

Sociology 120: Marriage and the Family

University of Wisconsin – Madison

Tues & Thurs, 9:30-10:45am

Bascom Hall, Room 165

Spring 2012

Instructor: Prof. Felix Elwert
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 Office Hours: Tues & Fri 11:00-noon.
 Email: elwert@wisc.edu

TA	Office Hours	Location	Email
Yun Cho	Mon 3:30, Tue 2:30	7110 Social Science	yuncho@wisc.edu
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Katharine Legun	Mon 5:30, Thur 1:00	2452 Social Science	klegun@ssc.wisc.edu

See section syllabi on the course website (<https://learnuw.wisc.edu>) for section meeting times and locations, readings, and announcements.

Course Description. The family is a fundamental building block of social life in at least two senses. First, families provide the context in which individual lives unfold: they set the stage for birth, life, love, and death. In this sense, families are “private institutions.” Second, families have consequences for the greater good: they educate children and care for the elderly, but they also play a major role in generating and perpetuating social inequalities. In this sense, families are “public institutions” that matter for society as a whole.

This course will examine families as private and as public institutions from the perspectives of family sociology and social demography. As such, it will focus primarily on aggregate patterns and historical trends within and between groups as defined by class, race, and gender, and less on individual experiences.

A major goal of this course is to learn about differences in family structure throughout history and in the contemporary United States. While it may be tempting to assume that there can only be one “best” or “natural” way to organize family life, research indicates that a fundamental constant in family structure is change. Consequently, it is a major goal of the course to evaluate critically our own assumptions about family structures and processes.

This is an introductory course designed for inquisitive students who are new to sociology. Seniors and other students with a background in social science are welcome, of course, but may alternatively wish to consider the more advanced family course Soc 640.

FORMAT

Lectures: You should read all assigned material *before* class. Have your notes ready and be prepared to ask and answer questions. Lectures will draw attention to select issues from the required readings, but also present new material not covered in the textbook. You are responsible for all material covered in lecture in addition to everything covered in the required readings. To facilitate note taking during lecture, I will post lecture outlines on the course website a few hours before lecture. Please print these outlines and bring them to class. If you need to miss a lecture, be sure to get lecture notes from a classmate.

Record contact information of a classmate here:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Sections: Weekly discussion sections give you the opportunity to engage with the material on a much deeper level. Section discussions are an integral part of this course, and section attendance is mandatory. You must complete all required readings prior to section. Your TA will distribute a separate section handout with further instructions. Sections are your time to shine!

REQUIREMENTS

There are four requirements for passing Soc 120: (1) Doing the readings, (2) section attendance and participation, (3) three news reflections, and (4) two midterm exams.

Readings:

The majority of your readings are drawn from the textbook:

Required: Cherlin, Andrew J. 2010. *Public and Private Families: An Introduction*, Sixth Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

This semester, Soc 120 is one of only five courses at UW to participate in a pilot project on electronic textbooks (eTexts). You can access the Cherlin textbook and accompanying reader *for free* via the course webpage on Learn@UW (click the “eText pilot” link near the top of the page). I encourage you to check it out. At the end of the semester, I look forward to learning about your experience with this eTexts.

Following the same link, you can also purchase a reduced-cost paper version of the required textbook. Or you could purchase the regular hardcover edition of the textbook at the University Bookstore and other fine bookstores around town. Content and pagination of all three versions of the textbook (eText, reduced cost, and regular) are identical. Choose one or more as you like.

All additional required and recommended readings are available on the course website at Learn@UW. I have further placed a number of accessible and well-written books on various topics on reserve at College Library. These books present topics that are covered in lecture but are not (exhaustively) covered in your textbook. I highly recommend that you take a look and read around. You’ll find a complete bibliography on the last two pages of this syllabus.

I have intentionally kept the required reading load for this course at a very moderate level (under 40 pages in most weeks). In return, I ask that you engage the material in depth. You may find it helpful to team up with a group of classmates to discuss the readings; the study questions at the end of each chapter in your textbook are an excellent place to start. We encourage you to contribute the fruits of your out-of-class discussions in lecture and in section. You will enjoy this class more and get a better grade.

Sections: Section is a major component of this course, accounting for 20% of your final grade (15% participation, 5% attendance).

Thoughtful *participation* is key. You will be graded on the *quality*, and not just the frequency, of your section participation. Prepare for section! Complete all readings in advance of section and contribute your questions, reflections, and observations. Engage your classmates creatively and constructively and advance the discussion.

Section attendance is mandatory. However, we understand that sometimes illness or required activities may interfere. Therefore, you may miss up to three section meetings without penalty, no questions asked. Please do not consider these absences “free.” It is your responsibility to make up all missed work, to obtain any handouts distributed in class, and to borrow notes from a classmate. Your *attendance grade* will drop to zero with your fourth absence. Please note that 5% for attendance is a big deal: after applying the curve, the difference between 0% and 5% can amount to a full letter grade of your final grade. Students receive an F for participation for every section missed beyond the three permitted absences.

News Reflection: You will compose three short reflections on current news related to select topics in Soc 120, accounting for a total of 15% of your final grade (5% each). The purpose of this assignment is to connect what you have learned in class to what’s going on in the world around you. For each report, you are asked to compile a portfolio of three news articles on a given topic that have appeared after January 24, 2012, summarize each article in up to two sentences, and then write an insightful 300-word mini-essay relating your articles to the material you learned in class. Reports are due at 9:30AM on the dates noted in the syllabus. Late assignments will receive a grade of zero without exception. Please see the instructions posted on the course website for details.

Exams: You will take two midterm exams, accounting for 65% of your final grade. All material presented in lecture and in your required readings is fair game. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions that emphasize concepts, facts, and mechanisms discussed in class and in your readings. Additionally, each exam will include several fill-in-the-blank questions and two short essays. The exams are non-cumulative. Since I appreciate that everybody may have a “bad day” once in a while, I will give greater weight to your better midterm score: your higher score will count more (40%) and your lower score will count less (25%)

No Make-Up Exams: Unfortunately, a class of this size cannot accommodate make-up exams. If students are compelled to miss the first exam because of serious illness, a serious family

emergency, or a *required* university-sponsored activity, their second exam will simply count more. In other words, there is no penalty for missing the first exam. Nevertheless, I *strongly* recommend that you take it. Past experience suggests that it is a bad idea to skip the first midterm hoping for a better grade on the second—too much will ride on a single exam; besides, success requires practice. Students compelled to miss the second exam must demonstrate compelling cause *prior* to the exam or receive a score of zero on the missed second midterm.

Grading Summary:

<i>Exams:</i>	65%	40% for your higher midterm score, 25% for your lower score.
<i>Section Attendance:</i>	5%	Up to three absences without deductions, 0% thereafter.
<i>Section Participation:</i>	15%	Quality and preparedness are key.
<i>News Reflections</i>	15%	5% each; no late submissions for any reason.
<i>Total</i>	100%	

Curve: Final grades will be flexibly curved to a median grade of B. Straight As are reserved for consistently excellent work; experience suggests that approximately 15% of students will earn this distinction. Sustained effort is a prerequisite for a passing grade.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Special Needs: We gladly accommodate students with documented special needs. Students with special needs should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>). If you wish to request or discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible and no later than the second week of classes after lecture or during office hours.

Office Hours: Use them! This is your chance for one-on-one conversations with the professor and your TAs. Experience shows that many students neglect this resource. But please be respectful of your TA's time. If you cannot meet your TA during her office hours, visit my or another TA's office hours instead of asking your TA to reschedule. You don't need an appointment to see the professor during office hours. *I look forward to meeting you!*

Grade disputes: You may contest exam grades *up to two weeks* after exams and assignments have been returned in section. Raise minor issues (e.g. computational errors in your score) with your TA. Any substantive concerns about the contents of your answer should be discussed with the professor.

Email Etiquette: Due to the large size of this class, please adhere to the following email etiquette. If you have questions or concerns, always check the course website first. If you can't find what you need there, contact your TA or the professor. Email is a professional communication tool, and proper form matters (e.g. salutation, syntax, signature). We try to respond to all emails within two business days.

Working with Sources: Before submitting your written assignments, you are expected to study the excellent guidelines on the Writing Center website about “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>).

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Students who cheat or attempt to cheat will automatically receive a zero score for that exam or assignment. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the Dean of your school or college as well as the Dean of Students so that he/she may decide whether further disciplinary action is warranted. A clear definition of plagiarism as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at the Dean of Students web site: <http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/pdf/UWS14.pdf>. Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility, and lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct.

Course Outline

Subject to change, please monitor course announcements.

All non-textbook readings available on the course website.

January

- 24 Introduction
Required: Cherlin, pp. 4-17, 188-192
- 26 Kinship & Course Logistics
Required: Cherlin, pp. 37-43
- 31 Early European Family History
Required: Goldthorpe, *Family Life in Western Societies*, pp.8-16
Required: Coontz, "What's Love Got To Do With It?" (Reader)
Required: Cherlin, pp. 44-47
Recommended: Goody, *The European Family*, Chapters 3-5

February

- 2 U.S. History I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 48-51, 58-64
Recommended: Coontz, "The Evolution of American Families"
Recommended: Goldthorpe, *Family Life in Western Societies*, Chapter 2, pp.18-40
- 7 U.S. History II
Required: Cherlin, pp 64-75
Recommended: Cherlin, "American Marriage in the Early 21st Century", pp. 33-43.
- 9 Sociological Approaches to the Family & Research Methods
Required: Cherlin, pp. 18-35
- 14 Gender I
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 3
Required: Maglaty, "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?"
- 16 Gender II
Required: West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender." (Reader)
- 21 Class, Status, and Families
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 4
- 23 Race and Ethnicity I
Required: Cherlin pp. 51-55, 135-146
Recommended: Franklin, "African Americans and the Birth of Modern

Marriage”

News Reflection #1 (gender) due at 9:30AM

- 28 Race and Ethnicity II
Required: Cherlin, pp.55-57; 146-172
- March
- 1 Sexual Orientation
Required: Cherlin, pp. 173-192
- 6 Sex
Required: Cherlin, pp. 192-204
Required: England and Thomas, “The Decline of the Date and the Rise of the College Hook Up.”
Recommended: Armstrong et al, “Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?”
Recommended: Geronimus and Korenman, “The Socioeconomic Consequences of Teenage Childbearing Reconsidered”
- 8 Marriage and Cohabitation I
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 7
- 13 Midterm I**
Bascom 272, normal class time.
- 15 Marriage and Cohabitation II
Required: Waite, “Does Marriage Matter?”
Required: Gerstel and Sarkisian, “Marriage Reduces Social Ties”
- 20 Work and Families I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 247-251, 290-293
Recommended: Bianchi, “Maternal Employment and Time with Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?”
- 22 Work and Families II
Required: Cherlin, pp.251-267
Required: Hochschild, “Joey’s Problem” (Reader)
News Reflection #2 (race) due at 9:30AM
- 27 Children and Parents
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 9
Required: Lareau, “Invisible Inequality” (Reader)
- 29 Old Age and Widowhood
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 10

April

- 3 Spring Break—No Class
- 5 Spring Break—No class
- 10 Divorce I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 375-389
- 12 Divorce II
Required: Cherlin, pp. 389-403
- 17 Divorce Effects and Causality
Required: Li, “The Impact of Divorce on Children’s Behavior Problems”
- 19 Remarriage and Stepfamilies
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 13
- 24 Gay Marriage
Required: Cherlin, 288-290
Required: Meezan & Rauch, “Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America’s Children” (Reader)
- 26 Legal Approaches to the Family; Domestic Violence
Required: Minow: Redefining Families
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 11

May

- 1 Family Change At Home and Abroad
Required: Cherlin, “American Marriage in the Early 21st Century”, pp. 43-50
Recommended: Lesthaeghe, “The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition”
News Reflection #3 (gay marriage) due at 9:30AM
- 3 Public Policy
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 14
Recommended: “Military Child Care”
- 8 Review Session
Email your questions by Monday, 5PM. Subject: “Review”
- 10 **Midterm II**
Bascom 272, normal class time
Note: No “final exam” during exam period.

NON-TEXTBOOK REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

All of these readings are available online on the course website under “content.”

Bianchi, Suzanne M. 2000. “Maternal Employment and Time with Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?” *Demography* 37:401-414.

Cherlin, Andrew. 2005. “American Marriage in the Early Twenty-First Century.: *The Future of Children* 15(2):33-55.

Coontz, Stephanie. “What’s Love Got to Do with It? A Brief History of Marriage.” Pp. 30-36 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

England, Paula, and Reuben J. Thomas. 2007. “The Decline of the Date and the Rise of the College Hook Up.” Pp. 151-162 in Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick, *Family in Transition* (14th edition). Boston: Pearson.

Goldthorpe, J.E. 1987. *Family Life in Western Societies: A historical sociology of family relationships in Britain and North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

Goody, Jack. 2000. *The European Family: An Historico-Anthropological Essay*. Oxford: Blackwell. Chapters 3-5.

Hochschild, Arlie R. 1989. *The Second Shift*. London: Penguin. Chapter 4 (Joey’s Problem).

Lareau, Annette. “Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families.” Pp. 82-105 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

Lesthaeghe, Ron. 2010. “The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition.” *Population and Development Review* 36(2):211-251.

Meezan, William, and Jonathan Rauch. “Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America’s Children.” Pp. 327-338 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

Minow, Martha. 1998. “Redefining Families: Who’s In and Who’s Out?” pp. 7-19 in K.V. Hansen and A.I. Garey (eds.), *Families in the United States: Kinship and Domestic Politics*, Temple University Press: Philadelphia.

Risman, Barbara, J (Ed.). 2010. *Families as They Really Are*. New York: Norton. (Various Chapters)

Maglaty, Jeanne. 2011. "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?"
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/When-Did-Girls-Start-Wearing-Pink.html?c=y&page=1>

Waite, Linda J. 1995. "Does Marriage Matter?" *Demography* 32:483-507.

West, Candance, and Don H. Zimmerman. "Doing Gender." Pp. 47-56 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

BOOKS ON RESERVE

This is a short list of great books for further reading on reserve at College Library. Many of these books are great reads, and would ideally supplement your studies. Take a look!

Amato, Paul R. et al. 2009: *Alone Together: How Marriage in America is Changing*. Harvard University Press.

Casper, Lynne M., and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 2002. *Continuity and Change in the American Family*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cherlin, Andrew J. 1992. *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, revised and enlarged edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2009. *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and Family in America Today*. Knopf.

Coontz, Stephanie et al. 2008. *American Families: A Multicultural Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Coontz, Stephanie. 2005. *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Penguin.

Cott, Nancy F. 2000. *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Edin, Kathryn, and Maria Kefalas. 2007. *Promises I can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goody, Jack. 2000. *The European Family: An Historico-Anthropological Essay*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Griffin, John Howard. 2004. *Black Like Me*. San Antonio: Wings Press. (NB: any edition works)

Hochschild, Arlie R. 1989. *The Second Shift*. London: Penguin.

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press.

Laumann, Edward O. et al (eds.). 1994. *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Romano, Renee C. *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.