

Contemporary Family Issues
Sociology 425/825, Fall 2010
M 6:00-8:50 pm

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Office Hours: Mon. 5:00-6:00 pm & Wed: 11:00-12:20 & by appointment

Note: You are required to use Black Board for this course to view assignments, announcements, discussion board, etc.

Objectives

Through weekly lectures, readings, and discussion, you will become familiar with some of the issues facing contemporary families today including partner violence, gay fatherhood, childcare and social networks, motherhood, and the state of marriage and family. You will enhance critical thinking skills through class discussions and the writing up of weekly summaries. This course will entail a *substantial amount* of reading, writing, and discussion each week. In addition, a paper and/or annotated bibliography will be due at the end of the semester. *There will be open discussion of research findings pertaining to human sexuality in this course. If you find such discussions objectionable, please enroll in another course. No alternative assignments will be given.*

Required Books:

➤ Undergraduates and graduate students:

The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today.

Author: Andrew J. Cherlin

Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage.

Authors: Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas

Gay Fatherhood: Narratives of Family and Citizenship in America. *Author:* Ellen Lewin

Intimate Partner Violence. *Author:* Angela J. Hattery

➤ Graduate students only:

Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life.

Author: Mario Luis Small

Course Requirements for Undergraduate Students:

Weekly summaries	20%
Participation and attendance	15%
Discussant role	5%
Midterm exam	25%
Proposal, annotated bib., presentation	35%

❖ Undergraduate Course Requirements Described:

Weekly Summary: A grade will be assigned to each student based on demonstration of completion of readings. You will be expected to hand in a 1-2 page summary (please do not go over this 2 page limit) every week for readings due that day. Your summary DOES NOT need to cover every point; pick and choose a few points that you find interesting and discuss them. Your summary should also include two questions, which can be used as a springboard to generate discussion within the small groups. Please use Arial or Times Roman 12 pitch font with 1 inch margins on all sides and double space. Your summary must be typed and handed in prior to the end of the class period on which it is due. Late summaries and those that do not adhere to the above guidelines will automatically lose points.

Participation: It is expected that students will have regular class attendance. In addition to attending each class, you are encouraged to participate in both the large group and small group setting. Having done the readings and having done your summary will make participation easy and enjoyable. ☺ Please note that missing more than two classes will severely affect your participation grade.

Discussant: Each student will be expected to share leadership of the class by serving as a discussant for the small groups for a *minimum of two class periods*. This will require you to come to class prepared to summarize the readings as well as ask your classmates questions that will generate discussion. Below average grades will reflect lack of preparedness, or failure to present an assigned reading. The class period for which you will be a discussant will be assigned in advance. If you miss class, contact the instructor as soon as possible to see if you are a discussant for the following class period.

Mid Term Exam: An in-class essay exam will be given that covers lectures, weekly readings, and discussions up to the point of the exam.

Proposal & Annotated Bibliography: You will be expected to first develop a research question (related to one of the topics covered in class) and then assemble an annotated bibliography that directly addresses your research question. Details for the assignment will be posted on Black Board. However, you must submit a brief proposal for approval (1/2 page) indicating your research question and two possible journal articles that you will use. Your proposal is due **October 4th**. This brief proposal must be typed. Late proposals will result in a 10% drop each day it is late. Please be sure to hand them in on time. Your completed annotated bibliography is due **December 6th**.

Research Presentation: Students will have an opportunity to share with the class their findings from their annotated bibliographies. This will be a brief presentation (~8-10 minutes) that summarizes the present state of the literature in the area that you have chosen.

Course Requirements for Graduate Students:

Weekly summaries	15%
Book review & formal presentation	25%
Participation/class discussant	15%
Paper and presentation	40%
Discussant role for grad paper	5%

❖ Graduate Course Requirements Described:

Weekly Summary: You will be expected to hand in a 2 page summary (please do not go over this 2 page limit) every week for readings due that day. Your summary DOES NOT need to cover every point; pick and choose a few points that you find interesting and describe/discuss them. Your summary should also include two questions, which can be used for your “leadership” role and as a way to generate discussion within the small groups. Please use Arial or Times Roman 12 pitch font with 1 inch margins on all sides and double space. Your summary must be typed and handed in prior to the end of the class period on which it is due. Late summaries and those that do not adhere to the above guidelines will automatically lose points.

Book Review: You will be expected to write a 5-7 page review for the book “Unanticipated Gains.” Your review should highlight the important findings. Details for this assignment will be posted on Black Board. Your book review is due **November 1st**. You will also be responsible for delivering a lecture to the class based on your review of the book.

Participation/Discussant: You are expected to attend all classes and participate in discussion. Additionally, as a graduate student, it is expected that each of you will serve as a “leader” for the small groups on a weekly basis.

Term Paper: You will be expected to write a paper related to one of the topics discussed in class. You must submit a one-page proposal for approval and suggestions, which details your research question and at least three key references. This one page typed proposal is due **October 4th**. Details for the paper will be available on Black Board. Your final paper is due **December 8th by 2 pm.**

Presentation: You will have an opportunity to present your findings from your paper to the class. You will be allowed approximately 15 minutes to do this task. Remember that at national conferences, you are given a time limit and must stay within that limit; the same is true for this presentation.

Discussant Role: You will be given a graduate paper to review one week prior to the presentation. Your job is to provide the author with feedback, highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Details for this role will be posted on Black Board.

Grading System

A+	97%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C+	77%-79%	D+	66%-69%
A	93%-96%	B	83%-86%	C	73%-76%	D	61%-65%
A-	90%-92%	B-	80%-82%	C-	70%-72%	F	<60%

SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

The following is a general outline for our progression through the material. Actual dates and chapter assignments may change based on how rapidly we progress, the addition of guest speakers, etc.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS DUE
8/23	Course expectations; Intro to Family Sociology	Cherlin Ch. 1 (pp. 3-35)

8/30 9/6 9/13	The Marriage-Go-Round <i>Labor Day – No Class!</i> The Marriage-Go-Round	Cherlin Ch's 2-4 (pp.36-115) Cherlin Ch's 5-8 (pp. 116-202)
9/20 9/27	Promises I Can Keep Promises I Can Keep	Edin & Kefalas Ch's 1-3 (pp. 1-103) Edin & Kefalas Ch's 4-Conclusion (pp. 104-220)
10/4 10/11 10/18	Gay Fatherhood Gay Fatherhood <i>Fall Break – No Class!</i>	Lewin Ch's 1-3 (pp. 1-97) Proposals Due Lewin Ch's 4-7 (pp. 98-191)
10/25 11/1	Intimate Partner Violence Intimate Partner Violence	Hattery Ch's 1-4 (pp. 1 -113) Hattery Ch's 5-7 (pp. 115-179) Grad Student Book Reviews Due (11/1)
11/8 11/15 11/22	Undergraduate Exam (6-7:30) Grad Student Book Review Presentations No Class	Grad students – work on class paper Q & A session; course wrap up Work on presentation and paper
11/29 12/6	Presentations Presentations	Grad Students: Papers to Discussants Undergrad Student Papers Due (12/6) (Grad Student Papers Due 12/8)
TBA	Exam Week	Pick up final papers in 711 Oldfather Hall

- **Note: a writing assignment/summary is due each Monday.**

♦The following schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class or posted on Black Board. Not knowing about syllabus changes due to class absence **is not** a legitimate excuse for failure to complete course requirements.

♦Staying in the class once the syllabus has been discussed implies consent to conditions set out here.

Course Policies and Ethics: You are encouraged to learn and apply yourself in a way that promotes respect for yourself and others. **Ground rules will be discussed the first day of class.** Students are expected to conduct themselves with scholarly integrity. Any type of scholastic dishonesty is prohibited.

♦Please turn off cell phones and/or beepers before entering class. Absolutely no texting during class!

♦Tape recorders and lap tops are not allowed unless you have permission from the instructor.

♦If you are going to be late for class or have to leave early, please inform the instructor ahead of time.

♦Do not make a habit of coming to class late or leaving early - this is unacceptable! You will automatically lose participation points for being late.