

Sociology 120: Marriage and the Family

University of Wisconsin – Madison

Tues & Thurs, 9:30-10:45am

Location: Ingraham B10

Spring 2017

Instructor: Prof. Felix Elwert
 Office: 4426 Social Science Building
 Office Hours: Tue 3-4pm, Weds 4-5pm
 Email: elwert@wisc.edu

TA	Office Hours	Location	Email
Miriam Barcus	Mon 3:15-4:15pm, Thurs 11am-12pm	7102D Social Sciences	mbarcusTA@gmail.com
Won-Tak Joo	Weds 12:50-1:50pm, Thurs 12:20-1:30pm	7102 Social Sciences	wontak.joo@wisc.edu
Katie Zaman	Tuesday 11-1	2473 Social Sciences	zaman@wisc.edu

See section syllabi on the course website (canvas.wisc.edu) for section meeting times and locations, readings, and announcements.

Course Description. The family is a fundamental building block of social life in at least two senses. First, families provide the context in which individual lives unfold: they set the stage for birth, life, love, and death. In this sense, families are “private institutions.” Second, families have consequences for the greater good: they educate children and care for the elderly, but they also generate and perpetuate social inequalities. In this sense, families are “public institutions” that matter for society as a whole.

This course will examine families as private and as public institutions from the perspectives of family sociology and social demography. The course will focus primarily on aggregate patterns and historical trends within and between groups as defined by class, race, and gender, and less on individual experiences.

A major goal of this course is to learn about differences in family structure throughout history and in the contemporary United States. While it may be tempting to assume that there can only be one “best” or “natural” way to organize family life, research indicates that the family is constantly changing and adapting.

Sociology 120 is an introductory course designed for inquisitive students who are new to sociology. Seniors and other students with a background in social science are welcome, of course, but may alternatively wish to consider the more advanced family course Soc 640.

Note that Sociology 120 is “introductory” in the sense that the course lists no prerequisites in the course catalogue. “Introductory” does not mean “easy.”

FORMAT

Lectures: You should read all assigned material *before* class. Have your notes ready and be prepared to ask and answer questions. Lectures will draw attention to select issues from the required readings, but also present new material not covered in the textbook. You are responsible for all material covered in lecture in addition to everything covered in the required readings. To facilitate note taking during lecture, I will post lecture outlines on the course website a few hours before lecture. Please print these outlines and bring them to class. If you need to miss a lecture, be sure to get lecture notes from a classmate.

Record contact information of two classmates here:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Sections: Weekly discussion sections give you the opportunity to engage with the material more deeply. Section discussions are an integral part of this course, and section attendance is mandatory. You must complete all required readings prior to section. Your TA will distribute a separate section syllabus with further instructions. Sections are your time to shine.

REQUIREMENTS

There are five requirements for passing Soc 120: (1) Doing the readings, (2) section attendance and participation, (3) weekly online quizzes, (4) two news reflections, and (5) two midterm exams.

Readings:

The majority of your readings are drawn from the textbook:

Required: Cherlin, Andrew J. 2017. *Public and Private Families: An Introduction*, Eighth Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

All additional required and recommended readings are available on the course website at canvas.wisc.edu.

I have intentionally kept the required reading load for this course at a very moderate level (under 40 pages in most weeks). In return, I ask that you engage the material in depth. You may find it helpful to team up with a group of classmates to discuss the readings; the study questions at the end of each chapter in your textbook are an excellent place to start. We encourage you to contribute the fruits of your out-of-class discussions in lecture and in section. You will enjoy this class more and get a better grade.

I have further placed a number of accessible and well-written books on various topics on reserve at College Library. These books present topics that are covered in lecture but are not (exhaustively) covered in your textbook. I recommend that you take a look and read around. You'll find a complete bibliography on the last three pages of this syllabus.

Sections: Section is an important component of this course, accounting for 16% of your final grade (11% participation, 5% attendance).

Thoughtful *section participation* is key. You will be graded on the *quality*, and not just the frequency, of your section participation. You should prepare for section. Complete all readings in advance of section and contribute your questions, reflections, and observations. Engage your classmates creatively and constructively, and advance the discussion.

Section attendance is required. You may miss up to two section meetings without penalty, no questions asked. It is your responsibility to make up all missed work, to obtain any handouts distributed in class, and to borrow notes from a classmate. Your *attendance grade* will drop to 2% with your third absence, and to 0% with your fourth absence. Please note that 5% for attendance is a big deal: 5% can amount to a full letter grade of your final grade. Note that if you have a medical or other emergency that prevents you from attending several section meetings, email *both* Professor Elwert and your TA to notify us. **Sections begin on Thursday, September 14.**

Quizzes: Starting Monday, September 18, each week, you will complete a short online quiz on the course website (canvas.wisc.edu) before our Tuesday lecture. Quizzes will be posted Monday at 9:00am and close on Tuesday at 9:00am. Each quiz has 4 questions: 2 about the previous week, and 2 about the required readings for Tuesday. You will have one hour to complete the quiz. There are 10 quizzes over the course of the semester, of which we will count the best 8. There are no quizzes during exam weeks.

News Reflection: You will compose two short assignments on current news related to select topics in Soc 120, accounting for a total of 14% of your final grade (7% each). The purpose of this exercise is to connect what you have learned in class to what's going on in the world around you. For each reflection, you will find two news articles on a given topic from approved sources that have appeared after September 1, 2017. You will first summarize each article in up to two sentences and then write an insightful 300-word mini-essay relating your articles to the material you learned in class. Reports are due electronically at 9:15AM on the dates noted in the syllabus. *Late assignments will receive a grade of zero without exception.* Plan to submit your assignment well head of the deadline. Please see the instructions posted on the course website for details.

Exams: You will take two midterm exams, accounting for 60% of your final grade. All material presented in lecture and in your required readings is fair game. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions that emphasize concepts, facts, and mechanisms discussed in class and

in your readings. Additionally, each exam will include several fill-in-the-blank questions and two mini essays. The exams are non-cumulative. Since I appreciate that everybody may have a “bad day” once in a while, I will give greater weight to your better midterm score: your higher score will count more (35%) and your lower score will count less (25%). Note: Your online schedule will list a “final exam” time. Pay no attention to it. There is no “final exam” in Soc 120 after classes end.

No Make-Up Exams: Unfortunately, a class of this size cannot accommodate make-up exams. If students are compelled to miss the first exam because of serious illness, a serious family emergency, or a *required* university-sponsored activity, their second exam will simply count more. In other words, there is no penalty for missing the first exam. Nevertheless, I *strongly* recommend that you take it. Past experience suggests that it is a bad idea to skip the first midterm hoping for a better grade on the second—too much will ride on a single exam; besides, success requires practice. Students compelled to miss the second exam must demonstrate compelling cause *prior* to the exam or receive a score of zero on the missed second midterm.

Grading Summary:

<i>Exams:</i>	60%	35% for your higher midterm score, 25% for your lower score.
<i>Section Attendance:</i>	5%	Up to two absences without deductions, 2-0% thereafter.
<i>Section Participation:</i>	11%	Quality and preparedness are key.
<i>News Reflections</i>	14%	7% each; no late submissions for any reason.
<i>Weekly Quizzes</i>	10%	10 quizzes—we count your 8 best.
<i>Total</i>	100%	

Curve: Final grades will be curved to a median grade of B. Straight As are reserved for consistently excellent work. Experience suggests that approximately 15-20% of students will earn this distinction. Sustained effort is a prerequisite for a passing grade. Fs are individually earned and not the result of a curve.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Office Hours: Use them! This is your chance for one-on-one conversations with the professor and your TAs. Experience shows that many students neglect this resource. You don’t need an appointment to see the professor during office hours. I look forward to meeting you!

Grade disputes: You may contest exam grades *up to two weeks* after exams and assignments have been returned in section. Raise minor issues (e.g. computational errors in your score) with your TA. Any substantive concerns about the contents of your answer should be discussed with the professor.

Email Etiquette: Due to the large size of this class, please adhere to the following email etiquette. If you have questions or concerns, always check the course website and syllabus first.

If you can't find what you need there, contact your TA first. If issues remain, email me or come to my office hours.

Email is a professional communication tool, and proper form matters (e.g. salutation, syntax, signature). This website has examples and guidelines about emailing professors (the same courtesies should be shown for TAs): www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor. We try to respond to all emails within two business days.

Laptops, tablets, etc.: Students who wish to use a laptop, tablet, or other large electronic device for taking notes in class are required to sit in the front two rows.

Accommodations. Please send the professor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university's [web page](https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698) for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>.

Academic honesty. As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students at <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>.

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University's standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students' website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor or one of the TAs.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the professor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science.

Department learning objectives. Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology.

- *Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:* Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
- *See Things from a Global Perspective:* Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences among individuals. They understand the ways events and processes in one country are linked to those in other countries.

Course Outline

Subject to change; please monitor course announcements.

All non-textbook readings are available on the course website.

Do your readings in preparation for the listed date.

September

- 7 Introduction
Required: Cherlin, pp. 4-12
Required: Angier, "The Changing American Family."
- 12 Kinship & Course Logistics
Required: Cherlin, pp. 33-38
- 14 Early Family History
Required: Goldthorpe, *Family Life in Western Societies*, pp. 8-16
Recommended: Coontz, "What's Love Got To Do With It?"
Recommended: Goody, *The European Family*, Chapters 3-5
- 19 U.S. History I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 38-45
Required: Coontz, "The Evolution of American Families"
Recommended: Goldthorpe, *Family Life in Western Societies*, Chapter 2, pp.18-40
Recommended: Cherlin, "American Marriage in the Early 21st Century", pp. 33-43.
Quiz 1 due at 9am (Canvas)
- 21 U.S. History II
Required: Cherlin, pp 52-67
Required: Fischer and Hout. "The Family in Trouble: Since When? For Whom?"
Recommended: Cherlin, "American Marriage in the Early 21st Century", pp. 33-43.
- 26 Sociological Approaches to the Family & Research Methods
Required: Cherlin, pp. 13-31
Quiz 2 due at 9am
- 28 Gender
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 3
Required: Orenstein, "What's Wrong with Cinderella?"
Recommended: Maglaty, "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink"
Recommended: West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender"

October

- 3 Class, Status, and Families
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 4
Quiz 3 due at 9am
- 5 African American Families
Required: Cherlin pp. 46-49, 119-135
Recommended: Franklin, "African Americans and the Birth of Modern Marriage"
News Reflection #1 (Gender and Families) due at 9:15AM
- 10 Race, Interracial Marriage
Required: Cherlin, pp.49-52; 136-151
Quiz 4 due at 9am
- 12 Sexual Orientation
Required: Cherlin, pp. 155-167
Required: TBA
- 17 Sex
Required: Cherlin, pp. 168- 179; 184-186
Required: Wade, "The Promise and Peril of Hookup Culture."
Recommended: Wade and Heldman, "Hooking Up and Opting Out—Negotiating Sex in the First Year of College."
Recommended: Armstrong et al, "Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?"
No quiz this week
- 19 **Midterm I**
B10 Ingraham, normal class time.
- 24 Marriage and Cohabitation I
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 7
Quiz 5 due at 9am
- 26 Marriage and Cohabitation II
Required: Waite, "Does Marriage Matter?"
- 31 Work and Families I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 217-221; 256
Recommended: Bianchi, "Maternal Employment and Time with Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?"
Quiz 6 due at 9am

November

- 2 Work and Families II
Required: Cherlin, pp. 222-236
Required: Hochschild, "Joey's Problem"
Required: Wade, "The Modern Marriage Trap."
- 7 Children and Parents
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 9
Required: Lareau, "Invisible Inequality" (Reader)
Quiz 7 due at 9am
- 9 Old Age and Widowhood
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 10
- 14 Divorce I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 329-339
Quiz 8 due at 9am
- 16 Divorce Effects and Causality
Required: Cherlin, pp. 339-359
Recommended: Li, "The Impact of Divorce on Children's Behavior Problems"
Required: Elwert, notes on causality (course website)
News Reflection #2 (Children and Parents) due at 9:15AM
- 21 Remarriage and Stepfamilies
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 13
No quiz this week

THANKSGIVING BREAK NOV 23-26

- 28 Same-Sex Marriage
Required: Cherlin, 205-206; 406-407.
Required: TBA
Recommended: Meezan & Rauch, "Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America's Children"
Quiz 9 due at 9am
- 30 Legal Approaches to the Family; Domestic Violence
Required: Minow: Redefining Families
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 11

- 5 Family Change At Home and Abroad
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 13
Recommended: Lesthaeghe, “The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition”
Recommended: Cherlin, “American Marriage in the Early 21st Century”, pp. 43-50
Quiz 10 due at 9am

- 7 Public Policy
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 14

- 12 **Midterm II**
Ingraham B10, normal class time
Note: The second midterm is *not* cumulative.

There is no “final exam” during exam period.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS (EXCEPT TEXTBOOK)

All of these readings are available online on the course website under “content.”

Angier, Natalie. 2013. “The Changing American Family.” *The New York Times*, Nov 26, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/26/health/families.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Bianchi, Suzanne M. 2000. “Maternal Employment and Time with Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?” *Demography* 37:401-414.

Cherlin, Andrew. 2005. “American Marriage in the Early Twenty-First Century.: *The Future of Children* 15(2):33-55.

Coontz, Stephanie. “What’s Love Got to Do with It? A Brief History of Marriage.” Pp. 30-36 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

England, Paula, and Reuben J. Thomas. 2007. “The Decline of the Date and the Rise of the College Hook Up.” Pp. 151-162 in Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick, *Family in Transition* (14th edition). Boston: Pearson.

Goldthorpe, J.E. 1987. *Family Life in Western Societies: A historical sociology of family relationships in Britain and North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

Goody, Jack. 2000. *The European Family: An Historico-Anthropological Essay*. Oxford: Blackwell. Chapters 3-5.

Hochschild, Arlie R. 1989. *The Second Shift*. London: Penguin. Chapter 4 (Joey’s Problem).

Lareau, Annette. “Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families.” Pp. 82-105 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

Lesthaeghe, Ron. 2010. “The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition.” *Population and Development Review* 36(2):211-251.

Meezan, William, and Jonathan Rauch. “Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America’s Children.” Pp. 327-338 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

Minow, Martha. 1998. “Redefining Families: Who’s In and Who’s Out?” pp. 7-19 in K.V. Hansen and A.I. Garey (eds.), *Families in the United States: Kinship and Domestic Politics*, Temple University Press: Philadelphia.

Orenstein, Peggy. 2006. "What's Wrong with Cinderella?" *New York Times, Magazine*, Dec, 24, 2006.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/24/magazine/24princess.t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Risman, Barbara, J (Ed.). 2010. *Families as They Really Are*. New York: Norton. (Various Chapters)

Maglaty, Jeanne. 2011. "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?"
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/When-Did-Girls-Start-Wearing-Pink.html?c=y&page=1>

Waite, Linda J. 1995. "Does Marriage Matter?" *Demography* 32:483-507.

West, Candance, and Don H. Zimmerman. "Doing Gender." Pp. 47-56 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

BOOKS ON LIBRARY RESERVE

This is a short list of great books for further reading on reserve at College Library. Many of these books are great reads, and would ideally supplement your studies. Take a look!

Amato, Paul R. et al. 2009: *Alone Together: How Marriage in America is Changing*. Harvard University Press.

Casper, Lynne M., and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 2002. *Continuity and Change in the American Family*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cherlin, Andrew J. 1992. *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, revised and enlarged edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2009. *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and Family in America Today*. Knopf.

Coontz, Stephanie et al. 2008. *American Families: A Multicultural Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Coontz, Stephanie. 2005. *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Penguin.

Cott, Nancy F. 2000. *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Edin, Kathryn, and Maria Kefalas. 2007. *Promises I can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goody, Jack. 2000. *The European Family: An Historico-Anthropological Essay*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Griffin, John Howard. 2004. *Black Like Me*. San Antonio: Wings Press. (NB: any edition works)

Hochschild, Arlie R. 1989. *The Second Shift*. London: Penguin.

Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press.

Laumann, Edward O. et al (eds.). 1994. *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Romano, Renee C. *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wade, Lisa. 2017. *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*. Norton.