

**Sociology of the Family**  
**Hunter, Summer 2016**  
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**Course Description:**

Far from a static entity that transcends time, the family form shifts in historically significant ways. Sociologists consider the family a window between our most personal lives and larger political and social forces. Together, we will explore how economics, politics, culture, love, gender, and personal identities shape, and are shaped by, the form and experience of the family. We will pay particular attention to the work making and keeping a family requires. Who plans the holidays? Who buys the groceries? Who lightens the mood? And, importantly, who faces obstacles to achieving or maintaining a family? Part of our time will be spent studying how our culture (US culture, that is) defines ideas of a good, loving, dysfunctional, and absent family. As always, we will situate the everyday life and feelings (falling in/out of love, dinner time, suffering from depression, having children) within larger social patterns.

**Required Texts:**

*Diversity in Families* (DF). Baca Zinn, Eitzen, and Wells. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**Requirements:**

**Attendance/Participation (25%):**

You will be graded on attendance since you must come to class to do well. Your attendance grade is determined in two ways: 1. From signing in either at the beginning, middle or end of class (it will be a surprise!) OR 2. from short in-class writing assignments that you turn in at the end of each class period. These will not be graded: as long as you complete the exercise, you will receive the point. We may share these writings with each other. Attendance/participation writings can never be made up. At the end of the semester you will receive an attendance/participation grade, which will be a calculation of all the points you earned divided by the total number of points possible. For example, if we have 3 writing assignments and 7 sign in points, and you complete 8, you will have earned an 80% (8/10).

**Symposium on the Family Brief (25%):** In groups, you will create a 1-2 page brief that includes the following:

1. A problem facing families today
2. A proposed solution to the problem
3. A chart/graph or image

I will compile our briefs and turn them into a mini-book (which will be online). You have free reign with the problem you'd like to address, and I'm happy to give you a topic if nothing comes to mind. You must address your problem sociologically—what does this mean? Sociological thinking means that you investigate the ways structural issues (big things—like the “economy” or drug laws or tax policies) influence different groups' daily realities.

Your group will receive ONE grade for the project = you will all receive the same grade. To receive all the points you must: 1. Propose a sociological solution (if your trying to change individual behaviors, take a second, third, fourth look...sociologists rarely try to change individuals) 2. Explain the problem and solution clearly, briefly, and convincingly, and 3. Your chart/image/graph must support your argument.

**Media Analysis (25%):** Write a report on how the family is represented in any media of your choosing (a tv show, book, movie, political candidate...whatever). Explain how the representation either aligns with families today or departs from the current family trends we learn about all semester. For example, if you analyze "Leave it to Beaver" you'd obviously write about how much of an anomaly that representation is to current families

(stay at home mom, breadwinning dad, married, etc). You need to describe how the media representation correctly/incorrectly captures modern family life (use facts and figures from the book). These will be presented to the class, you should show us a clip or image or some sample of the media you're analyzing. You will need to hand in a 500-700 word paper to me as well. These will be scheduled throughout the semester.

**Exam 1 & 2 (25%):** These will be take home exams. Multiple choice, true false. Anything from readings, class lecture and/or class discussion could be on the test—including videos, images we look at during class. You must return them on the day they are due—no excuses will be accepted.

**RULES:**

1. No late work is accepted. If you miss your day to present or to hand in your test, you will receive no credit.
2. I do not give incompletes. Period. You will get a grade at the end of the semester.
3. Respect each other.
4. No texting.
5. Schedule will change, come to class to stay on top of this!
6. You decide the grade you earn. I will not offer extra credit or change your grade for any reason.

**SCHEDULE:**

JUNE	1:	Introductions, scheduling, group assignments
	2:	Rebecca Traister: <a href="http://nymag.com/thecut/2016/02/political-power-single-women-c-v-r.html">http://nymag.com/thecut/2016/02/political-power-single-women-c-v-r.html</a>
	6:	<b>No Class</b> —prepare group project proposal for tomorrow
	7:	<i>The Price of Motherhood</i> , found here: <a href="https://fashioningsociology.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/priceofmotherhoodchap5.pdf">https://fashioningsociology.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/priceofmotherhoodchap5.pdf</a> Chapter 1 & Group project proposal sharing and critiquing
	8:	<b>No Class</b> —Revise group project proposal
	9:	Chapter 2 (47-52), Chapter 3 & Turn in proposal for group project
	13:	Chapter 4
	14:	Chapter 5
	15:	No Class—Take Home exam 1
	16:	Chapter 6
	20:	<b>Exam ONE DUE</b>
	21:	Chapter 7
	22:	Chapter 8
	23:	Chapter 8
	27:	Chapter 9
	28:	cont, catch up
	29:	Group Project Workday
	30:	
JULY	5:	Chapter 12
	6:	cont
	7:	Chapter 13 Exam 2 handed out
	11:	Chapter 13-14
	12:	<b>Exam 2 due/Group projects due</b>
	13:	Family Symposium