

University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Sociology 120: Marriage and Family (Honors)
Spring 2010**

Associate Professor Marcy Carlson
Office: Room 4458 Social Science
Phone: 608/262-1085
E-mail: carlson@ssc.wisc.edu

Section 2: Mon. & Wed., 2:30-3:45pm
Room: Social Science 4308
Office hours: Monday, 4:00-5:00pm
(or by appointment)

Course Description

The form, function, and definition of the family vary across historical and cultural contexts. This course examines the nature of and change in family and household organization from a social science perspective, with particular emphasis on family demography and sociology. A key underlying theme of the course is that social class, gender, and racial inequalities are intertwined with patterns of family change. The course reviews some cross-national and historical variation in the family; however, the focus is on U.S. families in recent decades. Contemporary debates and issues are explored, with emphasis on research evidence and considering potential implications for public policy. For example, we examine the changing nature of U.S. family structure over time, how children fare in different family types, and whether public policy should be concerned about family structure. A major goal of the course is to encourage students to critically evaluate their own assumptions about marriage and family as we together consider the research evidence and discuss the larger issues and implications.

Format

The general format of the class will be a mix of lectures and discussions. You should come to class having read the assigned materials, and having prepared comments and questions for class discussion. You should be ready to engage verbally in class, and participation will count for 20% of your course grade. Although not always the case, typically, the Monday class will be devoted to lectures and discussion of the textbook chapter(s) assigned for that week. The Wednesday class will be devoted to discussions of the assigned articles from the reader.

Required Books

The vast majority of readings come from two required books listed below that can be purchased at the University of Wisconsin Bookstore or via an on-line bookseller. A few required readings outside of the textbooks will be posted on the course website at Learn@UW.

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2009. *Public and Private Families: An Introduction*, 6th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill (ISBN 9780073404356). (Note that an e-version is also available at for purchase at: www.coursesmart.com)

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2009. *Public and Private Families: A Reader*, 6th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill (ISBN 9780073404363).

Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete all assignments as scheduled. Grades will be based on your performance on the following: two brief in-class quizzes (5% each), two non-cumulative in-class exams (25% each), one short paper (20%), and class attendance and participation (20%). Missed exams and quizzes can be rescheduled only with a doctor's note, and late papers will automatically receive a failing grade.

1. **Quizzes**. There will be two brief in-class quizzes on the material on Wednesday, February 17th and Wednesday, March 24th. These quizzes will be given during the first 15 minutes of class and are worth 5% each of your grade ($2 \times 5\% = 10\%$).
2. **Exams**. There will be two in-class exams held during regular class sessions on Monday, March 8th and Wednesday, May 5th. The first exam will cover the course material (including readings, lectures and videos) from weeks 1-7, and the second exam will cover the material from weeks 8-16 (minus week 11, which is spring break). Each exam will count for 25% of your final grade ($2 \times 25\% = 50\%$).
3. **Short Paper**. A short paper will be assigned in mid-February and will be due in the Center for Demography and Ecology (CDE) office no later than 4pm, Wednesday, April 14th (there will be no class on that day). The CDE office is located on the 4th floor of the Social Science building, Room 4412. The paper should be no more than 8 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font). The short paper will count for 20% of your final grade. Late papers will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.
4. **Class attendance and participation**. Students are expected to attend each class, to prepare for each class by doing the required readings before class, and to participate in class discussion. Lectures and classroom discussions will assume that you have done the readings and thought about comments and questions you might have about the material. Your preparedness and participation in class will affect your grades both directly—because they will be evaluated and contribute to 20% of your course grade—and even more so indirectly—because you will get much more out of the class and readings and perform better on the exams and paper. As a student in an Honors class, you have a responsibility to come to each class prepared and to participate in discussion in a constructive way. Moreover, your participation in class will affect the level of discourse and enjoyment of discussion for you and your peers. (If there is a reason you are unable to participate fully, please notify me as soon as possible. See section on 'Accommodating Students with Disabilities' below.)

Expectations and Information

Course Policies. The professor adheres to all Department, College, and University policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, incompletes, plagiarism, and student evaluation of the course and its instruction.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities. The University is legally obligated to provide appropriate accommodation for students with documented disabilities. To make special arrangements for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course, you must qualify for disability

services through the McBurney Disability Resource Center. Their website has detailed instructions on how to qualify (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>). Please notify me within the first two weeks of class if you have or anticipate having authorization from the Center, and we will make necessary arrangements.

Writing Center. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources and classes offered by the Writing Center (located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall) to help with organization, thesis statements, grammar, sentence structure, and appropriate citations. See: www.wisc.edu/writing. Before submitting your short paper, you are expected to be familiar with the guidelines on the Writing Center website about “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” (see: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>). See section below regarding ‘Plagiarism and Academic Integrity’.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. As with all UW classes, exams and papers are to be original work. Copying of phrases, sentences or paragraphs without proper and appropriate citations, or copying of the overall presentation structure from textbooks, journal articles, newspaper articles, or the internet will be considered plagiarism (<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#definition>) and are grounds for removal from the class and/or University. A clear definition of plagiarism, as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct, may also be found in the University of Wisconsin Statute 14 (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/uws/uws014.pdf>). If you have questions about plagiarism specifically, you should consult the information on the Writing Center website regarding “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>). Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility, and lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct.

Useful Websites

I encourage you to become familiar with various on-line resources available about aspects of family life and family trends, for example:

Center for Research on Child Wellbeing (Princeton University) – <http://crcw.princeton.edu/>

Century Foundation – www.tcf.org

Child Trends – www.childtrends.org

Council on Contemporary Families – www.contemporaryfamilies.org

Future of Children – www.futureofchildren.org

National Center for Family and Marriage Research – <http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu>

National Council on Family Relations – www.ncfr.org

National Marriage Project (University of Virginia) – www.virginia.edu/marriageproject

Population Reference Bureau – www.prb.org

U.S. Census Bureau (population trends) – www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Administration for Children and Families – www.acf.hhs.gov

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation – www.aspe.hhs.gov

Sociology 120: Marriage and Family (Honors)

Schedule and Required Assigned Readings

Readings for this course come from the textbook (*Public and Private Families: An Introduction*) and the accompanying anthology of readings (*Public and Private Families: A Reader*), both by Andrew J. Cherlin, Professor of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University.

While not always the case, the general pattern is that the Monday class of each week will be devoted to lectures and discussions of the chapter in the textbook assigned for that week. The Wednesday class will be devoted to discussions of the assigned readings from the reader.

Note that this syllabus may be updated as the course develops. If there is an update, I will announce it in class and post the revised version on the course website.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Jan. 20	Introduction	
2	Jan. 25 Jan. 27	Public and Private Families	Text chapter 1 Reading 1-1: "The Family in Trouble" Reading 1-2: "From Role to Self"
3	Feb. 1 Feb. 3	The History of the Family	Text chapter 2 Reading 2-1: "What's Love Got to Do with It?" Reading 2-2: "Growing Up Is Harder to Do"
4	Feb. 8 Feb. 10	Social Class and Families <i>PBS documentary: "Waging a Living," 2006</i>	Text chapter 4 Reading 4-1: "Ain't No Middle Class" Reading 4-2: "Invisible Inequality"
5	Feb. 15 Feb. 17	Gender and Families <i>Quiz in class</i>	Text chapter 3 Reading 3-1: "Doing Gender" Reading 3-2: "Fathers and Emotional Responsibility"
6	Feb. 22 Feb. 24	Race, Ethnicity, and Families <i>Documentary: "Race -- The Power of an Illusion", Episode 3, 2003</i>	Text chapter 5 Reading 5-2: "Breaking the Last Taboo"
7	Mar. 1 Mar. 3	Cohabitation and Marriage	Text chapter 7 Reading 7-1: "Everything's There Except Money" Reading 7-2: "Unmarried with Children"
8	Mar. 8 Mar. 10	** In-class Exam 1 ** <i>PBS Frontline Documentary: "Let's Get Married," 2002</i>	Read: "Healthy Marriage and Relationship Programs...", by Myrick, Ooms & Patterson, posted on course website

9	Mar. 15 Mar. 17	Work and Families	Text chapter 8 Reading 8-1: "The Work-Home Crunch" Reading 8-2: "Joey's Problem"
10	Mar. 22 Mar. 24	Children and Parents <i>Quiz in class</i>	Text chapter 9 Reading 9-1: "Religion and the Domestication of Men" Reading 9-2: "Gay Parenthood"
11		** SPRING BREAK **	
12	Apr. 5 Apr. 7	Older People and Their Families	Text chapter 10 Reading 10-1: "Beyond the Nuclear Fam." Reading 10-2: "Men and Women: Together and Apart..."
13	Apr. 12 Apr. 14	Divorce No class -- ** Short papers are due in the CDE office, Room 4412, by 4:00pm. **	Text chapter 12, Reading 12-1: "Life without Father"
14	Apr. 19 Apr. 21	Stepfamilies	Text chapter 13 Reading 13-1: "The Modern American Stepfamily"
15	Apr. 26 Apr. 28	Family, State and Social Policy <i>PBS documentary: "The Vanishing Father," 1995</i>	Text chapter 14, Reading 14-1: "The American Dream"
16	May 3 May 5	Guest lecture: Prof. Maria Cancian on "Child Support: Responsible Fatherhood and the Quid Pro Quo" (followed by brief exam review) ** In-class Exam 2 **	Read: "Promising Antipoverty Strategies" (Cancian, Meyer & Reed), posted on course website

(Note: There will be NO exam during the scheduled final exam time on May 10th.)

Revised: January 18, 2010