Plan for Fall 2020

One challenge of the pandemic is how it limits social interaction, and, as much as possible, I would like you to have opportunities to get to know people in our class. In addition, in my experiences, it can be interesting for you to do some practical exercises which help to bring abstract concepts to life. The groups provide a way for you to share and compare what you have learned in your hands-on learning activities. Hence, one component of the course is for you to meet with other students to work together in groups of three. If the weather is good, then it would be ideal to have the meetings outside, face-to-face in a socially-distanced fashion. Thus, if you are in Philadelphia, you will be assigned to a “buddy group” which will meet weekly to discuss the readings, complete exercises, and complete other assignments. If you are in a different time zone, I will assign you to a group with other students, ideally in your time zone. These groups will be reconfigured in the seventh week. There is research in sociology on the “strength of weak ties” which suggests that it is helpful for people to know more people --- these people can sometimes introduce you to others, help give you information about internships, and share other information. Our semester is very different this year, and I am seeking to provide a structure for you to have an opportunity to get to know other students in our class. These group meetings are a required component of the course.

Given the extraordinary circumstances, we will need to be flexible and adaptive as we see how the semester unfolds. All of us want this to work as well as possible. As you will see, although you have weekly exercises where you prepare little materials for class, you are able to skip three of them during the semester in an understanding that you will undoubtedly have other challenges --- you might get sick, a family member might get sick, you could get your heart broken, you might fall in love, or you might be overwhelmed with other obligations. It is helpful to save one of these “passes” for the end of the semester since sometimes things can be difficult during that period.

Canvas is an important resource for us in our class. There you will find a calendar and modules.
Required Readings:

All of the books are at the UPenn bookstore. You can order them there, and they will mail them to you. Or you can pick them up. They are also on reserve at the library generally as electronic books. The bookstore asked me to tell you this: “Students can order their books on our website, www.upenn.edu/bookstore. We can ship domestically and internationally to most locations around the globe.”


Lareau, Annette, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press. 2011. [Although the book *Unequal Childhoods* is widely used in college classes, it has many flaws. It will not hurt my feelings if you hate it. You should see what you think. I will estimate the royalties that I will earn on assigning this book and donate this amount to a charity.]

This class is an introductory course.

Learning Goals:

* to learn about historical shifts in family—there is an overly romantic view of the past
* the family is a dependent institution --- as other institutions change, the family changes
* to learn how men and women frequently have different experiences within the walls of the home
* to learn about sexual relations, family formation, and divorce as well as the impact of divorce on children
* to learn about variations in family life, particularly by race and class
* to be able to apply these concepts to your daily life

Fall 2020 Course requirements:

Most of you have not taken other sociology classes. Students in earlier semesters have shared that they found writing a sociological essay to be a new experience. Hence, I want to give you time and “scaffolding” to help you learn how to write a sociological essay so that you can do as well as possible in the course.
As a result, we will have two midterms. The first midterm is only worth 7% of your final grade, but it will help you understanding what is involved in writing an argument marshalling social science evidence. The exam will consist of one essay which will allow you to reflect on “big picture” questions that we have addressed during the semester. (You will be given a choice of questions; in addition to the essay, fifteen percent of the midterm exam will be based on short answer, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank. and short answers.) A second midterm, worth 23% of your grade, and a final examination, worth 30% of your grade, will follow the same format as the first midterm. In addition, each student will choose a topic of their choice connected to sociology of the family. During one week in the course, each student will be permitted to read research articles (or a book) on this topic of interest. In addition, each student will use their newly-gained knowledge to write a five-page research paper (20% of your grade).

We also will do a series of class exercises (15%) to deepen your understanding of the readings and, especially, of the nature of family life in America. For the readings, you will submit various things to help you engage with the readings. There are also practical exercises. For example, you will do a time budget of the division of labor between a man and woman in an intimate relationship. You will do budgets looking at the economic consequences of divorce. I would very much like all of you to do these exercises, but if you have some issue which makes you uncomfortable completing an assignment, please let me know. We can find an alternative assignment for you.

Finally, your active attendance and participation in the course sessions contributes 10% towards your final grade. We will do some little activities before class start I call “little livelies.” You will upload them to the “pre-class daily activities” under Assignments. They are not graded individual, but they count towards your participation grade as does your general class engagement. (If you are in a sufficiently different time zone that it is difficult for you to participate in the synchronous classes, then we will make a plan that works well for you.)

Course requirements:

First Midterm: 7%
Second Midterm: 23%
Final: 30%
Paper: 20%
Exercises: 10% (There are six exercises, if you have six, you may drop your lowest score.)

Class participation: 10% (As part of class participation, you will be asked to contribute to discussions, share articles about family life, and chime in to class discussions. You will also post comments. In order to liven up class discussion, you will be asked to carry out tasks; all of these tasks will count towards your grade. Almost every class, you will upload a little exercise before class or sometimes during class. (I think of as a “little lively” since my goal is to use these little exercises to liven up class). You are not given specific points for each activity. In addition, as noted above, we understand that things come up. For three classes in the semester, we are expecting that you will be in class, but you are excused from
preparing for class by completing the little pre-class exercises. In assessing your participation grade, we are looking for signs of your intellectual presence and engagement in the class. There are many forms, including intellectual engagement, intellectual curiosity, intellectual activity such as linking one reading to another reading, ability to connect course materials to unfolding dynamics in daily life, and other forms of academic engagement in the course. Of course, being present for the discussions is a crucial part. You will be given a course participation grade at the end of the semester.

You can earn up to 1000 points during the semester.

The midterms and final will have the same format. About 15% of your grade will be based on multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer. Most of your grade will be based on an essay you write where you state an intellectual position and support your claims with social science evidence. Hence, writing a sociological essay is different than writing an essay in a humanities course. You will be given a choice of questions. You will also have an opportunity to choose a paper of interest to you and read sociological research on the topic. You will write a five-page (double-spaced) paper assessing the evidence. More information will be forthcoming on the paper in coming days. We will also use class time to show you how to collect high-quality articles for your research paper.

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with Penn policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except under unusual circumstances, to arrange reasonable accommodations. Students must register with Student Disabilities Services (SDS) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

Sociology of the Family: Thoughts

Since he was not a sociologist, Tolstoy missed a crucial point when he wrote, at the beginning of Anna Karina, “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” As we will see, each family is unique, but there are other important patterns in family life. There are many overly romanticized views of families, and these views can impede our ability to see the very important social roles families play. Families transmit advantages and opportunities to children, and families have an impact on their children’s life paths. But families are also a source of tremendous meaning and sense of joy (as well as annoyance). This course focuses on the social roles of the family. From goofy family videos, where families create and embrace ritual, to significant level of poverty experienced by children in America, the study of the family is endlessly interesting. Finally, although the course is not a course in psychology, I will share practical advice from professionals on ways to create a satisfying romantic relationship and family life.

Welcome to the course!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: September 2nd</th>
<th>1st day of class</th>
<th>Fridays (exercises due)</th>
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</table>
| 2: September 7th     | Labor Day, no class | Exercise 1: Taking notes thoughtfully  
Do exercise 1 on only one of the readings in week 2.  
Due Friday, September 11, by 5:00 p.m.  
Please upload it to Canvas |
| 3: September 14th    |                  | Exercise 2: Economic consequences of divorce  
Due Friday, September 18, by 5:00 p.m. |
| 4: September 21st    |                  | Exercise 2: Gender division of labor  
Due Friday, September 26, by 5:00 p.m. |
| 5: September 28th    |                  |                        |

Note: You are graded on 5 exercises. There are 6 exercises in total. You may drop your lowest score. But, you have to have a score to drop it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Due Date/Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6: October 5th</td>
<td><strong>1st midterm (entire class session)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7: Oct 12th</td>
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<tr>
<td>8: Oct 19th</td>
<td>Exercise 3: Quantitative Data Exercise for your paper, Due Friday, October 23\textsuperscript{rd}, by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9: Oct 26th</td>
<td>Exercise 4: Quantitative Data Exercise for your paper</td>
<td>Due Friday, October 30, by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>10: Nov 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>11: Nov 9th</td>
<td>Exercise 5: Quantitative Data Exercise for your paper</td>
<td>Due Friday, November 13\textsuperscript{rd} by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12: Nov 16th</td>
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<tr>
<td>13: Nov 23\textsuperscript{rd} (no class on Wednesday)</td>
<td>Paper due Monday Nov 23 11:59 p.m.!</td>
<td>Note for Monday: Upload paper AND articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: Nov 30th</td>
<td>Exercise 6: Buying a home</td>
<td>Due Wednesday, December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, by 5:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15: Dec 7th</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monday December 7\textsuperscript{th} at noon</td>
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<td>Last class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday Dec 10th</td>
<td>Last class!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finals:</td>
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<td>On-line final examination, December 16\textsuperscript{th}:</td>
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<td>You will show up at Wednesday December 16\textsuperscript{th} at 3:00 p.m.. You will take the multiple-choice, true-false, matching section of the exam at that time. You will be given the essay portion of the exam. Ideally you will complete it by 5:00 p.m.. But, to make it less pressured for</td>
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you, you will have 24 hours to complete this portion of the exam. It is due by 5:00 p.m. on December 17th. You will upload this piece to Canvas along with another honor code statement. In the honor code statement, you will affirm that you did not discuss the exam with anyone or get help from anyone during the exam period. You will write this out in your own handwriting and sign it, take a picture of it, and upload it to Canvas. The honor code statement is due before the exam begins on December 16th at 3:00 p.m.

Readings: Please finish readings before class.

Readings:

September 2nd: Sociology and our Course, Learning to Listen

C. Wright Mills, The Promise, Sociological Imagination

“Research Methods,” The Sociological Experiment (buy on-line for $1.00)
https://www.sociologyexperiment.com/

Improving your listening skills

September 7th: Historical Changes in Family Life

Anderson, Michael, “Family, Household, and the Industrial Revolution”

Miller, Melina “Destroyed by Slavery?” Demography

Brooks, David “The Nuclear Family was a Mistake,” The Atlantic

September 9th: Historical Changes in Family Life

Zelizer, Viviana Child Insurance

Watch brief video of Andrew Cherlin on Marriage.

Recommended: More Wedding Costs, Higher Divorce

**September 14th: Love, Sexual Behavior, and Gender**

The Sociological Experiment: Gender and Sexuality [www.sociologicalexperiment.com](http://www.sociologicalexperiment.com)

Kaufman, Peter, “Love is Sociological”

Cohen, Philip, “Why It's So Rare for a Wife to Be Taller Than Her Husband”

Data Tables


Recommended: Vows, The New York Times

**September 16: Gender and Sexual Behavior**


Hook Ups, Sex, Brief Article

Rao, Aliya, *Crunch Time*, Introduction and start Part I

Tables on changes in sexual behavior

Recommended:


**September 21st: The Long Arm of the Job**

Kefalas, Furstenberg, and Napolitano, “Marriage is More than Being Together”

Black, Timothy and sky Keyes, Chapter 2, “It’s the Economy, Stupid.” from “It’s a Set up” forthcoming Oxford University Press.

Rao, Aliya, Finish Part I Gender and Space During Unemployment

**September 23rd:**

Hochschild, Chapter 1 to 3

Harknett, Kristen on Non-traditional Scheduling
September 28th
Rao, Part II Gender and Job Searching

September 30th:
Rao, Part III: Gender and Housework
Carlson et al. US Couples’ Division of Housework and Childcare During COVID-19 Pandemic

October 5th: First Midterm
Hochschild, Chapter 4, 5, and 6, 271-278

October 7th:
Unequal, Intro, methodological and theoretical appendices, 345-377, start part 1

October 12th
Hochschild, Chapter 8
Unequal, finish part 1

October 14th:
Unequal, start part 2

October 19th
Unequal, finish part 2

October 21st:
Read for your paper

October 26th:
Read for your paper and do data analysis

October 28th
November 2\textsuperscript{nd}:
Unequal, finish part 3

November 4\textsuperscript{th}:
Childhood into Adulthood
Unequal, Read update, skip 312-332

November 9\textsuperscript{th}:
Second midterm!
Dow, Mothering while Black Introduction and Chapter 1

November 11\textsuperscript{th}:
Dow, Chapters 2 and 3

November 16\textsuperscript{th}: Mothering while Black
Dow, Chapters 4 and 5

November 18\textsuperscript{th} : Mothering While Black
Dow, Chapters 5 and 6

November 23\textsuperscript{rd}: Mothering While Black

Paper due!
Dow, Chapter 7 and Conclusion

November 25\textsuperscript{th}: no Class, no reading

November 30\textsuperscript{th}: Refugee Families and Immigrant Families
Estrada, Emir, \textit{Kids at Work}
Sackett, Blair and Annette Lareau, \textit{Class and Speed of Integration}

December 2\textsuperscript{nd}: Immigrant Families
Gonazales, \textit{Living in Limbo}
**December 7th**: Race, Family Life, and Daily Life

Look at residential segregation: [www.coopercenter.org/demographic/racial-dot-map](http://www.coopercenter.org/demographic/racial-dot-map)

Steinbugler, Amy, *Beyond Loving*

**December 9th**: Neighborhoods and Family Life


Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*

**December 10th**: Race, Families, and Wealth Accumulation

Shapiro, *Black White Wealth Gap*

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**Reading days**

**Final**

**Weekly schedule:**

There will be weeks where we will workshop teaching you a new skill (i.e., how to search for articles) rather than have a traditional break-out session. In these workshops, you will work to develop the skill.