class, and sexuality.
...craft essays that draw upon scholarly sources to make cogent arguments.
and
...effectively incorporate peer and instructor feedback to strengthen their writing.

Grading Scale and Policies:

(See the “Calculating Your Grade” sheet on Coursesite for additional information.)

*Note: Each writing assignment should be submitted via Coursesite as a **Word or PDF document only**—otherwise, I will not be able to open your document and it will be marked late. You are responsible for making sure your paper has been submitted. Do not assume your paper has been submitted unless you receive electronic confirmation.*

- ***Short Essay #1: 15% of final grade***

Each student will write a 5-6 page paper, due to Coursesite before the start of class on Tuesday, September 12th. Each student should also *bring 2 printed copies of the paper to class that day* for peer review. **(See the “Writing Assignments” sheet on Coursesite for additional information about paper topics and grading criteria.)**

- ***Short Essay #1 REVISION: 10% of final grade***

Revisions are due to Coursesite before the start of class on Thursday, September 21st. Each revision will be graded based on *how well the student has revised the paper* in response to instructor feedback. The student’s grade on the revision may be lower or higher than the original paper grade, depending on the quality of the revision.

- ***Short Essay #2: 15% of final grade***

Each student will write a second 5-6 page paper, due to Coursesite before the start of class on Thursday, October 5th. Each student should also *bring 2 printed copies of the paper to class that day* for peer review.

- ***Short Essay #2 REVISION: 10% of final grade***

Your revised essay is due to Coursesite before the start of class on Thursday, October 26th.

- ***Final Research Paper: 30% of final grade***

Each student will write a 10-11 page paper, due to Coursesite before the start of our last class (Thursday, December 7th). The *first page* of this paper is due to Coursesite before the start of class on Thursday, November 9th. Students should also *bring 5 printed copies* of their first pages for their peers to review that day in class. Though I will provide feedback on the final paper “first page,” it will not be graded. *However*, if you do *not* turn it in and participate in the peer review exercise, I will deduct a half grade from your final research paper.

[continued on next page...]

- ***In-class presentation: 10% of final grade***

Each student will “catalyze” one class session, briefly summarizing the day’s reading(s) and providing discussion questions for the class. Each student should provide me with a hard copy of his presentation notes at the beginning of class on the day he is presenting. I will give a sample presentation on 8/31.

- ***Class participation: 10% of final grade***

Your grade for this item will reflect your *active, engaged participation* in our seminar. In order to receive a high grade for participation, you must not only attend class consistently but demonstrate that you are prepared (having done the readings) and speak regularly during our discussions.

Grading Scale:

93%-100% = A
90%-92% = A-
87%-89% = B+
83%-86% = B
80%-82% = B-
77%-79% = C+
73%-76% = C
70%-72% = C-
67%-69% = D+
63%-66% = D
60%-62% = D-
0%-59% = F

Late Papers:

Regarding both drafts and paper revisions, students will lose ½ a grade for each day these assignments are late. **Written assignments that are turned in more than three days after the deadline will not be accepted.**

Policy on Laptops/Cell Phones:

Students are not permitted to use laptops except at times specified by the instructor. If you have a special circumstance that requires you to use a computer, please see the policy on accommodations below.

Cell phone use is never permitted.

Lehigh Writing Intensive (“W.I.”) Course Requirements:

From: <https://cas.cas2.lehigh.edu/content/writing-intensive-guidelines>

A writing-intensive (WI) course should:

- require at least 30 pages of writing (counting drafts and revisions)
- require at least 5 writing assignments (drafts and revisions may count as separate assignments)
- provide the instructor's response to one assignment by the third week of classes; this assignment should provide an early assessment of skills the student should address in subsequent assignments
- stress revision and provide ample opportunities for students to develop skill in revising their own work; in most cases, one assignment should consist of a revision of a previous assignment

The instructor will indicate whether the student has passed the writing-intensive requirement for the course. Because course-content and writing assignments may be assessed separately, it is possible to pass the course but fail the writing-intensive requirement and vice versa.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both your instructor and the Office of Academic Support Services, Williams Hall, Suite 301 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

The Principles of Our Equitable Community:

Lehigh University endorses The Principles of Our Equitable Community [http://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/initiatives/PrinciplesEquity_Sheet_v2_032212.pdf]. We expect each member of this class to acknowledge and practice these Principles. Respect for each other and for differing viewpoints is a vital component of the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

Student Senate Statement on Academic Integrity:

“We, the Lehigh University Student Senate, as the standing representative body of all undergraduates, reaffirm the duty and obligation of students to meet and uphold the highest principles and values of personal, moral and ethical conduct. As partners in our educational community, both students and faculty share the responsibility for promoting and helping to ensure an environment of academic integrity. As such, each student is expected to complete all academic course work in accordance to the standards set forth by the faculty and in compliance with the University's Code of Conduct.”

Required Readings:

All required readings, in addition to other course-related documents (e.g. assignment descriptions, syllabus, etc.), are available on Coursesite (<http://coursesite.lehigh.edu/>).

Schedule of Assignments:

Part I: American Families in Historical Perspective

WEEK 1:

Tuesday, August 29th: Introduction & Course Administration

→ *There are no readings assigned for this class session.*

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session.*

Thursday, August 31st: What's Happened to the Family?: Change and Decline Arguments

Read for this class:

- Popenoe, D. (1993). American family decline, 1960-1990: A review and appraisal. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55, 3, 527-542.
- Glenn, N.D. (1993). A plea for objective assessment of the notion of family decline. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 55, 3, 542-544.
- Stacey, J. (1993). Good riddance to 'The Family': A response to David Popenoe. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 55, 3, 545-547.
- Cowan, P.S. (1993). The sky is falling, but Popenoe's analysis won't help us do anything about it. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 55, 3, 548-553.

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session. I will lead this class session to provide you with a template for subsequent student presentations.*

→ ***Today in class, students will sign up for presentation dates.***

WEEK 2:

Tuesday, September 5th: Changing Families: Trends and Perspectives

Read for this class:

- Cherlin, A.J. (2010). Demographic trends in the United States: A review of research in the 2000s. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 403-419.
- Giele, J. (2006). Decline of the family: Conservative, liberal, and Feminist views. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 76-95). Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Thursday, September 7th: Changing Families: Myths and Realities

Read for this class:

- Coontz, S. (1992). *The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap*. New York: Basic Books ("Introduction" and "Pregnant Girls, Wilding Boys, Crack Babies, and the Underclass: The Myth of Black Family Collapse"): pp. 1-22 and 232-254.

WEEK 3:

Tuesday, September 12th: PEER REVIEW SESSION

→ ***Essay #1 due*** (submitted to Coursesite) before the start of class today

→ ***Students should bring 2 printed copies of their papers to class for their peers to review.***

→ *There are no readings assigned for this class session.*

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session.*

Thursday, September 14th: Time Warp to the 1950's

Read for this class:

- Breines, W. (1992). *Young, white, and miserable: Growing up female in the fifties*. Boston: Beacon: pp. 1-24.
- Coontz, S. (1997). *The way we really are: Coming to terms with America's changing families*. New York: Basic Books ("What we really miss about the 1950's"): pp. 33-50.

→ *Essay #1 graded and returned with feedback*

Part II: Marriage and the Family through a Sociological Lens

WEEK 4:

Tuesday, September 19th: Some Sociological Perspectives on the Family

Read for this class:

- Goode, W.J. (2006). The theoretical importance of the family. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 14-25). Boston: Allyn Bacon.
- Gough, K. (1994). The origin of the family. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 23-39). New York: HarperCollins.

Thursday, September 21st: Marriage as a "Social Institution"

Read for this class:

- Cherlin, A. (2004). The deinstitutionalization of American marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66, 848-861.
- Cherlin, A. (2003). Should the government promote marriage? *Contexts* (Fall), 22-29.

→ *Essay #1 REVISION due (submitted to Coursesite) before the start of class today.*

Part III: Topics in the Sociology of the Family

WEEK 5:

Tuesday, September 26th: Dating, Sex, and Family Formation

Read for this class:

- Gerstel, N. and Sarkisian, N. (2006). Marriage: The good, the bad, and the greedy. *Contexts* 5, 4, 16-21.
- Buss, D. *et al.* (2001). A half-century of mate preferences: The cultural evolution of values. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63, 491-503.
- England, P., & Thomas, R.F. (2006). The decline of the date and the rise of the college hook up. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 151-162). Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Thursday, September 28th: Sex: Marital, Extramarital, Premarital

Read for this class:

- Smock, P.J. and Manning, W.D. (2010). New couples, new families: The cohabitation revolution in the United States. In Risman, B.J. and Rutter, V.E. (Eds), *Families as they really are* (pp. 149-158). New York: Norton.
- Treas, J., & Giesen, D. (2000). Sexual infidelity among married and cohabiting Americans. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(1), 48-60.

→ *Essay #1 REVISION graded and returned with feedback*

WEEK 6:

Tuesday, October 3rd: Children and Childhood

Read for this class:

- Mintz, S. (2010). American childhood as a social and cultural construct. In Risman, B.J. and Rutter, V.E. (Eds), *Families as they really are* (pp. 56-67). New York: Norton.
- Hunt, P. and Frankenberg, R. (2015). It's a small world: Disneyland, the family and the multiple (re-)representations of American childhood. In James, A. and Prout, A. (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood* (pp. 99-117). New York: Falmer.

Thursday, October 5th – PAPER DUE/ PEER REVIEW SESSION

→ *Essay #2 due* (submitted to CourseSite) before the start of class today.

→ Students should **bring 2 printed copies of their papers to class** for their peers to review.

→ There are no readings assigned for this class session.

→ There will be no student presentation in this class session.

WEEK 7:

Tuesday, October 10th: Social Constructions and Contradictions of “Motherhood”

Read for this class:

- Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press: pp. 19-50.

Thursday, October 12th: Class, Race, and Parenting

Read for this class:

- Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible inequality: Social class and childrearing in black families and white families. *American Sociological Review*, 67, 5, 747-776.

→ *Essay #2 graded and returned with feedback*

WEEK 8:

Tuesday, October 17th – NO CLASS – PACING BREAK

Thursday, October 19th: Family Violence

Read for this class:

- Gelles, R. J. (1997). *Intimate violence in families*. Thousand Oaks: Sage (“Introduction”): pp. 1-16.
- Kurz, D. (2013). Violence against women or family violence? Current debates and future directions. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 474-485). Boston: Allyn Bacon.

WEEK 9:

Tuesday, October 24th: Gender, Work, and Family Roles

Read for this class:

- Hochschild, A. (2014). The second shift. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 309-316). New York: Pearson.
- Gerson, K. (2010). *The unfinished revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press (Chapter 2: “Families Beyond the Stereotypes”) (pp. 15-45).

Thursday, October 26th: Stay-at-Home Dads

Read for this class:

- Doucet, A. (2004). “It’s almost like I have a job, but I don’t get paid”: Fathers at home reconfiguring work, care, and masculinity. *Fathering* 2, 3, 277-303.

→ *Essay #2 REVISION due (submitted to Coursesite) before the start of class today.*

Part IV: Different Types of Families

WEEK 10:

Tuesday, October 31st (spooky!): Divorce & Stepfamilies (1): Putting Divorce in Perspective

Read for this class:

- Coontz, S. (2008). *The way we really are: Coming to terms with America’s changing families*. New York: Basic Books (Chapter 5: “Putting Divorce in Perspective”): pp. 97-108.
- Coltrane, S. and Adams, M. (2003). The social construction of the divorce ‘problem’: Morality, child victims, and the politics of gender. *Family Relations* 52, 4, 363-372.

Thursday, November 2nd: Divorce & Stepfamilies (2): Managing Stepfamily Relationships

Read for this class:

- Menning, C. (2008). “I’ve kept it that way on purpose”: Adolescents’ management of negative parental relationship traits after divorce and separation. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 37, 586-617.

→ *Essay #2 REVISION graded and returned with feedback*

WEEK 11:

Tuesday, November 7th: Low-Income Families

Read for this class:

- Edin, K., & Kefalas, M. (2011). *Promises I can keep: Why poor women put motherhood before marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press (“Introduction” and “Chapter 1: ‘Before We Had a Baby...’”): pp. 1-49.

Thursday, November 9th – PAGE DUE/ PEER REVIEW SESSION

→ *First page of final paper due (submitted to Coursesite) before the start of class today.*

→ *Students should bring 5 printed copies of their first page to class for their peers to review.*

→ *There are no readings assigned for this class session.*

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session.*

WEEK 12:

Tuesday, November 14th: Race in Families (1): The Black Middle Class

Read for this class:

- Patillo-McCoy, M. (1999). *Black picket fences: Privilege and peril among the Black middle class*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (Chapter 3: “Generations through a Changing Economy”): pp. 44-67.

→ *First page of final paper returned with feedback*

Thursday, November 16th: Race in Families (2): Understanding “Tiger Moms”

Read for this class:

- Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development*, 65, 4, 1111-1119.
- Chua, A. (2011). *Battle hymn of the tiger mother*. New York: Penguin Press: pp. 3-19.

WEEK 13:

Tuesday, November 21st:

- Screening of *The Kids Are All Right* (2010), directed by Lisa Cholodenko

→ *There are no readings assigned for this class session.*

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session.*

Thursday, November 23rd – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

WEEK 14:

Tuesday, November 28th: LGBT Families Today

Read for this class:

- J. Stacey. (2014). Gay parenthood and the end of paternity as we knew it. In A. Skolnick & J. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 232-247). New York: Pearson.
- Moore, M. and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer, M. (2013). LGBT sexuality and families at the start of the twenty-first century. *Annual Review of Sociology* 39, 491-507.

→ *We will begin this class with small-group discussions of The Kids Are All Right.*

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session.*

Thursday, November 30th: LGBT Families in Historical Perspective

Read for this class:

- Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press: 1-41 (“Chapt. 1: The Monkey Cage and the Red Desert” and “Chapt 2 Exiles from Kinship”)
- *NOTE: Chapt 5 “Families We Choose” is included in the PDF as optional reading.*

WEEK 15:

Tuesday, December 5th: What Is the Future of the Family?

Read for this class:

- Coontz, S. (2008). *The way we really are: Coming to terms with America’s changing families*. New York: Basic Books (Chapter 4: “The Future of Marriage”): pp. 77-95.
- Stacey, J. 1996. *In the name of the family: Rethinking family values in the postmodern age*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press (Chapter 2: “The Family Is Dead, Long Live Our Families”): pp. 38-51.

Thursday, December 7th – COURSE WRAP-UP & EVALUATIONS

→ *Final research paper due (submitted to Coursesite) before the start of class today.*

→ *There are no readings assigned for this class session.*

→ *There will be no student presentation in this class session.*

→ **HAVE A GREAT WINTER BREAK! ☺**