

WINTER 2016
SOCIOLOGY 310: THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL LEARNING
DR. KARRIE ANN SNYDER

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(Dr. Snyder's office hours may differ during Reading and Finals week. Please check Canvas).

Teaching assistant contact information and office hours will be posted to Canvas.

This course is an overview of the sociology of the family focusing on the contemporary United States. We will begin the course, however, by looking at the history of the family and how its form and roles within have changed over time. The course will pay particular attention to diversity in family formation and experiences by class, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation and in how people learn their social roles and interact within family units. We will also consider how families shape individuals and their life chances through both social learning and access to resources. In the final part of the course, we will look at how family members balance their work and home lives including an examination of how domestic and work roles and tasks are divided up within the family.

The final reading for the course brings together many of the themes covered throughout the quarter: Should mothers “work” outside the home? The “mommy wars” and supposed trends regarding women “choosing” to stay at home have made headlines from the *New York Times* and are fiercely debated wherever parents convene – from the school playground to the workplace. We will look at both the evidence for such trends and consider a range of opinions within this debate as well as discussing how this debate influences what expectations are placed on parents.

The aim of this course is for students to learn how sociologists have conceptualized and studied families in the U.S., understand general trends in how contemporary U.S. families live, explore issues of diversity among family experiences and forms, and contemplate how “the family” fits into the larger society and with other social institutions, including the economy. Overall, the goal of the course is for students to become more engaged and critical of issues related to family life that are presented to us in our daily lives through the media, from politicians and family advocates, and in our interpersonal exchanges.

Grading and Course Policies

Student Evaluation

Grades will be based on 4 components:

1) Class Participation - 15%

**Students are expected to do the assigned readings prior to class. Students are encouraged and expected to bring their insights, questions, and opinions to lecture and participate in any small group exercises in class. Students are also expected to participate in any online discussions on the course’s Canvas site.

2) In-Class Midterm - 30% (Wednesday, February 3rd - Week 5)

3) Research Paper - 25% (Due Monday, March 7th - Week 10 at the beginning of class.)

– Guidelines will be given out later in the quarter during lecture and will be available on Canvas. Research papers will be turned in the last day of class at the beginning of class on March 7th. Electronic copies will not be accepted.

4) Take-Home Final - 30% (Due Tuesday, March 15th at 1pm).

– Take-Home Final will be passed out during class on Monday, March 7th and will be posted to Canvas after class on March 7th. Take-Home Final must be posted to Canvas by the deadline.

NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Course Materials – Available at Norris Book Center

Required Books:

Edin & Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*
Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*

Readings marked with ** are available through the course's Canvas site.

Additional materials may be required as well and added throughout the semester. Any additional materials will be available electronically through the course website.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was missed. Please take note of two other students' email addresses. Lecture notes of the teaching staff are not available for students.

Academic Integrity

Issues regarding academic integrity will be immediately referred to the Dean's Office. For further information regarding the academic integrity policy at Northwestern, please consult the *Student Handbook* and/or <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/uniprin.html>.

Laptop Policy

Laptops (also cell phones, iPods, etc.) are not to be used during lecture.

Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

Any student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to speak directly to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (847-467-5530) and the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first two weeks of class.) All discussions will remain confidential.

*****This syllabus is as of January 5th, 2016. If there are any modifications to the assignments, course policies, or criteria for evaluation, any updates will be posted on the course's Canvas site. Students are also responsible for announcements made during class.***

I. Historical Views of the Family and Contemporary Trends

Week 1

January 4th - Monday

Introduction to the course - No readings

January 6th - Wednesday

**Coontz (2010), "Historical Perspectives on Family Diversity," from *Shifting the Center*, Ferguson (editor).

**Vinovkis (2010), "Historical Perspectives on Parent-Child Interactions," from *Shifting the Center*.

Week 2

January 11th - Monday

**Lichter & Qian (2010), "Marriage and Family in a Multiracial Society," from *Shifting the Center*.

II. Diversity in Family Life: Socio-Economic and Race & Ethnicity

January 13th - Wednesday - Marriage and Parenting

**Lareau (2002), "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families," *American Sociological Review* (67): 747-776.

**Howard (2008), *Brides, Inc.: American Weddings and the Business of Tradition* - Chapter 1 and Epilogue

Week 3

January 18th - Monday - No Class

January 20th - Wednesday - Single Parenthood

Edin & Kefalas (2005), *Promises I Can Keep* – Chapters: 1-3

Week 4

January 25th - Monday - Single Parenthood

Edin & Kefalas (2005), *Promises I Can Keep* – Chapters: 4, 5, 6 & Conclusion

January 27th - Wednesday - Prison Life and Families

**Braman (2007), *Doing Time on the Outside* - Excerpts.

**Wildeman & Western (2010), "Incarceration in Fragile Families," *The Future of Children* (20): 157-77.

Week 5

February 1st - Monday - Prison Life and Families

**Eckholm (1999), "In Prisoners' Wake, a Tide of Troubled Kids," *New York Times*. (Note: Also, look at the multimedia content that accompanies the story.)

February 3rd - Wednesday

In-class Midterm

III. The Changing Nature of Family Life

Week 6

February 8th - Monday - Same-Sex Marriage and Families

**Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist & Steelman (2010), *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definition of Family* - Chapters: 2 & 3

February 10th - Wednesday

In class Documentary - To Be Announced

Week 7

February 15th - Monday - Adoption

**Kubo, (2010), "Desirable Difference: The Shadow of Racial Stereotypes in Creating Transracial Families through Transnational Adoption." *Sociology Compass* 4/4: 263–282.

**Weiner & Zinner, (2015), "Attitudes Toward Straight, Gay Male, and Transsexual Parenting." *Journal of Homosexuality*, 62:327–339.

February 17th - Wednesday - Reactions to Changing Family Life

**Nock, Sanchez & Wright (2008), *Covenant Marriage: The Movement to Reclaim Marriage in America* - Chapters 1, 2 and 4

**Sanchez (2010), "Marital Mythology: Why The New Crisis in Marriage Isn't," *From Families as They Really Are*.

IV. Balancing Work and Family Lives

Week 8

February 22nd - Monday - Trends in Women's Employment

**Cotter, England & Hermsen (2010), "Briefing Paper: Moms and Jobs: Trends in Mother's Employment and Which Mother's Stay at Home," *From Families as They Really Are*.

**Pew Research Center, "On Pay Gap, Millennial Women Near Parity – For Now Despite Gains, Many See Roadblocks Ahead." Only Read Chapters 1, 2 and 5

February 24th - Wednesday - Monday - Who does what?

**Hochschild (1989), *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*, Excerpts.

**Sullivan (2010), "Men's Changing Contribution to Family Work", *From Families as They Really Are*.

**Sullivan & Coltrane (2010), "Men's Changing Contribution to Housework and Child Care", *From Families as They Really Are*.

Week 9

February 29th - Monday - Opting out or Leaning in?

**Percheski (2008), "Opting Out? Cohort Differences in Professional Women's Employment Rates from 1960 to 2005," *American Sociological Review* (73): 497-517.

**Belkin (2003), "The Opt-Out Revolution," *New York Times*.

March 2nd - Wednesday

Sandberg (2013), *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* - Chapters 1- 6 and introduction

Week 10

March 7th - Monday - So now what?

Sandberg (2013), *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* - Chapter 7 - 11

***Take-Home Final will be distributed and will be posted to Canvas after class time
Research Paper is due at the beginning of class***

TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE to Canvas by Tuesday, March 15th by 1pm