

SYP 2430: Sociology of Marriage and Family (Online)

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Please note: We encourage the use of the class discussion board for posting general administrative, technical, or substantive questions or comments at any time of the day or night. As the semester gets going, these postings should be your first point of reference when you have a question or concern. Questions and answers will be open for everyone to read and archived for later reference. Note that we do *not* monitor the discussion board or our email 24/7. You should reasonably expect a reply to your electronic communications within 48 hours, except for weekends and holidays. Please note that we are on Eastern Standard Time; all due dates for assignments refer to EST.

Course Description:

We tend to think of marriages and families as private entities composed of close, personal relationships. But they are not just collections of individual experiences and sites of private decisions. They are institutions performing socially valuable activities that are shaped by social, cultural, political, and economic forces. A sociological perspective will help us place our private, individual experiences in families within this broader context. The course focuses on marriage and family issues over the life course, including topics like dating and love, the formation of partnerships and marriages, choices about parenting, divorce and remarriage, the balance of work and family, and intergenerational relationships. Issues relating to diversity, including race, gender, social class, and sexual orientation, will be emphasized throughout the semester.

Objectives:

- To describe the socio-historical development of the family as a social institution, including the changing roles of women, men, children, and elderly family members
- To analyze social, cultural, economic, and political forces that shape the institutions of marriage and family, as well as the experiences of individual family members
- To explain basic concepts, theories, and research methods used in the sociological study of marriage and family
- To identify and examine sociologically relevant issues within the contemporary family
- To develop an appreciation for the diversity of family patterns that exist and an understanding of how family experience is shaped by race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation

Required Reading:

1. *Marriages and Families: Diversity and Change* (6th ed., 2009) by Mary Ann Schwartz and Barbara Marliene Scott

Software requirements: You must be able to access the internet, read PDF documents, view streaming audio and video, as well as use basic word processing and spreadsheets. If you do not have a high-speed internet connection at home you need to set aside time in your schedule to access the online material from a computer with a sufficient connection speed. Slow connection speeds at home are not a valid excuse for failing to complete a course requirement on time.

*Please note that you are responsible for checking the course website at least once a week. We'll regularly post changes or updates under "Announcements."

Class Format:

Although this class will not meet face-to-face, there are several ways that you will be connecting with the instructor, mentors, and each other over the semester. First, we'll have regular interaction via the discussion boards. The first few days of class, we'll post online biosketches in order to get to know one

another. Every other week, we'll have a discussion that focuses on the topics of our current readings. You'll have these discussions within assigned groups of approximately 25 students each. The course material to be discussed on these boards will vary over the weeks. For example, sometimes our discussion questions will focus on the textbook, while other weeks' discussions will incorporate external websites or films that have been made available to you via the course website. These discussion boards will remain open for a minimum of 48 hours each week, during which they are monitored by the instructor and/or teaching assistants.

In addition to our bi-weekly discussions, we'll have a discussion board for more general questions and concerns that will remain open for the duration of the semester. This is the place where you can ask questions about the material you're reading and have them answered by the instructor and/or teaching assistants. This is also where we'll bring course-related observations to share and discuss with one another, such as current events.

The instructor and teaching assistants also will be available to you via email. Each week, you'll receive emails from the instructor and your teaching assistant that provides details about the week's assignments. When you contact us, you should reasonably expect a response to your emails within a 48 hour period (excluding weekends and holidays). The instructor and teaching assistants have each designated a two-hour block of time for online office hours; if emailing during these times, you can expect rapid responses. You can also expect throughout the semester to receive emails from your instructor or teaching assistant with course-related current events (e.g., links to *New York Times* articles).

In lieu of lectures, we'll provide notes and outlines to accompany the assigned readings. For some of the topics covered in our weekly discussions, we'll also provide you with links to external websites that you'll be expected to visit to gain further insights into the issues. On a few occasions, we'll also provide access via the course website to videos that relate to the week's discussion.

Grading:

Grades will be based on a 100 point scale. The points for each assignment are listed below. More information on each will be provided through course announcements and under the "Assignments" tab. The final exam and quizzes will not be proctored.

1. **Online bio (3 points)** – So that we can get to know a bit about one another, you're asked to create a short bio to post on the website. *Along with the Honor Policy assignment (below), the bio will count as your first-day attendance.
2. **FSU Honor Policy assignment (2 points)** – To make sure that you're familiar with FSU's policies on academic honesty, you're required to read this material at the following link: <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>. From this link, you'll need to click onto the Academic Honor Policy pdf file. You'll then go to "Assignments" and take the one-item survey indicating that you've read and agree to abide by FSU's policies. *Along with the online bio, this will count as your first-day attendance.*
3. **Final exam (15 points)** – The final will cover material from the entire textbook.
4. **Quizzes (7 quizzes; 28 points total; 4 points each)** -- The 7 quizzes will cover material from the chapters indicated on the course calendar.
5. **Discussions (7 discussions; 42 points total; 6 points each)** -- We'll have 7 online, asynchronous discussions over the course of the semester. Your posting should be about 1-2 paragraphs long and include the creative and relevant use of sociological concepts. It should also use good grammar. In addition to the original comment, each student must make a reasoned reply or reaction to at least one posting during each class discussion. Our class will be divided into several

groups for the discussions (approximately 25 students each). Each discussion board will be open for a period of 48 hours for you to make your post and reply.

6. **Family interview project (10 points)** -- For this project, you'll focus on a topic related to families (e.g., gender roles; managing dual career families; grandparenting; single-parent families) and write a paper (about 4-5 pages typed and double-spaced) incorporating concepts you've learned in the class. You may interview members from your own or another family. I'll provide more details about the project several weeks before the paper will be due.

Each assignment (e.g., quiz, discussion board, exam) will be available over a two-day period – from 9am EST on the day assigned until 10pm EST on the following day. The window is usually Thursday and Friday. See course calendar for the due dates for each assignment.

Grading will be according to a standard scale, and plus/minus grading will be used for final semester grades. FSU does not allow a final grade of "A+." The specific grade ranges are below:
 A =92-100; A- =90-91; B+ =88-89; B=82-87; B- =80-81; C+ = 78-79; C=72-77; C- =70-71; D+=68-69;
 D=62-67; D- =60-6; F=<59

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. 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. 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.

Website: <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>. (From this site, you'll need to click onto the Academic Honor Policy pdf file.)

Work Policy

Students must complete assignments (i.e., weekly discussions, quizzes, final, and short paper) at the times indicated on the syllabus. Students will be permitted to make up coursework that was missed because of verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Please note that medical illness refers to conditions that are serious in nature and require treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. It is also necessary that you contact me *as soon as possible* after missing an assignment due to an emergency or medical illness. In most cases, it is reasonable to expect that you'd email me within 1-2 days of missing an assignment.

If due dates for course assignments coincide either with the observation of religious holidays or the representation of FSU at official functions, such as intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events, you must contact your instructor in advance of the due date for the assignment for which alternative arrangements will be made.

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.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should do the following: (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 must 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

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

Course Calendar

NOTE: Each assignment (e.g., quiz, discussion board, exam) will be available over a two-day window – from 9am EST until 10pm EST on the following day.

Date	Topic	Things to Read	Things to Do
Week 1 August 29-Sept. 2	Marriages and families over time	Chapter 1	Post an online bio and complete FSU Honor Policy assignment These two assignments will count as your first day attendance. Students not completing these assignments will be dropped from the class. *BOTH must be completed by Tuesday, August 30 at 10pm.* Thursday, 9/1 & Friday 9/2: Online Discussion 1: What is a family?
Week 2 Sept. 5-9	Ways of studying and explaining marriages and families	Chapter 2	Thursday, 9/8 & Friday, 9/9: Quiz 1 on Chapters 1 & 2
Week 3 Sept. 12-16	Understanding gender: Its influence in intimate relationships	Chapter 3	Thursday, 9/15 & Friday, 9/16: Online Discussion 2: Gender socialization
Week 4 Sept. 19-23	The many faces of love	Chapter 4	Thursday, 9/22 & Friday, 9/23: Quiz 2 on Chapters 3 & 4
Week 5 Sept. 26-30	Dating, coupling, and mate selection	Chapter 5	Thursday, 9/29 & Friday, 9/30: Discussion 3: Online dating
Week 6 Oct. 3-7	Sexuality and mate selection	Chapter 6	Thursday, 10/6 & Friday, 10/7: Quiz 3 on Chapters 5 & 6
Week 7 Oct. 10-14	Nonmarital lifestyles	Chapter 7	Thursday, 10/13 & Friday, 10/14: Discussion 4: Sexuality and marriage
Week 8 Oct. 17-21	The marriage experience	Chapter 8	Thursday, 10/20 & Friday, 10/21: Quiz 4 on Chapters 7 & 8
Week 9 Oct. 24-28	Evolving work and family structures	Chapter 10	Thursday, 10/27 & Friday, 10/28: Discussion 5: Household division of labor
Week 10 Oct. 31-Nov. 4	Reproduction and parenting	Chapter 9	Thursday, 11/3 & Friday, 11/4: Quiz 5 on Chapters 9 & 10
Week 11 Nov. 7-11	Violence and abuse	Chapter 11	**Wednesday, 11/9 & Thursday, 11/10**: Discussion 6: Violence journal
Week 12 Nov. 14-18	The process of uncoupling: Divorce	Chapter 12	Thursday, 11/17 & Friday, 11/18: Quiz 6 on Chapters 11 & 12
Week 13 Nov. 21-22	Remarriage and remarried families	Chapter 13	**Monday, 11/21 & Tuesday, 11/22**: Discussion 7: Remarriage contract
Week 14 Nov. 28-Dec. 2	Marriages and families in later life	Chapter 14	Thursday, 12/1 & Friday, 12/2: Quiz 7 on Chapters 13 & 14
Week 15 Dec. 5-9	Marriages and Families in the 21 st Century: U.S. and World Trends	Chapter 15	Friday, 12/9 *Family interview project due *Extra credit papers due
Exam week Dec. 12-16	Final exam Available from *Monday, Dec. 12 at 9am – Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 10pm*		