

## **Sociology Of The Family (SOCI 129)**

Classroom: Peterson Hall 104

Class Hrs: 11:00—12:20 TR

Prof Office Hrs: Thursdays 12:30-02:00 (Office)

TA Office Hrs: Fridays 10:00-12:00 (427 Soc Sciences Bldg)

**Professor:** Dr. Richard N. Pitt

497 Social Sciences Bldg

rpitt@ucsd.edu

**Teaching Assistant:** Kea Saper

ksaper@ucsd.edu

## **[www.majorsmatter.net/family](http://www.majorsmatter.net/family)**

*"Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wide social unit; our self of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks." Erving Goffman*

*"So, I guess we are who we are for a lot of reasons. And maybe we'll never know most of them. But even if we don't have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there. We can still do things. And we can try to feel okay about them." Steven Chbosky*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** The overall goal of this course is to provide students with a working knowledge of conceptual frameworks and theories relevant to the sociological study of families. The course, which consists of lectures, readings, class discussions, and writing assignments is designed to focus on the question of how families function and how variation within and between families affects individuals and society. The class covers a range of theoretical explanations from classical macro-oriented sociology approaches (e.g., structural functionalism) to meso-level approaches (e.g., exchange theory, family systems) to micro-sociological ones (e.g., symbolic interactionism). Woven throughout the class are opportunities to understand how cultural, economic, political, and demographic factors affect family structure and interaction.

**TEXTS.** All assigned readings will be articles made available to you in course reserves. You can access them in Canvas (under "Course Reserves"). You can also find them by clicking on the book icon on the course webpage. You will be responsible for reading each article assigned and write memos (see point B in grading) for two of them each week. Undergraduate students are conventionally expected to complete 2-3 hours of out-of-class coursework for *every hour in class . . . really*. [I know. Stop laughing!] Research on reading speeds shows that undergrads average about 250-300 words per minute for recognition of the material content. The average 20-page article assigned in this course is about 12500 words and should take you about an hour to read carefully and 30 minutes to skim. As you'll see below, you will be required to outline these articles; that will add an additional 30-45 minutes. Therefore, I fully expect that you should be able to read/outline the articles each week. If you find it difficult to manage this level of work, please let me know and we can discuss some techniques for increasing your reading/skimming speed.

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING.** Other than the quizzes and the final examination, your grade in this class will be based on your completion of assignments, not "mastery" of material. In order to learn the material we will cover in this class, I need you to complete all of the assignments. Each journal and article memo will be marked as "done" or "not done", not "correct" or "incorrect". These assignments are opportunities to explore, engage with, and

challenge ideas raised in the class. Complete them. Each of you starts with an "A" (600 points) and you move down from there. The buffer for each letter grade is 60 points (10%). Pluses and minuses are earned in the 20 point margins at the top/bottom of the letter grade range. The course requirements include attendance (8%), article memos (17%), weekly response essays (25%), and quizzes and a final examination (50%).

## **Curriculum Units**

### **Week Of March 31      Course Introduction**

Furstenberg, Frank. 2014. "Fifty Years of Family Change: From Consensus to Complexity." *ANNALS* 654:12-29.

Sheff, Elisabeth. 2011. "Polyamorous Families, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Slippery Slope." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40:487-520.

### **Week Of April 07      Functionalism Theory**

Mandara, Jelani, Carolyn Murray, and Toya Joyner. 2005. "The Impact of Fathers' Absence on African American Adolescents' Gender Role Development." *Sex Roles* 53:207-220.

Pitt, Richard, and Elizabeth Borland. 2008. "Bachelorhood And Men's Attitudes About Gender Roles." *Journal of Men's Studies* 16:140-157.

### **Week Of April 14      Symbolic Interaction Theory (QUIZ)**

Collett, Jessica, Kelcie Vercel, and Olevia Boykin. 2015. "Using Identity Processes to Understand Persistent Inequality in Parenting." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 78:345-364.

Wall, Glenda, and Stephanie Arnold. 2007. "How Involved Is Involved Fathering? An Exploration of the Contemporary Culture of Fatherhood." *Gender and Society* 21:508-527.

### **Week Of April 21      Social Exchange Theory**

Coy, Anthony, and Lindsey Rodriguez. 2023. "Affection Preference, Enactment, and Relationship Satisfaction: A Dyadic Analysis of Love Languages." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 49:737-994.

Donnelly, Denise, and Elisabeth Burgess. 2008. "The Decision to Remain in an Involuntarily Celibate Relationship." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 70:519-535.

Kreager, Derek, Richard Felson, Cody Warner, and Marin Wenger. 2013. "Women's Education, Marital Violence, and Divorce: A Social Exchange Perspective." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75:565-581.

### **Week Of April 28      Family Life Course Theory (QUIZ)**

Fingerman, Karen, Yen-Pi Cheng, Eric Wesselman, Steven Zarit, Frank Furstenberg, and Kira Birditt. 2012. "Helicopter Parents and Landing Pad Kids: Intense Parental Support of Grown Children." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74:880-896.

Nomaguchi, Kei and Melissa Milkie. 2003. "Cost and Rewards of Parenthood: The Effects of Becoming Parents on Adults' Lives." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65:356-374.

**Week Of May 05                      Family Systems & Ecological Theory**

- Bacallao, Martica, and Paul Smokowski. 2007. "The Costs of Getting Ahead: Mexican Family System Changes After Immigration." *Family Relations* 56:52-66.
- Christie-Mizell, Andre, Erin Pryor, and Elizabeth Grossman. 2008. "Child Depressive Symptoms, Spanking, and Emotional Support: Differences between African American and European American Youth." *Family Relations* 57:335-350.
- Porche, Michelle, and Diane Purvin. 2008. "'Never In Our Lifetime': Legal Marriage for Same-Sex Couples in Long-Term Relationships." *Family Relations* 57:144-159.

**Week Of May 12                      Conflict Theory (QUIZ)**

- Hoffman, Kristi, Jill Kiecolt, and John Edwards. 2005. "Physical Violence among Siblings: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis." *Journal of Family Issues* 26:1103-1130.
- Wang, Hongyu and Paul Amato. 2000. "Predictors of Divorce Adjustment: Stressors, Resources, and Definitions." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62:655-668.

**Week Of May 19                      Dating And Assortative Mating**

- Allison, Rachel, and Margaret Ralston. 2018. "Opportune Romance: How College Campuses Shape Students' Hookups, Dates, and Relationships." *The Sociological Quarterly* 59:495-518.
- Rosenfeld, Michael and Reuben Thomas. 2012. "Searching for a Mate: The Rise of the Internet as a Social Intermediary." *American Sociological Review* 77:523-547.

**Week Of May 26                      Infidelity and Cohabitation (QUIZ)**

- Jackman, Mahalia. 2015. "Understanding the Cheating Heart: What Determines Infidelity Intentions?" *Sexuality & Culture* 19:72-84.
- Sassler, Sharon, and Amanda Miller. 2011. "Waiting to Be Asked: Gender, Power, and Relationship Progression among Cohabiting Couples " *Journal of Family Issues* 32:482-506.

**Week Of June 02                      Article Reviews**

No Readings This Week. We Will Engage In A Deep-Dive Review Of Your Favorite Articles.