Sociology 3638-001 (3cr)

**Families in Society**

(aka, Sociology of Marriage & Family)

Fall, 2009

University of Utah

Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 10:45-12:05

Location: BEHS 116

**Professor Kim Korinek**

Office: 333 Social and Behavioral Sciences Building

Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 2-3 pm, or by appointment

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“In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.”

~Alex Haley

**Course Overview:** Families are diverse and changing social institutions that influence our wellbeing, social relationships, and position in society. The families we live with and the family roles we fulfill influence who we are and who we are becoming. Our belonging to a particular family defines our social status, roles and responsibilities, and our access to resources and opportunities. In addition, our social class, sexual orientation, gender, religious affiliation, race, and ethnicity each inform our decisions about family, such as whether to marry, whom to marry, how many children to have, and how to divide household labor. Many of the decisions we make about family, in turn, influence our social position, workforce opportunities, and access to public resources.

In this course we will use the sociological imagination to explore and analyze families in historical and international perspective. We will highlight the diverse and changing definitions of family, with a specific focus on the intersection of macro-level social change and change in family structure, roles, and ideologies. We will address how economic systems, culture, class structure and public policies influence the character of family life and create changes in the form and function of families across time and space.

Most of our readings, lectures and discussions will focus locally—on families in the U.S. and our own communities. However, we will also take a global perspective on families. This international perspective will allow us to consider how different social and cultural circumstances, and the forces of globalization, influence families in the U.S. and countries across the world. By considering the similarities and differences across families internationally we will gain a more complete understanding of families as socially-constructed institutions conditioned by social and economic structures.

**Course Readings:** There is one required textbook for this course, as well as a series of required readings that will be available via WebCT/blackboard. The required text, available for purchase at the University Bookstore, is *Diversity in Families* (8th edition), by Maxine Baca Zinn & Stanley Eitzen (abbreviated BZE in reading schedule).

The various articles located on WebCT/Blackboard are also required reading. You must use a computer with Adobe Acrobat reader to access these articles. If questions arise regarding use of WebCT/Blackboard please contact the campus helpdesk (581-4000).
**Course Expectations and Grading Scheme:** To create a participatory and respectful atmosphere in the classroom, my expectations for you are as follows:

- To arrive to class on time, and on a regular basis. It will be impossible to do well in this course without attending regularly (please inform me if you have a university-approved function or a medical/family emergency preventing your attendance).
- To complete the assigned readings for the day.
- To participate in classroom activities—as an active listener, active discussant, and active, respectful, and collaborative member of learning groups.
- To complete the required writing assignments on time. I will not accept late work.
- To show courtesy & respect to fellow students during all classroom activities.
- To prevent disruptions by turning off mobile phones, beepers, and putting away devices, newspapers, & other distractions. Use of laptop computers in class is not allowed.
- To follow the University of Utah code for student conduct (see below).

**Assessment of Learning and Assignment of Grades:** Your final grade in the course will be based upon your performance on the following 5 requirements:

- 2 Reading Reflection Papers - paper & lead discussion (2, 2-3 page papers, 10% each): (20%)
- Test 1: In class, September 24: (20%)
- Test 2: In class, November 3: (20%)
- Family History Interview and Essay (approx. six, double-spaced pages): November 24: (20%)
- Test 3: Exam week - December 16, regular classroom, 10:30-12:30: (20%)

**Reading Reflection Papers:** In the first week of class, students will sign-up for a group. Your group will work together on in-class activities and the group members will be assigned the same class readings for which you will write reflection papers and lead class discussion. The reflection papers are to be your own individual, independent work. Each student will hand in his/her own paper on the designated date. Group members may work together to develop discussions or class activities around their assigned articles. Be creative in thinking of questions or activities that will engage your classmates. Due dates and assigned articles for each group are included in the “schedule of reading and course work” below.

**Tests:** Will be closed book, mixed format (multiple choice, short answer, essay). They will take place in class (1 & 2) and during exam week. More information will be provided in the week before the test.

**Family History Interview & Essay:** For this assignment you will interview an older generation family member (or friend) in order to learn about his/her family-related experiences of dating/courtship, cohabitation/marriage, childbearing/adoption, and/or divorce/separation/widowhood. In your interview you should aim to discover how the time period and cultural, racial-ethnic or religious group membership influenced your interviewee's experience as a child/parent/partner/spouse. Following your interview, you will write a 5-6 page paper in which you discuss your findings in light of theories of family and subsequent historical changes in family structure, expectations of family relationships and roles. More detailed instructions are attached to the syllabus.
The final calculated points correspond to letter grades as follows:

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**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Students’ Rights and Responsibilities:** In order to maintain a positive, civil environment for learning I expect that all students will strive to meet the goals described in the University of Utah’s Student Code, which states “the mission of the University of Utah is to educate the individual and to discover, refine and disseminate knowledge. The University supports the intellectual, personal, social and ethical development of members of the University community. These goals can best be achieved in an open and supportive environment that encourages reasoned discourse, honesty, and respect for the rights of all individuals. Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.”

Following the Student Code, I adopt a zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct in this course. “Academic misconduct,” according to the University of Utah Student Code, “includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.” For detailed definitions and possible academic sanctions please see: [http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html](http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html).

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS & COURSE WORK**

**UNIT 1 - DEFINING & STUDYING FAMILIES**

**Week 1 (August 25 & 27): Images, Ideals and Myths of Family**

- BZ&E: Chapter 1
- Gittins, “The Family in Question.” (WebCT)

**Week 2 (September 1 & 3): How Do Social Scientists Study Families?**
o Pagnini & Morgan, “Racial Differences in Marriage and Childbearing.” (WebCT)

UNIT 2 - FAMILY DIVERSITY & INEQUALITY IN U.S. HISTORY

Week 3 (September 8 & 10): History of Family Change: Pre-Industrial Era to mid-20th century

  o BZ&E: Chapter 2
  o Mintz, “Huck’s Raft” (WebCT)
o Bernard, “The Good Provider Role: Its Rise and Fall.” (WebCT)

  [GROUP 1: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Huck’s Raft - due Sept 8]

Week 4 (September 15 & 17): The Historical Making of Family Diversity & Division

  o BZ&E: Chapter 3
  o Thornton Dill, “Fictive Kin, Paper Sons and Compadrazgo.” (WebCT)
o Moran, “Antimiscegenation Laws and the Enforcement of Racial Boundaries.” (WebCT)

  [GROUP 2: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Fictive Kin...” due Sept 15]

Week 5 (September 22 & 24): Families, economic structure, and social class

  o BZ&E: Chapter 5
  o Lareau, “Invisible Inequality: Social Class & Childrearing in Black & White Families.” (WebCT)

  ***TEST 1: Thursday, September 24***

UNIT THREE - ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS, COHABITATION & MARRIAGE

Week 6 (September 29 & October 1): Intimacy & Mate Selection

  o BZ&E: Chapter 7
  o England & Thomas, “Decline of the Date and Rise of the Hook-up.” (WebCT)
o Smock, “Cohabitation in the US: An Appraisal of Research Themes, Findings and Implications.” (WebCT)

  [GROUP 3: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Decline of the Date...” due Sept 29]

Week 7 (October 6 & 8): Marriage Trends: Cohabitation, Marriage Postponed & Marriage Foregone

  o BZ&E: Chapter 8
  o Edin et al., “A Peek Inside the Black Box: What Marriage Means for Poor Unmarried Parents.” (WebCT)
o Cherlin, “Deinstitutionalization of Marriage.” (WebCT)

  [GROUP 4: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Peek Inside the Black Box - due Oct 6]
FALL BREAK (October 12-16)

UNIT 4 - FERTILITY & PARENTHOOD

Week 8 (October 20 & 22): Parenting & Reproductive Politics

  o BZ&E: Chapter 9
  o Solinger, "Race, Class & Reproductive Politics in American History"
  o Jencks, "Do Poor Women Have a Right to Bear Children?"

  [GROUP 5: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Do Poor Women…” - due Oct 21]

Week 9 (October 27 & 29): Single Parenting & New Forms of Parenting

  **October 29 - Attend Siciliano Forum Session on Intergenerational Relations and Global Aging. Information TBA.

  o McClanahan, “Life Without Father.” (WebCT)
  o Stacey and Biblarz, "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?" (WebCT)

  [GROUP 1: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Life without Father” - due Oct 27]

UNIT 5 - WORK, FAMILY & FAMILY CONFLICT

***TEST 2: Tuesday, November 3***

Week 10 (November 3 & 5): Work-Family Balance & the Second Shift

  o Bianchi,” Maternal Employment and Time with Children.” (WebCT)
  o Tichenor, "Maintaining Men's Dominance." (WebCT)

Week 11 (November 10 & 12): Violence in Families

  o BZ&E: Chapter 10
  o Atkinson et al., "For Women, Breadwinning Can Be Dangerous." (WebCT)


Week 12 (November 17 & 19): Divorce and Remarriage

  o BZ&E: Chapter 11
  o Coontz, “Origins of Modern Divorce.” (WebCT)
  o Sayer & Bianchi, “Women’s Economic Independence & the Probability of Divorce.” (WebCT)

UNIT 6 - FAMILY POLICY & NEW FORMS OF FAMILY DIVERSITY

Week 13 (November 24): Family Policy - Family Leave & Childcare
  o BZ&E: Chapter 13
  o Armenia and Gerstel, "Family Leave, FMLA and Gender Neutrality." (WebCT)

  ***FAMILY HISTORY ESSAY DUE - Tuesday, November 24th***

  **November 26th - Happy Thanksgiving**

Week 14 (December 1 & 3): Family Policy - Welfare Reform & Marriage Promotion
  o Cherlin, "Should the Government Promote Marriage?" (WebCT)
  o Hofferth, “Did Welfare Reform Work?” (WebCT)
  o Chase Lansdale et al, "Mothers' Transitions from Welfare to Work." (WebCT)

  [GROUP 5: Reflection Paper/Discussion on “Should Government Promote Marriage - due Dec 1]

Week 15 (December 8 & 10): Emergent Families in the Global Era
  o BZ&E: Chapter 12
  o Fuscaldo, “What Makes a Parent?” (WebCT)
  o Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, "I'm Here but I'm There." (WebCT)

  ***Test 3: Finals Week - Wednesday December 16th, 10:30-12:30***
A major goal of this course is to arrive at a better understanding of how social and historical contexts influence the formation of families and family relationships. For this assignment you will interview one older adult over the age of 60(preferably a family member) who came of age in a distinct historical era - perhaps the Great Depression; WWII and the post-war 1950s; the 1960s era of women's liberation and sexual freedom; the racial, social and class conflicts of the Vietnam war era. The content of your interview will focus on a particular set of family expectations, experiences, and/or relationships as experienced in this time period.

The Interview
The person you interview may be a man or woman from your immediate or extended family or the broader community (e.g., neighborhood, school, church). He or she should be at least 60 years old, and you should place his or her major life events (birth, schooling, first job, first marriage, childbearing) in historical context. You should plan ahead in selecting an appropriate interviewee, asking his/her permission to conduct & audio record the interview, and finding a convenient time and place for the interview. I anticipate that your interview will last ~60 minutes, but it may be longer depending on your interviewee and subject matter.

There is a wide range of subjects that you can focus upon in your interview. Remember that you should choose a focus—don’t attempt to collect an entire life history—and that focus should relate to family. Some potential topics that you might focus on are:

- dating (what age did he/she start dating; 'rules' of dating for men and women, what were dates like and what were some memorable dates, criteria for choosing a spouse);
- immigration experiences and their impact on family life;
- weddings and other ceremonies (e.g., traditions and role of family in events);
- marital relationships (strain, happiness, reasons for marrying or staying single);
- childbearing (when children were born, issues around non-marital pregnancy, childbirth experience, ideal number, how decisions were made about fertility);
- raising children (e.g., child rearing philosophy, gender socialization of children, spending time with children, disciplining children);
- balancing family and labor force participation (e.g., labor force participation when children are young, reasons for combining family and career, leaving work to care for children);
- the division of household chores (e.g., who was responsible for which chores, house/paid work done by children, conflict over housework, meaning of housework);
- divorce;
- relationships with extended family members (e.g., visiting with family, holiday rituals, living with extended family);
- historic events and their impact on family life (e.g., influence of war, depression, natural disaster, involuntary migration).
In formulating your interview questions, you should aim to address the ways that social structure has influenced your subject’s family life and ideas about the importance of family and proper roles of men, women, and children in families. What does your subject believe are the opportunities, limitations and pressures related to families faced by women/men of their background? What expectations have peers and family upheld his/her life? What does he/she feel is the “proper” role and position for women/men in the labor market, politics, family, and the community? How have social class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion or other aspects of social position constrained or facilitated opportunities in their lives? It would be impossible for your interview and write-up to cover the entire spectrum of your interviewees’ experiences and beliefs pertinent to family life. The interview should be relatively focused and build incrementally on information revealed in the interview.

Keep in mind that a good interview involves several skills. It requires careful planning and forethought, good verbal and nonverbal communication, development of rapport, thoughtful and sensitive probing, and careful listening.

**The Write-Up**
In addition to summarizing aspects of your subjects’ family lives using a sociological, comparative framework, your paper should meet to two analytical requirements: 1) An analysis of your subjects’ families in light of concepts, trends and research presented in class; and 2) A comparison of your subject’s family and experiences as compared to the present time and/or people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

***Family History Analysis paper is due on November 24th. It should not exceed six pages (typed, double-spaced).***