

HOPE COLLEGE

SYLLABUS  
SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY - SOC/SW 232  
SPRING 2008

Dr. James C. Piers

Ext 7553

Office hours: Appointments may be made through our office manager

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will use a social scientific perspective to introduce you to the study of the family. We will examine contemporary theory and research findings on family life as they relate to trends in family form, issues, problems, and functioning in American society, as well as family organization in different ethnic, cultural, and historic settings.

Topics covered will include theories of family change, diverse family forms, mate selection theories, sociological functions of dating, premarital and marital sexual behavior, satisfaction and adjustment in marriage, parenting, intra-family violence, and family disorganization.

**METHODS OF THE COURSE**

Lecture, discussion, demonstration, student treatment groups, role play and guest speakers will be used. Students will be expected to complete all readings as assigned and participate in class discussion and demonstration. This is a professional social work practice class and your attendance will be expected. A student with over two absences in class and the group will be penalized by a reduction in grade.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Eshleman, J. Ross, *The Family: An Introduction*. Boston: Allen and Bacon, Inc., 2006.

It is critical that you read the required materials as we progress in this course

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of this family course. (Outcome measure: tests)
2. Practice with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. (Outcome measures: Discussion, tests)
3. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities. (Outcome measures: tests)
4. Evaluate research studies on relevant aspects of family functioning with the intent of applying the findings to social work practice courses, and to evaluate practice interventions. (Outcome measure: tests)

## **LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION**

In this course, you will be expected to utilize the theoretical knowledge you have gleaned from several of your core and cognate courses. Biology and the social sciences will help you understand various client systems. Several courses will help you to understand diversity and populations at risk. Natural and social science research methodology will help you evaluate intervention effectiveness. Your liberal arts study of religion and philosophy will help you understand the values, ethics and ethical dilemmas encountered in generalist practice. Your written, verbal and critical thinking skills, honed by all the Hope College courses, will aid you in analyzing and facilitating solutions and interventive strategies in the cases to be presented during the semester. In this course, you will continue your study of intervention strategies for generalist practice. You will utilize information on each stage of the problem-solving model from Social Interventions I to aid you in developing intervention strategies including those that will promote social and economic justice for client systems.

## **HUMAN DIVERSITY**

Your studies of foreign languages, the arts, sociology, political science, economics, psychology, and history offer insights into diverse populations, their cultural beginnings, how needs of diverse groups are or are not met, and how diverse individuals and groups may behave and function.

## **SOCIAL WORK VALUES AND ETHICS AND THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**

It is specifically in the practice of social work where your professional and personal values and ethics and your Christian perspectives are integrated and converge or battle one another and cause personal strife.

## **POPULATIONS-AT-RISK AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

In this course, at-risk populations will be discussed and examined with a focus on defining these populations, understanding and assessing the system dynamics and institutions that encourage or perpetuate the risk and those that may reduce risk.

Essential to social work practice is the promotion of social and economic justice. Examination of organizations, services and resources that empower at-risk groups and promote social and economic justice will also be undertaken.

Finally, interventions that may empower at-risk populations and the impact of these interventions will be considered throughout the course.

### **ABSENCES**

The course is a part of the learning community and each participant has a responsibility to herself or himself to engage in the learning, and each participant has a responsibility to others engaged in the process and to treat other learners with respect. An absence may be an indication of disrespect for others and/or an unwillingness to recognize the communitarian nature of the process.

I am making the assumption that you are moving into a professional career path. Showing up on time and ready to do the work are parts of the job. Your behavior in the class tells me what you have learned about professionalism and what you will do on the job.

Absences will result in deducting a percentage from your cumulative class grade of up to 10 per cent. The same applies to being late for class.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

Jan 8	<b>Theories of Mate Selection</b> The pool of eligible Homogamy in age, race, religion, education, IQ, residential propinquity	<b>Ch. 7</b>
Jan 10	Innate, biological theories Parental image theories Complimentary needs theory Values theory Social exchange theory Role theory SVR theory	<b>Ch. 8</b>

Jan 15	<b>Sociological Functions of Dating</b> Dating Steady dating Engagement Marriage Non-traditional patterns	
Jan 17-22	<b>Pre-Marital and Non-Marital Sexual Behavior</b>	<b>Ch. 9</b>
Jan 24-29	<b>Satisfaction and Adjustment in Marriage</b> Sex and Sexual Difficulties in Marriage	<b>Ch. 10</b>
<b>Feb 5</b>	<b>TEST 1</b>	
Jan 29-Feb 7	<b>Marriage in Middle and Late Years</b> Middle years: Prime of life and years of adjustment Later years families common problems socialization retirement death widows and widowers	<b>Ch. 13</b>
Feb 7-12	<b>Problems and the value of parenting</b> Transition or crisis Roles of mothers and father Value of parenting Pros and cons of parenting Family size and birth order  <b>Young Parents</b> Concerns for young parents Concerns over unwed parenthood Consequences of birth outside of marriage	<b>Ch. 11</b>
Feb 12-14	<b>Family Violence</b> Spousal assault perpetrator characteristics victim characteristics why do the victims often stay or return social interventions: protection, shelter, transition, and treatment  Child abuse preconditions WAR cycle	<b>Ch. 14</b>

programs and prevention

Feb 14-21

**Family Disorganization: Divorce and Death**

**Ch. 15**

Divorce

rates

reasons

consequences for the adults

children's responses to parental divorce

divorce mediation services

Death and dying

theories of grieving

more about widows and widowers

assisted suicide

**Feb 21**

**Spousal Conflict and Resolution**

**Feb 26**

**TEST 2**