San José State University
Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
SOCI 170, Sociology of the Family, Summer 2017

Instructor: Dr. Tracy DeHaan
Office Location: DMH 213
Email: tracy.dehaan@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-10:10pm
Classroom: DMH 226A
Prerequisites: SOCI 001 (or instructor consent) is a prerequisite for all SOCI upper division classes.

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 family-life. We will also explore topics on love, dating, partnerships, consensual non-monogamies, 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 used to this teaching style, but I encourage you to embrace the opportunity. Because of this teaching style, classroom discussion, personal reflection, creativity, and a desire to learn are all requirements of this course.
Required Texts/Readings/Software

Anthology/Course Reader:


*Do not purchase other editions of this book.* The book is available on reserve at MLK Library.

Other Readings:

See Canvas ([https://sjsu.instructure.com/](https://sjsu.instructure.com/)) for additional course readings

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

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 dealing 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!*

Software:

*Sims 4* (base game) by Maxis downloadable [here](#). The game is downloadable content only for Mac. The game can be downloaded and run through Origin. There are also discs available for PC.

Classroom Protocol and Course Requirements

*Emails* – Due to the high volume of emails that I receive daily, I will not respond to requests for information that can be found in the syllabus or the assignment sheets. Please review all course documents before sending questions about course content/materials.

Due to the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA), I am not allowed to email grades to students. All grades are posted to Canvas, and you should calculate your course grade using the weights below. Furthermore, I will not tolerate impulsive, disrespectful emails pertaining to grades received in this course. Emails of this nature will be forwarded to the department chair. If you have concerns over an assigned grade, you must visit me in person.

*Attendance* - Attendance is *NOT* required. Frankly, if you do not want to be in class, I’d prefer you not attend. 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 indirectly, negatively affect your course grade.
CLASSROOM RULES AND ETIQUETTE

1. Come to class prepared. This means having all 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 is 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.

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.

Course requirements for your grade will consist of twice-weekly discussion posts, three essay exams, and a course project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts</td>
<td>Twice-weekly on Tuesdays</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Thursdays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Exam #1</td>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Exam #2</td>
<td>June 27</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Exam #3</td>
<td>July 6</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Project</td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMS

Because multiple-choice tests and in-class essay writing exams often evoke extreme anxiety in students, the 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 these exams than you would for ordinary in-class tests. All exam answers will be submitted both online (using a plagiarism checker) and in person. Late exams receive a 10% deduction per 24-hour period that they are late. No exams will be accepted after 3 days.

Taking your discussion posts 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.
DISCUSSION POSTS

Each student will contribute to the twice-weekly discussions on Canvas, posting a 250-word (more is OK) response. This aspect of the course requirement is meant to encourage collaborative learning, creative reflection, synthesis of material, and application of the readings to your everyday life. Each post is worth 3 points (3% of your course grade). This assignment will be graded on both effort and completion. If you do not meet the word count, do not address the necessary prompt, or post your response after the deadline, you will be marked down. Also, if you submit answers that are too vague, do not reflect depth and understanding of the readings, or if you copy someone else’s discussion idea you will also be marked down. Late discussions are accepted up to 3 days late with penalty (half credit). Please take these assignments seriously! They add up quickly, and point deductions can have a drastic effect on your overall course grade.

Using the assigned course readings, you must choose **ONE** of the following questions to answer. **LABEL** the number of the question you are answering, and answer the question with a minimum of 250 words. You must refer to and reference the course materials. Your discussion must show comprehension of the key terms/concepts from the reading(s) you've selected.

1. How do you personally relate to the reading(s) in this module? 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 author’s/authors’ **arguments** or **evidence** presented in one of the readings? What flaws do you see in the author’s argument or evidence? What counter-arguments might you develop?

3. How do the ideas, concepts or theories in the reading(s) relate to other readings we have done this semester or to course material you have learned in other classes? **Be specific!**

Be sure to include your word count at the bottom of your post.

You must also **respond to 2 of your peers**. Your response should reflect comprehension of the course materials, while also expressing knowledge of your peer's position and/or claims.

There are no discussions due on June 6th or July 4th.

COURSE PROJECT

For the course project, you are being asked to create and act out family life in the game Sims 4. You must play the game for a total of 10 hours. You will be asked to analyze and share data from the game and apply the information to course concepts. The course project is due at the end of the term, and you will be expected to apply a breadth of course theories to your experience of creating and playing your family life in virtual reality. More information will be forthcoming.
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 and research of family and common (mis)representations of the family.
- 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.

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/or 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 NOT always 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>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>72-77%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-91%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>62-67%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-81%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-61%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, if you receive a 91.3 your grade will be rounded to 91 as an A-. If you receive a 91.6 your grade will be rounded to a 92 as an A.
University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/
# SOCI 170 / Sociology of the Family / Summer 2017

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

*STC = Shifting the Center   CAN = Canvas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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| 1    | June 6 | Introduction to the course – Review the syllabus  
No Discussion Post Due |
|      |       | **HISTORICAL CHANGES AND FAMILY VARIATIONS** |
**STC – Historical Perspectives on Family Diversity – Pp. 42-58**  
**STC – The Normal American Family Pp. 90-105** |
**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** |
|      | June 15 | **STC – Arranged Marriages: What’s Love Got to Do With It? Pp. 163-172**  
**STC – Living Apart Together: A New Family Form Pp. 248-260**  
In-Class Film: Love Chronicles – Arranged Marriages  
**Essay Exam #1 Due @ 6pm** |
| 3    | June 20 | **CAN – Opening Up: Choosing an Open Relationship**  
**CAN – Alternative Families, Alternative Lives: Married Women Doing Bisexuality**  
In-Class Film: TBD |
|      | June 22 | **STC – Mothering for the State: Foster Parenting and the Challenges of Government-Contracted Carework Pp. 302-317**  
**STC – Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families Pp. 291-302**  
**STC – What it Means to be Daddy: Fatherhood for Black Men Living Away from Their Children Pp. 334-348**  
**STC – The Emergence of Lesbian-Coparent Families in Postmodern Society Pp. 20-33**  
In-Class Film: Fatherhood Dreams |
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<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 4</td>
<td><strong>FAMILIES, WORK, AND CAREWORK</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>NO CLASS – INDEPENDENCE DAY</strong>&lt;br&gt;No Discussion Post Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td><strong>Course Project Due to Canvas @ 6pm</strong>&lt;br&gt;No Attendance Required</td>
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