

SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FALL 2015

Prof. Rebecca M. Loew, PhD RLoew@mxc.edu
SOC 210/CRN 3419 860.343.5813

Office: Snow Hall Room 508 Office Hours: Tu, 12:30- 2:30, Th 12:30- 1:00 and Fri. 7:30- 8 am

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of the evolution of contemporary relationships such as dating, cohabitation and marriage. The implications of changes in relationships and their effect on the individual, family and society will be analyzed.

SCOPE OF THE COURSE:

This course will introduce the student to sociological analyses of the family as an intimate, resilient, and dynamic social institution. Students will examine the influences of various social forces on the family, including race and ethnicity, legislation, technology, medicine, and other engines of social change. The course will explore empirical findings and theoretical perspectives pertaining to such aspects of the family as courtship, roles, marriage, and family interaction.

The course will facilitate the development of students' critical thinking skills by situating the modern family in its historical context, examining differences and similarities between the role of family in various cultural and ethnic groups, assessing the impact of changes in the family on children and adults, and by reflecting upon the future of the family and the debate over the *ideal type* of family structure.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand and use sociological theory in studying intra- and inter-family roles and relationships.
2. Recognize some of the key historical changes, and their precipitators, which have had significant consequences for the family.
3. Identify diverse family forms and family interaction in the U.S.
4. Assess the reification of "family values," and the importance of constructive values in resilient families.
5. Identify problems and frame research questions relating to families and their experiences.
6. Appreciate the process of theory-building and theoretical frameworks used by the social sciences by employing the three major theoretical frameworks in sociology, structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism, to gain insight into and to engage in critical thinking about the family.
7. To understand differences among and commonalities across families and their experience and transitions in roles and responsibilities of family members as they face various life events (e.g. college graduation, marriage, parenthood, retirement, catastrophic illness).
8. Understand how changes in the economy, legislation and technology may affect the family.
9. Identify and explain gender division of labor in different cultures.
10. Analyze family problems of violence and abuse.
11. Explore the future of the family.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Assigned readings must be completed on time, as they will be the bases for class discussion.
2. Three exams will be given and must be completed by their assigned dates.
3. Regular and conscientious participation in class Discussions.

REQUIRED TEXT: Cherlin, A.J. *Public & Private Families: An Introduction*. McGraw-Hill Publishing. 2013.

ISBN #: 0078026679

PARTICIPATION POLICY: You are required to log on weekly and perform tasks and assignments online per the course outline in the syllabus. For weekly discussion and bi-weekly summary, **the**

initial message responding to the questions or chapter summary is due midnight, Saturday of the week. The responses to at least two other students are due midnight, Sunday of the week. All other assignments are due according to the course outline. Credit will not be given for late submissions.

CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY: Not applicable

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

Competence/Assessment

Competence will be demonstrated in each chapter:

- **By critiquing weekly assigned readings**
- **Examinations**
- **Discussion Board participation**

Course Requirements and Evaluation Methods

Weekly discussions (14 discussion assignments; 10 points each) 140 points + 10 point Extra Credit Assignment.

Exams (3 exams; 50 points each) 150 points

TOTAL 300 points

Weekly Discussions

Every week, you will be asked by the instructor to answer questions relating to assigned chapter on the week discussion board. You also need to respond to at least TWO messages other students posted. A weekly discussion assignment is worth 10 points. The initial message responding to the instructor's questions is due midnight, *Saturday*, of each week. The response to at least two classmates is due midnight, *Sunday*, of each week. You will be graded on how completely you answer the assigned discussion questions and by the quality of your response to other students' postings. ***Refer to the grading rubric for a specific explication of how points are assigned to discussion responses.*** Your use of critical thinking skills, conducting the research you conduct on the discussion board questions, and your application of the readings will be assessed. You will have one week to conduct research and post. The discussion board is available Monday 12:01 am to the following Sunday Midnight EST. *No late postings will be accepted.*

The exams will draw from material in the text and readings, films, discussions, and instructor comments for the calendar period covered by the exam.

Grading System: The policies detailed in the college catalogue will be followed by the instructor.

IMPORTANT COLLEGE POLICIES!! PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

For information about the college's policies and procedures regarding academic honesty, accessibility/disability services, attendance, audio-recording in the classroom, grade appeals, plagiarism, religious accommodations, weather and emergency closings, and more, please go to the following website: www.mxcc.edu/catalog/syllabus-policies/ or scan the QR code with your smart phone. Also, please become familiar with the policies regarding nondiscrimination, sexual misconduct, and general student conduct at the following website: www.mxcc.edu/nondiscrimination/.

SOCIOLOGY of the FAMILY COURSE OUTLINE

Week, Discussions Due	Topic	Assignments
Week 1, 9/5 & 6	Introductions	Welcome and Introductions
Week 2, 9/12 & 13	Defining "family"; theoretical perspectives; research methods	Chapter 1
Week 3, 9/19 & 20	Historical Perspectives on the Family	Chapter 2

Week 4, 9/26 & 27	Gender & Families	Chapter 3
Week 5, 10/3 & 4	Race, Ethnicities, & Families	Chapter 5
Week 6, 10/10 & 11	Social Class & Families Exam #1	Chapter 4 <u>Exam #1 (Ch. 1-5)</u>
Week 7, 10/17 & 18	Sexualities	Chapter 6
Week 8, 10/24 & 25	Cohabitation & Marriage	Chapter 7
Week 9, 10/31 & 11/1	Work & Families	Chapter 8
Week 10, 11/7 & 8	Children & Parents	Chapter 9
Week 11, 11/14 & 15	Older People & Their Families Exam #2	Chapter 10 <u>Exam #2 (Ch.6- 10)</u>
Week 12, 11/21 & 22	Domestic Violence Divorce	Chapters 11 & 12
Week 13, 11/28 & 29 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	Stepfamilies	Chapter 13
Week 14, 12/5 & 6	The Family, The State, & Social Policy	Chapter 14
Week 15, 12/9	Course Reflections	Film on Demand (Extra Credit)
FINAL EXAM WEEK	FINAL EXAM (Due midnight, Wednesday, 12/9)	<u>Final Exam (Chapters 11- 14)</u>