

## Sociology 111AC

## Sociology of the Family

UC Berkeley, Fall 2022  
MWF 11-12, 145 Dwinelle

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**Course Description:** This course explores contemporary family life with a focus on the United States. It will introduce you to how sociologists study families and consider topics that seem (and are!) personal and emotional from a scientific perspective. We will explore expectations around what families are expected to accomplish for society and for individuals, and how well they are meeting them in the context of deep and persistent economic and social inequality in the U.S. and the current policy context. We begin the course by considering how U.S. families have changed since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> C., and how that change is connected to contemporary realities. A key aspect of this part of the course is examining relationships between changing social and economic trends and patterns of family organization and relationships. How have family relationships changed and why? How does this vary across social groups? How are these privately experienced changes manifested in social trends and how are changing economic and social conditions involved? Next, we move on to exploring contemporary family relationships with attention to socially patterned variations across social class, race and gender, and other social factors, focusing on parents and children. The last part of the course considers the intersection of parenthood with paid work and a comparative look at the impact of social policy.

### Goals for the course:

By the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Think of the family as a social institution and explain its connections to other social forces.
- Understand family diversity and change from a sociological perspective.
- Learn how family trends have shifted over time and how they are related to other social changes.
- Understand the challenges facing U.S. families today and how these are socially patterned.
- Claim some experience doing qualitative research.
- Evaluate your past and future family experiences in a more critical and creative way.

## **Evaluation:**

**Take-home Exam 1:** 20% of grade

**Changing Families Paper:** 20% of grade

**Take-home Exam 2:** 20% of grade

**Response and Reflection papers (4):** 10% of grade

**Final Project: Young Adults' Family Plans:** 30% of grade

-**Interview and write-up:** 7.5% of grade

-**Qualitative Analysis Findings Report:** 5% of grade

-**Paper:** 17.5% of grade

## **Course Schedule\*:**

**Week 1,** Aug. 24 & 26: What does it mean to think sociologically about families, and what can family history help us with?

Readings: Cohen, P. (2014) "Family Diversity is The New Normal for America's Children". Council on Contemporary Families, briefing paper

Coontz, S. (2000) "Historical Perspectives on American Families." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 62, no 2

### **PART 1: CONNECTING THE PAST AND PRESENT**

**Week 2,** Aug. 29, 31 & Sept. 2: Families and social structure, or examples of how race, the economy and the structure of paid work are related to family forms, tensions and diversity.

Readings: Cherlin, A. (2014) *Labor's Love Lost*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1

Nakano-Glenn, E. (1983), "Split Household, Small Producer & Dual Wage Earner: An Analysis of Chinese-American Family Strategies". *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol.45, No. 1

**Week 3,** Sept. 7 & 9: Gender relations, the division of labor and the right to chart your own path

Readings: From D'Emilio, John and Freedman, Estelle. (1988). *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. New York: Harper and Row.  
"The Contraceptive Revolution" pp. 242-255  
"The Second Wave of Feminism" pp. 308-318

“Gay Liberation” pp. 318-325

Hochschild, A. (2012)(1989) *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books.  
Introduction, Ch. 1, 2, 4, and either (or both) 6 or 8

### **R/R Paper #1 Due on Sept. 9**

**Week 4**, Sept. 12, 14 & 16: Increasing family diversity accompanied by social controversy and conflict

Readings: D’Emilio & Freedman, E. (1988) *From Intimate Matters*  
“Sexual Politics and the New Right” pp. 344-354

Carlson, M. & England, P. (2011). “Social Class and Family Patterns in the United States”. In eds. Carlson, M. & England, P. *Social Class and Changing Families in an Unequal America*, pp. 1-9. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Reczek, C. (2020) “Sexual and Gender-Minority Families: A 2010 to 2020 Decade in Review”. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82: 300-325

“The Abortion Underground” by Jessica Bruder, *The Atlantic*, May 2022

### **Exam #1 Questions released on Sept. 16 after class.**

**Week 5**, Sept. 19, 21 & 23: Challenges of divorce and family instability

Readings: Raley, K. & Sweeney, M. (2020) “Divorce, Repartnering and Stepfamilies: A Decade in Review”. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82:81-99

Gerson, K. (2010) *The Unfinished Revolution*. Oxford Univ. Press. Ch. 1-4

### **Exam #1 Due Sept. 23. No Lecture**

**Week 6**, Sept. 26, 28 & 30: Forming contemporary romantic partnerships

Readings: Gerson, K. (2010) *The Unfinished Revolution*. Oxford Univ. Press.  
Ch. 5-9

Enriquez, L. E. (2020) *Of Love and Papers: How Immigration Policy Affects Romance and Family*. Univ. Of California Press. Ch. 2 & 3

## **Part 2: INTERSECTIONAL PARENTING**

**Week 7**, Oct. 3, 5 & 7: Social class differences and the goal of providing security

Reading: Nelson, M. (2010). *Parenting Out of Control: Anxious Parents in Uncertain Times*. NYU Press. Introduction, Ch. 1-4

## **R/R Paper #2 Due Oct. 5**

**Week 8**, Oct. 10, 12 & 14: Race and ethnicity

Readings: Dow, D. (2019) *Mothering While Black*. University of California Press. Ch. 1-4

Jackson, D. (2001). "This Hole in Our Hearts: The Urban-Raised Generation and the Legacy of Silence." Pp. 189-206 in eds. Lobo, S & Peters, K. *American Indians and the Urban Experience*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press

**Week 9**, Oct. 17, 19 & 21: Single parents experiencing poverty

Readings: Edin, K. & Kefalas, M. (2005). *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction, Ch. 5 & 6

Edin, K. & Nelson, T. (2013). *Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction, Ch. 4

## **Changing Families Paper Due Oct. 21**

**Week 10**, Oct. 24, 26 & 28: Immigrant families

Readings: Zhou, M. (2011). "Conflict, Coping and Reconciliation: Intergenerational Relations in Chinese Immigrant Families". In Eds. Skolnick, A. & Skolnick, J., *Family in Transition*, pp. 472-84. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Sun, K. (2014). "Reconfigured Reciprocity: How Aging Taiwanese Immigrants Transform Cultural Logics of Elder Care". *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 76, No. 4

Dreby, J. (2015) *Everyday Illegal: When Policies Undermine Immigrant Families*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 3 & 4 (R)

**R/R Paper #3 Due Oct. 28**

**Exam #2 Questions Released Oct. 28**

**Week 11**, Oct. 31, Nov. 2 & 4: Government policing and regulation of families

Roberts, D. (2022). *Torn Apart*. New York: Basic Books. Ch. 1, 2, 3

Meadow, T. (2018) *Trans Kids*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 5

**Exam #2 Due Nov. 4, no lecture.**

## PART 3: FAMILIES AND CAREERS

**Week 12**, Nov. 7 & 9: Families and Careers: gendered expectations and the structure of careers

Readings: Mason, M. & Eckman, E. (2007). *Mothers on the Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*. New York: Oxford University Press

**Week 13**, Nov. 14, 16 & 18: Families and Careers: Work, gender and social policy

Reading: Collins, C. (2019) *Making Motherhood Work*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 1 & 6

### **Interview Write-Up Due Nov. 16**

**Week 14**, Nov. 21-25: Thanksgiving week—No lecture.

No New Reading—or get started on Week 15.

**Week 15**, Nov. 28, 30 & Dec. 2: Families and Careers: Work, gender and social policy

Reading: Collins, C. (2019) *Making Motherhood Work*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 2 & 4

**R/R Paper #4 Due Nov. 30**

**Interview Analysis Report Due Dec. 2**

**RRR Week**: Dec. 5-9

**Final Project Paper due Dec. 13**

## **Overview of Assignments and Academic Expectations**

**Detailed prompts for all assignments are on bCourses.**

**Exams**: All exams will be take-home essay exams. Essay prompts will be posted one week before the exams are due. Instructions for formatting and length will be on the exam prompts. Exams will be graded according to a traditional letter grade scale (i.e. “A”, “B”, “C”, etc.)

**Response and Reflection Papers**: There will be four short reflection papers due during the semester. The purpose of these papers is to create a space for students to reflect on their personal reactions and responses to the course material. These papers will be contract based, in terms of evaluation (i.e., you will get full credit if you follow instructions and make a good effort). If you miss *one* of these assignments during the semester, or do poorly on it, you can make it up during RRR week.

**Changing Families Paper:** In this paper you will make connections between societal level changes in families and personal experiences within your own family. You will choose one or two aspects of family change to focus on in greater detail.

**Final Project: Young Adults' Family Plans Qualitative Analysis**

For this project, you will become a sociologist. You will collect and analyze interview data that you and other students will gather during the second part of the semester and write up your findings in a research paper. The project consists of three assignments that you will turn in for credit. First, there is an interview and write-up, next is a report on the results of your analysis, and then finally the paper itself. The paper will be graded according to a traditional letter grade scale but the interview/write-up and analysis report will be “contract based” (i.e., you will get full credit if you follow instructions and make a good effort). *Detailed instructions for this project are posted on bCourses.*

**Readings:** Much of the work of this class consists of keeping up with the class readings. All readings will be available to you through bCourses. You can find them in two places in bCourses: by clicking “Files”> “Readings” and then the folder for the week, or going to “Pages” and selecting the page for the appropriate week.

For any given week, please read in the order listed on the syllabus. Readings are assigned for the week, rather than by the day, to allow for more flexibility in the class. That said, we will generally consider them sequentially. In general, try to complete the first reading before Monday’s class, and everything before Friday.

We are reading two books this semester, in addition to various book chapters and journal articles. All books are available through the UCB library website as e-books (this is the free option) but if you prefer a hard copy, they can be easily purchased via online sources. Order them early so you will have them ready! Please note that these books are not posted on bCourses or included in the bound copy of course readings available for purchase (see below).

1. Gerson, Kathleen. (2010) *The Unfinished Revolution: How a New Generation is Reshaping Family, Work and Gender in America*. New York: Oxford University Press

2. Mason, Mary Ann & Eve Mason Eckman. (2007) *Mothers on the Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*. New York: Oxford University Press

Bound hard copies of course readings can be purchased at the Copy Central Store at 2411 Telegraph Ave. While not required, I strongly advise investing in your learning this semester by purchasing one. Numerous studies have shown that we retain material better when we read it offline. Also, you don’t need internet access or a

functioning computer to do the reading and stay caught up! Please note that the two books listed above are NOT included in the volume that is for sale. Both print and digital versions are available.

**Attendance:** This is an in-person class and consistent attendance is a basic academic expectation. If you are not able, or not planning, to come to class regularly then please drop the class now. To reward students for attendance, we will have periodic random attendance checks for which you will earn extra credit points.

**Course capture:** Our class is scheduled for course capture. This means that there will be recordings (audio recording + slides) available of each class meeting on our class bCourses site. I am doing this because Covid is still with us. *These recordings are not meant to substitute for in-person attendance in class.* I will post these as soon as I can after they are available. Recordings will remain on bCourses for a week or so, and all will be removed prior to the release of exam questions. Course capture recordings can be accessed in the “Media Gallery” of our class bCourses site.

## **Grading Policies:**

**Readers:** Graduate student Readers will do the bulk of the grading for this class. We will all work together to make sure the grading is as consistent and equitable as possible. Around the second or third week of the semester, students will be assigned a Reader that will be their primary contact for dealing with administrative matters around DSP extensions, other extension requests and any issues around attendance checks. This same person may grade all or some of your assignments.

**Due dates and Grace Period:** All assignments will have a due date, as usual. However, in the spirit of offering more flexibility to everyone, there will be a grace period that will extend for 24 hours after the deadline. An assignment turned in after the due date, but before the end of the grace period will not be considered late. The grace period extends to all students—you do not need to ask for permission or notify me if you plan to turn in work during the grace period.

**Late Assignments Policy:** If you have a personal emergency or are ill, contact your Reader at the *earliest opportunity* about an extension. Unexcused late assignments will be marked down 10% for each day after the grace period of 24 hours expires. At times, I or Readers may request documentation of an illness, emergency, or other situation.

**Academic Accommodations:** Ask for accommodations if you are a DSP student (according to your LOA). Make sure that the DSP office has sent me a copy of your letter. If you have an accommodation for take-home assignments, it is your

responsibility to contact your Reader to ask for an extension. Please bear in mind that accommodations for extra time on in-class exams do not apply to take-home assignments. You are always welcome to reach out to me to discuss accommodations. Accommodations are also available for the observance of religious holidays, or due to conflicts related to student athletics. Please reach out to me if you have another issue not “officially” covered and we can talk about it. Here is a link to more information from UCB about academic accommodations and resources: <https://evcp.berkeley.edu/programs-resources/academic-accommodations-hub>

**Re-grade policy:** Please first talk with the person who graded your assignment for more feedback. Readers have the authority to change grades if they believe it is warranted. If you believe a mistake was made on your assignment, and want me to review it, write a short statement explaining why you think your assignment deserves a different grade, making sure to reference the assignment rubric. This statement should be about the substance of your work, rather than effort. I will then re-grade your paper and determine the final grade for the assignment. All re-grade requests must be made within a week of when an assignment is handed back. Per University policy, no re-grades are possible for final exams.

**Incomplete Grades:** Incompletes are an option of last resort for students experiencing true medical or other emergencies that make it impossible for them to complete their coursework on time. To be considered for an incomplete grade, students need to speak with me about it DURING the semester, have completed at least half of the coursework, and provide documentation of the reason for the request.

**Academic honesty is expected of all students.** It is extremely important that everyone submits their own original work, produced specifically for this course, in order to receive credit. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the office of student conduct and dealt with according to university policies. *Be aware of plagiarism.* Word for word use of even a single sentence from any author, publication or website without proper citation is plagiarism and is unethical and unacceptable. So is very closely following the structure and wording of another author’s work. In addition, please be aware that you may not turn in any portion of *your own* previous work submitted for credit in another course without substantial revision. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam in question with no opportunity to rewrite, as will any other kind of academic dishonesty. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, please ask! The student writing center is a good resource for questions about this.

**Turnitin:** All of your assignments will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin. Please be aware that this program keeps a database of work previously turned in for this class by other students, as well as any of your own work that you turned in for credit in a previous class.



## University Resources for Students

**Your Health and Well-Being:** Life as a college student can be full of excitement and possibilities, but at times may feel overwhelming or be difficult in other ways. Some degree of this is to be expected, but if you are experiencing a lot of distress, anxiety or have a pre-existing mental health issue, there are resources on campus to help. You are not alone; many others share your difficulties. Even if you don't think you need them, I encourage you to look at these websites now, so you know what is available. There is much more than counseling appointments: there are web tutorials and videos, support groups and mindfulness classes, for example. Counseling center staff have told me these groups and classes can be a great preventative resource, and are a great way to get the semester off to a good start. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), (510) 642-9494, <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>. More general resources on mental health, services are at <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/health-topics/mental-health>.

Remember that regular exercise, getting enough sleep, healthy eating, getting together with friends in-person to have fun and not spending too much time online/on your phone are important ways to support mental health. (A message from the parent side of me!)

**Student Learning Center:** "The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals."

**Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services:** To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. Please note that I am not a confidential advocate; I am a mandated reporter. You can speak to a Confidential Care Advocate.

**Undocumented Students** can find university resources and support at: <https://undocu.berkeley.edu/>

**Economic, Food, and Housing Support:** If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at the Basic Needs Center (<https://basicneeds.berkeley.edu/home>).

**Technology resources and support for students:** Please see this page for the latest information on university-provided support: <https://studenttech.berkeley.edu/home>

**\*Course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**