

**Sociology 120: Marriage and Family**  
**University of Wisconsin-Madison**  
**Monday & Wednesday, 2:30-3:45pm**  
**Social Science Building, Room 6210**  
**Spring 2014**

Professor Marcy Carlson  
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Teaching Assistants	Office Hours	Location	Email
Ian Carrillo	Mon. 4:00-5:00pm Wed. 1:00-2:00pm	8120 Social Science	<a href="mailto:icarrillo@wisc.edu">icarrillo@wisc.edu</a>
Yun Cho	Mon. 1:30-2:30pm Wed. 1:30-2:30pm	7110 Social Science	<a href="mailto:yuncho@ssc.wisc.edu">yuncho@ssc.wisc.edu</a>
Alexis Dennis	Fri. 1:00-3:00pm	8120 Social Science	<a href="mailto:dennis.teaching@gmail.com">dennis.teaching@gmail.com</a>
Taylor Laemmler	Wed. 12:00-2:00pm	7110 Social Science	<a href="mailto:llaemmler@ssc.wisc.edu">llaemmler@ssc.wisc.edu</a>

See section syllabi on the course website (<https://learnuw.wisc.edu>) for section meeting times and locations.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The family is a fundamental building block of social life in at least two senses. First, families provide the context in which individual lives unfold: they set the stage for birth, life, love, and death. In this sense, families are “private institutions.” Second, families have consequences for the greater good: they educate children and care for the elderly, but they also play a major role in generating and perpetuating social inequalities. In this sense, families are “public institutions” that matter for society as a whole. This course will examine families as private and as public institutions from the perspectives of family sociology and social demography. As such, it will focus primarily on aggregate patterns and historical trends within and between groups as defined by race, gender, and socioeconomic status, and less on individual experiences.

A major goal of this course is to learn about differences in family patterns in the contemporary United States and throughout history. While it may be tempting to assume that there can only be one “best” or “natural” way to organize family life, research indicates that a fundamental constant in family life is change. Consequently, it is a major goal of the course to evaluate critically our own assumptions about family structures and processes.

This is an introductory course designed for inquisitive students who are new to sociology. Seniors and other students with a background in social science are welcome but may alternatively wish to consider the more advanced family course, Sociology 640.

## COURSE FORMAT

**Lectures:** You should read all assigned material *before* class. Have your notes ready and be prepared to ask and answer questions. Lectures will draw attention to select issues from the required readings, but also present new material not covered in the textbook. You are responsible for all material covered in lecture in addition to everything covered in the required readings. To facilitate note-taking during lecture, I will post lecture outlines on the course website a few hours before lecture. Please print these outlines and bring them to class. If you need to miss a lecture, be sure to get lecture notes and other details from a classmate.

Record contact information of a classmate or two here:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sections:** Weekly discussion sections give you the opportunity to engage with the material on a deeper level. Section discussions are an integral part of this course, and section attendance is mandatory. You must complete all required readings prior to section. Your TA will distribute a separate section handout with further instructions.

## 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:

The majority of readings come from the textbook that can be purchased at the University of Wisconsin Bookstore or via an on-line bookseller:

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2013. *Public and Private Families: An Introduction*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Boston: McGraw-Hill (ISBN# 0078026679). (Note that an e-version is also available for 'rent' at: [www.coursesmart.com](http://www.coursesmart.com).)

Additional required readings outside of the textbook will be posted on the course website at Learn@UW. I have intentionally kept the required reading load for this course at a very moderate level (under 40 pages in most weeks). In return, I ask that you engage the material in depth. You may find it helpful to team up with a group of classmates to discuss the readings; the study questions at the end of each chapter in your textbook are an excellent place to start. We encourage you to contribute the fruits of your out-of-class discussions in lecture and in section. You will enjoy this class more and get a better grade.

### **Section:**

Section is an important component of this course, accounting for 15% of your final grade (10% participation, 5% attendance). Thoughtful *participation* is key. You will be graded on the *quality*, and not just the frequency, of your section participation. Prepare for section! Complete all readings in advance of section and contribute your questions, reflections, and observations. Engage your classmates creatively and constructively and advance the discussion.

*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 your TA to notify us of the circumstances.)

### **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:**

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. Since I appreciate that everybody may have a "bad day" once in a while, I will give greater weight to your better exam score: your higher score will count more (30%), and your lower score will count less (25%). Note: Your online schedule will list a "final exam" time. Pay no attention to it. There is no "final" in Soc 120 after classes end.

**No Make-Up Exams:** Unfortunately, a class of this size cannot accommodate make-up exams. If students are compelled to miss the first exam because of a serious illness, a serious family emergency, or a *required* university-sponsored activity, their second exam will simply count more. In other words, there is no penalty for missing the first exam. Nevertheless, I *strongly* recommend that you take it. 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%	

Curve: Final grades will be curved to a median grade of B (but I do not curve down). Straight As are reserved for consistently excellent work; experience suggests that approximately 15% of students will earn this distinction. Sustained effort is a prerequisite for a passing grade.

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

**Special Needs:** We gladly accommodate students with documented special needs. Students with special needs should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>). If you wish to request or discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible and no later than the second week of classes after lecture or during office hours.

**Office Hours:** Use them! This is your chance for one-on-one conversations with the professor and your TAs. Experience shows that many students neglect this resource. You don't need an appointment to see the professor during office hours. *I look forward to meeting you!*

**Grade Disputes:** You may contest exam grades *up to two weeks* after exams and assignments have been returned in section. Minor issues (e.g. computational errors in your score) should be raised with your TA. Any substantive concerns about the contents of your answer should be discussed with the professor.

**Email Etiquette:** Due to the large size of this class, please adhere to the following email etiquette. If you have questions or concerns, always check the course website and syllabus first. If you can't find what you need there, contact your TA first. If issues remain, email me or come to my office hours.

Email is a professional communication tool, and proper form matters (e.g. salutation, syntax, signature). This webpage has examples and guidelines about emailing professors (the same

courtesies should be shown for TAs): <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>. We try to respond to all emails within two business days.

**Lecture Etiquette:** If you bring a laptop and want to use it for taking notes, you must sit in the first 2 rows of the lecture hall. Only use your laptop to take notes—do not check e-mail, play solitaire, or update Facebook. You won't learn, AND you will be a distraction to those sitting behind you. Please do not use cell phones to text, and make sure the sound is turned off. Finally, avoid disruptions such as arriving late, talking, reading, or packing before I finish lecturing. Thanks!

**Working with Sources:** Before submitting your written assignments, you are expected to study the excellent guidelines on the Writing Center website about “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>).

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** Students who cheat or attempt to cheat will automatically receive a zero score for that exam or assignment. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the Dean of your school or college as well as the Dean of Students so that he/she may decide whether further disciplinary action is warranted. A clear definition of plagiarism as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at the Dean of Students web site: <http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/pdf/UWS14.pdf>. Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility, and lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct.

## Course Outline

*Subject to change, please monitor course announcements.*

All non-textbook readings available on the course Learn@UW website.

### January

- 1 Wed 22 Introduction to the course and topic
- 2 Mon 27 Public and Private Families  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 1, pp. 4-17, 22-35
- 3 Wed 29 Family History I  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 2, pp. 40-52  
Required: Goldthorpe, *Family Life in Western Societies*, pp.17-40

### February

- 4 Mon 3 Family History II  
(Professor Carlson out of town; Lecture given by Professor Jenna Nobles)  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 2, pp. 60-76  
Required: Coontz, "What's Love Got to Do With It?"
- 5 Wed 5 Sociological Approaches to the Family & Research Methods  
Required: Cherlin, pp. 17-22

### *Quiz 1 in section this week (Feb 10-14)*

- 6 Mon 10 Gender I  
Required: Cherlin, pp. 82-91  
Required: Maglaty, "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?"
- 7 Wed 12 Gender II  
Required: Cherlin, pp. 91-105  
Required: West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender."
- 8 Mon 17 Socioeconomic Status I  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 4, pp. 110-130  
Required: DeParle, Jason. "Two Classes, Divided by 'I Do'." (*NYT*)
- 9 Wed 19 Socioeconomic Status II  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 4, pp. 130-136  
Required: Lareau, "Invisible Inequality."  
**News Reflection #1 (gender) due at 2:30pm**
- 10 Mon 24 Race and Ethnicity I  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 2, pp. 53-59, and Chapter 5, pp. 140-147
- 11 Wed 26 Race and Ethnicity II  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 5, pp. 147-172

**March**

- 12 Mon 3 Sex  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 6, pp. 178-204  
Required: England and Thomas, "The Decline of the Date and the Rise of the College Hook Up."
- 13 Wed 5 Marriage and Cohabitation I  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 7, pp.208-244
- 14 Mon 10 Marriage and Cohabitation II  
Required: Waite, "Does Marriage Matter?"
- 15 Wed 12 Exam 1 (in class)**

\*\* Spring break (no class March 17 and 19) \*\*

- 16 Mon 24 Unmarried families  
Required: McLanahan, "Family Instability and Complexity after a Nonmarital Birth."
- 17 Wed 26 *In class: Watch PBS Frontline Documentary "Let's Get Married," 2002.*  
**NEW DUE DATE: News Reflection #2 (race) due at 2:30pm**
- 18 Mon 31 Work and Families  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 8, pp. 250-269  
Required: Hochschild, "Joey's Problem."

**April**

- 19 Wed 2 Children and Parents  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 9, pp. 274-283, 285-292
- Quiz 2 in section this week (April 7-11)***
- 20 Mon 7 Divorce I  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 12, pp. 374-388
- 21 Wed 9 Divorce II  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 12, pp. 388-401  
Required: McLanahan, "Life without Father."
- 22 Mon 14 Remarriage and Stepfamilies  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 13, pp. 406-429

23 Wed 16 Gay Marriage and Same-Sex Parenting  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 9, 283-285  
Required: Meezan & Rauch, "Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America's Children."

***Quiz 3 in section this week (April 21-25)***

24 Mon 21 Domestic Violence  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 11, pp. 342-370

25 Wed 23 Families and Public Policy I  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 14, pp. 434-452

26 Mon 28 Families and Public Policy II  
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 14, pp. 453-462  
**News Reflection #3 (gay marriage) due at 2:30pm**

27 Wed 30 *In class: Watch PBS Frontline Documentary "Two American Families," 2013.*

**May**

28 Mon 5 Family Change in International Perspective  
Required: OECD, "Families Are Changing."

29 Wed 7 **Exam 2 (in class)**  
(Note: There is no "final exam" during exam week.)



## NON-TEXTBOOK REQUIRED READINGS

All of these readings are available online on the course Learn@UW website.

Coontz, Stephanie. "What's Love Got to Do with It? A Brief History of Marriage." Pp. 30-36 in Cherlin, Andrew J. (ed.), 2008, *Public and Private Families: A Reader* (5<sup>th</sup> edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

DeParle, Jason. 2012 (July 14). *New York Times*. "Two Classes, Divided by 'I Do'."  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/us/two-classes-in-america-divided-by-i-do.html?smid=pl-share>

England, Paula, and Reuben J. Thomas. 2007. "The Decline of the Date and the Rise of the College Hook Up." Pp. 151-162 in Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick, *Family in Transition* (14<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston: Pearson.

Goldthorpe, J.E. 1987. *Family Life in Western Societies: A historical sociology of family relationships in Britain and North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

Hochschild, Arlie R. 1989. *The Second Shift*. London: Penguin. Chapter 4 (Joey's Problem).

Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review* 67:747-776.

Maglaty, Jeanne. 2011. "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?"  
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/When-Did-Girls-Start-Wearing-Pink.html?c=y&page=1>

McLanahan, Sara. 2002. "Life without Father: What Happens to the Children?" *Contexts* 1(1):35-44.

McLanahan, Sara. 2011. "Family Instability and Complexity after a Nonmarital Birth: Outcomes for Children in Fragile Families." Chapter 5 (pp. 108-133) in *Social Class and Changing Families in an Unequal America*, edited by Carlson and England. Stanford, CA: Stanford Press.

Meezan, William and Jonathan Rauch. 2005. "Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America's Children." *The Future of Children* 15(2):87-115.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2011. "Families Are Changing," Chapter 1 in *Doing Better for Families*. Paris: OECD.

Waite, Linda J. 1995. "Does Marriage Matter?" *Demography* 32:483-507.

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. "Doing Gender." 1987. *Gender & Society* 1:125-151.

Revised: January 22, 2014