

SOCIAL SCIENCE 200
THE FAMILY: SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVES

<http://courses.washington.edu/ssci200/>

Course Content and Goals: The study of families lies at the heart of the social sciences. This course is an introduction to research on the family taught by three social scientists--an economist, a psychologist, and a sociologist—and provides students with an unusual opportunity to learn and practice the models and methods of three disciplines with very different perspectives. A set of questions about the changing American family focus the discussion and highlight the contrasting and complementary views of sociology, psychology, and economics on issues of common concern: What is a family and what do families do? Is the American family in decline? Who marries whom—do opposites attract? Who benefits from marriage and who bears the cost of divorce? Is cohabitation now just an alternative form of marriage? What determines the fertility rate? How are children “raised” to become members of a social group? What determines decision-making power within a family? Why do American mothers work so much? Throughout, we emphasize the diversity of family life and experiences, and the relevance of social science research for policy issues affecting the family.

The key goal of this course will be to help student develop an interdisciplinary perspective on the study of families in contemporary America. The understanding and development of research skills is another important goal of this course. Weekly lab sections will be devoted to projects than enable the student to learn how to access information about families from a variety of sources, prepare and analyze data, and present their results clearly and effectively.

Course requirements: Midterm exam, final exam, lab project reports, possible additional quizzes or small assignments, participation in class discussions.

Class time: MW 1:30-2:50 plus one lab (ThF 8:30-10:20 or ThF 1:30-3:20)

Textbook: Cherlin, A. (1999) Public and Private Families. McGraw-Hill.

Readings: Additional required readings are placed on Electronic Course Reserve at Odegaard Library. Go to <http://www.lib.washington.edu/ougl/reserves/ereserves.html> to access the readings in electronic form. In order to view these files you must have Acrobat Reader. Most campus computers will have this application. For your home computer, you can download the application for free from the Adobe website, <http://www.adobe.com>.

Instructors :

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W 10-12

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T 10:30-11:30,
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Teaching Assistants:

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F 10:30-12:20
Th 10:30-11:30,
& Th 3:30-4:30

Class Topics and Readings

Week 1: March 27,29

Introduction: What is the family? Is the American family in decline?

Cherlin, Chapter 1 “Public and Private Families”

Chapter 2 “The History of the Family”

Coontz, Stephanie. 1994. “‘Leave it to Beaver’ and ‘Ozzie and Harriet’: American Families in the 1950s.” Chapter 2 in The Way we Never Were. New York: Basic Books.

Taylor, Ronald. “Minority Families and Social Change,” Pp. 251-295 in Minority Families in the United States, Ronald Taylor, ed. New York: Prentice Hall

Gary Becker’s Nobel Lecture, “The Economic Way of Looking at Behavior,” Hoover Institution monograph, 1996

Lab: Introduction and session on library use

Week 2: April 3,5

Dating and Mating: What do we look for in a partner? Do we marry people like ourselves, or people who are different?

Cherlin, Chapter 7. (pp. 197-209)

Cherlin, Chapter 8 (pp.238-248)

Rothman, Ellen K. (1984). In Our Own Time, 1920-1980. In Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America (pp. 287-311).

Paula England and George Farkas, Households, Employment, and Gender: A Social, Economic, and Demographic View, 1986, pp. 31-42 only (a discussion of marriage markets and search for partners)

Murstein, Bernard (1970). Stimulus-Value-Role: A Theory of Marital Choice Journal of Marriage and the Family.

Lab: Rating couple interactions

Week 3: April 10, 12

Cohabitation and Alternative Family Forms: Is cohabitation a new form of marriage?

Cherlin, Chapter 8, pp. 256-261 and Chapter 9, pp. 281-284

Rindfuss, R. and A. Vandenheuvel. "Cohabitation: A precursor to marriage or an alternative to being single?" Pop and Development Review 16: 703-726.

Carrington, Christopher. 1999. "The Division of Domestic Labor in Lesbian and Gay Families." Pp. 175-206 in No Place Like Home: Relationships and Family Life among Lesbians and Gay Men. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.

Lab: Using the Internet/Web Resources on families

Week 4: April 17, 19

Family Goals: Why marry? Who benefits from marriage?

Cherlin, Chapter 9 "Spouses and Partners"

Pp. 67-79, "The Household as an Economic Unit," in The Economics of Gender, Joyce Jacobsen, 1998. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Waite, Linda. 1995 "Does Marriage Matter?" Demography 32: 483-507.

Oppenheimer, Valerie. 1997. "Women's Employment and the Gain to Marriage: The Specialization and Trading Model." Annual Review of Sociology 23: 431-53.

Lab: Analyzing Census Data

Week 5: April 24, 26

Fertility: Has industrialization caused a steady decline in fertility? What explains "baby booms" (and busts)?

Mason, Karen Oppenheim. 1997. "Explaining Fertility Transitions." Demography 34: 443-454.

Morgan, S. Philip. 1996. "Characteristic Features of Modern American Fertility" in Fertility in the U.S.: New Patterns, New Theories ed. by J. Casterline, R. Lee, and K. Foote. New York: The Population Council.

Pp. 74-83 in Paula England and George Farkas, Households, Employment, and Gender: A Social, Economic, and Demographic View, 1986.

Lab: Review for midterm

Week 6: May 1, 3

Socialization: Becoming a member of society, who do you want your child to be?

Cherlin, Chapter 14 (pp.423-444)

Cauce, A.M., Gonzales, N., Hiraga, Y., Grove, K., & Ryan-Finn, K. 1996. African American Mothers and Their Adolescent Daughters: Intimacy, Autonomy, and Conflict. In B.J. Leadbeater and N. Way (eds.), *Urban Girls: Resisting Stereotypes: Creating Identities*. New York: Erlbaum, pp. 100-116.

Delgado Gaitan, C. (1994). Socializing Young Children in Mexican-American Families: An Intergenerational Perspective. In Greenfirel, P.M. & Cocking, R.R. Cross-Cultural Roots of Minority Child Development. Erlbaum

Lab: Midterm exam

Week 7: May 8, 10

Work-Family Issues: Why do mothers work so much?

Cherlin, Chapter 10 “Work and Families”

“Labor Force Participation: Analysis of Trends,” Pp. 106-141 in The Economics of Gender by Joyce Jacobsen, 1998.

Jane Waldfogel, “Understanding the ‘Family Gap’ in Pay for Women with Children,” Journal of Economic Perspectives 12: 137-156 (Winter 1998).

Lab: Intro to SPSS/Windows

Week 8: May 15,17

Family Decision-making: What determines power in the household?

“BATNAs, Babies, and Bedrock Facts,” Pp. 37-64 in Kidding Ourselves: Breadwinning, Babies, and Bargaining Power by Rhona Mahoney. 1996. New York: Basic Books.

“Joey’s Problem: Nancy and Evan Holt.” 1989. Pp. 33-58 in The Second Shift, by Arlie Hochschild with Anne Machung. New York: Vintage.

Lab: Analyzing data from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH)

Week 9: May 22,24

Divorce and Public Policy: Who bears the cost of divorce—men, women, children?

Readings: Cherlin, Chapter 12

Petersen, Richard. 1996. "A Re-evaluation of the Economic Consequences of Divorce." American Sociological Review 61: 528-536.

Weitzman, Lenore. 1996. "The Economic Consequences of Divorce are Still Unequal": Comment on Petersen." ASR 61: 537-538.

Petersen, Richard. 1996. "Statistical Errors, Faulty Conclusions, Misguided Policy: Reply to Weitzman." ASR 61: 539-540.

Furstenberg, Frank and Andrew Cherlin. 1991. "Remarriage and Children's Well Being." Pp. 77-95 in Divided Families. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.

Lab: Analyzing data from the NSFH (continued)

Week 10: May 28, 30

May 28: Holiday

May 30: Wrap up

Lab: Review for Final Exam