SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
Fall 1999

INSTRUCTOR: Sharon Warner Methvin
OFFICE: 
PHONE: 
OFFICE HOURS: 

TEXTS:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this course is to understand the nature and functions of family from a cross-cultural and life span perspective.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:
1.) Students will be able to demonstrate competency in the core sociological concepts.
2.) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to apply sociological theories to a variety of sociological or social issues and human behavior.
3.) Students will be able to examine human behavior using more than one theoretical or sociological paradigm.
4.) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to do independent research from conceptualization to data analysis.
6.) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability communicate effectively in writing.
7.) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively verbally.
8.) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to work with others toward a common goal.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1.) To understand the relevant issues influencing the American family today.
   PO#1 Methods: Lecture, Text, Emergent Issue Briefs
2.) To analyze marriage and family systems in relation to ethnicity from a cross cultural perspective.
   PO#1, #4 Methods: Lecture, Oral Presentation, Paper
3.) To analyze the family within the context of biological, behavioral, cultural, institutional and temporal issues.
   PO#2, #3 Methods: Lecture, Text, Emergent Issue Briefs, Paper
4.) To develop verbal, collaborative and written communication skills.
   PO#6, #7, #8 Methods: Oral Presentation, Drafting Conference, Paper

EXPECTATIONS: Expectations for the course include: (1) reading of assigned text and reserve materials and satisfactory completion of all assigned projects; (2) regular attendance at class sessions so as not to miss lecture material - failure to do so may jeopardize ability to complete exam questions; (3) active participation in discussions and small group sessions.
GRADING CRITERIA:

Points are earned as follows:

- Exams: 200 points
- Position Paper: 50 points
- Case Study Paper: 100 points
- Oral Presentation: 25 points
- Annotated Bibliography: 10 points
- Student/Teacher Conference: 15 points

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 400

360 points (90%) or above = A
320 points (80%) or above = B
280 points (70%) or above = C
240 points (60%) or above = D
Below 240 points is considered failure

NOTE: No final grades can be posted or mailed because of departmental guidelines designed to protect your privacy. You will need to wait until the grades are available through the Registrars Office. Because of the volume of students, no telephone calls to receive scores or final grade will be accepted. Finally, you must retain all assignments until you receive and verify your final grade.

TESTS: There will be two exams during the semester; one at midterm and the final. Each exam will consist of primarily objective along with a few short answer/essay questions that are designed to enable you to synthesize the major concepts covered in the course. I will provide you with a list of the concepts I expect you to be familiar with prior to the exam.

MAKE UP TESTS:

It is not necessary to contact me if you are going to miss a regularly scheduled exam. There is one and only one opportunity to make up missed exams. Test make-up day is Friday, DEC. 10 at 2:00 in Room 200 West Hall. Exams taken during the make-up period tend to be more difficult and are essay. It is strongly urged that you take exams during the regularly scheduled time unless an emergency arises.

NOTE: If any member of this class believes that he/she has a disability and needs special accommodations, please advise the instructor immediately. The instructor will work with you and the University’s Office of Multicultural and Disabled Services to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have an equal opportunity to perform in this class.
ASSIGNMENTS

EMERGENT ISSUE BRIEF -

To encourage meaningful discussions in class and to encourage you to stay current with the reading and to attend class on a regular basis, 50 points of your grade will be based on one position paper on a topic listed in the course outline. Students will be asked to read on a controversial issue of their choice facing the families today. For that issue you are read the assigned materials on reserve in the library.

For the topic you selected you are to prepare a report using the following format.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ISSUE

First, prepare a written executive summary of each article. It should include the author's purpose of the article; a summary of the major points he/she is making; and the conclusions the author comes to. Be sure to discuss each major point. Each executive summary should be one to two typed pages.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUE

The next part of the assignment is as follows. You are to identify all the pro and con aspects of the issue as presented in the readings. On page one you are to list in bullet or sentence fashion each point the authors presents that is a positive point in support (+) of the issue and the appropriate (author's name) citation (author/page) for it. On page two you are to list each point the authors present that is negative (-) regarding the issue and the appropriate citation for it. On page three, list any points which are relevant to the issue, but not necessarily in favor or against. This constitutes the first portion of the issue brief. The next step is to write a one page opinion on where you stand on the issue. You may want to use the following method of reflection as you struggle with which side of the debate you presently favor. "...On the one hand I think...however, on the other hand..." At the conclusion of this page, you must tell me where you presently (at this time) stand on the issue and cite one piece of evidence from the reading in support of that position. The final step is to write one page on what you consider to be the best argument (point) the other side has to refute your position. On the day your issue is to be presented in class your group will be asked to read the position papers and will need to debate both the pros and cons associated with the issue for the benefit of the other class members. To receive full credit for this assignment, you must be present to present your case. Late assignments are penalized by one letter grade for each day they are late.

Your position portion of the assignment can be reflective in nature and can draw on previous material and/or current events. In any event you are to address the key issues covered in the respective readings and to demonstrate that you have read the assigned material and looked for the authors' evidence used to support his/her position.

CASE STUDY -

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Each student is to select a partner and provide a **joint**, case study research paper and oral presentation on marriage and family in a culture other than the United States or a subculture (minority group) of the U.S. You may select any culture or group you like for your case study, subject to the approval of the instructor. Indicate your culture selection and choice of dates on the sign up sheet which will be distributed in class. The case study assignment consists of four stages. Both students are required to be involved with research and writing, but beyond that requirement, you can divide your labor according to your skills and interests.

**STAGE ONE** (10 pts)

**DUE BY OCTOBER 6**

Submit culture selection, aspects of family you will focus on or thesis (this can be modified at a later date), and **EIGHT ANNOTATED** bibliographic references. These cannot be textbooks but need to be primary sources (only three of which can be electronic sources).

**STAGE TWO** (15 pts)

**ONE WEEK BEFORE PRESENTATION**

Show combined, typed rough draft to the professor at a prearranged writing conference. Each student is to submit a typed, rough draft of his/her portion of the paper and for discussion at the for a draft review conference. At that time I will ask you which portion of the paper you wrote. Conference appointments should be prearranged with me by appointment and will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Conferences are to be conducted at least one week prior to your oral presentation. You are to bring a copy for each of you and one copy for me of your draft to the meeting. At the time of this meeting each partner is to have read and made written comments regarding the content and grammar on your portion of the paper. I will be looking for the comments that show you have each read and collaborated on the partners' drafted versions.

The purpose of the drafting conference is to identify strong content and style areas in the draft and areas of content and style which need improvement. The objective of this conference is to teach you, by way of specific examples in your papers, where your writing and research skills are strong and where they need improvement. Good writing and research skills don't just happen through some mystical process but with practice and being shown specific examples of good writing and poor writing.

**STAGE THREE** (25 pts)

**DATE AS NOTED ON SIGN UP SHEET**

Oral Presentation

Each student team is to give a 15 minute oral presentation on those aspects of the family which they think would be of interest to their colleagues. You may choose to read your paper if you like or you may choose to discuss certain of the more interesting and significant points. On the day of the presentation, you must provide me with a typewritten outline or agenda of what your presentation will include. **NOTE:** Both partners do not have to present, but are to be equally involved in the research and be equally prepared to answer questions from the class after the presentation. It is up to each student team to decide how they can best divide their labor and where their skills lie. Visual and sensual aids such as: food, pictures, overheads, handouts, music, clothing, artifacts, etc. are welcome additions to your presentation and serve a couple of
important purposes. First, they keep some of the attention directed away from you to something else and this is a great stress reducer for you, the presenter. Second, they help to hold the audience's attention and provide an association stimulus or memory jogger to assist the audience in remembering the information presented. Please keep your presentation to 15 minutes. Thus, you may need to do some advance preparation during the ten minute interval between classes. My office is available in which to store items upon request.

**STAGE THREE** (100 pts)

**DUE DAY OF YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION**

A copy of the final draft of your paper which has been revised based on suggestions during your drafting conference are due the day of your presentation. In addition, you are to provide a typed statement which identifies what each partner contributed to the entire case study project. This is to be placed after the cover page of the paper, namely, just before your outline of the paper.

The written portion of the case study project is to be an eight to ten page typewritten research report plus cover page, outline, and a references cited page or what is sometimes called a bibliography. Your paper and corresponding presentation should cover the pertinent aspects of marriage and family in that particular culture and utilize the format outlined below.

If possible your research paper should include oral interviews with a relevant group of informants, which as a group will constitute one reference source. But your research is to also include a minimum of four other written sources, two of which must be primary sources and not textbooks or electronic. These are to be identified and actually referred to in your paper (see note on plagiarism). I will provide you with a grading criteria sheet at the beginning of the semester which tells you what I will look for when grading your paper and what point value system I will be using. If you need assistance in writing your report please contact the Writing Lab at 581-2932. I am also available to assist during office hours or by special appointment.

**Paper Content:**

**Part One: Summary of the Issue** Your paper should begin with a thesis and then a discussion of the familial cultural practices you have decided to focus on and may include historic changes or trends over time. This summary section of the paper should be about four pages.

**Part Two: Application of Sociological Concepts** Your paper should go beyond a summary of cultural issues to include a discussion of how certain theories or ideas/concepts covered in class/readings may apply to a given situation. Specifically, your paper should include an application section in which you interpret how the concepts covered in class can explain the first four pages of the paper fit into the larger societal context. For example, what function(s) do they serve for the society. This section of the paper should be about two pages. It is important that each team collaborate on this section.

**Part Three: Critical Evaluation and Implications** Next, your paper should include an evaluation of what you consider to be the advantages or limitations or consequences of the practices/issues you just described. In other words, how well are these practices meeting or not meeting the needs of certain group members or the society at large. It should include some

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theoretical and critical thinking on your part regarding the implications of what you have just described and even some speculation which you should back up and support with specific examples from earlier in your paper or from your reading. This section of the paper should be around one to two pages. Again, this section of the paper requires each of the team’s members to brainstorm and reflect on the cultural practices.

**Note on Documentation for Case Study** - When you hand in a written report, it must have a bibliography listing only those books which are directly cited. Citations are to appear in the text rather than in footnotes, and specify in parenthesis the author's last name, the date of publication, and the page(s) which are being referred to. You must give such credit each time you use a fact, theory, or opinion which you have found in your reading. If you actually quote word-for-word from a book, instead of merely citing the author, you must put a parenthesis at the end of the quotation, in which you give the author's last name, the date of publication, and the page(s).

**Example of a citation** - One anthropologist (Johnson 1950:55) believes that sex role behavior is largely determined by a person's genetic makeup...

**Example of a quotation** - In the words of one sociologist, "a person's genetic makeup is the main determinant of his or her sex role behavior" (Johnson 1950:55) ...

To master the fine points of how to document a paper, for this course, simply consult any issue of the journals AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST OR AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW or other standard social science journals in the library, and study any of the articles, to see how it is done.

**PLAGIARISM AND ORIGINALITY** - You will be graded in part on the care with which you document the sources you rely upon in your papers, and the success you have in using a professional style of documentation. The assumption is, that if you use somebody else's data or ideas, you must give them credit.

If a student takes a major idea already in print and represents it as his or her own idea, in a way which the instructor feels is deliberately intended to give the student major credit for another person's thinking, this is not merely a problem of style. Rather, it is plagiarism and will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, if, after discussion with the student, the instructor concludes
## Course Outline
### Sociology of the Family

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Material to Be Covered</th>
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<td>August 23</td>
<td>Unit One: Family in the United States</td>
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<td>September 24</td>
<td>Introduction to Family Studies</td>
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<td>Functions of the Family</td>
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<td>Family as a Institution, Group, System</td>
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<td>Theoretical Perspectives</td>
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<td>Family in Transition: How Change Occurs</td>
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<td>Historical Perspective</td>
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<td>Read Eshleman Chapters 1, 2(35-40), 3</td>
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<td>September 17</td>
<td>*Emergent Issue One:</td>
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<td>Gender Roles and the Impact on the Family</td>
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<td>Library Reserve Readings</td>
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<td>September 20</td>
<td>*Emergent Issue Two:</td>
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<td>Divorce</td>
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<td>Library Reserve Readings</td>
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<td>September 22</td>
<td>*Emergent Issue Three:</td>
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<td>Reproductive rights</td>
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<td>Library Reserve Readings</td>
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<td>September 24</td>
<td>*Emergent Issue Four:</td>
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<td>Welfare Reform</td>
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<td>Library Reserve Readings</td>
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<td>September 27</td>
<td>Unit Two: Courtship and the Mate Selection in the U.S.</td>
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<td>October 4</td>
<td>Patterns of Mate Selection</td>
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<td>Modes of Mate Selection</td>
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<td>Read Eshleman Chapters 4, 5</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td>Bibliography is Due</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td>Unit Three: Cultural Setting of the Family</td>
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<td>October 15</td>
<td>Types of Societies</td>
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<td>Kinship and Descent</td>
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<td>Marriage and Family</td>
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<td>Read Eshleman Chapter 3 (41 - 62), 5 (132)</td>
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<td>October 18</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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October 20 - November 26
Unit Four: Structure and Process During the Family Life Cycle
Introductory Issues
Marital Structural Arrangements
Marital Adjustment
Read Eshleman Chapter 7

October 27
Case Studies
Family Interaction System
Rules/Roles
Power
Communication
Managing Conflict
Read Eshleman Chapter 7 cont.

November 8
Case Studies
Parental System
Parenthood
Teen Pregnancy
Childhood Development, Discipline
Read Eshleman Chapters 12

November 17
Case Studies
Middle and Later Years
Middle Age
The Later Years
Read Eshleman Chapter 14

November 26
Case Studies

November 29
Case Studies

November 29 - December 10
Unit Five: Family in Crises
Divorce, Remarriage
Dysfunctional Family
Family Therapy
Role of the Helper
Read Eshleman Chapters 16

December 14
Final Exam 10:00 – 12:00 p.m.