

Sociology of Family – SOC 3110 (32624)
Spring 2014 – MWF 12:30-1:20 p.m. – Room SS 44

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Office hours: Mon. 10:00-11:00 a.m., Tues. 3:00 – 4:00 p.m., Th. 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. or by appointment if needed.

Required Texts:

Cherlin. 2012. *Public and Private Families: An Introduction*, 7th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
ISBN: 978-0078026676

New & used copies available in bookstore: New—\$203.75 (new rental \$126.40); Used—\$152.85 (used rental \$75.36). Both new & used (and Kindle) available online for less (the 6th ed will do).

Sociology Writing Group. 2013. *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, 7th ed. NY, New York: Worth Publishers. ISBN: 978-1429234795

New & used copies available in bookstore: New—\$54.40.75 (new rental \$32.36); Used—\$37.00 (used rental \$18.24). Both new & used (and e-book) available online.

Please note that there will be topics where I assign other readings; I may reduce the assigned reading in the textbook for some of these topics.

Course Objectives:

1. Introduce students to a sociological consideration of the interaction between individuals, families, and society.
2. Help students appreciate the diverse array of familial experiences.
3. Help students focus on the issues that surround us, including those that are current and often controversial, and assist students in developing the background and skills for assessing family issues critically.
4. Give each student the opportunity to explore his or her own topics of interest within this broad field.
5. Help students develop stronger writing abilities and hone their critical thinking skills.

Course Format and Expectations:

Since there are many ways to learn, with different people excelling at different tasks, this class will use a variety of learning methods. They include reading, lectures, discussion, classroom activities, written assignments and projects, and essay exams. Most of these learning methods require your attendance to be of benefit.

- **Lectures** supplement, **but do not replace, required reading** from the text and other sources
 - Students will be held responsible for material presented in the readings, lectures, and by guest speakers. Readings should be completed before lectures and class discussions.
- **Writing assignments** – this course includes a number of short but important writing assignments, one medium-length paper, and two more in-depth assignments. They provide you with another way to learn course materials, give you a chance to demonstrate your progress, and allow me to assess how well you organize your thoughts about the course material and express yourself in writing.

There are two take-home essay exams for this course, a midterm and a final. Both include essay questions you can choose from, to some degree. The exams will cover all course materials (reading, lecture materials, etc.). You will have one week to complete each.

- I expect university-level writing on all written assignments. This includes proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. The Writing Center is a good resource for help with writing.
- This course uses a good deal of **discussion**. Part of your grade will come from your participation throughout the semester. Do remember that all students need the chance to participate.
- **If you have a legitimate problem with an exam date or due date, you need to talk to me as early as possible so we can make arrangements before it affects your grade.**

On distractions: Even small, unintended disruptions like chatting with others, rustling a newspaper, or gathering your books and papers before the end of class can disturb your classmates' learning. Coming to class late and leaving early are particularly distracting, and should be avoided if at all possible. **Please do not leave class early unless you have made prior arrangements with me.**

- Electronic devices may ONLY be used for course work, NOT for texting, social media, or other non-class activities; devices must also be silenced.
- Please be considerate of your fellow students and your instructor.

Student and Instructor Responsibilities:

Students	Instructor
Be prepared for class	Be prepared for class
Arrive on time	End on time
Turn in assignments on time	Return graded assignments in timely fashion
Know and understand grading policy	Follow grading policy with fairness
Ask about what you don't know or understand	Research and report back on what I don't know or understand
Bring up problems when they occur	Bring up problems when they occur

A Tone of Respect and Sensitivity:

Because this course touches on emotionally charged topics such as roles in the household, sex and sexuality, corporal punishment, and divorce, you may learn things about others that conflict with your own thoughts and values. My hope is that students will engage with the material in both an intellectual and emotional way, and that lively discussions can take place during class time (and beyond). In order to do this, all students must feel the classroom is a “safe” environment where they can explore ideas and express opinions without fear of being ridiculed, judged negatively, or put down. It is possible and healthy to disagree with others without degrading, silencing, or intimidating them. Our goal should be open minds, with sensitivity to and appreciation for differences.

Differing viewpoints are encouraged, but personal attacks or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Respect for all is expected, including:

1. **Treating everyone with civility, including listening without interrupting**
 2. **Avoiding insulting terms and stereotypes when describing people**
 3. **Attempting to understand other people's behavior**
 4. **Critiquing ideas rather than the person holding them**
- **Other people holding philosophies, values and beliefs that are different than our own is not a threat to the philosophies, values and beliefs we each hold—it's just different.**

Core Beliefs: According to the WSU Student Code, students are to “[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs” (WSU Student Code, Section IV, item D. 9; http://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/6-22_StudentCode.html).

Make-up Policies: Only those students whose absence from class has been excused will be allowed to make up an exam, quiz, class activity, or writing assignment.

- An *excusable* absence needs to be cleared with me in order for it to become *excused*.
- Excused absences need to be cleared before the next class.
- **In the case of an unexcused absence, no make up for missed work will be allowed.**
- Students who miss class for any legitimate reason, including participation in organized university activities, should notify me **in advance** of their absence if possible.

Grading:

Summary of grading:	Percent (rounded) of course grade:
• Participation and Class Activities—50 points total:	8%
○ Includes attendance as well as class participation	
• Worksheets or free writes—140 points total:	23%
○ 1 per chapter plus introductory, 10 points each	
• Deliberative Democracy Project—30 points total:	5%
○ Participation in Deliberative Democracy Day	
○ Analysis paper – 30 points	
• Assessment of Legislative Session – Family—100 points total:	17%
○ Annotated bibliography of sources – 25 points	
○ Analysis paper – 75 points	
• Diversity Project—80 points total:	13%
○ Interview and paper	
• 2 take-home essay exams—200 points total:	33%
○ 100 points each (about 17% of grade)	
• Total possible: 600 points	100%
• Extra credit assignments will be available, no more than 15 points total (details to follow)	

Grades will be distributed as follows:

93% and higher (558-600) = A	80-82% (480-497) = B-	67-69% (402-419) = D+
90-92% (540-557) = A-	77-79% (462-479) = C+	60-66% (360-401) = D
87-89% (522-539) = B+	73-76% (438-461) = C	Less than 60% (359) = E (F)
83-86% (498-521) = B	70-72% (420-437) = C-	

A denotes *exceptional* performance, **B**—*above average* performance, **C**—satisfactory performance, **D**—poor performance, **E(F)**—failing performance

Academic Integrity: “...As members of Weber State University academic community, students shall...maintain academic ethics and honesty.” Plagiarism, “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work” (including purchased or borrowed papers), and cheating are specifically prohibited (Weber State University Student Code). Any sort of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. A single case of cheating or plagiarism can be the basis for a failing grade and/or sanctions from the University. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse. For further information, please see the student code referred to above (<http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm>), or talk with the instructor.

Students with Disabilities: Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary. For more information about the SSD, contact them at 801-626-6413, ssd@weber.edu, or <http://departments.weber.edu/ssd>

Emergency Closure: If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct our class through email and Canvas. Look for announcements on your Weber email and on Canvas. Code Purple is a good way to be alerted to campus closures, and you are encouraged to sign up for it.

Course Assignments

NOTE: Late papers will be docked unless you have made arrangements ahead of time.

- Unless noted otherwise, **PRINTED ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN – I do not grade assignments submitted electronically.**

Deliberative Democracy Project – Events on Feb. 25th, paper due March 4th – worth 30 points

Purpose: “Deliberative Democracy is centered on the notion that persons should be given opportunity to deliberate about public problems and solutions under conditions that are conducive to reasoned reflection and mutual willingness to understand the values, perspectives, and interests of others” (WSU’s Democracy Project website). The purpose of involving the class in this event is to allow students the opportunity to participate in the deliberation, bringing a sociological perspective to the issue.

The Event: This year Weber State’s Deliberative Democracy Project considers the topic of income inequality. Deliberative Democracy Day will occur **Wed., Feb. 25th**. The events take place in the afternoon (11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.) and include a free lunch, small group deliberations led by student facilitators, a panel of experts to answer student questions, and a small group de-briefing. You will write an analysis paper about the event (directions for the paper will be provided). More information will available through a link on: (<http://www.weber.edu/leadership/adp.html>).

Students in this class need to make plans now to attend the Deliberative Democracy Day activities. Anyone who is absolutely unable to participate will be allowed to do an alternative assignment on the topic, however I will need to approve this ahead of time, and there will need to be a good reason.

Diversity Project – brief on who interviewing due Feb. 13th; paper due Fri. March 20th, 80 points

Purpose: This project provides you an opportunity to work towards appreciating the diverse array of families in our society. Interview someone from a different family background than your own, and write a paper discussing what you learned in the interview. “Different” may be interpreted broadly.

The Interview: By Friday, Feb. 13th, you need to write a brief statement describing the person you have selected to interview and explaining why you have chosen that particular individual—make sure that person has agreed to the interview as well.

Most of you will likely interview friends or family members who are already comfortable discussing their lives with you—if you have a different idea than this, check with me on potential problems. You are expected to be respectful and ethical during the interview. Here are the interview rules:

- **Inform the interviewee that involvement is voluntary and confidential. He or she may refuse to answer any question, and he or she may end the conversation at any time.**
- **Being ethical means that once confidentiality has been promised, it must be protected.** It would not be ethical for you to gossip or “share” with others what your interviewee has shared with you in any way that would identify the interviewee (including in your paper).
 - **It also means being respectful of your interviewee’s views, feelings, and experiences.** In both your paper and class discussions, talk about the differences between you and your interviewee in a way that honors him or her. Think about how you would want your own views, feelings and experiences talked about.
- **Do not use this assignment as a justification to pry into someone’s life.**

Other than those things, how you structure the interview is up to you. Use an approach that makes you both comfortable. For example, you could approach the interview with questions you have already formulated, or you could ask the individual for an oral history of his or her family situation.

The Paper: Due Fri. March 20th

Write a 3-5 page paper (typed, double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, pages numbered) that conveys what you learned during the interview process. In your narrative-style essay (paragraph form, not bullet points), relate your discussion to relevant information covered in the course to that point. Do not include information that could identify your interviewee, and **do not use real names.**

This paper is not to be a journalistic reporting of what your interviewee said, but rather, a look at the themes and patterns that came up. Include not only what you learned about your interviewee, but what you learned about yourself and your family as well:

- Talk about why you chose to interview this particular person. What makes your situation and his or her situation different? Be explicit.
- What did you learn about the person during your interview? What did he or she say that sounded foreign to you? Emphasize anything that sounded unfamiliar to you.
- How to the specific stories and examples your interviewee shared match up to your own stories and examples?
- Note the similarities between your family and your interviewee’s family, too. What commonalities do you share even among your differences?
- Include a sociological perspective throughout your paper. You do not need statistics, but show that you can see bigger social trends and workings in personal situations.

I will pass out a hand-out with examples of these points.

Assessment of Legislative Session – Family Issues – Full project due in class April 8th

- Total project worth 100 points (bibliography 25 points, analysis paper 75 points)

Purpose: Using a sociological perspective, students will increase their awareness of the interaction between the institution of the state and families, noting how events outside the family can affect the family unit. The assignment will also provide practice in sociological analysis and critique.

Overview: The Utah State Legislature will meet from January 26th through March 12th. They will debate and make legislative decisions on a variety of topics that will directly and indirectly affect Utah families. Each student will pick a family-related issue the legislature is addressing and follow it throughout the legislative session. The project consists of *two parts*: an annotated bibliography of all the sources you use for your research (whether you cite them in your paper or not), and a report based on your findings. After the legislative session ends, using a sociological perspective you will write a paper that analyzes and critiques the action taken (or not taken) by the legislature, as well as the way the issue was constructed by the various groups involved, including the media.

- **Utilize the information from *A Guide to Writing, Part 2, “Working with Sources”*** (Ch. 4, “Collecting and Evaluating Sources” and Ch. 5, “Citing Sources and Preparing Bibliographies,” pp. 43-74) to assist your work
 - **Resources to use for your research:** should address the legislative action, including whatever background material you need to have a good understanding of the issue.
 - **They may include:** internet sources; newspaper articles and other mainstream journalistic coverage (e.g. news videos, news magazine articles, etc.); coverage of, attendance at or watching videos of speeches or other presentations related to the issue; direct communication with legislators, whether by email, phone or in person (for the latter two, you will need to take good notes of the conversation that you can refer to for your paper—be prepared to let me see the notes if I ask).
- **First:** choose any issue directly or indirectly family-related, being addressed by the Utah State Legislature in the current session, whether they pass legislation about it or not. I will ask you for this topic after the legislative session begins.

Annotated Bibliography (25 points): Required reading: Ch. 5 in *Writing Sociology Papers*
Build an annotated bibliography listing all the sources of information you use, including background information you might not even include in your paper but that helped you gain a better understanding of the issue and the action (or inaction) taken by the legislature. It can include sources of information about the legislative process itself, if you need to increase your understanding of how things work.

The bibliography (typed, **single spaced**, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, pages numbered) must include full citation information and a 1 paragraph summary of each resource.¹

- **Use ASA citation style** (in *Writing Sociology Papers*, pp. 69-72; see also Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), formatting in Sociology: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>)
- The annotated bibliography **must include at least 7-10 items from mainstream journalism** (newspaper articles/columns/editorials, news videos, news magazine articles, etc.), however if you want to include more of these items in your report, each must be included in the annotated bibliography (**cont. on next page**)

¹ If you have questions about what to include in the citation information for things like presentations, speeches, etc., talk to me about it.

(Assessment of Legislative Session: Annotated Bibliography – cont.)

- You may draw from opinion pieces (e.g. columns, op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, etc.), but you must also make sure you have adequate coverage of the issue from news articles
- The minimum number depends on the length and usefulness of the items
- Additionally, the annotated bibliography needs to include a number of other types of sources, as noted above

Analysis Paper (75 points):

- **You need to use the required reading from *Writing Sociology Papers* to craft a well-written paper. Use the information from the reading to practice your writing skills.**

Utilizing information from course materials as well as from the resources referred to above, write a 4-7 page report on the family-related issue you chose (typed, double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, pages numbered). In the narrative-style report (paragraph form, not bullet points), include each of the following areas. The use of headings is expected, to assist both you and the reader.

- A brief **intro** that includes an introduction to your issue and your basic thesis for your paper.
- **“Lit review”**: A detailed explanation of the issue, including its causes and conditions, as well as a brief discussion of the sociological theory **you** think explains the issue the best (including **how** the theory explains the problem). **This must come from course materials.**
- **Study area context/background**: Here include the background on why the UT state legislature is addressing this issue, the history of the issue where the legislature is concerned (e.g., whether the issue has come before them before, what the trends have been (e.g. with funding), why the issue is coming up now, etc. This will differ depending on the issue), etc.
 - Who are the parties of interest? What are their interests?
 - Are some parties likely to benefit more than others? Is it likely that the costs (fiscal and otherwise) will be higher for some than others?
 - Describe any sources of controversy or conflict related to the issue in UT
- **“Findings”**: What did the legislature decide to do, and what were the reasons given
 - What happens with the issue from here?
- **“Discussion”**: using a sociological perspective informed by course materials, analyze and critique the action taken (or not taken) by the legislature, as well as the way the issue was constructed by the various groups involved, including the media
 - Were there likely other reasons and/or motivations beyond “the official explanation” given for the legislative decision?
 - In your critique of the legislature, include what you think they did right as well as things you question, important aspects you think they missed, possible bias, etc.
 - In your critique of the media reports (as well as interested parties), include what you think they did right as well as things you question, important aspects you think they missed, possible bias, etc.
 - Comment on how the issue was constructed in the media
 - How did the media treat or represent people affected by the issue of focus?
 - How did the media treat or represent various interest groups?
 - In your critiques, be specific, using examples to support what you say

(Assessment of Legislative Session: Paper – cont.)

- Make sure to discuss how your findings relate/connect with the information in your lit review section, including the theory you used.
- **“Summary”**: Briefly summarize your main points, **and** discuss what you learned from the project, being specific rather than general, vague, fluffy or flowery
- Utilizing the information from *Writing Sociology Papers* on in-text citations (pp. 66-68) and reference sections (pp. 69-72), properly cite all references you use throughout the paper, and include them in a reference section at the end of the report. Your reference section should include only those sources you cite when writing the paper. You may have quite a few more sources in your annotated bibliography than you have in your reference section, but **every source you include in the reference section must also appear in the annotated bibliography** (other than your course textbook).
 - (In case you are confused, you will have the separate annotated bibliography AS WELL AS a reference section for the paper itself. They serve different purposes. If one is longer than the other, it should be the annotated bibliography, since you may have sources on it that you do not include in the paper. Other than the textbook, every item you cite in your paper should appear not only in the reference section, but also the annotated bibliography.)

Course Schedule²

Jan. 12th: Introduction to the course.

Reading for Jan. 14th: Excerpt from Mills, C. W. 1959. “The Promise of Sociology;” and from Berger, P.L. 1963. “Invitation to Sociology;” and “Utah students 'grossly' unprepared for workforce, study says.” Also: *A Guide to Writing*, pp. x-xii, “To the Student”

❖ **January 19th: Holiday—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Reading for Jan. 21st: Textbook—Ch. 1 – Public and Private Families; also *A Guide to Writing*, pp. 4-12 from Ch. 1, “Getting Started”

Reading for Jan. 28th: Ch. 14 – The Family, the State, and Social Policy

Reading for Feb. 4th: Ch. 2 – The History of the Family; also *A Guide to Writing*, pp. 13-27 – Ch. 2, “Designing Your Paper”

Reading for Feb. 11th: Kimmel, M. 2003. “Introduction: Toward a Pedagogy of the Oppressor,” pp. 1-10 from *Privilege*

Reading for Feb. 13th: Ch. 3 – Gender and Families [Brief due: who interviewing? Fri. Feb. 13th]

❖ **February 16th: Holiday—Presidents Day**

Reading for Feb. 20th: Ch. 4 – Social Class and Families; also *A Guide to Writing*, pp. 29-41 – Ch. 6, “The Textual Analysis Paper”

➤ **Wednesday, Feb. 25th – Deliberative Democracy Day: NO CLASS—attend event**

[Midterm distributed Fri. Feb. 27th]

Reading for March 2nd: Ch. 5 – Race, Ethnicity, and Families; also *A Guide to Writing*, pp. 163-166 – Part 4, “Finishing Up”

[Deliberative Democracy paper due Wed. March 4th]

Reading for March 6th: Ch. 6 – Sexualities [Midterm due]

❖ **March 9th through 13th: Spring Break**

Reading for March 20th: Ch. 7 – Cohabitation and Marriage [Diversity project due]

Reading for March 25th: Ch. 8 – Work and Families

Reading for April 1st: Ch. 9 – Children and Parents

Reading for April 8th: Ch. 10 – Older People and Their Families [Legislative paper due]

Reading for April 13th: Ch. 12 – Divorce; Ch. 13 – Stepfamilies

April 20th: Presentation/discussion of legislative issues [Final exam distributed]

➤ **Wed. April 22nd: Departmental Research Conference: NO CLASS—attend 1 session**

April 24th: Course wrap-up—last day of class; [extra credit due]

➤ **Wednesday, April 29th: Final exam due—5 p.m. in my office or box**

² Syllabus is subject to change due to outside speakers, added activities or readings, or circumstances beyond my control.