

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for SOC 4

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS

Effective: Fall 2006

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

SOC 4 — MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS — 3.00 units

Sociological perspective of the family including mate selection, marital roles, marital adjustment, sexual adjustment, reproduction, child rearing, marital dissolution, and problems associated with the family in modern industrial society.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. identify the core differences between pre-industrial and post-industrial courtship and family life;
2. outline the impact of industrialization and modernization on the American family;
3. explain the impact of technology on family life (such as birth control, reproductive assistance), etc;
4. identify the economic and social structures which contribute to the conflicts regarding work/family balance;
5. compare and contrast global marriage, divorce and parenting trends;
6. critique current family policies for their effectiveness.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Historical and economic transformations of the family
 1. Variations of definitions of "family"
 2. Cultural and political innovations: gay/lesbian families, kibbutzes, Stalin's family programs
 3. Social functions of family
 4. Breakdown of US households and current US trends
 5. Impact of economy on family structure (cross cultural comparison of families living in agricultural societies)
 6. How industrialization and modernization affected American family roles/structure
 - a. Men's roles
 - b. Women's roles
 - c. Role of children
 - d. Family/community influence
 - e. Emergence of gay and lesbian communities
- B. Love, intimacy and courtship
 1. History of American mate selection process
 - a. Colonial practices
 - b. 19th century America and the introduction of "romantic love"
 - c. 20th century America and the concept of "confluent love"
 - d. Social/medical interpretations of same-sex love
 2. Re-emergence of arranged marriages in postindustrial nations
 3. The emergence of dating in the U.S. as a primary mate selection process
 4. Effects of gender socialization on women's sexuality
 5. Effects of gender socialization on men's sexuality
 6. Gay and lesbian courtship
 7. Legalizing gay and lesbian relationships
 8. Sociological research on love
- C. Weddings, civil unions, marriages, and other alternatives
 1. The origins of wedding traditions
 2. The controversy over civil unions
 - a. religious v. legal definitions of marriage
 - b. varying religious positions on the subject of gay/lesbian marriage
 - c. issues regarding the constitutionality of protecting sexuality as an identity

3. U.S. marriage laws
 - a. History of marriage laws including anti-miscegenation and "purity" laws
 - b. Current laws re: name, residence, sexual obligation, marital crimes, and marital dissolution
4. Global trends in marriage
 - a. Attempts to eliminate tradition
 - b. Resurrections and reinterpretations of older traditions
 - c. Growth of cohabitations and staying single in postindustrial nations
- D. The impact of birth control and population control on families
 1. History of the birth control movement in the U.S.
 2. The eugenics movements of the 20th century
 3. Current eugenic practices
 4. Impact of birth control on family structure
 5. Issues of accessibility/restriction e.g. abortion
- E. Reproductive technology and its impact on families
 1. Factors contributing to the growth of the fertility industry
 2. Causes of infertility
 3. Overview of technologies: A.I., Invitro, surrogacy, etc.
 4. Issues of cost/moral concerns
- F. Childbirth and childhood
 1. Stages of pregnancy/fetal development
 2. Stages of labor
 3. The medicalization of birth
 4. Infant/maternal mortality
 5. Partners of pregnant women
 6. The impact of modernization in the changing definitions of "childhood"
- G. Parenting and domestic negotiations
 1. Gender differences in transitioning into parenthood
 2. Negotiating housework
 3. Factors affecting the second shift: "stalled revolution," gender ideologies, etc.
 4. Male resistance strategies to sharing the second shift
- H. Work/family balance
 1. The role of daycare in modern American life
 2. The creation of work as "family," and family and relationships as "work"
 3. Do "family friendly policies" work?
 4. Factors affecting the stress associated with work/family balance
 5. Creating the third shift – the emotional fallout
 6. The costs of choosing parenthood over work
 7. The costs of choosing work over parenthood
 8. The "Mothers Movement"
- I. Divorce and remarriage
 1. Impact of divorce on children
 2. Growing trend of blended families
- J. Family violence
 1. Cycles of violence
 2. Prevention v. imprisonment
- K. Creating family policy
 1. Critiques of current family policies at government and corporate levels
 2. Making policy meaningful
- L. The future of families in the United States
 1. Current trends – aging population, declining birth rate, etc.

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Video/web visitation
- C. **Discussion** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading assignment 1. Read chapters 1-3 in Hochschild's *The Time Bind*. 2. Each course should include at least 1 full work in addition to a reader or text B. Family policy paper and presentation 1. Drawing from lecture notes, readings and additional research, create a corporate, local or federal family policy. Explain what problems your policy addresses, how this policy will work and how it will help American families. C. Alien sociologist assignment 1. Pretend you are sociologist from another planet. Using a harlequin novel as your "text" analyze American "courtship" and "mating" rituals. D. Marriage/Partnership contract 1. With your spouse, significant other or someone who is of the same gender as a future partner, create a "contract" outlining the domestic division of labor, childcare, and career plans of both parties.

VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
 1. Exams/Tests
 2. Papers
- B. **Frequency**
 1. Frequency
 - a. At least 2 exams per semester
 - b. A 10-page or two, 5-page research assignments
 - c. A class presentation (See VII.B.)

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Hochschild, Arlie. *The Time Bind: When Work becomes Home and Home becomes Work*, Henry Holt & Co, 2001.
2. Skolnick, Arlene and James Skolnick. *in Transition: A Reader in Cultural Diversity*, Allyn and Bacon, 2005.
3. Crittendam, Ann, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*, Henry Holt & Co, 2002.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: