

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

SOC. 251 SYLLABUS

Summer I 2013

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Department of Sociology

M-F
10:30-11:45 a.m.
Webster 102

I. Catalog Description

Family patterns, mate selection, parent-child interaction, socialization of roles, legal sanctions, trends in organization, functions.

II. Course Objectives

Family and marriage are ancient societal institutions, but particularly since the late 20th Century, they have been undergoing tremendous changes in their basic structures, functions and social significance, particularly in America. The traditional patriarchal nuclear family is reportedly no longer the most prevalent family structure in our society; egalitarian two paycheck nuclear families are more popularly found on the social scene today. Cohabitation is also definitely increasing especially among the younger generations, for whom, marriage and parenthood may be delayed or even avoided. And reportedly at least half of all children born in the 1980s and 1990s will be living in single-parent families sometime in their lives. Some of these single-parent families will be by choice and will involve children by adoption or by artificial insemination by a willing or anonymous donor. Reconstituted or step families will become familiar family structures as will same-sex unions.

Moreover, secondary institutions, like social media, hospitals, courts, stores, schools, etc., are performing more of the functions that were traditionally done by the nuclear or extended family in our society. These and other changing realities will be the focus of this introductory Sociology course on marriage & the family in America in general and in Hawai'i in particular. Especially examined will be:

a/the social aspects of marriage and the family, including the historical-cultural variations of these universal social institutions;

b/some pertinent Sociological theories about and related research on those institutions on primarily macro-and micro-levels of analyses;

c/social and personal reactions to love, dating, marriage, parenthood, and post-parenthood stages of marriage and family;

d/some of the institutional and relational dysfunctions associated with these two institutions, like domestic violence and substance abuse; and

e/the institutional alternatives and trends, including present and future social policies and programs affecting marriage and family life nationally and locally.

III. Course Methodology

This course approaches the sociological analysis of family and marriage on the introductory level from two combined teaching strategies: First, Chang's "Pathways" approach that stresses students' self-discovery about these two institutions through supervised peer teaching within a small group or taskforce structure. The second strategy involves students' collective use of research methods commonly used by Sociologists to study family and marriage, notably, the case study, photodocumentation, secondary data analysis, and participant-observation in the field.

Organized into taskforces, students will be expected first, to present orally to the class their collective results of their sociological research on some topic related to family and marriage. This topic may be an issue or problem of contemporary concern, like child abuse, interracial dating, or same-sex marriages. Data from local and national levels should be emphasized and presented via a power point format utilizing primarily 25 or more original photos. Photos from Internet are prohibited unless part of the free public domain. All such borrowed photos must be formally cited in the taskforce's bibliography. The maximum number of photos for the presentation is 30. A minimum of 3 handouts relating to the topic or issue is required along with the brochure for the presentation (See handout.)

Each taskforce member will also be expected to individually conduct a case study that presents his/her own reported assessments on 4 mandatory self-inventories affecting familial and marital success: love styles, self-esteem level, stress and anger profiles. A short autobiography w/ a bilateral, 3-generational family tree will also be required for this assignment. See myheritage.com or familyecho.com for examples of a family tree. (See handouts for details.)

Additionally, reaction papers and other written assignments, like chapter reviews using the Web's Puzzlemaker game format, will be assigned to primarily ensure students develop clear and effective verbal and written communication skills as a learning objective.

This course is NOT recommended for those students who are NOT able or willing to work in groups, since the course is designed to give a sociological insight to group dynamics and functions that parallel those within families and marriages and since the course grade is partly dependent on the students' collective efforts and peer evaluations. Nor is it recommended for those without access to computers and cameras.

Audiovisual material will be shown if possible and/or guest speakers will be invited to stimulate students' sociological imaginations and understanding of marriage and family at home and abroad.

Remember, students, since Chang uses her “Pathways” approach to teaching, the traditional lengthy lecturing format is at a minimum to ensure student interaction with the instructor and peers during class time.

Student compliance with the University’s STUDENT CONDUCT CODE is MANDATORY, especially as it relates to exams, attendance, civility, and plagiarism. The electronic recording of lectures without prior permission is prohibited.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Course Grading

To objectively evaluate students’ comprehension of the lectures and text materials, including handouts, videos, speaker’ presentations, grading is based on the following:

An objective midterm exam	25% of final grade
An objective, noncumulative final exam	25%
A 2-part case study w/ Part I being An autobiography w/ family tree and w/ Part II being the self-assessments on love styles, self esteem, stress and anger profiles	25%
A taskforce class photo documented Power point presentation	25%

A final course grade of “A” is based on an overall average of 4.0 for the above individually graded tasks. If there are NO overall averages of 4.0 in the class, then ONLY those with an overall average grade of 3.75 or higher will be considered for an “A” for the course. There will be NO plus or minus grades.

NO late exams will be accepted without valid written medical or legal justifications provided by a licensed doctor or legal authority.

A student’s failure to participate satisfactorily in taskforce activities will NEGATIVELY affect that student’s final grade; the student will NOT be given the grade earned by his/her taskforce for their class presentation. Instead that student will receive either a partial grade reduction or no grade at all, depending on the extent and quality of his/her contribution as assessed by the modal number of students in his/her taskforce. A student formally ejected from a taskforce will NOT be given opportunities to make up that portion of the course grade. There are NO extracredit assignments in this class.

B. Readings

Required text: Seccombe, Karen. 2012. Families & Their Social Worlds. N.Y.:
Pearson.

Additional mandatory readings will be distributed during the term.

V. CONSULTATION

Meetings with students regarding any aspect of the course
Can be arranged by appointment or on the following day and time:
Tuesday 12-1 p.m.

Office: Saunders

Telephone:

Email: deanna@hawaii.edu