

**Sociology of the Family SOC 2310**  
**William Paterson University, Winter 2014**

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**Course Description:**

This course focuses on current social changes affecting American families, with particular emphasis on the intersections of families with other social institutions and social inequality. We will first explore common assumptions about the “traditional family,” comparing this image with a brief overview of historical facts about American family life over the past two centuries. We will then examine how macro forces and systems of social inequality shape family life. Then, we will analyze four current major transformations in American family life: the changing relationship between work and family life; new trends in dating, intimacy, and marriage; new patterns of parenting; and the increasing diversity of families. In our discussions of all of these topics, we will explore the social and political implications of these changes for men, women, and children, and for society.

**Course Objectives:** This course will:

1. Introduce students to basic concepts, theories, and research methods used in sociology to study the family
2. Analyze the impact of broader social, cultural, economic, and political changes on marriage, parenting, and the family
3. Enhance understanding of how the diversity of family life is shaped by gender roles and expectations, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and sexuality
4. Raise awareness of current family issues and challenges.

**Required Texts:**

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, and Wells. *Diversity in Families*. Ninth Edition. Allyn & Bacon Publishers. 2011.
- Other assigned news articles and blog posts are available online.

**Schoology.com:** Instead of Blackboard, we are using Schoology for this class.

A quick guide to Schoology:

- o **Homepage:** I will use the course homepage to post reminders and updates.
- o **Materials:** In the “Materials” menu, you can find links to course **readings, assignments, resources,** and our **Discussion Board**.
- o **Discussion Board:** The Discussion Board is organized by topics. Please post your assigned postings, and free posts, in the related topic board.
- o **Calendar:** On the right hand side, there is a calendar of due dates with links to assignments and readings.

**Course Policies:**

- As this is a short, online course, **no late postings or assignments will be accepted.** This is non-negotiable. If you fall even a day behind in this course, your grade will suffer.

- **Grammar and spelling count!** Be sure to carefully edit each assignment and posting to the online discussion. Spelling and grammar errors will significantly reduce your grade.
- **Paper Requirements:**
  - Only Word documents will be accepted (.doc or .docx format).
  - Assignments must be double-spaced and use 12 point standard font.
- **Citing your work:** You are required to follow proper citation procedures for all assignments and online posting. If something is not your own original idea, it needs a citation. See the online Course Resources for more information on proper citation. **Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.**

**Grades:** Your final grade will be made up of the following:

- 20%: 10 Free Choice Posts
- 30%: 5 Assigned Posts
- 30%: 3 Open-Book Exams
- 20%: Final Analytic Paper

**Final Grades:**

- You will be able to track your grade and attendance progress over the course of the semester on our Schoology.com class website.

A	93-100	C+	77-79.9
A-	90-92.9	C	73-76.9
B+	87-89.9	C-	70-72.9
B	83-86.9	D	60-69.9
B-	80-82.9	F	<60

**Assignments:**

- **Free Choice Posts:** Over the duration of the course, you are required to post **10 times** to the discussion board. You may spread out your posts however you would like.
  - **What counts as a post?**
    - A question, informed by the class material that you would like to pose to the class.
    - An answer, informed by the class material, to another student's question.
    - A link to a news article, blog post, image, video etc. that is related to that class material, and a description of how it is related.
  - **What does not count as a post?**
    - Anything that is too brief ("I agree" or "good question" etc.). Your posts should be 50-100 words.
    - Anything that is not explicitly tied to course material.
- **Assigned Posts:** During the course there are 5 assigned posts that you must complete and post to the discussion board. Assigned post details are listed in the course schedule.

- **Exams:** During the course you will take 3 open-book exams. These will be posted at 8am on the day of the exam, and must be submitted on Schoology by 12 Midnight the same day. You will have 2 hours to complete each exam.
  - **Exam 1:** Sunday, December 28
  - **Exam 2:** Monday, January 5
  - **Exam 3:** Sunday, January 11
- **Analysis Paper:** There is one 4-5 page analysis papers due. The assignment is posted online.
  - **Monday, January 12:** *Work/Life Choices* paper due

### Schedule:

	Reading	Assignment
<i>Introductions</i> <b>Monday 12/22</b>	Introduce yourself online!	Register for Schoology with code: 5VKHH-22WRG
<i>What is Family?</i> <b>Tuesday 12/23</b>	Chapter 1 “Images, Ideals, and Myths”	<b>Assigned Post 1:</b> <i>What is a Family?</i>
<i>Family History</i> <b>Wednesday 12/24</b>	Chapter 2 “Preindustrial Families and the Emergence of a Modern Family Form”	
<i>Family Diversity</i> <b>Friday 12/26</b>	Chapter 3 “The Historical Making of Family Diversity”	
<i>Macro Forces</i> <b>Saturday 12/27</b>	Chapter 4: “Macro Forces Affecting Families: The Economy, Immigration, and Aging”	
<b>Sunday 12/28</b>	Exam will be available on Schoology at 8am in the morning, and must be completed online by 12 Midnight.	<b>Exam 1</b>
<i>Family Inequality</i> <b>Monday 12/29</b>	Chapter 5: “Class, Race, and Gender”	
<i>Household Labor</i> <b>Tuesday 12/30</b>	Konigsberg, Ruth D. “Chore Wars” <i>Time Magazine</i> . Aug. 8, 2011. [link online]  Dockterman, Eliana, “There’s a Gender Pay Gap in Kids’ Allowances and Parents Are To Blame” <i>Time Magazine</i> . April 24, 2014 [link online]	<b>Assigned Post 2:</b> <i>Dividing Household Chores</i>

	Reading	Assignment
<i>Work &amp; Family Life</i> <b>Wednesday 12/31</b>	Chapter 6: "Meshing the Worlds of Work and Family"	
<i>Dating &amp; Intimacy</i> <b>Thursday 1/1</b>	Chapter 7: "The Social Construction of Intimacy"  <b>Read and watch lecture:</b> Wade, Lisa. "The Promise and Perils of Hook-Up Culture." <i>Sociological Images</i> . June 21, 2011. [link online]	<b>Assigned Post 3:</b> <i>Whatever Happened to Dating?</i>
<i>Marriage</i> <b>Friday 1/2</b>	Chapter 8: "Contemporary Marriages"  Coontz, Stephanie "Economic disparity takes toll on marriage" <i>The Philadelphia Inquirer</i> . Jan. 9, 2011. [link online]  Infographic: The New American Family. GOOD: Culture. [link online]	
<i>Raising Children</i> <b>Saturday 1/3</b>	Chapter 9: "Parents and Children"  Belkin, Lisa. "The Evolution of Dad." <i>The New York Times Motherlode Blog</i> June 16, 2010. [link online]	
<i>Children &amp; Consumer Culture</i> <b>Sunday 1/4</b>	Brasted, Monica. "Care Bears vs. Transformers: Gender Stereotypes in Advertisements." <i>The Socjournal</i> . Feb. 17, 2010. [link online]  <b>Watch:</b> "Consuming Kids" [link online]	<b>Assigned Post 4:</b> <i>Childhood and Consumerism</i>
<b>Monday 1/5</b>	Exam will be available on Schoology at 8am in the morning, and must be completed online by 12 Midnight.	<b>Exam 2</b>
<i>Family Violence</i> <b>Tuesday 1/6</b>	Chapter 10: "Violence in Families"  Hernandez, Daisy. "The Violence of a Recession." <i>Colorlines</i> . March 31, 2010. [link online]	
<i>Divorce &amp; Remarriage</i> <b>Wednesday 1/7</b>	Chapter 11: "Divorce and Remarriage"  Thomas, Susan G. "The Good Divorce." <i>The New York Times</i> . Oct. 28, 2011. [link online]	

	Reading	Assignment
<i>Changing Families</i> <b>Thursday 1/8</b>	Chapter 12: "Emergent Families in the Global Era"  Park, Alice. "Study: Children of Lesbians May Do Better Than Their Peers" June 7, 2010 [link online]  Arnold-Gordon, Evan. "My Two Dads" April 30, 2014 [link online]	
<i>Family Policy</i> <b>Friday 1/9</b>	Watch: Up with Chris Hayes: "Working Families Surviving on Welfare." [link online]	<b>Assigned Post 5:</b> Play the online simulation <a href="http://www.PlaySpent.org">www.PlaySpent.org</a>
<i>Family Policy</i> <b>Saturday 1/10</b>	Chapter 13: "Family Policy for the Twenty-First Century"	
<b>Sunday 1/11</b>	Exam will be available on Schoology at 8am in the morning, and must be completed online by 12 Midnight.	<b>Exam 3</b>
<b>Monday 1/12</b>		<b>Analysis Paper:</b> <i>Work/Family Choices</i>