

# SOC 120: Sociology of Marriage and Family

## Spring 2014

**Teaching Assistant: Alexis Dennis**

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### **Discussion Sections**

DIS 308: Thu 09:55-10:45 a	Social Science 6109
DIS 309: Thu 11 :00-11:50 a	Social Science 6109
DIS 310: Thu 12 :05-12 :55 a	Social Science 6109
DIS 318: Fri 11 :00-11 :50 a	Social Science 6121
DIS 319: Fri 12 :05-12 :55 a	Social Science 6109

**Email:** dennis.teaching@gmail.com

**Office:** Social Science 8120F

**Office Hours:** Fri. 1:00-3:00pm

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### **Purpose of Discussion Section:**

Welcome to Sociology 120! In section, we aim to critically engage with the specific issues and topics discussed in the course through group discussion, activities, readings, and writing assignments. These sections are separate from lecture, intended to clarify and deepen your understanding of topics and questions raised throughout the course. However, they **will not be used as review sessions**. You are encouraged to apply what you learn in this course to daily life! Remember, this is a *discussion* section, not a second lecture! Come prepared to ask questions about things you didn't understand and to discuss in further detail the ideas expressed in the readings and lectures.

### **Participation:**

This includes actively contributing in class discussions, respecting the views of others, and coming prepared with assigned work. In the spirit of C. Wright Mills' "sociological imagination" we encourage discussion that emphasizes the connections among history, social structure, and personal experience in ways that critically engage with topics of family, love, marriage, and sexuality.

Discussions will focus on lecture, readings and relevant events. I encourage you to critique readings and dissect the debates and data within them. I have found that students often generalize based on their own personal experiences, particularly in courses that address sexuality, gender, race, and social dynamics. Personal experience can be used to illustrate theoretical points, however please keep in mind that relying too heavily on personal experience distracts us from the task at hand and may make others uncomfortable.

### **Discussion and section etiquette:**

1. There is a zero-tolerance policy for laptops in section.
2. Turn off electronic devices; students who insist on using their electronic devices during section will be asked to leave.
3. Do not pack up or prepare to leave before section is over.
4. Be respectful of the opinions and life experiences of your classmates.

The classroom should be a comfortable and safe environment that encourages participation and active engagement. With this goal in mind, we can and should discuss ideas and theories. Provocative ideas and thoughtful questions are acceptable and encouraged. However, personal attacks, insults, and blatant sexist, racist, homophobic, or antagonistic language and behavior will not be tolerated. **Critique arguments, not people.**

### **Contacting TAs and Office Hours:**

I am available during my office hours. However, **you are required to email me in advance with the time and date that you will be attending office hours. In your email, please include your section number and a brief description of what you would like to accomplish during the meeting.** This will ensure that I have an available time-period to focus on your questions. If your

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questions are about course material, please come prepared with written questions, as well as relevant readings or notes.

**\*Note:** If you have a question about an assignment grade or exam you **must** submit your questions in writing via email 24 hours before our scheduled meeting.

**Email:** I will do my best to reply to emails promptly, but expect about a 24-hour turnaround time. **I will disregard questions that are clearly answered in either the lecture or section syllabus,** so please check those before emailing me.

### **Course Requirements:**

There are five requirements for passing Soc 120: (1) Doing the readings, (2) lecture and section attendance and participation, (3) three news reflections, (4) three in-section quizzes, and (5) two (non-cumulative) in-class exams.

**Readings:** Most required readings are drawn from the Cherlin (7<sup>th</sup> edition) textbook. Others can be accessed through your MyUW account. Please see pg. 9 of your lecture syllabus for the list of other required readings.

**Attendance Policy:** *Section attendance* is mandatory. You may miss up to two (2) section meetings without penalty, no questions asked. It is your responsibility to make up all missed work, to obtain any handouts distributed in class, and to borrow notes from a classmate. After two missed sections, your section *attendance grade* will be calculated as the percentage of classes attended. (Note that if you have a medical or personal issue that prevents you from attending several classes, email *both* Professor Carlson and me to notify us of the circumstances.)

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ email : \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ email : \_\_\_\_\_

### **News Reflections:**

You will compose three (3) short reflections on current news related to select topics in Soc 120, accounting for a total of 15% of your final grade (5% each). The purpose of this assignment is to connect what you have learned in class to what's going on in the world around you. For each report, you are asked to compile a portfolio of three news articles on a given topic that have appeared after January 22, 2014, summarize each article in up to two sentences, and then write an insightful 300-word mini-essay relating your articles to the material you have learned in class. Reports are due at 2:30pm on the dates noted in the syllabus. Late assignments will receive a grade of zero without exception. Please see the instructions posted on the course website for details.

### **Quizzes:**

There will be three (3) short (10-15 minute) quizzes in section over the semester, each of which will count for 5% of your grade for a total of 15% of your final grade. (If one or both of your two 'free' section absences occurs on a quiz day, your quiz grade will be calculated based on the remaining quiz[zes] that you take.)

### **Exams:**

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You will take two, non-cumulative exams (in the middle and end of the semester), accounting for 55% of your final grade. **All material presented in lecture and in your required readings is fair game.** The exams will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions that emphasize concepts, facts, and mechanisms discussed in class and in your readings. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of taking adequate notes in both lecture and discussion section as well as forming study groups outside of class. Doing so will prevent pulling all-nighters. It has been in my experience that students who demonstrate good attendance, take sufficient notes, and study with others do exponentially better than those who do not!

### **No Make-Up Exams:**

As laid out in the lecture syllabus, make up exams will not be given. It is your responsibility to know the dates and times of all exams and show up prepared to take the exam. **If you are a member of a sports team and the scheduled exam times conflict with your schedule, you need to bring appropriate documentation well ahead of time (first 2 weeks of class).** While there is no penalty for missing the first exam, I encourage you to take it. Otherwise, the majority of your grade will be dependent on how well you do on the second exam. As noted in your lecture syllabus: Past experience suggests that it is a bad idea to skip the first exam hoping for a better grade on the second—too much will ride on a single exam; besides, success requires practice. Students compelled to miss the second exam must demonstrate compelling cause *prior* to the exam or receive a score of zero on the missed second exam.

### **Grading Summary:**

<i>Exams (2):</i>	55%	30% for your higher score, 25% for your lower score
<i>Quizzes (3):</i>	15%	5% each
<i>Section:</i>	15%	5% for attendance; 10% for participation (quality and preparedness)
<i>News Reflections (3)</i>	15%	5% each; no late submissions for any reason
<i>Total</i>	100%	

### **Special Needs and Religious Observances:**

If you require special accommodations for exams, quizzes, and other activities related to this course, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>) so that you can receive appropriate support services. We are happy to accommodate **documented** needs, but please contact us no later than the second week of class. Additionally, if you anticipate missing any discussion sessions this semester because of a religious observance, you must inform us within the first two weeks of class.

### **The Writing Center:**

Excellent writing instructors offer classes and one-on-one meetings to help you with all aspects of the writing process, from ways to improve your skills to focused work on a particular class assignment. Please call (608) 263-1992 or visit: [www.wisc.edu/writing](http://www.wisc.edu/writing) for more information.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**

Students who cheat or attempt to cheat will automatically receive a zero for that exam or paper. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to both the Dean of your college and the Dean of Students so they may decide whether further disciplinary action is needed. Your short papers will be submitted to turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism website that will notice if you submit papers copied from other students, from books or articles, or from the web. See lecture syllabus for more details.

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**Important Dates to Remember:**

**Feb 10-14:** Quiz I

**Feb 19:** News Reflection #1 (gender) due at 2:30pm

**March 5:** News Reflection #2 (race) due at 2:30 pm

**March 12:** Exam I (in lecture)

**March 17 and 19:** Spring Break!!!

**April 7-11:** Quiz II

**April 21-25:** Quiz III

**April 28:** News Reflection #3 (gay marriage) due at 2:30pm

**May 7:** Exam II (in lecture)

\*\*\*Note: There is no "final exam" during exam period\*\*\*