

## Sociology 169: Changing American Family

Section 1, TTh 9-10:15

Yosemite 135

Professor Todd A. Migliaccio

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### **Course Objectives:**

Students will be presented with the changing dynamics of American families, and will learn about family structures in the past, present and to some degree, the future. While the class will focus on specific issues that exist within families, attempting to understand from where the issues arise, ultimately the class will address the relationship between the family as an institution and other social structures to note the effect each has on one another. Students will learn to exercise their sociological imagination in understanding the structure of family and the reasons for changes in the structure. The class will gain an understanding of social issues that are related to the family, their history and their relationship to the changes in the family in general. Through interviews, exams, papers and class projects, students will apply the information from the class to instances in their lives and the world in general.

### **Required Text:**

Course Reader, located at University Copy and Print (behind Safeway), 446 Howe Avenue (929-6147).

### **Service- Learning**

The Service-Learning option offers students a chance to interact in a community group that is associated with the family, allowing the student to note the connection between the ideas being discussed with actual experiences in the world. This will assist students in not only developing a better understanding of the material and how it applies in the world but also to gain real world experience with such groups, and idea.

The overall goal of Service Learning is to provide a laboratory in which learning experiences address human and community needs and provides the necessary time for reflection on those experiences. Service opportunities are structured to promote student learning and development. Desired learning outcomes include: acquiring a sense of civic and social responsibility, gaining exposure to cultural and socioeconomic differences, applying classroom learning and learning new skills.

Students that choose to be a part of the Service-Learning component of the course will be expected to be present at their chosen Community Partner site no less than 3 hours a week between weeks 3 and 12, for a total of 30 hours. Students will have a chance to choose from a number of potential community partners, but should remain with the site for the remainder of the semester. Students will be graded on attendance and work behavior, which will be determined through an evaluation that will be made by the student's supervisor at the site. The assignments for the class, as discussed below, will differ from other students because they will focus on connecting the class ideas to the student's service learning experience.

## **Policies:**

The due dates for each of the papers are stated in the syllabus. No late papers will be accepted. The paper guidelines are on the web. As well, a brief statement in class about what is expected will be given. The due dates for each assignment are listed in the course calendar at the end of the syllabus. While I will attempt to offer reminders to impending due dates, it is ultimately your responsibility to insure that all papers are ready to be turned in by the expected due date.

Throughout the course, each student will be allotted four extensions for the papers or assignments. You do not need permission from the professor. You may use these extensions whenever you want, subject to the rules given below:

- 1) You get four extensions. Don't ask me for more- you won't get them. Hence, you should use extensions wisely when you really need them, such as sickness or an athletic event.*
- 2) You may use a maximum of two extensions on any one paper; by using two on one paper, you can turn the paper in one week late (two classes late).*
- 3) You may use only one extension for a late assignment, meaning it can be turned in only one class period late.*
- 4) Any paper that is submitted later more than two classes after it is due (regardless of your extension situation), or is turned in late after you have used all of your extensions will be penalized two full grades.*
- 5) Any assignments submitted after one class period (regardless of extension situation), or after you have used all of your extensions, the assignment will not be accepted.*
- 6) No extension can be used for posting assignments, quizzes or exams. If you fail to post before the end of the allotted time, then you lose those points.*

All papers must be typed and stapled and not placed in any covers, folders or any other such contraption. A title page is expected, which will contain the following information: Title of the paper, your name, and the name of the class (Sociology 169 for those of you not paying attention). Thank you.

Use of the website. While there are times when the site will be down, this is not an excuse for a missed assignment or late paper. The material will be up with sufficient time to copy it before it comes due. Ultimately it is your responsibility to either obtain it, or let me know of any problems you are having with it. I will attempt to correct any problems, but on occasion they are not always my fault (I know, that is hard to imagine, but it is true).

If you are a student who has a disability that may necessitate accommodations being made in the classroom, please contact the office for student disability services.

Turn off all pagers and cell phones before entering class. I accept the right to answer any that ring (and make up any wild stories about you to the person who has called).

Finally, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are caught engaging in either of these activities, you will receive an F.

## **Online Component:**

The class is located on the WebCT campus server. Accessing this site requires a login and password, which are the following: Login: your samlink account; Password: your samlink password. You will be able to access the outlines for the course, any overheads used in class, any material that was handed out, a glossary of terms (if there

is one not listed that you can not locate elsewhere, please let me know so I can include it), all of the assignments, as well as the posting questions and syllabus. You will also be able to locate your grade on-line if you desire.

**POSTINGS:** Several Friday afternoons I will be putting up posting questions/assignments on-line. I will attempt to let you know about it in class. As for the postings, they will be questions that you will be required to answer that engage the ideas in the class, the readings and possibly current events. As well, you will be required to respond to at least two other student's comments, preferably on a different day than you originally posted. This is to help in the comprehension of the material, ideas and readings from the class, as well as to generate topics of discussion within the classroom.

### **Exams:**

Four exams will be given over the course of the semester, but only three will be counted toward your grade (yes, that means your lowest score will be thrown out). Each will consist of short answer questions, coupled with matching, true/false and/or multiple-choice questions. Each exam will be worth 15% of your total grade (for those of you who have not taken math as of yet, that is a total of 45% of your total grade). Each test will only examine your knowledge from the previous test until the class period just prior to the exam. The final will not be a comprehensive final. You will need to bring blue books and scantrons for all of the exams.

### **Assignments:**

#### **Class Assignments, Postings and Participation:**

Throughout the semester, a series of short assignments will be given that incorporate the concepts of the class into your own lives. Some of the assignments will require you to bring something written back into the class, while some will require you to engage with other students in on-line discussions on the website. The Posting assignments will be given on Friday and you will be required to respond to these over the weekend, as well as to respond to two other student's comments. Many will engage the readings, with the intent of bringing in discussions from these on-line postings to the class. All assignments will be listed on the web. All together, these will be worth 10% of your total grade.

#### **For Students who are not participants in the Service Learning Component:**

##### **Journals:**

Every few weeks a reaction/journal paper (1-2 pages) will be due (the exact days will be listed below), for a total of four journals. The journals will be your own thoughts and comments about the ideas from the class and/or the readings and your perception of them. The journals as a whole will be worth 20% of your total grade.

##### **Presentation**

You will conduct research on a topic related to class (you choose) and present it to the class. Within the research, you will use no less than 3 academic sources to help gain information. Your presentation will be about the conclusions you have drawn from your research on the topic. You can be as specific as you like in the topic you choose for your research. You will be teaching the class about the topic from an academic perspective. The presentation will be worth 10% of your total grade.

##### **Paper Project**

You will need to take a position about the topic you are researching for your presentation and argue it, using information from the class, the readings, and your interviews. The paper will be more focused than the presentation. This is due on the first day of presentations. It will be worth 15% of your total grade.

##### **Interview Schedule:**

You are required to establish an interview guide that will list the topics, ideas and even questions that will be asked in your interviews. You will pick several general topics and then a list of ideas and/or questions that will be covered within those topics. A copy of this will be used and turned in with each of the interviews throughout the semester. This will be worth 10% of your assignment grade.

##### **Interviews:**

You will be expected to interview three different people from different generations about love, dating, marriage, childrearing, etc. Essentially the issues we have been or will be discussing in class. You will turn

both of these interviews in to insure that you are following the appropriate format. There is no given order for the age designation for each interview. Just make sure you have one to turn in on the assigned days. And they are new. While each interview will be graded separately, the total of all three will be worth 30% of your grade on the Paper project.

### **Analysis:**

You will be required to engage the materials in the class, along with the interviews that you conducted and offer an argument concerning changes that have occurred in family over generations. You will use the interviews to support your claims. The format of the paper will be thesis-style paper and will be 6-8 pages long. Further information about the paper is included in a handout. This is worth 60% of your grade.

## ***For Students who are participants in the Service Learning Component:***

### **Journals:**

Every few weeks a journal paper (1-2 pages) will be due on the Thursday of that week (the exact days will be listed below), for a total of four journals. Two of the journals will be your own thoughts and comments about your service learning experiences and what you have learned from the experience in relation to the issues/topics in the class. The first and fourth journals will be based on ideas given to you (they are discussed in the guidelines located online). The journals as a whole will be worth 20% of your total grade.

### **Presentation**

You will give a presentation that introduces the service learning experience to the class and connects it to ideas in the course. Rather than listing how the service learning experience relates to a list of concepts in the class, pick one or two to which it most strongly relates and explain in detail the concepts, theories and ideas associated with the topic and how the experience relates, or is a perfect example of it. It will be worth 10% of your total grade.

### **Service Learning**

You will be graded on your attendance and overall review of your service learning experience. This will be turned in by your supervisor to me. It is structured by a point system along with comments written and stated by your supervisor. It will be worth 15% of your total grade.

## **Calendar:**

### TOPIC:

September 1 & 3: Introduction and the definition of family

September 8 & 10: Theory and Social Factors

September 15-22: History of American families and alternatives

**September 17: Interview Guide due**

**September 22: Journal 1 is due**

September 24: Exam 1

September 29 - October 6: Sexuality and family

October 8 - 15: Family and the State

**October 13: 1<sup>st</sup> Interview due**

**October 15: Journal 2 is due**

October 20: Exam 2

October 22: Power, Conflict and Communication

October 27- November 3: Parenthood

**October 27: Interview 2 due**

**October 29: Journal 3 is due**

November 5 & 10: Children

November 12: Exam 3

November 17 & 19: Family Violence

**November 19: Interview 3 due**

**November 26: THANKSGIVING!!! ENJOY!!!**

November 24- December 3: PRESENTATIONS

**November 24: Journal 4 is due**

**December 3: Paper due**

December 8 & 10: Divorce

**December 15 (Tuesday), 8-10a: Exam 4**

### READING DUE:

Goode

Furstenberg; Giele

Skolnick; Coontz;

Casper & Bianchi;

Cunningham & Thornton

Lewin; Schalet; Collins

Cherlin; Butler, et al.;

Geyman

Jackson; Waite, et al.

Hays; Gillespie

Townsend; Luker

Mintz

Johnson & Ferraro;

Simonelli, et al.

Hackstaff; Kelly & Emery