

Contemporary Family Issues
Sociology 425/825, Fall 2007
M, W 2:30-3:45

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Office Hours: M & W: 1:30-2:20 and by appointment

Note: You are required to use Black Board for this course to view assignments, grades, 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 family violence, child care management, fatherhood, housework, and gender equity, divorce, same sex intimacies, and the effects of the internet on family life. 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.

Required Books:

➤ Undergraduates and graduate students:

Chaudry, A. (2004). *Putting children first: How long-wage working mothers manage child care*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Sev'er, A. (2002). *Fleeing the house of horrors: Women who have left abusive partners*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Amato, P. R., & Booth, A. (1997). *A generation at risk: Growing up in an era of family upheaval*. Harvard University Press.

Coltrane, Scott. (1996). *Family man: Fatherhood, housework, and gender equity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Required Articles Posted on Black Board (Undergraduates and graduate students):

Kurdek, L. A. (2004). Chapter 6. Gay men and lesbians: The family in context. In M. Coleman & L. H. Ganong (Eds.), *Handbook of contemporary families: Considering the past, contemplating the future* (pp. 96-115). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hughes, R., Jr., & Hans, J. D. (2004). Chapter 29. Understanding the effects of the internet on family life. In M. Coleman & L. H. Ganong (Eds.), *Handbook of contemporary families: Considering the past, contemplating the future* (pp. 506-520). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

❖ Graduate students only:

Booth, A., & Crouter, A. C. (1998). *Men in families. When do they get involved? What difference does it make?* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Barnett, O., Miller-Perrin, C. L., & Perrin, R. D. (Eds.). (2005). *Family Violence Across the Lifespan: An Introduction. 2nd Ed.*
 -Chapters 1, 8, 9, 10, & 11

Course Requirements for Undergraduate Students:

Weekly summaries	30%
Participation/attendance	10%
Discussant role	10%
Mid term exam	25%
Proposal, annotated bib. & presentation	25%

❖ Undergraduate Course Requirements Described:

Weekly Summaries: 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 or for the prior class period. That is, you can choose to do your summaries on either set of readings. Please use either Arial or Times Roman 12 pitch font with 1 inch margins on all sides and double space. Your summary of the readings should also include two questions, which can be used for your discussant role and/or as a way to generate discussion within the small groups. Your summary must be typed and handed in prior to the end of the class period on which it is due. Late summaries 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 summaries will make participation easy and enjoyable. ☺ Please note that missing more than four classes will affect your participation grade.

Discussant: Each student will be expected to share leadership of the class by serving as a discussant for a *minimum of two class periods*. This will require you to come to class prepared to summarize the articles 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 exam will be given in late October that covers lectures, weekly readings as well as any additional articles that have been assigned up to that point. The exam will be essay format.

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 1st**. 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 annotated bibliography is due **December 5th**.

Research Presentation: Each student 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	20%
Book review/readings (one set) & presentation	25%
Participation/class discussant	15%
Paper & presentation	35%
Discussant Role for Grad Paper	5%

❖ Graduate Course Requirements Described:

Weekly Summaries: 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 or for the prior class period. That is, you can choose to do your summaries on either set of readings. Please use either Arial or Times Roman 12 pitch font with 1 inch margins on all sides and double space. 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. Your summary must be typed and handed in prior to the end of the class period on which it is due. Late summaries will automatically lose points.

Book Review: You will be expected to write a 5-7 page review for one of the graduate assigned sets of readings. Your review should highlight the important findings as well as noting things that you found particularly interesting. Details for this assignment will be posted on Black Board shortly. Your book review is due **November 5th**. You will also be responsible for delivering a lecture to the class on an assigned date (Nov. 7 or 12th) relevant to the book you review. Details will be posted on Black Board.

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.

Presentation: You will have an opportunity to present your findings from your research 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 your presentation in this class.

Term Paper: You will be expected to write a research paper this term 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 no later than **October 1st**. Details for the term paper will be available soon, posted on Black Board. Your final term paper is due **December 10th**.

Discussant Role: You will be given a graduate paper to read one week prior to the presentation. Your job is to give the author feedback. You want to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses (if applicable) 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/page assignments may change based on how rapidly we progress, the addition of guest speakers, etc.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS DUE
8/27	Review syllabus and course expectations	
	Managing Child Care	
8/29		Chaudry Ch. 1-2
9/3	Labor Day – No Class!	
9/5*		Chaudry Ch. 3-4
9/10		Chaudry Ch, 5-6

9/12	Guest Speaker – Trish Hill - Sociology	
	Domestic Violence	
9/17		Sev'er Ch. 1-3
9/19*		Sev'er Ch. 4-6
9/24	Guest Speaker – Voices of Hope	
9/26*		Sev'er Ch. 7-8 & 10
	Family Man	
10/1*		Coltrane Ch. 1-3 - All Proposals Due!!!
10/3		Coltrane Ch. 4-6
10/8*		Coltrane Ch. 7-8
	Generation at Risk	
10/10		Amato & Booth Ch. 1-3
10/15*		Amato & Booth Ch. 4-5
10/17		Amato & Booth Ch. 6-8
10/22	Fall Break – No Class!!	
10/24	Mid Term Exam – Undergrads Only!	
10/29*	Gay Men & Lesbians	Kurdek – Ch. 6 Article
10/31	Guest Speaker	
11/5*	Effects of Internet on Family Life	Hughes & Hans – Ch. 29 Article Grad Student Book Reviews Due!!
11/7	Graduate Lecture & Discussant on Books	
11/12	Graduate Lecture & Discussant on Books	
11/14	Crim Meetings - No Class!	
11/19	No Class	Work on papers!!!
11/21	Thanksgiving Break – No Class!	
11/26	Presentations	Grad Students: Papers to Discussants
11/28	Presentations	
12/3	Presentations	
12/5	Presentations	Undergrad Papers Due!!
12/10	Presentations	Grad Papers Due!!
12/12	Wrap Up	
TBA	Exam Week	Pick up final papers in 711 Oldfather Hall

Note: * denotes that your assignment is due that day.

- ♦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 failures 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 also 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. Tape recorders are not allowed unless you have permission from the instructor.
 - ◆ If you are going to be late for a 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 and will not be tolerated.
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UNL academic calendar is on line at: http://www.unl.edu/regrec/calendar/calendar_main.shtml