



SOC 295: Marriage and the Family



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Office Hours

MTWRF 10am-11am; 2pm-4pm or by Appointment

In about half (47%) of all marriages, one or both people have been married before

Almost 2 million couples marry each year and 1 million divorce (most divorces w/

Average bride age:
1960-20.3
2007=25.5
Nigeria=17
Denmark=30.2

It goes far toward making a man faithful to let him understand you think him so, & he that does not suspect I will deceive him, give me a right to do it (Seneca)

He that is not Jealous, is not in Love (St. Augustine)

Romantic love is an illusion. Most of us discover this truth at the end of a love affair or else when the sweet emotions of love lead us into marriage and then turn down their flames (Sir Thomas More)

By all means marry; if you get a good wife, you'll be happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher (Socrates)

Average groom age:
1960-22.8
2007=27
Nigeria=23

Average American wedding costs \$15,000
Engagements average of 9 mths

Divorce in America
Females=33 years
Males=36 years
Length= 7 years

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- ◆ If you marry wisely, marry your equal (Ovid)
 - ◆ In a time when nothing is more certain than change, the commitment of two people to one another has become difficult and rare. Yet, by its scarcity, the beauty and value of this exchange have only been enhanced. (Robert Sexton)
 - ◆ The most dangerous food is wedding cake (American Proverb)
 - ◆ Never go to bed mad. Stay up and fight. ~(Phyllis Diller, *Phyllis Diller's Housekeeping Hints*, 1966)
 - ◆ Marriages requires commitment.....then again so does insanity (author unknown)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Williams, Brian K, Stacey C. Sawyer and Carl M. Wahlstrom. 2009. *Marriages, Families and Intimate Relationships A Practical Introduction* 2nd edition. Pearson Education, Inc.

This is the main textbook for the course. This book is written in an engaging format and full of practical timely information on the status of marriages and families in America. The book also provides students with the possibility of online inventories regarding relationships at www.relate-institute.org. These materials will not be required for this course.

Moodle documents

Because family life is "real" I have collected contemporary reports, scholarly journal articles and news stories regarding the topics that we will be discussing. These readings are listed in the syllabus. They are all available on Moodle, they are organized by date they are DUE (meaning you should have read these materials before class). In Moodle some of them are discussed as just for your information (as in you do not have to read them you may just find them interesting) others are required. Those that you are not expected to read are listed as (FYI) These materials will facilitate class participation and are for the most part easy reading.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/PURPOSE

This course introduces basic sociological research in the area of marriage and family, helping students become familiar with topics of concern to the discipline. The course also examines the dynamics of family relationships so that material can be useful to students in their own lives. In general, the emphasis will be on family strengths and differences as well as family problems. By the end of the course students should have a basic understanding of research on this subject and a comprehension of related contemporary issues. This course examines sociology of the family from a primarily micro perspective addressing issues of the family and location in society from the vantage point of the individual. Other courses on the sociology of the family address the more macro issues of family in society.

SPECIAL NOTES

Class Participation

Class participation is expected in this course. Sociology is animated and given life through personal experience. So try to come to class with your experience and viewpoints and an open mind. Throughout the semester this class may upset you, frustrate you and at the same time inspire you. Open up and share with the class your experiences, views, opinions and thoughts. Also, remain courteous to your classmates while they do the same. I will not tolerate mockery of any student for participating in my class. This class should feel like a "safe" place to ask your questions and express your opinions regarding marriage and family life and to build and understanding of the same.

Course Evaluation

Hope College expects all students to assess each course in an effort to continuously improve student learning. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to assess how well this course met its stated goals. Your responses will be kept anonymous, but I will take the collective results seriously in thinking about how to provide Hope students the best possible education. Your responses matter. You are urged to participate in this important process.

Disability Policy

Any student whose disability falls within Americans with Disability Act guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services and/or Academic Support Center. If you have questions, call Student Development at extension 7800.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADES

Exam (100 points)

The first exam will cover all class material, supplemental Moodle material readings (chapters 1-7) and lectures covered up to the time of the exam. Questions may include short answers, essay, matching, true/false, and multiple choice formats.

Final Exam (150 points)

The final exam will be cumulative. However the exam will primarily cover class material supplemental Moodle material readings (chapter 8-16) and lectures after the first exam. Questions again may include short answer, essay, matching, true/false, and multiple choice formats

Class Participation/homework (75 points)

Class participation will encompass periodic homework assignments as well as participation in activities in class and will be graded primarily on a full credit/no credit basis. If class discussion uncovers a majority of students not being prepared to participate pop quizzes may be given on a graded basis as class participation.

- Your very first class participation point is available now. On our Moodle site on the bottom block you will find a questionnaire. This questionnaire is set up as anonymous I will not know which of you provided which response. I will however be able to see if you have completed the questionnaire. We will use the responses to compare our class to national studies we go over in class throughout the semester. You will receive 5 points of class participation for completing the questionnaire by September 7, 2009. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete

Case Studies (50 points)

Throughout the semester you are expected to answer 5 case studies. There are a total of 9 that you may choose from. These case studies are listed as the names of the actors in the case study; they are due in class on the day they are listed on the syllabus. These case studies should be answered by a 1-2 page double spaced answer. This answer should be reasoned using information we have studied in class and any outside research or information that you may have acquired. Citations are acceptable but not required for the case studies.

Controversial Issue Paper (150 points)

In this research paper you will select a controversial issue facing contemporary marriages and/or family life. Examples might include (but are certainly not limited to) gay marriage, parents choosing to vaccinate or not vaccinate their children, whether or not one parent should stay home with young children, marriage ages, common law marriages, adoption laws, whether or not foster parents should be compensated, increased maternal age, May/December romances etc. Your paper must include at least 4 peer reviewed academic sources (academic books, journal articles) This paper should be 7-15 pages long and be double spaced in a reasonable font. Any citation strategy will be accepted as long as it is used consistently throughout the manuscript. The paper must contain at a minimum the following sections:

Introduction (1-2 pages). This portion should give a clear description of the issue you have selected and why it is important to be discussed. It should highlight and explain the two perspectives well and include the most prominent voices in the debate.

Position (1-3 pages). In this section you provide your perspective on this controversial issue. To back up your position you should include academic sources to back up your position with research that has been done. Your position should include both the benefit of your position on the issue being adopted and the potential consequences if it is not.

Opposition (1-3 pages). This portion must provide an honest and objective analysis of the research and position that is counter to your view on the issue. You should include academic sources in this portion similarly as your position section.

Analysis (2-4 pages). This section should provide a description of where the issue is moving outside of what you think. Where the research seems to be pointing and the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the argument. This should also provide the limitations you found to the research you used as sources and any potential biases you see in those researching the issue.

Future work (1-3 pages). In this section you should draw on holes in research that you discovered and suggest a way to fill that gap. This should provide an idea on a study or research project you feel would provide more knowledge on your topic.

Conclusions (1-2 pages). In the final section you should conclude with discussing how you felt before undertaking the issue, your personal reasons for interest in the topic and any ways that your opinions may have changed or surprises you encountered while researching your idea

Controversial Issue Schedule The paper will be graded on a rotating schedule summarized below. On each hand in I will provide feedback to help you in your final project.

Paper Topic (5 points)

Initial bibliography (10 points) This should include at least 4 peer reviewed academic sources and at least 10 overall sources as a start to the project

Outline (15 points)

Rough draft (20 points)

Final Draft (100 points)

Giving Reality TV a "Reality check" (75 points)

Reality television it seems has overtaken our society! Many of these programs address marriage and family life. In this project we will examine these "real" families from a sociological perspective.

Wife Swap is a show that appears on ABC on Friday evenings. This show is also on Lifetime television every day from 2-4pm (check listings in case this changes from the writing of the syllabus). You will analysis one episode of this program using the following guidelines.

Their position in the Family Life Map- on September 18 we will be going over the Circumplex Model of Family Life. You also have a reading on this model that is available on Moodle. You will need to rate both families on your chosen episode for their Cohesion (disengaged, connected, cohesive, enmeshed) and flexibility (Rigid, structured, flexible, chaotic) and discuss their family communication style. Lastly, you will locate both families on the family map.

Rule changes- each of the women will get to change the "rules" of the family she is visiting. You should state your beliefs on the rule changes they implement and if you think the suggestions were a positive or negative change for the other family. You should think about the topics in class and use the research we discuss to back up your response. You should also list what rules you would impose for each of the families.

Final thoughts- in this section you will discuss whether you think each family is better off for having participated in this program. How did each change? Also include your views on what the future has in store for each of the families. Lastly, give your over all perspective on the program as a whole.

Grading- you will be graded on your application of the circumplex model, incorporation of class material into your response and the clarity and quality of your writing.

FINAL GRADE

Your numeric grade = $\frac{\text{points you attained}}{\text{points available (600)}}$

Grades will be determined using the following scale:

100-93	A	(558 points)	76-73	C	(438 points)
92-90	A-	(540 points)	72-70	C-	(420 points)
89-87	B+	(522 points)	69-67	D+	(402 points)
86-83	B	(498 points)	66-63	D	(378 points)
82-80	B-	(480 points)	62-60	D-	(360 points)
79-77	C+	(462 points)	<60	F	

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Subject	Reading	Moodle Reading	DUE
Sept 1	Introduction	Chap 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Clair- could your pillow talk lead you to jail • Marriage laws (just FYI) 	
Sept 3	Research and Theory of Family Science	Chap 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Circumplex Model • Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (complicated-read 2nd) 	
Sept 18	Research and Theory con'd		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout on Theoretical Frameworks 	
Sept 10	Gender	Chap 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing Gender (just FYI) 	
Sept 15	Love	Chap 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romeo and Juliet, Baghdad • Kelsey Peterson • Mathew Koso • Koso • Lisa Clark • Infatuation vs Love 	
Sept 17	Love and social cognition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love is not enough • Jealousy • Bad Boy doesn't get girl • Marry smart 	PAPER TOPIC JOE AND MARILYN
Sept 22	Attraction AND Dating	Chap 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saudi Court refuses to block • Court refuses annulment • Saudi girl wins appeal • America's best and worst cities for dating (FYI) • Finding love the scientific way • Pick up lines scholarly 	BRAD AND ANGELINA

			article (FYI)	
Sept 24	Dating, cohabitating and hooking up and interdependency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooking up hanging out and hoping for Mr. Right • Hooking up in College (A Guy's perspective) • A Case for Courtship • Episode guide for ABC "Hooking Up" • Wedding costs fireman job • Should we live together? 	JOEL AND NICHOLE
Sept 29	Power and Conflict	186-206		SID AND NANCY
Oct 1	Communication	206-219		
Oct 6	Sexuality	Chap 7	<p>For Child Trend readings just the graphs will suffice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Trend Fact Sheet 1 • Child Trend Fact Sheet 2 • Child Trend Fact Sheet 3 • Child Trend brief 1 • Child Trend brief 2 • Fraternal twins • Networks (FYI not required) 	JESSICA AND NICK
Oct 8	CATCH UP/REVIEW	CATCH UP/REVIEW		PAPER SOURCES DUE
Oct 13	EXAM 1	EXAM 1		

Oct 15	MARRIAGE	Chap 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage quiz • Legal and economic (FYI) • Us Marriage Laws • Covenant marriage • Covenant Marriage wiki • Cousin couples principles • Cousin marriage in the US • When Cousins get married 	CHUCK AND TAWNY
Oct 20	NO CLASS	NO CLASS		
Oct 22	Adjusting to marriage		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sleeping separately • in-laws • boomerang generation 	OUTLINE DUE
Oct 27	Variations:	Chap 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Till Work do Us Part • Home alone together • Joy of living apart • Marie Claire article • State laws • Gay marriage immigration • Polling report (FYI) • Common Law 	
Oct 29	Variations communal group & open marriages		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communes 	
Nov 3	To parent or not to parent	Chap 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs and rewards of children • Big broods • 18th child • bumpaholics • We are childless • No kids, please • She's a stupid moo 	

Nov 5	Parenting prevention and acquisition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive summary • Delay • Rarely kept • Pledge withdrawal • Pledges and STDs • Safe haven dad • Parent's worst nightmare • Teen birth rate • Pregnancy boom 	FIRST DRAFT DUE
Nov 10	Single parenting	Chap 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unwed moms hit record • Single Mothers-poverty 	
Nov 12	Parenting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obama fatherhood • What works in fatherhood • On children 	
Nov 17	Issues in Parenting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose in charge here? • Today's Tykes • case against breast feeding 	
Nov 19	Managing Economic resources	Chap 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Opt out revolution • Women still march to work • Elite college motherhood • Warmth and competence 	
Nov 24	Stress and infidelity	446-466 482-488	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jani • Landscape of infidelity • Cheating gene • Prison visits 	BARBIE AND KEN
Nov 26	NO CLASS	HAPPY TURKEY DAY!		THANKSGIVING BREAK
Dec 1	Domestic Abuse	467-481	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teen child abuse victim 	MARK AND JENNY

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent abuse • My son's trail of sparkles 	
Dec 3	Divorce	Chap 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most married woman • Professor • sued for grounding 	FINAL PAPER DUE
Dec 8	Maintainin g and repairing relationship s			ROSEANNE AND DAN
Dec 10	Remarriag e	Chap 15		REALITY CHECK DUE
Dec 14 @ 12:30	FINAL EXAM	FINAL EXAM		