

## Sociology 111AC

## Sociology of the Family

UC Berkeley, Fall 2023  
MWF 11-12, 145 Dwinelle

**Instructor:** Joanna Reed, Ph.D.  
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**Office hours:** Wednesdays 9:30am-10:30am and 3:30-4:30pm by appointment, in-person (419 SSB) or remote. Sign-up sheet is linked on bCourses main page. Drop-in office hours immediately following class on Mondays until 12:30.

**Course Description:** This course explores contemporary families with a focus on the United States. 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 inequalities. We begin the course by considering how U.S. families are connected to and influenced by other social structures and have changed over time. We use this historical background to ground explorations into contemporary aspects of family life, such as romantic relationships and commitment, family instability, gender relations, parenthood, and the influence of social policy and state regulation on families that make up the rest of the course material. Throughout the course we pay close attention to socially patterned variations of family experiences across social class, race and gender, and other social categories.

### **Goals for the course:**

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

- Understand family diversity and change from a sociological perspective.
- Understand the challenges facing U.S. families today and how these are socially patterned.
- Demonstrate a breadth of knowledge around specific topics related to families.
- Gain a deeper understanding of how social policy and institutions such as the workplace influence individual behavior and family decision making.
- Gain some experience doing qualitative research.
- Evaluate your past and future family experiences in a more critical and creative way.

## Evaluation:

**Reading Quizzes:** 15% of grade

**Changing Families Project:** 30% of grade

-Assignment 1, Family History and Reflection (10%)

-Assignment 2, Changing Families Analysis (20%)

**In-Class Exam:** 20% of grade

**Final Project: Young Adults' Family Plans:** 35% of grade

-Interview Write-up/transcript: (10%)

-Qualitative Analysis Findings Report: (5%)

-Paper: (20%)

## Course Schedule\*:

### PART 1: CONNECTING THE PAST AND PRESENT

#### **Week 1, Aug. 23 & 25: Introducing...Families in the U.S. today**

Readings: 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

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

#### **Week 2, Aug. 28, 30 & Sept. 1: Thinking Sociologically about Families**

Readings: Coontz, S. (2005). *Marriage, A History*. New York: Viking. Ch. 14

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. 6 & 8: Historical Background for Connecting the Past to the Present**

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

"Sexual Politics and the New Right" pp. 344-354

Cooper, M. (2014) *Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times*. Berkely, CA: UC Press. Ch. 1 "From Shared Prosperity to the Age of Insecurity: How We Got Here"

**Reading Quiz 1, released after class on 9/8, due before class on 9/11.**

**Week 4, Sept. 11, 13 & 15: Social Movements Hit Home**

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

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

**Changing Families Project Assignment 1 due on 9/15.**

**Week 5, Sept. 18, 20 & 22: 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

**Reading Quiz 2, released after class on 9/22, due before class on 9/25.**

**Week 6, Sept. 25, 27 & 29: Marriage and Relationships Today**

Readings: Gerson, K. (2010) *The Unfinished Revolution*. Oxford Univ. Press. Ch. 5-7

D'Allesandro, C. (2021) *Intimate Inequality: Millenials Romantic Relationships in Contemporary Times*. Rutgers Univ. Press. Ch 4 "The Color of Intimacy".

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

**Changing Families Project Assignment 2 due on 9/29.**

**Part 2: INTERSECTIONAL PARENTING**

**Week 7, Oct. 2, 4, 6: Motherhood and Fatherhood in an Unequal Society**

Readings: Hays, S. (1998). *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, Ch. 5

Schoppe-Sullivan, S. & Fagan, J. (2020) "The Evolution of Fathering Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Persistent Challenges, New Directions. *The Journal of Marriage and the Family* 82: 175-197

Mincy, R., Jethwani, M. & Klempin, S. (2015) *Failing our Fathers: Confronting the Crisis of Economically Vulnerable Nonresident Fathers*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 4

**Reading Quiz 3, released after class on 10/6, due before class on 10/9.**

**Week 8, Oct. 9, 11, 13: 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, Pp. 17-21 and Ch. 1 & 4

Randles, J. (2012) "Willing to do Anything for my Kids: Inventive Mothering, Diapers and the Inequalities of Carework". *American Sociological Review*, 86(1):35-59

**Week 9, Oct. 16, 18, 20: Race and Parenting**

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

**Reading Quiz 4, released after class on 10/20, due before class on 10/23**

**Week 10, Oct. 23, 25, 27: Immigrant Families**

Readings: Zhou, M. & Gonzalez, R. (2019) "Divergent Destinies: Children of Immigrants Growing Up in the U.S." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45:383-399

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

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

**In-Class Exam on Oct. 27** (on material from weeks 7-10).

**PART 3: FAMILIES, SOCIAL POLICY AND PAID WORK**

**Week 11, Oct. 30, Nov. 1 & 3: Families and the State**

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

**Week 12, Nov. 6, 8 : Families and the State (continued)**

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

Astor, M. (2023) "GOP State Lawmakers Push a Growing Wave of Anti-Transgender Bills". *The New York Times*, June 20, 2023

ANSIR (2020) "Introduction to the Turnaway Study" and "The Harms of Denying A Woman A Wanted Abortion: Findings From The Turnaway Study". UCSF

**Reading Quiz 5, released after class on 11/8, due before class on 11/13.**

**Week 13, Nov. 13, 15, 17: Families and Careers: Pressures for Professional Mothers**

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

**Young Adults' Family Plans Project Interview Write-up/Transcript due Nov. 15**

**Qualitative Analysis Workshop in class on Nov. 17**

**Week 14, Nov. 20-24 : Families and Careers: Work, Gender and Social Policy**  
*Thanksgiving week—No lecture, but take the quiz, keep up (or catch up) with reading and most importantly, get started on your qualitative analysis.*

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

**Reading Quiz 6, released on Nov. 20, due before class on Nov. 27.**

**Week 15, Nov. 27, 29 & Dec. 1: Families and Careers: Work, Gender and Social Policy**

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

**Young Adults' Family Plans Project Qualitative Analysis Report Due Dec. 1**

**Reading Quiz 7, released on Nov. 20, due before class on Nov. 27. This is an optional quiz for students wishing to try and raise their overall quiz grade.**

**RRR Week:** Dec. 4-8

**Young Adults' Family Plans Paper due Dec. 11**

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

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

**Reading Quizzes:** The reading assignments form the backbone of our class. The goals for the quizzes are to incentivize keeping up with the reading as well as provide some benchmark of your comprehension. Quizzes are open-book. There will be 7 quizzes. Each quiz will be released in the quiz section of bCourses after class on Friday when a quiz is scheduled, and due the following Monday before class. The average of your best six quiz scores will be used to calculate your final (cumulative) quiz grade. This means Quiz 7 is optional if you are happy with the cumulative average of the first 6 quizzes.

Each quiz should only take 25 minutes or less to complete if you are reasonably caught up on the reading. As everyone has multiple days to complete the quiz, any DSP accommodations for extended time have already been met with the scheduled due date.

**Changing Families Project:** Sociology has famously been described as the intersection of biography and history. Putting those things together is exactly what we will do in this first project. The project is made up of two assignments and covers the first six weeks of class material. It asks students to engage with topics around changing family patterns both personally and sociologically. In the first assignment, you will address a prompt that asks you to describe some history for a family (either yours, or a friend's or classmate's). The second assignment will be based on the first one, so keep that in mind. In the second assignment, you will provide a sociological analysis of some aspects of the family history and experiences you recorded in the earlier assignment, bringing in class readings and materials to provide context and depth. Detailed prompts for both assignments are on bCourses.

**In-Class Exam:** We will have an in-class exam on material from weeks 7-10. You can expect a mix of short answer and one or two longer essay prompts. You do not need to bring a green book to the exam. This will be a closed-book exam. No electronic devices are allowed. International students may bring a hard-copy English dictionary if they wish.

### **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 the interview write-up/transcript, 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. The best way to access the readings is by going to “Pages” and selecting the page for the appropriate week. You can also access readings by clicking “Files”> “Readings” and then the folder for the week, but please note that bCourses by default will list the readings in alphabetical order here, which may not be the same order in which we will cover them in class.

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 and handwrite notes. 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.

Classes are not recorded so make plans to exchange notes with a classmate in case you are absent. Lecture slides will be posted on bCourses before class.

## **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 5% for each day after the grace period of 24 hours expires. At times, Readers or I may request documentation of an illness, emergency, or other situation.

**Academic Accommodations:** If you are a DSP student please verify 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 and work out a timeline. Please bear in mind that accommodations for extra time on in-class exams do not apply to take-home assignments. I will be using the DSP proctoring service for the in-class exam. You can expect to hear from me or your Reader about arrangements for the exam in advance. Reading quizzes are open book and only expected to take 25 minutes or so. Since you have more than two full days to complete each quiz, and control over the environmental conditions for taking the quiz, DSP accommodations for quizzes are met and no further action is needed. 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 also 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>



**Grading Scale:** Your assignments will be given a numeric score and posted on the grade book in bCourses. At the end of the semester, your scores will be totaled and converted to a letter grade based on the percentage scale below. All assignments together total 1000 points. If you take the course P/NP, you must earn a 70% or above to pass.

97-100 A+	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	59 and below is failing
93-96 A	83-86 B	73-76 C	63-66 D	
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-	

**Re-grade policy:** Please first talk with the Reader 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.

We are in a new era of much controversy and uncertainty about the role and use of artificial intelligence in academic assignments and writing. My position is that any

use of AI programs to produce work for this class is another version of plagiarism and will be treated as such.

**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 Berkeley 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 are 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." <https://slc.berkeley.edu/home>

**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.**