COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines one of the most important institutions in social life and an institution with which we all have experience and familiarity – the family. The goal of this course is to teach you how (not what) to think about the family as a public and private social institution. Families are where we spend much of our private lives. However, families also serve important societal functions and are shaped by public perception, social conventions, and laws.

During the semester we will examine major themes studied by family sociologists. We start the course with a discussion of what family means including an examination of historical trends and changes that led to the current form(s) of Western families. We will also explore topics on love, dating, partnerships, polyamory, marriage, parenting, divorce, housework, and work-family balance.

This course is taught from a feminist perspective. What that means is that we will spend a substantial amount of time examining the social norms that shape our views of what a normal, healthy family looks like. We will think holistically about family life by examining the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality and how it relates to the production and reproduction of everyday life within a family. I will challenge you to recognize the artificiality of the traditional, heterosexual, monogamous, with biological offspring, American family.

Because I also practice feminist pedagogy I will expect you to take control of much of your own learning process. This is our class, not mine. Your contribution is necessary and important. This is a challenge for many students because they are not use to this teaching style, but I encourage you to embrace the opportunity. As a result of this teaching style, classroom discussion; personal reflection; creativity; and a desire to learn are all requirements of this course.
**Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

To facilitate student understanding and articulation of the following:

- The historical, social, political, and economic processes that have produced and structured inequalities in family experiences within the United States.
- The social processes through which racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism operate to exclude certain groups of people in the United States from equal access to family life.
- The difference between sociological theories or family research and common (mis)representations of the family in everyday life.
- The processes through which an individual’s age, gender, ethnicity, race, and/or sexual orientation can shape their experiences in a family.
- The effect of family on an individual’s everyday life and interactions.

**Required Texts/Readings**

**Anthology/Course Reader (Do not purchase other editions of this book)**


**STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO READ THE ASSIGNMENTS BEFORE COMING TO CLASS.**

In order to be an active participant in the classroom, you must come to class prepared – even if being prepared means simply having questions about what was confusing to you in the readings! In addition, I have chosen readings that deal with real-world examples of research for the purposes of enhancing our discussion in class; if you haven’t read them, it will be hard for us to discuss them.

*A major part of your learning in this class will come from reading and digesting the weekly reading assignments. You will find it very difficult to pass this class without doing the readings!*

**Classroom Protocol and Course Requirements**

Students learn best when presented with a variety of teaching strategies. Not everyone will like every strategy. As much as possible, given the constraints of time and room setup, classroom activities will be organized with a hands-on approach, asking students to engage in some of the day-to-day activities of sociologists (including reading, writing, discussion, and analysis). You will be asked to participate in various in- and out-of-class activities and discussions. If you are usually a talker, then your challenge will be to listen more and talk less. Please don’t be offended if I stop calling on you. If you are usually quiet or an observer, your challenge will be to take risks and speak up from time to time. As a class, we will engage in both small and large group discussions in order to build rapport and a sense of community in the classroom.
**Attendance is NOT required.** Frankly, if you do not want to be in our class, I do not want you in our classroom. Students who force themselves to sit in while disengaging in the classroom activities suck the life and energy out of the room. If you would rather be somewhere else, with someone else, doing something else, then you may kindly excuse yourself. However, please note that while attendance is not required, failing to attend class will likely negatively affect your course grade.

"While attendance isn't mandatory, she'd rather not have u in class if u won't pay attention, students WANT to go to class. I did. Expect to do work- just because she's fun, it doesn't mean she'll take your bs. Treat her like u want to be treated: respectfully."

~Student on RateMyProfessor.com

SJSU classes are designed such that, in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours per semester for each unit of credit (usually three hours per week per unit of credit) on preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

Course requirements for your grade will consist of 35 reading journals, a take-home midterm, a family issue policy brief, a take-home final, and a course reflection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Journals</td>
<td>Beginning of class whenever readings have been assigned</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Essay Exam</td>
<td>Distributed: March 3 Due: March 12</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Issue Policy Brief</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Reflection Exercise</td>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay Exam</td>
<td>Distributed: May 7 Due: May 15</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**READING JOURNALS**

This aspect of the class is meant to encourage collaborative learning, creative reflection, synthesis of material, and application of the readings to your everyday life. You must buy a packet of 4x6 index cards for this course requirement. For every reading assignment, you will be asked to respond to a question on one side of the notecard and complete reading notes on the backside of the notecard. **This assignment is described more fully on the last page of the syllabus.** Reading journals will be graded on your ability to accurately interpret and apply the material. They are due at the start of class on the day the reading is scheduled for. You must complete one journal per reading. Some days we will start the class with a discussion of your journals. If you’re late, so is your journal. Late journals may be submitted for half-credit up until the due date of the next exam.
EXAMS
Because multiple-choice tests and in-class essay writing exams often evoke extreme anxiety in students, the midterm and final examinations will be take-home essays. Please note that take-home exams are often more challenging, and I’ll expect you to submit a well-polished version of your exam answers. Plan on spending more preparation time on this exam than you would for ordinary in-class tests. All exam answers will be submitted to Canvas in order to avoid plagiarism and cheating. Late exams are only accepted with documentation of illness and/or emergency, and late exams will still receive a 10% deduction per 24-hour period that they are late.

Taking your daily journals and lecture notes seriously will significantly help your performance on these exams. In many cases you can easily implement your notes/discussions into your exam answers. This course design is intentional. Being proactive and doing the work early will allow you to perform better on these exams with less stress. I also encourage you to seek help/clarification early and frequently. Having a firm grasp of the content as we move through the course will benefit you in the end. You will have approximately one week to complete the take-home exams.

FAMILY ISSUES POLICY BRIEF
For this assignment you are being asked to write a policy brief based on family issues. This assignment allows you to practice professional writing while thinking about and researching alternative government/organizational policies that have the potential to create social change. This assignment is very helpful for those students who intend to pursue a career in public policy or family law. The assignment will have nine components including: an executive summary, a statement of the issue, background information, statement of your (imagined) organization’s interest in the issue, pre-existing policies, policy options, advantages and disadvantages, recommendations, and a list of sources. More information will be distributed as the due date approaches.

COURSE REFLECTION
At the conclusion of this class you will be required to submit a 2-page (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12pt. font) reflection about the course. This reflection should focus on what you have learned over the semester. It should also include a discussion of what you think you will remember most about this class in 5 years. Finally, it should discuss how you plan to apply what you learned to your everyday life. We will share and discuss course reflections on the last day of instruction during the course wrap-up. There are no “wrong” answers, but you will be expected to submit two full pages. Deductions will be given for failure to meet the page minimum. 2.5% of your grade will come from the written reflection. 2.5% of your grade will come from the in-class discussion.
COURSE GRADES

I encourage you to separate yourself from mainstream ideologies about course grades. We are socialized to believe that grades reflect personal intelligence, abilities, and potential. In my class, grades are an evaluation of context-specific assignments measured against the course objectives. I view grades as a form of communication that, when combined with critical feedback, leads to meaningful learning. I encourage you to interpret them this way as well. Grades should serve as a reflection of your learning process, and act as motivation for improvement and/or continued learning. Grades do not signify my level of respect for you. I am not obligated to give you the grade you think you deserve.

A note about Canvas and grade totals: Canvas is an online tool used to help you succeed in this class. While I post grades for individual assignments to Canvas, you should NOT trust the automatic calculations for the final course grade. Because my grading scheme is complicated, Canvas cannot calculate all of the weights and drops necessary for producing an accurate final course grade. I strongly suggest calculating this yourself using assignment weights and point totals. The final grade you have on Canvas is very often NOT your final course grade.

All assignments will be given point scores. These scores will be turned into percentages and weighted according to the table above to average your course grade. The course percentages will then be assigned a letter grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-91%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-81%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-77%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-71%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62-67%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-61%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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</table>
CLASSROOM RULES AND ETIQUETTE

1. Come to class prepared. This means having all of the tools you need to participate. At minimum, please bring something to take notes on and a writing utensil. I will contact students through Canvas if the reading(s) and/or book are required for classroom discussion.

2. Late arrivals to class are strongly discouraged. Late students are a disruption to the learning environment. I will not repeat important information provided at the start of class. It is in your best interest to arrive on time. If you are late, your reading journals are late.

3. Silence or turn off all electronic devices before entering the classroom. Do NOT leave them on vibrate. It is highly annoying and disruptive when such devices make noise.

4. Do not plan to use class time to read, surf the net, make grocery lists, plan your weekend, write letters, sleep, flirt, or catch up with friends. Mentally “checking out” of class in this way will make it difficult to do well in the course. It will be disruptive to your classmates. In addition, I find it incredibly annoying and boring. If you have a pressing need to do these things during class time, please do yourself, your classmates, and myself a favor and just don’t come to class.

5. Classroom discussion is to remain civil. We talk about a wide-array of sensitive and provocative subjects in this class. We are here to learn from each other. It is difficult to learn from others when they are rolling their eyes at you, yelling at you, ignoring you, or engaging in other disruptive behaviors. Disrespectful behaviors such as these will not be tolerated in our classroom.
University Policies

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page. It is your responsibility to know the late drop policy. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub.

Academic integrity

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or committing plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of both instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

Campus Safety

On a campus as large as San Jose State University, emergency situations arise from time to time. Our community will be better prepared and able to handle these stressful situations if we are all informed about the resources and information available to work through a crisis. This site provides information about how to stay in communication with the university and provides guides on what to do during an emergency.

A special ‘thank you’ to Dr. Jen Myhre at De Anza College and Jackie Logg at Cabrillo College for their help in the creation of this syllabus.
# SOCI 170 / Sociology of the Family, Spring 2015

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice – Changes will be announced during class and/or through Canvas.

*STC = Shifting the Center    CAN = Canvas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | January 22 | Introduction to the course – Review the syllabus  
No journal due today |
| 1    | January 29 | STC – Historical Perspectives on Family Diversity – Pp. 42-58  
STC – *The Normal American Family* Pp. 90-105 |
| 2    | February 3 | STC – Choosing Mates – *The American Way* Pp. 125-134                        |
| 2    | February 5 | STC – Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood: Double Binds and Flawed Options Pp. 135-149  
STC – Dating and Romantic Relationships Among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth Pp. 150-162 |
| 3    | February 10| STC – *Arranged Marriages: What’s Love Got to Do With It?* Pp. 163-172  
*In-Class Film: Love Chronicles – Arranged Marriages* |
STC – Living Apart Together: A New Family Form Pp. 248-260 |
| 4    | February 17| STC – *From This Day Forward: Commitment, Marriage, and Family in Lesbian and Gay Relationships* Pp. 261-274 |
| 5    | February 19| CAN – *White Weddings – Lifting the Veil*                                     |
| 6    | February 24| CAN – *Opening Up: Choosing an Open Relationship*                             |
| 6    | February 26| CAN – Polyamorous Women, Sexual Subjectivity, and Power                       |
| 7    | March 3    | STC – Mothering for the State: Foster Parenting and the Challenges of Government-Contracted Carework Pp. 302-317  
**Midterm distributed** |
| 7    | March 5    | STC – *Mothering From a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families* Pp. 291-302  
CAN – Can Men “Mother”? Life as a Single Father |
<p>| 8    | March 10   | STC – <em>What it Means to be Daddy: Fatherhood for Black Men Living Away</em>       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9    | March 12   | **Topics:** From Their Children Pp. 334-348  
**Readings:** STC – Fathering: Paradoxes, Contradictions, and Dilemmas Pp. 319-333  
**Assignments:** In-Class Film: Evolution of Dad  
**Deadlines:** Midterm Due to Canvas                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9    | March 17   | **Topics:** PARENTS AND PARENTING, CHILDREN AND CHILDRearing  
**Readings:** STC – The Emergence of Lesbian-Coparent Families in Postmodern Society Pp. 20-33  
**Assignments:** In-Class Film: Fatherhood Dreams                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10   | March 19   | **Topics:** STC – (How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter? Pp. 412-430                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10   | March 24/26| **Topics:** SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES THIS WEEK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 11   | March 31   | **Topics:** CESAR CHAVEZ DAY – NO CLASS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11   | April 2    | **Topics:** STC – Out of Sorts: Adoption and (Un)desirable Children Pp. 400-412  
**Assignments:** STC – Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families Pp. 431-446                                                                                                                                                             |
| 12   | April 7    | **Topics:** CAN – The Joys of Parenthood Reconsidered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 12   | April 9    | **Topics:** DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND BLENDED FAMILIES  
**Readings:** STC – Framing Divorce Reform: Media, Morality, and the Politics of Family Pp. 499-511                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 13   | April 14   | **Topics:** STC – Divorce Culture and Marital Gender Equality Pp. 514-525  
**Assignments:** STC – The Modern American Stepfamily Pp. 540-555                                                                                                                                                                |
| 13   | April 16   | **Topics:** FAMILIES, WORK, AND CAREWORK  
**Assignments:** STC – Fast-Track Women and The “Choice” to Stay Home Pp. 635-650                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 14   | April 21   | **Topics:** STC – The Work-Home Crunch Pp. 626-634  
**Assignments:** STC – No Place Like Home: The Division of Domestic Labor in Lesbigay Families Pp. 679-693                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 15   | April 28   | **Topics:** CAN – Fathers and The Flexibility Stigma  
**Assignments:** Note: You may skip the “methods” section of this reading                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 15   | April 30   | **Topics:** STC – Lifting the Veil of Secrecy: Domestic Violence Against South Asian Women in the United States Pp. 584-595  
**Assignments:** STC – Toward a Better Understanding of Lesbian Battering Pp. 595-607                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 16   | May 5      | **Topics:** STC – Abuse of Elders Pp. 607-625  
**Assignments:** Family Policy Issue Brief Due  
**Deadlines:** FAMILIES AND POVERTY  
**Readings:** STC – As American As Apple Pie: Poverty and Welfare Pp. 710-716                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Final Distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In-class film: <em>On The Edge: America’s Working Poor</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Reflection Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>NO CLASS ATTENDANCE REQUIRED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td>SUBMIT TO CANVAS BY 5pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
READING JOURNALS (NOTECARDS)

You will need to buy a packet of 4x6 (NOT 3x5) notecards for this assignment. You will turn in one card per reading each class period. These are due at the start of class in order to be considered on time. Late journals will be accepted until the due date of the next exam for up to half credit. Journals will always be accepted early.

The purpose of this assignment is to help you prepare for class and critically engage with the reading assignments. Completing these journals should help you stay up-to-date with the readings, as well as think about and digest them. This assignment will also help you study and prepare for other components of the course. Occasionally, I will use submitted journals to help guide our class discussions.

There are 35 reading journals. These cards will be totaled over the semester for 35% (up to 35 points total) of your grade. Therefore, each journal is worth up to 1% (1 point each) of your course grade. Incomplete journals, or journals that do not meet the expectations of the assignment will receive partial credit. Feedback will be provided. You will not receive full credit if you do not answer one of the three questions posed below or if you do not complete both sides of the notecard. Late journals (even by a couple of minutes) receive half-credit maximum. I am not responsible for lost or unnamed notecards.

ON THE FRONT OF THE CARD:
Answers must be legible. Place your name, date, and the title of the reading at the very top of the card (DO NOT use half the card for this information!). You must choose ONE of the following questions, LABEL the number of the question you are answering, and answer the question on the card:

1. How do you personally relate to this reading? What ideas, concepts, theories, or information have personal relevance for you? How might the ideas, concepts, theories, or information be useful in your own life? Do not answer this question if you cannot relate!
2. What critiques might you make of the arguments or evidence presented in this reading? What flaws do you see in the author’s argument or evidence? What counter-arguments might you develop? Focus on the arguments or evidence. Do NOT critique methodology, length, level of difficulty, etc.
3. How do the ideas, concepts or theories in this reading relate to other readings we have done this semester or to course material you have learned in other classes? Be specific!

ON THE BACK OF THE CARD
Take reading notes. Write down the most important points from the reading. Define the major concepts and terms. Summarize the evidence the author offers for his/her points. Do not simply copy the abstract or “summary” paragraph of the article. I should believe that you read the chapter in its entirety and that you understood it.