Sociology of Family: SOCI 3340.001

Monday 7-930pm CI 126

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Course Description:
This course provides a sociological overview of the family in the United States. We examine the American family as it was and as it is. In doing so, we also uncover and address the American Family Mythologies that pervade our thoughts.

This course can be quite challenging—family is considered one of the most private, sacred, and important social institutions in our society. We all have had contact with at least one family; and, over our lifetime, many of us will be involved with several families. You will be asked to read and think critically about what you think you know and what you will be learning.

Over the summer, New York became the sixth state to allow same-sex marriages. During the 2008 national elections, many states included referendums on gay marriage. These elections as well as the less recent events in several other states have compelled Americans to think about how we define marriage and family. To some, the traditional family is under attack. To others, homosexuals seeking public recognition of their relationships demonstrate how strong the institutions of marriage and family remain.

Regardless of what position one holds, the social fact that remains is that families are in transition. Among the many changes taking place, families are re-negotiating gender roles, experiencing changes in courtship, marriage, and dissolution patterns, as well as facing new challenges with parenting. To better understand the numerous changes occurring and why those changes are taking place, we will examine recent and classic works from a variety of social scientists.

Course Objectives:
- To introduce students to essential concepts, theories, and research used in sociology to analyze the family
- To examine the socio-historical development of family as a social institution, including the changing roles of women, men, and children
- To enhance students’ understanding of the complexity of family life and how family experience is shaped by race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The student will be able to
- recall essential concepts, theories, and research used to analyze the family
- describe the socio-historical development of the family as a social institution
- examine the complexity of family life
- discuss how race, class, gender and sexual orientation affect family experiences.
Course Requirements:

Text:

Questionnaire (5%):
You will be required to complete a series of questions which will be distributed on the first day of class. Your honest and thoughtful responses will be critical to the development of your understanding and awareness of sociological literature addressing families. Any sharing of responses on the questionnaire will be done so without any disclosure as to who wrote the response. Furthermore, your responses WILL NOT be used for anything outside the context of OUR classroom.

Exam I (35%), Exam II (35%):
Exam I covers Parts I and II of the textbook. Exam II Covers parts III and IV. Each exam is structured the same way. The exam is comprised of two parts—each weighted equally. The first part of the exam will be an essay question that will be given to you at the end of the previous class meeting. You will be required to come to class on the day of the exam with your typed-written response. You must submit this portion of your exam within the first ten minutes of class. When you turn in your typed section of the exam, you will be given part II. For part II of the exam, six readings will be selected AT RANDOM. You will be asked a specific question related to each reading. You will have to answer five of the six questions. The response for each question will require a short answer (roughly a paragraph or two in length). After the first person completes and submits part II of their exam, people arriving to take part II of the exam will not be permitted to do so. They will be allowed to submit the take home portion of their exam (with a penalty); however, they will have to schedule a make up exam for part II. Be fore-warned the make up exam will be much more challenging.

In-Class Writing Exercises (25%):
During the first ten minutes of class, you will be given one or two short answer questions that will ask you about content from the readings. If you read the readings, you should have no problems answering the questions. You will not be permitted to make up this portion of your grade. There are a total of twelve in-class writing exercises. I will drop your two lowest grades. If you have to miss a class, you can use one of your drop grades for that class missed.

I recommend that you take notes on the readings and that you make sure that you can answer the following questions once you’ve completed the readings:
- What were the author’s/authors’ main ideas, arguments or positions?
- What evidence did he/she/they use to develop those?
- What was his/her/their methodology?

Summary of Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight for Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>First Class Meeting</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Writing</td>
<td>Every Class Meeting</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM DAY</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Final Grade Scale:
A: 89.5-100%; B: 79.5-89.4%; C: 69.5-79.4%; D: 59.5-69.4%; F: 59.4% or lower
Course Policies:
Class Discussions:
You are expected to come to class having read and thought about the material presented in the chapter. Though I am not allotting points for participation, I am distributing a sign up sheet for each chapter. You will sign up for one reading for each class meeting. I expect you to participate in the review/discussion of the reading for which you signed up. Signing up from a reading does not exempt you from discussing the other readings. This is just a way to ensure that we get class participation.

Exam Policies:
Note card: You will be permitted to bring with you on exam day a single 3x5” note card on which you can HANDWRITE notes regarding the reading. You may use the front and back of the note card and write as small or large as you wish. The note card must be 3x5”. I will cut note cards that do not fit the dimension of a standard note card. If you are in need of a note card, I will have note cards with me the class meeting prior to the exam. These note cards must be presented prior to receiving your exam. Failure to comply with the parameters can result in your forfeiting the privilege to use a note card. Note cards must be turned in at the same time you turn in your exam.
Materials Needed on the Day of the Exam: Your notecard and a writing utensil

Missed Exams: You should make every attempt to be present on exam dates. I do understand that emergencies do occur. In such circumstances, I will need notification. Moreover, a make up date for a missed exam will be announced. Make up exams are considerably more challenging than scheduled exams. You WILL NOT be permitted to use a notecard, and you will have to answer ALL questions on the exam.

Grading:
Grades WILL NOT be curved. Graded exams will be returned one week from the day of the exam.

Your work will be given a letter grade: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-… etc. Those grades with a plus following the letter grade will be assigned values ending in 8—for example: 98 (A+), 88 (B+), 78 (C+), etc. Those letter grades without a sign following a letter grade will be assigned values ending in 5—for example: 95, 85, 75, etc. Those letter grades with a negative sign following a letter grade will be assigned values ending in 2—for example: 92, 82, 72, etc. Occasionally, I will award two letter grades for one response, such as an A/A-, in those circumstances the average of the values associated with the two letter grades will be computed when assigning an actual value for the response.

Absences:
Attendance is expected but will not be taken. You are an adult responsible for your own time and your own actions. Material will be presented and discussed in class, and that material often appears on exams. It is in your interest to attend. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that regular attendance is positively correlated with grades.
**Contacting the Professor:**
Should you need to contact me, the best way to do so is via email. I check that multiple times, daily. When you do contact me, treat your email as a formal document. Use proper salutations, grammar and punctuation.

**Electronic Devices:**
LAP TOPS are not permitted in my class; however, electronic recording devices are. Should you wish to record the lectures/discussions, you are more than welcome to do so. All cell phones, ipods, mp3 players, and the like should be turned off prior to class beginning.

**Cheating Policy:**
Any form of cheating will not be tolerated. Should you be caught cheating, your name will be submitted to the Department Chair, as well as to the Vice President of Student Affairs. If you are caught cheating, you will get a zero on the exam/assignment and will not be allowed to retake the exam/assignment or resubmit the reaction paper. Please see the Student Code of Conduct for the disciplinary procedures pertaining to academic dishonesty.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities:**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Academic Advising:**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Grade Appeal Process:**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Email**
You have your very own Islander e-mail account. I will be using this account should any correspondence be necessary. All university notifications will be using your Islander account to contact you. To access your Islander email, first go to S.A.I.L. for your new student ID number. Next, go to [http://newuser.tamucc.edu](http://newuser.tamucc.edu) for your new email account. For more information call 825.5618.