

Department of Sociology
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA—LINCOLN

FAMILIES AND SOCIETY

Fall 2015

COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number:	SOCI 225.001	Lecture Times:	T, Th 11:00am - 12:15pm
Credits:	3 Hours	Lecture Room:	Hamilton Hall 110
Attributes:	ACE 6; ACE 9		

Contact Information

Instructor:	Professor David Warner	TA:	Julia Black
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Office Hours:	T & Th 12:30-2:00 pm or by appointment	Office Hours:	M & W 12:30-2:00 pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The family has long been considered the primary and enduring social institution. Yet, there is concern over “the decline of *the* family” as telling of the decline of society. Some argue that individualism is undermining a once stable component of human existence. Others counter that the family is not in decline, but that it is in transition—with families taking multiple forms to meet changing circumstances. In this course, we will learn about the functions of families and the diverse forms they have taken over time and across different groups. As early socialization and caregiving usually take place within this institution, many of our ideas about the world are closely tied to our families. However, by examining families from a sociological perspective, we will challenge our preconceived notions and come to understand: (1) how the forms families take differ by race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class; and (2) how diverse families function in terms of companionship, parenting, and economic cooperation. At the end of the course, students will be equipped to discuss how the forms families take and the ways in which they achieve these functions relate to broad social changes in the U.S.

ACHIEVEMENT-CENTERED EDUCATION (ACE) & STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The University of Nebraska—Lincoln seeks to provide quality education to all of its students and has certified that certain classes assess specific learning objectives. SOCI 225 will facilitate Learning Outcomes No. 6 (using knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior) and No. 9 (exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue). Students successfully completing this course will:

- Describe the role of the family institution in society currently and in the past;
- Recognize how diversity—including, gender, sexuality, social class, and race/ethnicity — influence the structure and functioning of families;
- Understand that families function as a vehicle of socialization, economic exchange, social norms and social support affecting our attitudes, values, and life choices;
- Describe how social trends and forces—such as population composition, economic restructuring, political change and public policy—affect families, both historically and contemporarily;
- Be familiar with the empirical methods of family sociologists, including how data are gathered and interpreted;
- Critically evaluate family policy initiatives and their implications for individuals and society.

ACE learning objectives in this course will be assessed through written assignments, examinations, and in-class activities.

COURSE FORMAT:

As an introduction to family sociology, this course is primarily lecture-based. However, class participation is encouraged and expected. I reserve the right to call on students during class to facilitate participation. Lectures will be supplemented periodically with in-class activities, discussions/debates, and videos. Attendance is essential and expected (See [ATTENDANCE](#) below). **Electronic recording of lectures is not permitted.**

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK & READINGS:

There is one required textbook for this course, available for purchase in either print or electronic format at the University Bookstore or other retailers:

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2013. *Public and Private Families: An Introduction* (7th Edition). New York: McGraw Hill. ISBN: 978-0-07-8026676

In addition to the textbook, students are also required to read several scientific and newspaper articles, which are available via the course *Blackboard* site. These readings are:

Amato, Paul R. 2004. "Tension between Institutional and Individual Views of Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66:959-965.

Coontz, Stephanie. 2013. "Why Gender Equality Stalled." *The New York Times*, February 16th Edition: SR1. Accessed online at www.nytimes.com, April 2, 2013.

Gootman, Elissa. 2012. "When Branches Tangle in a Stepfamily Tree." *The New York Times*, October 4th Edition: E1. Accessed online at www.nytimes.com, August 19, 2013.

Kimmel, Michael. 2008. "Hooking Up: Sex in Guyland." Excerpt from *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (pp. 190-216). New York: HarperCollins.

Lee, Shawna J., Inna Altschul, and Elizabeth T. Gershoff. 2015. "Wait until Your Father Gets Home? Mother's and Fathers' Spanking and Development of Child Aggression." *Children and Youth Services Review* 52:158-166.

Paul, Pamela. 2010. "The Un-Divorced." *The New York Times*, July 30th Edition: ST1. Accessed online at www.nytimes.com, August 1, 2010.

Polgreen, Lydia. 2010. "One Bride for Two Brothers: A Custom Fades in India" *The New York Times*, July 16th Edition: A4. Accessed online at www.nytimes.com, July 18, 2010.

Scott, Ellen K., Andrew S. London, and Allison Hurst. 2005. "Instability in Patchworks of Child Care When Moving from Welfare to Work." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67:370-386.

Sultan Ahmed, Sania and Sally Bould. 2004. "'One Able Daughter Is Worth 10 Illiterate Sons': Reframing the Patriarchal Family." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66:1332-1341.

Yavorsky, Jill E., Claire M. Kamp Dush, and Sarah J. Schoppe-Sullivan. 2015. "The Production of Inequality: The Gender Division of Labor across the Transition to Parenthood." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77:662-679.

Note that Cherlin has also edited a paperback reader to accompany this text—we will **NOT** be using the reader in this section. Be sure to purchase the 7th edition of the **hardcover** textbook.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course will present information about families that challenges “common sense” notions. The keys to success are relinquishing these ideas, learning key sociological principles, and applying the course material to demonstrate mastery thereof. To this end, the following methods of evaluation will be used:

1) Assigned Readings:

Each topic is accompanied by a portion of the textbook and/or the additional readings. You need to complete these readings before the class session for which they are assigned. The [COURSE SCHEDULE](#) and reading assignments are at the end of the syllabus.

For the Cherlin text, I *strongly* encourage you to complete the **Chapter Study Guides** (available on *Blackboard*: “Assignments”→“Cherlin Chapter Study Guides”). These will not be collected or graded, but you are welcome to attend office hours to discuss your answers.

The best practice is to read the assigned Chapter as scheduled and then to attempt to complete the associated Study Guide *from memory*. Once you have completed your first attempt, you should verify your Study Guide answers by re-examining the chapter. If you are unable to provide correct answers to most of the Study Guide questions *from memory*, you should re-read the assigned chapter and attempt the process again. Simply searching for the answers without first reading the chapter is unlikely to be helpful for retaining the information.

The breadth of family sociology means that not everything assigned for reading will be covered in detail in lecture. The Study Guides are a self-directed opportunity to identify the key points from the textbook and assess your comprehension as the course progresses.

2) Short Analysis Projects (SAPs):

Six Short Analysis Projects distributed throughout the semester ask you to analyze content related to families by applying the course themes and concepts. A description of each SAP is available under “Assignments” on *Blackboard*. Generally, each SAP will be 2-3 double-spaced pages (excluding any required supporting materials) and will allow you to explore an aspect of family sociology in a creative way.

Assignments are due by 5 pm on *Fridays*, as listed below and in the [COURSE SCHEDULE](#) :

	Due by 5pm
SAP 1: Family Tree & Family Change	F 9/4
SAP 2: Gendered Roles in Birthday Cards	F 9/11
SAP 3: Love Song Lyrics	F 10/9
SAP 4: Images of Fatherhood	F 10/30
SAP 5: Celebrity Divorce	F 11/20
SAP 6: Presidential Family Policy Proposals	F 12/4

You will submit the SAPs electronically through *Blackboard*; detailed instructions for how to do this can be found there under “Assignments.”

Late-papers will be accepted up to 72 hours after the deadline (until the following Monday at 5pm), but will be penalized 10 points per 24 hours late. After 72 hours, a grade of zero will be entered.

Late SAPs may be accepted beyond 72 hours, but only under extraordinary circumstances for unanticipated excused absences and at my discretion (See [ATTENDANCE](#) below and the “Detailed Attendance Policy” under the “Other Course Documents & Policies” on *Blackboard*).

3) **Midterm Examinations:**

There are two preliminary exams in this course: Midterm Examination 1 covers Units 1 & 2, Midterm Examination 2 covers Unit 3. Each exam will include material from lecture, supplemental readings, class discussion, and any in-class activities or films. The exams will consist of multiple choice (pick the correct answer) and multiple selection (pick all correct answers) style questions.

The exams will be administered in the **Arts & Sciences Testing Center** (127 Burnett Hall; see http://scimath.unl.edu/wba/testingcenter_home.php for Hours of Operation). Details on using the Testing Center are on *Blackboard* under “Examinations” → “General Examination Procedures.”

Timing:

There is a two-stage process for taking the Midterm Examinations:

- a) There is an initial three-day window during which you must take the exam. Class time is set aside for you to complete each Midterm. Lecture will not meet on those days. The exact dates of the exam windows are listed in the [COURSE SCHEDULE](#) at the end of the syllabus. In the event that the first window coincides with a home football game, it will be expanded by one (1) day
- b) Following the first attempt window, a second window will open and you may retake the Exam up to two (2) more times (but only if you completed the Exam during the first-attempt window) during this period. You are not required to make additional attempts.

This two-stage process is designed to facilitate learning. I will review problem areas from the Midterm Exam in the class period immediately following the close of the first attempt window. Before retaking a Midterm Exam, I encourage you to attend office hours to identify areas where you need to devote additional attention.

Procedures:

- Within the windows described, you may take an exam at any time during the Testing Center hours of operation. *You may retake an examination only once per day.*
- Your highest scoring attempt (out of a maximum of three) on each exam will be applied to the total points you earn in this course.
- After the second window for an exam has closed, you should review your attempt(s) via *Blackboard*. This will help you prepare for the *cumulative* Final Examination (see below). To review your exams on *Blackboard*, go to “Blackboard Tools” → “Maple T.A. Course Tools”. Under “assignments” select the exams you want to view. Next go to “Show results” and select “all (best).” Hit search. Click on “details” for each exam to see the questions.
- Given flexibility in when you sit for exams, make-up exams will be administered only in extraordinary circumstances, for excused absences, and at my discretion (See [ATTENDANCE](#) below). All make-up exams will be essay format.

4) **Final Examination:**

The Final Exam will be cumulative in nature, although Unit 4 content will be emphasized. The format will be similar to the midterm exams. The Final will be administered in the **Arts & Sciences Testing Center** (127 Burnett Hall), but the timing and procedures differ from those of the Midterm exams:

Timing:

- The Final Exam window is three days and opens on the University scheduled date for the final examination in this course (Monday, **December 14th, 3:30 to 5:30 pm**). As you can take the Final at the University designated time, the window complies with the UNL Fifteenth Week Policy.

Procedures:

- **You may only make one (1) attempt at the Final during this three-day window** because of the significantly increased demands on the Testing Center during finals week.
- The Final Exam will **only** be administered during the three-day window. **No make-up exam** will be administered. Given the exam window, Final Exam conflicts as defined by the University (see <http://registrar.unl.edu/final-exam-schedule-fall>) are not possible. Thus, if you have other University scheduled finals for Monday, December 14th you should plan to take this course’s Final Exam *later* in the window. Make your end of the semester travel plans accordingly.

5) Course Conduct:

I place the utmost premium on respectful conduct both in and out of the classroom, representing diversity, and acknowledging different experiences and opinions. To that end, there are 50 course points available for overall classroom conduct. Students will earn the maximum available Classroom Conduct points by:

- a) Reading and acknowledging the Course Conduct Policy by the third week of the semester (available on *Blackboard* under “Course Documents & Other Polices”); and
- b) Engaging in behavior—throughout the semester—consistent with that Policy.

Students may *lose* Course Conduct points for engaging in behavior that violates the Policy’s terms and/or that otherwise undermines the classroom learning objectives. I, in consultation with the TA, will subjectively evaluate your Course Conduct at the end of the semester.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular class attendance is expected and essential for successful completion of this course. Not everything assigned for reading will be covered in lecture. The lectures will introduce factual and explanatory material not covered in the assigned readings.

Students who are absent from lecture are responsible for getting notes from a fellow student. Please get the contact information of *three* students in class and record it in the box below.

Student Name	Email	Phone
1.		
2.		
3.		

Contact these students for notes in the event that you have to miss class for any reason. If, during the course, you notice that your student contacts have stopped attending, please obtain contact information from 1-2 other students. *I do not release my notes to students or post them on Blackboard.*

Students with excused absences *may* be offered alternative arrangements for completion of course requirements. In general, excused absences exist only for documented major illness, serious injury, personal crisis, participation in intercollegiate athletic events or other extra-curricular activities, and religious holidays. Please see the “Detailed Attendance Policy” under the Other Course Documents & Policies on *Blackboard* for additional information.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT MASTERY:

The primary goal of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to learn about the sociology of families. I have designed the course in such a way as to provide multiple opportunities for students to achieve success (See “Tips for Being Successful” under “Other Course Documents & Policies” on *Blackboard*). Grades are unfortunately a necessary means by which to assess learning and in this course reflect the extent to which you have mastered the presented material.

Accordingly, you will **EARN** the final grades in this course based on your demonstrated mastery as indicated by your performance on each of the course requirements described above as follows:

Weight of the Course Requirements:

Short Analysis Projects (6 @ 50 points each)	300 points
Midterm Examination 1	100 points
Midterm Examination 2	100 points
Final Examination	200 points
Course Conduct	50 points
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Total Possible:	750 points

Of course, any system that tries to force learning into neatly defined categories, as does grading, is imperfect and I have attempted to correct for this as much as possible:

- Some exams are more difficult than are others and a student with equal amounts of preparation for two exams cannot expect to earn the same grade on both. Therefore, I will take the highest (non-outlier) score earned on any given exam and determine your grade as the relative percentage correct to the highest score. For example, if the highest score on Midterm Exam 2 is 90 points and you're raw score is 80, then your weighted grade would be 89% $[(80/90) * 100 = 88.9]$ and you would earn approximately 89 points toward the final course grade.

As you may make up to three attempts on the each of the midterm exams, I will determine the maximum score based on the highest score out of all attempts and after the exam window has closed. The maximum score will be announced in class.

- Occasionally there may be an error in how a paper was evaluated or an exam question was constructed. If you believe such an error has been made, you have the right to redress this situation as described in the “Request for Re-Evaluation” policy under the “Other Course Documents & Policies” tab on *Blackboard*.

Final grades will be determined—in accordance with the grading system used by the University—based on the total number of points you have earned in the course. I will not force final course grades into a normal distribution and thus it is possible for everyone in this class to earn an “A.” However, my experience in this course is that most final grade distributions are approximately normal. The grade of “A” is earned by students whose demonstrated mastery is truly “outstanding.”

The highest point totals used to assign final grades in this course are as follows:

A+	=	97%	B+	=	87%	C+	=	77%	D+	=	67%
A	=	93%	B	=	83%	C	=	73%	D	=	63%
A-	=	90%	B-	=	80%	C-	=	70%	D-	=	60%
									F	<	60%

These percentage cut-offs are absolute. You must earn the minimum percentage of total points listed for each grade; final grades will not be “rounded-up.” A student with 89.9% of the total point has earned a **B+**. *No Exceptions.*

EXTRA CREDIT:

All students will have the chance to evaluate the course through two voluntary, anonymous *Blackboard* surveys— a Mid-Semester Course Evaluation (8th week) and a Final Course Evaluation (15th week)— and will earn 8 points of extra credit for each. Completing both evaluations will provide the equivalent of ~2% of the total points available in the course (enough to move a student “on the bubble” from a B+ to an A-, for example). Any extra credit earned will be added to student scores at the end of the semester.

In the interest of fairness to all, extra credit opportunities will not be offered to individual students.

ELECTRONIC NOTE-TAKING POLICY:

You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes in this course as specified in the guidelines of the “In-Class Laptop Use Contract” (find it under “Other Course Documents & Policies” on *Blackboard*.) However, I strongly discourage the students from taking notes electronically because, in addition to being a distraction to others, it is associated with reduced classroom attention, poorer understanding and retention of material, lower exam scores, and worse overall course performance.

Smartphones or other electronic devices may not be used for any purpose in this course and must remain stowed and powered-off /silenced at all times.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy in the UNL *Student Code of Conduct* (<http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code>). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: Cheating; Fabrication or Falsification; Plagiarism; Abuse of Academic Materials; Complicity in Academic Dishonesty; Falsifying Grade Reports; and Misrepresentation to Avoid Academic Work. Consistent with the Disciplinary Procedures described in the *Student Code of Conduct*, any student found committing acts of academic dishonesty in this course will receive a failing final grade and will be reported to the the University Judicial Officer.

GRADE CHECK FORMS:

Students participating in various campus organizations, intercollegiate athletics, or as a condition of scholarship receipt may be required to solicit mid-semester evaluations of their performance-to-date in their courses. Such “Grade Check” Forms will only be signed during my Office Hours. The Teaching Assistant is not authorized to sign Grade Check Forms. Please plan accordingly.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

In compliance with *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* (FERPA), all identifying course materials, including graded papers and exam scores, will be provided directly to each student via *Blackboard* and will not be posted, displayed, or otherwise made available in a public forum. Although students may sign a FERPA Waiver consenting to the release of educational records to a parent, guardian, counselor, etc., the grades or progress of any student in this course will **NOT** be discussed with anyone but that student— except as necessary with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities or the Judicial Officer.

DISCLAIMER: Everything in this syllabus is subject to change as needs and circumstances develop. Any and all changes will be announced in class and posted on *Blackboard* and students are responsible for these revisions as announced.

COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED READINGS:

UNIT 1: The Historical, Theoretical, and Research Foundations of Family Sociology

<i>Date</i>	<i>Class #</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment Due</i>
T	8/25	1	<i>Introduction</i>
Th	8/27	2	Preface (p. xxv) Chapter 1
T	9/1	3	<i>The History of the Family</i> Chapter 2 Polgreen 2010
Th	9/3	4	
F	9/4		<i>SAP I: Family Tree</i>

UNIT 2: Social Structural Variations Within and Between Families

T	9/8	5	<i>Gender & Sexuality in Families</i> Chapter 3 Chapter 6 (pp. 175-190)
Th	9/10	6	
F	9/11		<i>SAP 2: Birthday Cards</i>
T	9/15	7	<i>Families and the Economy</i> Chapter 4 Sultan Ahmed & Bould 2004
Th	9/17	8	
T	9/22	9	<i>Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Families</i> Chapter 5
Th	9/24	10	
MIDTERM EXAMINATION 1			
T	9/29	11	1 st Attempt <u>Window: Su 9/27-T 9/29</u> Retake Window: Th 10/1-M 10/5

UNIT 3: Partnership, Marriage, and Family Life

Th 10/1 12	<i>Dating, Courtship, and Marriage</i>	Chapter 6 (pp.190-204) Chapter 7 (pp.208-221)
T 10/6 13		Kimmel 2008
Th 10/8 14		Chapter 7 (pp. 222-242)
F 10/9		SAP 3: Love Song Lyrics
T 10/13 15	<i>Work and Families</i>	Chapter 8 (+ <i>Missing Text on BB</i>) Yavorsky <i>et al.</i> 2015
Th 10/15 16		
T 10/20 17	FALL BREAK—No Class	
Th 10/22 18		Coontz 2013
T 10/27 19	<i>Children and Parents</i>	Chapter 9
Th 10/29 20		
F 10/30		SAP 4: Fatherhood Images
T 11/3 21	<u><i>Grandparenthood</i></u>	Chapter 10
	MIDTERM EXAMINATION 2	
Th 11/5 22	1 st Attempt Window: <u>Th 11/5-Su 11/8</u> Retake Window: T 11/10-Sa 11/14	

UNIT 4: Instability, Social Change, and the Family Institution

T	11/10	23	<i>Family and Spousal Violence</i>	Chapter 11 Lee <i>et al.</i> 2015
Th	11/12	24		
T	11/17	25	<i>Divorce and Union Dissolution</i>	Chapter 12 Paul 2010
Th	11/19	26		
F	11/20			<i>SAP 5: Celebrity Divorce</i>
T	11/24	27	<i>Remarriage and Blended Families</i>	Chapter 13 Gootman 2012
Th	11/26	28	THANKSGIVING—<i>No Class</i>	
T	12/1	29	<i>Families and Social Policy</i>	Chapter 14 Scott <i>et al.</i> 2005
Th	12/3	30		
F	12/4			<i>SAP 6: Presidential Proposals</i>
T	12/8	31	<i>Social Change and the Family Institution</i>	Amato 2004
Th	12/10	32	<i>Course Conclusion</i>	

FINAL EXAMINATION WINDOW:
**MONDAY DECEMBER 14TH —
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16TH**
(University Scheduled Time:
Monday 12/14, 3:30 –5:30 PM)