

## Family Problems and Social Change (SYO 3100)

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Florida State University  
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### Course Description and Objectives

Social science courses should help us to understand where we have been, where we now stand, and possibly, where we are heading as a society. Accordingly, this course has two emphases: social change (major historical transitions in society) and corresponding family changes. In this course, we will investigate historical changes in family life from the clan family to the patriarchal family, the nuclear family and the proposed present day “post nuclear family.”

There are four main objectives to this course. First, you will learn the basic concepts used in the study of human societies and the most fundamental building block of society – the family. Second, you will be challenged to adopt a sociological imagination and understand the structural and cultural limitations that create and limit individual opportunities and choices and shape families. In other words, individuals are not necessarily capable of doing whatever they choose, even if they try hard enough. Social structures help to determine what is possible. Third, you will be able to use critical thinking to evaluate information about family and social problems and to understand why some social issues become defined as problems while others do not. Fourth, you will be able to apply a critical consciousness to events that take place in your everyday life.

The course fulfills the University’s “diversity in Western experience--y” multicultural requirement and is a Women’s Studies course, so issues of race/ethnicity and gender are highlighted throughout.

### Required Reading

**Students are expected to read assigned material before the class in which the topics are covered.** You should purchase the following *required* textbook:

**Families: A Sociological Perspective. David M. Newman, First Edition, McGraw Hill, 2008. ISBN:978-0-07-340416-5.**

This text is available at either Bill’s or the FSU bookstore. **I will provide additional materials and readings throughout the semester either as files available on the course website and/or paper copies distributed in class.**

### Class Communication – Email and Course Website

The official method of communication at FSU is your ACNS garnet email account. FSU policy states: “In order to stay informed and aware, you are required to check it 3 times per week. If you choose to have your garnet account forwarded; you still will be responsible for all information distributed.” This applies to our class and you will be responsible for information emailed to the class and posted on the course website. **Be connected! Please check for class emails (that will go to your garnet account) and check the *Announcements* page of our course website frequently.**

## Course Requirements:

Your final grade will be based on the quality of your performance with respect to the course assignments and responsibilities. The allocation of points is as follows:

(1) Online Bio – 5%. You will receive five points for completing a brief “quiz” during the first week of class. This online quiz covers questions about your background, interest in the course and whether you agree to the policy statements explained in the College of Social Sciences Policy on Student Conduct. Before you begin the online bio, please read the policy statement available at <http://e-soc.net>.

(2) Three Group Discussions – 30%. At three points in the semester, a discussion topic will be posted on the course website discussion board located on Blackboard. Each student is expected to post a 150 word position statement, in essay form, to the discussion topic and to post two 50-75 word replies to other students’ statement postings. Based on the relevance and quality of your posts, you can earn a possible 10 points for your contribution in each group discussion. There will be *no credit given for late postings on the discussion board or for “flaming” and other inappropriate responses*. Remember, to receive full credit for each group discussion, you must *post three times*: a position (not opinion) statement with a 150-word minimum and at least two reactions with a 50-75 word minimum by the deadlines posted on the syllabus. Participation in online group discussions together will comprise 30% of your grade.

(3) Three exams – 65%. The three exams will cover material from assigned readings and materials covered in class. Students should take class notes. Topics discussed in class will generally parallel material in the Newman text; however, I will bring information into the lecture that does not come from the text. You are responsible for information presented in the classroom, the text and other assigned readings covered during the course. Each exam will cover a third of the course. The exam dates are listed in the course calendar. **The final exam must be taken on the date scheduled by the Registrar’s Office.** Please save the date.

### Grading Summary

Online Bio – 5 points

Discussion Boards = 30 points

Three Exams = 65 points

Total = 100 points

### Grading Scale

A	93-100	C	73-76.99
A-	90-92.99	C-	70-72.99
B+	87-89.99	D+	67-69.99
B	83-86.99	D	63-66.99
B-	80-82.99	D-	60-62.99
C+	77-79.99	F	below 60

### **Class Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is required. I take roll in each class and use this information to boost borderline final grades. In order to take a make-up exam you must have a written medical or emergency excuse. Please provide a copy of the documentation to your instructor and keep a copy for your own records. All makeup exams will be in essay form. While one is not penalized for an excused absence, he or she remains responsible for all content missed, including assignments, knowledge, or skills that were covered in the missed class. There will be no credit given for late postings on the discussion board. The discussion board is a group project that requires timely participation for the benefit of all group members.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus and course calendar are guides for the course and are subject to change with advanced notice.

### **Academic Honor Policy**

Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Policy of the Florida State University, including the statement on Values and Moral Standards published in The Florida State University General Bulletin. The Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of these expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Policy:<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the university administration for further disciplinary action as specified in the Academic Honor Policy (<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>).

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Bldg., Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, (850)644-9566 (voice), (850)644-8504 (TDD)

E-mail: [SDRC@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:SDRC@admin.fsu.edu)

Website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

### **Classroom Courtesy**

Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. **This means *no cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the professor or discussion leader), reading newspapers, using laptops for material not class-related and other disruptions of this nature.*** If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about children or other family members, keep it on vibrate. In addition, ***please remove all headphones or earpieces not used as a hearing aid for class lecture.*** Coming in late and leaving early are disruptive to the instructor and to the other students, please plan to attend for the entire class time. (Thanks for observing these guidelines.)

### **Religious Holidays**

Students are allowed to miss class due to observance of religious holidays but they are still responsible for all materials assigned outside and covered in class on the day(s) missed. You must talk with your instructor in advance of missing a class for religious holiday observance reasons.

### **Excused Absences**

The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: Religious holidays, as specified in FSU policy; absences due to representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events; verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Medical illness refers to conditions that are serious in nature and require treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Documentation is required for an absence to be excused.

### **Incomplete Grades**

Missing work or uncompleted assignments are insufficient reasons for a grade of Incomplete. An Incomplete grade will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's

discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.