Sociology 205  
Family and Social Change  
Spring 2019  
(4/4/19 version)  
https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/19S-SOCIOL205-1

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Subject Matter: This seminar examines sources of change in family and household organization. A major focus is the relationships among economic institutions, family structure, and the content of family life. The seminar considers concepts, theories, and data about kinship. The course emphasizes research on U.S. families, but draws on evidence from other cultures to help address what is universal and what is not. Readings are drawn from sociology, anthropology, economics, and history. Seminar discussion will consider classical debates in family sociology and their application to empirical research and contemporary policy-related topics. Seminar discussions will consider individual readings in depth as well as the broader big-picture concerns that the topical address.

Course Requirements: There are three requirements in addition to active participation in the weekly sessions: (1) help lead seminar discussions of the readings; (2) write three short critical summaries of selected readings to be circulated to all participants before the relevant seminar meetings; (3) write a short research proposal or report of research in progress. These are described below.

(1) Each student is responsible for leading the discussion for two of the weekly seminar sessions. Depending on enrollment, discussion leaders may collaborate to organize the weekly discussions. I encourage discussion leaders to circulate a short memo in advance to alert participants to common themes and conceptual and methodological issues to be addressed in the discussion. However, a preliminary memo is not required. For those who decide to circulate memos in advance, these should be posted on the class discussion board https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/mod/forum/view.php?id=452594 to facilitate class discussion. Please post these memos by noon on Tuesday before our Wednesday morning seminar meeting. Note that students must be logged into the web page to be able to post and read entries on the Discussion Board.

(2) Three times during the quarter, students who are not discussion leaders for a particular week will sign up in advance to write 1-2 page reviews of readings that are not part of the core assignments. The reviews should include a brief summary of the selection as well as critical commentary. These must be posted on the discussion board by noon on Tuesday before our Wednesday morning seminar meeting to allow everyone an opportunity to read the material before the session. The discussion board is https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/mod/forum/view.php?id=452594. Authors of reviews should incorporate observations from these extra readings in their contributions to seminar discussions.

(3) The quarter project for the seminar is a short research paper, a report on work in progress, or a research proposal. A paragraph describing the topic must be submitted to the instructor for approval by Wednesday, April 17. For students who choose to write a proposal, the proposal should include a statement of the research question and a rationale for posing the question, a brief review of the relevant literature, and a description of the data and methods that will be used to address the question posed. Both the research report and research proposal are statements about work in progress, either toward a conference paper or journal article or as a draft plan for a masters paper or dissertation proposal. The research paper, report, or proposal is due no later than Wednesday, June 12.

Grades: Students may take the course as “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” or for a regular grade. Seminar presentations and class participation contribute 50% to the final course grade. Critical reviews contribute 15%. The research paper or proposal counts 35% of the seminar grade.

To complete the course, students must finish all of the assignments. The grade of “incomplete” will not be given.
**Readings:** The reading list for this course draws from literature in several social science disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, history, and economics. A goal of the seminar is to expose students to a variety of approaches to studies of family and kinship. The reading list is not comprehensive in breadth or depth. Seminar discussion will help identify and synthesize common themes and criticisms across readings. Participants should also be prepared to consider individual readings in depth, addressing the logic of the arguments presented, the theoretical motivations, empirical approach, and interpretation of results.

Readings are available electronically. The syllabus indicates whether the readings are available through JSTOR ([www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)) or via URL in another collection or web page. All readings without a particular designation are available on the class links page as password protected documents. Students enrolled in the course can log in using their BOL user name and password.

**Topic Schedule and Readings**

**Week 1, April 3, *Introduction and Overview***

**REQUIRED**


**SUGGESTED**


The new decade review articles will be published in 2020, but the 2010 reviews provide a good background.

**Week 2, April 10, *Definitions and Universals***

**REQUIRED**


SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS


Week 3, April 17, Marriage and Other Unions

REQUIRED


**SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS**


**Research paper or proposal topics must be turned in for approval by Wednesday, April 17.**

**Week 4, April 24, Some Theories about Family Change**

**REQUIRED**


SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS


Week 5, May 1, Economic Perspectives on Families

REQUIRED


SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS


WEEK 6, MAY 8 NO CLASS.
WE WILL MAKE UP THIS CLASS ON THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 5:30 P.M.

Week 7, May 15, Criticisms and Modifications of Economic Perspectives

REQUIRED


SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS


Week 8, May 22, Childbearing and Child Rearing

REQUIRED


SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS


Week 9, May 29, American Families: Past and Present

REQUIRED


**SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS**


**Week 10, June 5, Division of Labor and Resources**

**REQUIRED**


**SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS**


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**Week 11, THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 5:30 P.M. Marriage and Divorce in the Contemporary United States: Theory Development and Applications**

**THE DATE/TIME FOR THIS SESSION WAS SET AT THE FIRST CLASS SESSION.**

**REQUIRED**


http://asr.sagepub.com/content/79/4/605.full.pdf+html

**SUGGESTED FOR REVIEWS**


*Research papers, reports and proposals are due in hard copy on Wed., June 12*