

## **www.majorsmatter.net/family**

*"Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wide social unit; our self of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks." Erving Goffman*

*So, I guess we are who we are for a lot of reasons. And maybe we'll never know most of them. But even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there. We can still do things. And we can try to feel okay about them." Steven Chbosky*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION.** The overall goal of this course is to provide students with a working knowledge of conceptual frameworks and theories relevant to the sociological study of families. The course, which consists of lectures, readings, class and in-group discussions, weekly writing assignments, and final presentations is designed to focus on the question of how families function and how variation within and between families affects individuals and society. As you can see from the course schedule, this course is VERY theoretical. The course does not have sociology prerequisites, but having some experience with sociological concepts, theory, and research will prove helpful to students taking the class. Each week, we will couple lectures on one of seven major theories of family function with an in-class analysis of an episode of NBC's "Modern Family" sitcom using that week's theory. These analyses will help train students in the use of the theories as analytical tools.

**TEXTS.** There is no assigned textbook for this course. All assigned readings will be articles made available to you in course reserves. You can access them in Canvas (under "Course Reserves"), but will need a VPN (AnyConnect "allthruucsd" group) for library access if you're off-campus. You will be responsible for reading each article assigned and write memos (see point B in grading) for two of them each week. Undergraduate students are conventionally expected to complete 2-3 hours of out-of-class coursework for *every hour in class* . . . *really*. [I know. Stop laughing!] Research on reading speeds shows that undergrads average about 250-300 words per minute for recognition of the material content. The average 20-page article assigned in this course is about 12500 words and should take you about an hour to read carefully and 30 minutes to skim. As you'll see below, you will be required to outline these articles; that will add an additional 30-45 minutes. Therefore, I fully expect that you should be able to read/outline the articles each week. If you find it difficult to manage this level of work, please let me know and we can discuss some techniques for increasing your reading/skimming speed.

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING.** Other than the quizzes and the final examination, your grade in this class will be based on your completion of assignments, not "mastery" of material. In order to learn the material we will cover in this class, I need you to complete all of the assignments. Each journal and article memo will be marked as "done" or "not done", not "correct" or "incorrect". These assignments are opportunities to explore, engage with, and challenge ideas raised in the class. Complete them. Each of you starts with an "A" (600 points) and you move down from there. The buffer for each letter grade is 60 points (10%). Pluses and minuses are earned in the 20 point margins at the top/bottom of the letter grade range. **You will receive an A- at 564 points.** Once you go below the threshold for any given grade, there is NO way to go up. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be single-spaced, 1" margins, and in Times or Times New Roman font. All assignments must be turned in on Canvas in the correct assignment "mailbox" as WORD (doc. or docx) documents.

<b>A</b> = 565-600 points (94%)	<b>B</b> = 520-539 points (87%)	<b>C+</b> = 460-479 points (77%)	<b>D</b> = 360-419 points
<b>A-</b> = 540-564 points (90%)	<b>B</b> = 500-519 points (83%)	<b>C</b> = 440-459 points (73%)	<b>F</b> = 0-359 points
	<b>B-</b> = 480-499 points (80%)	<b>C-</b> = 420-439 points (70%)	

**A) Encounter The Material (5 days at 10 pts each = 50 points):** The single largest predictor of a final grade in any course is attendance (Credé, Roche, Kiezcynka 2010), with doing the reading following a close second.

As much of the learning taking place in this class will happen during the three hours we have together each week, you hurt yourself by not attending. Not only do I believe your presence enables you to learn from the contributions of others, but your own contributions are critical for our engagement with these ideas. Each day, I will randomly select about 12 of you whose presence I will record. If you are there when I call your name, **you will receive 10 points**. If you are late, check at the end of class to make sure your name wasn't called.

**B) Explain The Material (20 Article Memos at 5 pts each = 100 points):** While most of the theoretical and conceptual material for this class will be found in the lectures and discussions, we will encounter most of the empirical (i.e., research-based) evidence of the theories in the 20 readings assigned in this class. You will be required to outline each week's readings and those outlines are due (in Canvas, in the correct folder) **by midnight on Friday** of the week they are assigned on the syllabus. Each memo for each reading should be no more than one page in length. They **must** follow the model supplied at the end of this syllabus, including each of the sections included in that model; don't include the notes and numbers in parentheses. I will choose one of your memos to post on the course website as a study guide for the rest of us. The posted memo's terms and findings will be what I will base quiz/exam questions upon. If you find that, week after week, your memos don't look like the posted ones (e.g., you don't pick the right concepts), please meet with me to see what you can do differently. We will discuss 6 of the articles in depth the last week of class.

**C) Engage The Material (10 journal entries at 15 pts each=150 points):** Every week you will be expected to write a one page (minimum 600 words) single-spaced journal entry on the issues covered in class that week. I will give you a specific question to answer that's based on that week's material. The journal entry will be due **by midnight the following Monday** in Canvas. The last journal will be due that **Friday (December 8)** at midnight. Your *ideas* will not be graded as "correct" or "incorrect" -- rather this is an opportunity to explore, engage with, and challenge ideas raised in the course. A "useful" (to you) journal entry will try to apply the concepts discussed in class and the readings assigned that week. If we tell you to use specific terms, you must UNDERLINE those terms in your journal. Not using the terms makes that an "incomplete" journal and you will get a zero. Use paragraphs. Like most writing, these are hard to read and understand without them. Often, you'll get a response (in Canvas) along with your grade. We'd love for you to respond to those.

**D) Exhibit Erudition (Quizzes and final examination for 300 points):** I would like for you to master the material in this class at the following levels of understanding: (1) basic knowledge, (2) comprehension and understanding, (3) application, and (4) analysis and comparison. With that in mind, there will be two ways I'll test your understanding: a series of quizzes and a cumulative final exam.

- **Quizzes:** There are four (10 question) quizzes scheduled throughout the semester (essentially one every other Wednesday). Each question will be worth 2.5 points. Quizzes will test that you are keeping up with your knowledge of the material and not waiting until the final exam to cram it all. These quizzes will only cover that week's readings and the material covered since the last quiz. The average on quizzes is usually 70%. If you find that you're scoring much below that, please see me as soon as possible for possible study tips.
- **Final Examination:** There will be a cumulative final exam composed of 80 multiple-choice questions. Each question will be worth 2.5 points. As you'll discover with the quizzes, these multiple-choice questions can't be answered by just looking for a word you recognize. You'll be expected, in some questions, to apply your knowledge to cases. You'll also be responsible for the material in the readings even if we did not discuss that reading in class. The exam will be offered on **Tuesday December 12 from 11:30a-02:30p** on Canvas.

### **SUMMARY OF WHEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE**

**Mondays: Journals are due by midnight**

**Wednesdays: Quizzes are open from 9am to noon on Wednesdays**

**Friday: Article Memos are due by midnight**

## OTHER IMPORTANT THOUGHTS

**Academic Excuses:** I recognize that life may create interruptions in your ability to fully participate in the class. If an issue arises for you, please make sure to contact me immediately by email, but also be sure you can get the missed material from another student. Likewise, article memos and journals are critical to your ability to encounter and engage the course material on a daily basis. On a case-by-case basis, I'm amenable to considering reasonable requests for extensions if you communicate with me before the assignment is due. My instructional ethic tends towards "equal" and not "equitable" treatment because I'm incapable of knowing what a "fair" arbitration of the validity or seriousness of your issue looks like; I'm more likely to say "no" than "yes".

**Academic Etiquette:** As a sign of respect to your fellow classmates, please TURN OFF CELL PHONES before class. Respect the views and opinions of others. Avoid talking when others are making a point. You will have your chance. Try to avoid destructive criticism. However, constructive criticism is welcomed. Do not leave class until class has ended. Not only are those things disrespectful and disruptive to your classmates and me, but they also limit your ability to understand the material.

**Academic Integrity:** UCSD's Student Honor and Conduct Code governs all work in this course. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the provisions of the Code addressed in UCSD's Catalog and Student Handbook. Uncertainty about the application of the Honor Code does not excuse a violation. Plagiarism/cheating is easily detected and WILL NOT be tolerated. If I suspect that either has taken place, you will receive no credit for the assignment. Materials presented in this class are for the exclusive use of students enrolled in this course. The release of any of this material (including, but not limited to, direct sharing or recording content) is strictly prohibited. Releasing this material will be considered an Honor Code violation and may also be a violation of state and federal laws.

*A Note About ChatGTP Written By ChatGTP:* "I am aware that some students may be using ChatGTP to complete their assignments. However, I will be able to easily spot any instances of this because ChatGTP produces generic and unoriginal answers that do not demonstrate a genuine understanding of the material. ChatGTP is incapable of producing unique answers for multiple students in the same class. More than one instance of similar writing will be challenged. I expect all students to complete their assignments on their own and with honesty and integrity."

**Academic Accessibility:** The Office for Students With Disabilities (OSD) works with students who have disabilities in order to help us provide reasonable accommodations to enable you to learn the course materials. It is your responsibility to request those accommodations *through that office*. In order to receive consideration for an accommodation, you must register with the OSD as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied.

**Final Thoughts on Respect:** People often have strong opinions about the topics discussed in sociology courses, particularly in discussions that also intersect with ideas about race, gender, and sexuality. In our processes of learning what is empirically "true" and what is not, it is possible that members of the class will make comments which are based on misinformation or an interpretation that other members of the class find objectionable. Given this, it is essential that we treat each other with respect, that we do not demean or devalue the comments of class members, and that we stick to the issues rather than engage in personal attacks. If something is said in class that makes you uncomfortable and you want to discuss it, you can either address it in class or you can speak to me privately. It is also important to be aware of how your choice of language regarding race, gender, and sexuality will be received by your classmates who may stand in different relations to the material than you. One important adjustment we should all make for this class is to tend towards inclusive language when talking about human beings (e.g., "people" instead of "men") except when the analysis we're engaging in requires more specificity (e.g., a discussion on gay men).

## Curriculum Units

### **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

#### **Week Of January 06 Introduction To Class**

Furstenberg, Frank. 2014. "Fifty Years of Family Change: From Consensus to Complexity." *ANNALS* 654:12-29.

Sheff, Elisabeth. 2011. "Polyamorous Families, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Slippery Slope." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40:487-520.

### **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

#### **Week Of January 13 Functionalism Theory**

Pitt, Richard and Elizabeth Borland. 2008. "Bachelorhood And Men's Attitudes About Gender Roles." *Journal of Men's Studies* 16:140-157.

Seltzer, Judith. 2000. "Families Formed Outside of Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62:1247-1268.

#### **Week Of January 20 Symbolic Interaction Theory (QUIZ)**

Collett, Jessica, Kelcie Vercel, and Olevia Boykin. 2015. "Using Identity Processes to Understand Persistent Inequality in Parenting." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 78:345-364.

Wall, Glenda and Stephanie Arnold. 2007. "How Involved Is Involved Fathering? An Exploration of the Contemporary Culture of Fatherhood." *Gender and Society* 21:508-527.

#### **Week Of January 28 Social Exchange Theory**

Donnelly, Denise and Elisabeth Burgess. 2008. "The Decision to Remain in an Involuntarily Celibate Relationship." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 70:519-535.

Kreager, Derek, Richard Felson, Cody Warner, and Marin Wenger. 2013. "Women's Education, Marital Violence, and Divorce: A Social Exchange Perspective." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 75:565-581.

Mannino, Clelia and Francine Deutsch. 2007. "Changing the Division of Household Labor: A Negotiated Process between Partners." *Sex Roles* 56:309-324.

#### **Week Of February 03 Family Life Course Theory (QUIZ)**

Fingerman, Karen, Yen-Pi Cheng, Eric Wesselman, Steven Zarit, Frank Furstenberg, and Kira Birditt. 2012. "Helicopter Parents and Landing Pad Kids: Intense Parental Support of Grown Children." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 74:880-896.

Nomaguchi, Kei and Melissa Milkie. 2003. "Cost and Rewards of Parenthood: The Effects of Becoming Parents on Adults' Lives." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 65:356-374.

#### **Week Of February 10 Family Systems & Ecological Theory**

Bacallao, Martica and Paul Smokowski. 2007. "The Costs of Getting Ahead: Mexican Family System Changes after Immigration." *Family Relations* 56:52-66.

Christie-Mizell, Andre, Erin Pryor, and Elizabeth Grossman. 2008. "Child Depressive Symptoms, Spanking, and Emotional Support: Differences between African American and European American Youth." *Family Relations* 57:335-350.

Porche, Michelle and Diane Purvin. 2008. "'Never In Our Lifetime': Legal Marriage for Same-Sex Couples in Long-Term Relationships." *Family Relations* 57:144-159.

### **Week Of February 17    Conflict Theory (QUIZ)**

Hoffman, Kristi, Jill Kiecolt, and John Edwards. 2005. "Physical Violence among Siblings: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis." *Journal of Family Issues* 26:1103-1130.

Wang, Hongyu and Paul Amato. 2000. "Predictors of Divorce Adjustment: Stressors, Resources, and Definitions." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62:655-668.

## **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

### **Week Of February 24    Dating And Assortative Mating**

Coy, Anthony and Lindsey Rodriguez. 2023. "Affection Preference, Enactment, and Relationship Satisfaction: A Dyadic Analysis of Love Languages." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 49:737-994.

Rosenfeld, Michael and Reuben Thomas. 2012. "Searching for a Mate: The Rise of the Internet as a Social Intermediary." *American Sociological Review* 77:523-547.

### **Week Of March 03        Cohabitation And Infidelity (QUIZ)**

Jackman, Mahalia. 2015. "Understanding the Cheating Heart: What Determines Infidelity Intentions?" *Sexuality & Culture* 19:72-84.

Sassler, Sharon and Amanda Miller. 2011. "Waiting to Be Asked: Gender, Power, and Relationship Progression among Cohabiting Couples " *Journal of Family Issues* 32:482-506.

### **Week Of March 10        Article Reviews**

No Readings This Week. We Will Engage In A Deep-Dive Review Of Your Favorite Articles.

**Lareau, Annette. 2001. "Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life" Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pages 1-32.**

**PRIMARY ARGUMENT (one sentence, usually found in the front of the article):** The author argues that social class status causes differences in many aspects of family life such as use of free time, use of language, and relationships with other family members.

**IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS (2, don't define acronyms/abbreviations):**

- Concerted Cultivation: a middle class phenomena where the family's focus is placed on the individual in activities, reasoning processes and questioning patterns which leads to increased assertiveness which continues on into adulthood.
- Accomplishment of Natural Growth: a working class phenomenon where the family's focus is placed less on autonomy from adults and more on following direct orders from parents.

**PRIMARY FINDINGS (3-4, usually found in "Findings", "Results", or "Discussion"):**

1. Middle class mothers take a "cultivation" approach that results in their children having an emerging sense of entitlement. While working class mothers focus on an "accomplishment of natural growth" approach that leads to an emerging sense of constraint in their children.
2. Middle class children are overly involved in organized activities which become the focus of their lives, with time for free choice activities forced in between these extracurriculars. While instead children in working class families spend much less time in organized activities and are able to create their own games and make choices about how to spend their time.
3. Working class parents use more directives when speaking to their children and do not often engage in long conversations with them. And although these children do develop other skills such as being respectful to adults and being resourceful these skills are not as useful as the reasoning skills that middle class children develop.
4. Working class parents are more accepting of criticisms of their children. While middle class parents extremely assertive in pressing others to recognize their children's needs or talents.

**KEY QUOTE (1):** "When children and parents move outside the home and into the world of social institutions, they find that these cultural practices are not given equal value. There are signs that middle-class children benefit, in ways that are invisible to them and to their parents, from the degree of similarity between the cultural repertoires in the home and those standards adopted by institutions." (317)

**QUESTION (1):** It is said that working class children experience more autonomy from adults and more abilities to develop their own resources and make their own decisions. Why is it that these traits are not just as helpful to them in society? Why are they more likely to rely on the opinions of professionals?