

Sociology 315.01: Marriage and Family

Wednesday, 3:00-5:45, TJH 108

Spring 2023

Instructor Information

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:00 (and by appointment other days/times) in my office or on Zoom (<https://lcsc.zoom.us/j/84258147040>) (Email me in advance if you want to meet on Zoom.)

Course Summary

How have marriage and the family as social institutions changed over the course of the 20th century and into the 21st? How are socio-cultural and economic trends of the past half century changing the life course and the way people get married and start families (if they even do)? What are some of the most pressing issues that modern-day families and couples face? How do social class, race, gender, and sexual orientation intersect in marriage and family life in the United States? In this course, we will explore these and other questions related to the role of marriage and family in society and society's role in shaping these two key social institutions, drawing on the scholarly and popular work of sociologists, historians, and other social scientists. By the end of the semester, you will have developed a critical, sociological perspective on marriage and family through active engagement with readings, discussions, and writing.

Catalog Description

A study of the institutions of marriage and the family emphasizing the various social factors and forces affecting relationships within the family as well as the changing role and forms of marriage and family in society. Prerequisites: ENGL 102 or ENGL 109 or instructor permission.

Course Format

Our class time together will be spent discussing the readings, with mini-lectures interspersed. Preparing for class by doing the assigned readings and weekly class preparation/reflection assignments is an essential part of your role as a student. Additional details about expectations for our class time together are noted below under "Attendance and Engagement" and "Expectations for Classroom Behavior."

Time Requirements

In higher education, the standard time requirements for credit hours are as follows: for every 1 credit hour, students are to complete one hour of class time and two hours of time outside of class on required coursework (reading, writing papers, studying, etc.), for a total of three hours, on average, per week, per credit hour. This means that for a 3-credit class such as this one, the time requirement per week is **nine hours** (just under three hours in class and six hours spent on coursework outside of class). Because these are averages, you will not spend exactly six hours on coursework outside of class every week. For example, during Week 1, you may spend only an hour or so outside of class reviewing this syllabus and getting your bearings with how the class works, but then during subsequent weeks, you will likely spend a full five to six hours reading the assigned chapters, writing your weekly class preparation/reflection assignment, and periodically reviewing your notes, and you will likely exceed the six-hour mark at the end of the semester when you are writing your final paper. What this all comes down to is that you should expect to spend considerable time outside of class on reading, writing, studying, etc., so be sure to plan your weekly schedule accordingly.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to help you gain knowledge and develop skills that will aid you in becoming a critical thinker, a successful student, and an informed, engaged member of society. Specifically, in this course you will:

- gain knowledge of how society operates on the micro and macro levels
- learn how to interpret your and others' experiences using a sociological framework
- gain an understanding of the role of marriage and family in society and society's role in shaping marriage and family life
- gain practice discussing social issues in an informed, critical, and civil manner
- write well-organized assignments, essays, and a paper that demonstrate an understanding of key sociological issues and concepts
- conduct an interview and in the process learn a new qualitative research skill

Overall Goal

I want you to learn something new in this class. Sounds simple, right? Well, in my experience, this isn't always such an easy task. We all have so many taken-for-granted assumptions about how the world works, what constitutes reality, why people behave in certain ways, etc., that it is sometimes difficult for us to recognize when what we've "always known" is keeping us from learning more. I think that all of us—teachers and students alike—need to continually challenge ourselves to learn more about the world in which we live. I believe the way to accomplish this is by questioning popular interpretations of social phenomena, seeking out credible information that will help us answer our questions, and understanding that we can always learn more about any given topic. You should do well in this course if you approach the material with this in mind.

My philosophy of learning

My philosophy of learning derives from my more basic approach to life, which can be summed up in two words: be curious. The mark of an active mind is *curiosity*, a genuine desire to learn more about whatever it is you're actively studying as well as the myriad of other things that cross your path or your mind during a given day. Curiosity has driven my own academic pursuits since I was an undergraduate, and that, in turn, influences how I teach and how I hope you will approach the learning process in this class. In emphasizing this quality, curiosity, I am implicitly (and now explicitly) revealing that I think learning works best as a self-motivated, internally driven process. Interestingly, this is at odds with how we (meaning the larger enterprise of formal education) tend to approach teaching and learning in the United States, in that through the process of grading, calculating GPAs, awarding scholarships, etc., we use external rewards to motivate students. I would encourage you to reflect on this and consider the degree to which your own motivation for learning and, in turn, your academic behaviors are driven by internal versus external motivations. You're probably driven by a mix of both, which is understandable given our more general cultural orientation, but I'd encourage you to try to focus on the internal motivations a bit more. In doing so, you will likely notice a perceptual shift in how your approach your schoolwork. For example, instead of *having* to read a chapter, you might find yourself being *interested in* reading a chapter in order to learn more about a given topic, or instead of cramming for an exam, you may begin periodically reviewing your notes and thinking about how the new concepts and insights you're learning can be applied to your own life, what you see in the news, etc. If you approach this class in this way, you will begin to see the world around you through the lens of sociology, which will undoubtedly spur further curiosity, likely beyond the bounds of what we cover in this class, and that's exactly the point: from this semester forward you will be even more curious about the social world, which will hopefully lead to further learning throughout your life.

Required Readings

Reading is key to your success in this class. Our class dynamic and your learning depend on your active engagement with the assigned readings. What does "active engagement" entail? If you're like me, it means you may have to read certain passages several times to fully understand them, and you will definitely want to jot down notes (important points, your own insights, questions, etc.) as you read. It also requires that you block off several hours of your weekly schedule for reading for this class so that you can read entire chapters/articles in an uninterrupted fashion, rather than bits and pieces in between all of the other things on your daily to-do list. Finally, it involves consciously thinking about key points from earlier readings as you encounter new ones in subsequent readings, integrating various insights as we move through the semester.

The readings for this class include peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly book chapters, and popular articles and chapters from various news outlets and other sources. They are arranged in alphabetical order in the “Readings” module in Canvas. The authors and titles of the readings are noted in the course schedule (on the last few pages of this syllabus).

You should always have the readings (printed or electronic copies) readily available during our class sessions because we will directly reference specific passages in our class discussions.

Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Class preparation assignments and in-class writing assignments – 25% Most weeks there will be a relatively brief writing assignment asking you to summarize, apply, and/or reflect on what you are learning from the assigned readings. **Class preparation assignments will be due before class (by 2:30 on Wed.) whereas in-class writing assignments will be written in class.** Instructions for class preparation assignments will be posted in Canvas by Friday afternoons. They should take you approximately 20-60 minutes to write, depending on the week (not including the time it takes to complete the readings on which they are based). In-class writing assignments will be assigned in class as we are covering the material on which they are based. *Your two lowest scores in this assignment category will be dropped, meaning that if you miss one or two of these assignments, it won't affect your grade in any way.*

Participation and engagement – 10% You are required to actively engage in our class sessions by coming to class having completed the assigned readings and regularly contributing to both small-group and full-class discussions. I will make note of times when you do or don't actively participate as well as the quality of your participation (the degree to which you demonstrate engagement with the readings and other course material, attention in class, etc.), and from those notes I will assign you a score of 1-10 for participation and engagement at the end of the semester. You will also do a self-assessment of your level of participation and engagement, for which you will assign yourself a score of 1-10. These scores (the one I assign based on my notes and the one you assign yourself based on your self-reflection) will be added together to form this portion of your grade. Specific instructions for how to do your self-assessment will be posted on Canvas near the end of the semester.

First exam – 20% The first exam consists of essay questions asking you to demonstrate your ability to integrate information from the readings, lectures, and discussions, using key terminology correctly. It is an exam you will work on outside of class and submit on Canvas. A study guide will be posted in Canvas one week before the exam is posted. The weekly Powerpoint slides are also good guides to what sorts of questions you may be asked to address on the exam.

Second exam – 20% The second exam follows the same general format and procedure as the first exam.

Life history/trajectory paper – 22.5% You will write a 6-8-page paper in which you examine and interpret your life history and trajectory in comparison to an older family member or older friend's life history, situating both within the context of larger socio-historical trends and processes. This will involve you interviewing an older member of your family or an older friend to gain a detailed understanding of his/her life history, particularly with regard to romantic relationships, marriage, and family life. Specific instructions for the paper will be posted in Canvas during the first few weeks of the semester. During Week 14, you will present and discuss some of your findings in class so that your classmates and I can help you extend your interpretation/analysis further. Your paper will then be due during finals week.

Paper themes post – 2.5% You will submit a brief written summary of one or two specific themes/findings that you are focusing on in your paper. This will be submitted as a post in a discussion in Canvas, but it will not be an actual online discussion; it will simply be a forum in which everyone can post and read others' posts in preparation for our discussion of your papers during Week 14.

LCSC's grading scale:

A = 93-100%	B- = 80-82%	D+ = 67-69%
A- = 90-92%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 60-66%
B+ = 87-89%	C = 73-76%	F = 59% or less
B = 83-86%	C- = 70-72%	

Keep track of your grade and reviewing graded assignments:

All grades will be posted on Canvas. Weekly assignments typically will be graded within one week of when they are due; exams will be graded within approximately one week to ten days.

For written assignments, *always be sure to review the grading rubric and any comments I provide*, both of which you can view on the Grades page in Canvas. The rubrics and my comments are intended to help you continually improve throughout the semester. If you ever have any questions about a grade, you can address your concerns to me in writing via email (*not* as a comment below my grading feedback, which I may or may not see) with reference to the instructions and rubric for the assignment *within one week* of when the grades for that assignment are posted.

Evaluation criteria:

The weekly **class preparation and in-class writing assignments** will be graded according to the degree to which your response to the question(s) posed illustrates that you are engaging with the course readings, taking time to write a thoughtful, well-written response, and making connections between/among key points/concepts. The rubric for the class preparation assignments will be attached to each assignment in Canvas so that you can review it in advance. I will use the same basic criteria for grading your in-class writing assignments except for that you will not be graded on the technical aspects of your writing (spelling and punctuation, for example) for those assignments.

My assessment of the **participation and engagement** portion of your grade will be based on the following: attendance, thoughtful contributions during class that demonstrate you have read the assigned chapters and articles, and respect for the learning environment (being attentive, being respectful toward your classmates, not using your phone or laptop for anything other than accessing the course readings or notetaking, etc.). See the next two sections, "Attendance and Engagement" and "Expectations for Classroom Behavior" for more details on how to effectively participate and engage in class.

Your **exam answers** will be graded according to the thoroughness with which you have addressed the questions posed; the correctness of your answers; the extent to which you offer a sociological analysis/interpretation; the extent to which your answer reflects engagement with the course readings, lectures, and discussions; and the quality of your writing.

Your **life history/trajectory paper** will be graded according to the thoroughness with which you have explored key, sociologically relevant aspects of your life and your family member/friend's life; the extent to which you offer a sociological analysis/interpretation; the extent to which you have integrated course readings (and, if applicable, other scholarly sources of information) to help you construct this analysis/interpretation; and the quality of your writing.

In terms of the **actual grades** assigned to exams and your paper, I use the following holistic rubric to conceptualize the different grade categories:*

- "A"s are reserved for truly superior work that illustrates depth, breadth, and nuanced comprehension of the course material, skillful integration of insights from the assigned readings, and nearly flawless writing.
- "B"s are assigned to above average, well-written work that fulfills/answers the assignment/question posed in a sociological manner, and includes relevant references to course readings.
- "C"s are an indication that more detail and analysis are needed, your argument/points may be somewhat flawed/incorrect or not linked to any of the readings, and/or your writing noticeably needs improvement.

- “D”s are a sign that your analysis/interpretation is deeply flawed, and/or you have not completely answered the questions posed, and/or your writing needs significant improvement.
- “F”s are an indication that you have not met the basic requirements of the paper/exam (addressing the questions posed in at least a somewhat sociological manner) and/or your writing is unacceptable..

*Note: This holistic rubric is translated into a points-based rubric in Canvas for the life history/trajectory paper and will also include a criterion related to the use of APA style for that paper. You will be able to view that rubric prior to writing that paper. Similarly, for the exams, the points earned for each answer are calculated with a grading rubric that reflects the criteria above. You will be able to view that rubric before writing your answers for the exam.

Attendance and Engagement

I believe very strongly in the benefits of regular attendance and a high level of engagement with the course material.

You will not do well in this course if you do not attend class on a regular basis, thoroughly engage with the readings, and take notes. You also need to check into Canvas regularly in order to read any announcements I’ve posted and, of course, submit the class preparation assignments.

If you happen to miss a day of class for *non-health-related* and otherwise routine reasons, please do not email me asking what you missed. Instead, it is your responsibility to stay abreast of the material we’re covering by following along with the course schedule (on the last few pages of this syllabus), completing the required readings for the week noted therein, and reviewing the Powerpoint slides and any other information posted on Canvas for the day(s) you were absent. I also strongly suggest getting notes from a classmate for any class session you miss. **All of this said, because this class meets only once a week, you should not miss any classes unless it is for illness or serious personal reasons.**

When it comes to missing class for *health-related reasons, emergencies, or similarly serious reasons*, first and foremost, *please do not come to class if you are feeling unwell.* If you wake up one day with a sore throat, a cough, unusual fatigue, etc., you should not attend class. Instead, refer to the course schedule (on the last few pages of this syllabus) and materials posted on Canvas (Powerpoint slides, videos, etc.) to keep up with what we’re covering for that day. ***In such instances, if you are missing only one day of class, you do not need to contact me*** (although you certainly can if you’d like to let me know what’s going on). I trust that you can keep up with what we’re doing and then return to class when you’re feeling back to normal and get the notes from a classmate then. However, if you would like assistance with getting notes for the day you’ve missed (again, if it’s for a health-related reason or emergency), please let me know, and I will be happy to solicit a volunteer from the class who can share their notes.

If you face a more serious illness or hardship at any point in the semester (a family emergency, a prolonged illness, etc.) **that will result in you missing more than one day of class, then I *definitely do want to hear from you*** and will assist you in getting notes for the days you have missed.

Bottom line: Come to class unless you’re sick, in which case, *stay home*. If you miss class for health-related or other serious reasons (affecting you, a family member, pet, etc.), I’m happy to assist you in getting notes.

Expectations for Classroom Behavior

In taking this course, you are agreeing to abide by the following basic norms of behavior in class, which are aimed at providing a productive learning environment for all students:

- **Arrive on time, and do not leave early for arbitrary reasons.** If you know that you need to arrive late or leave class early one day for a legitimate, unavoidable reason, let me know before class (via email or in-person at the start of class), but this should not be a regular occurrence.
- **Please do not begin putting away your notes and shuffling things around as the class period nears its end.** This can be distracting for everyone. I keep an eye on the clock and will make sure to end class on time.

- **Do not chat with your neighbors during lectures; it is *very* distracting for everyone.**
- **Interact with your fellow classmates and me respectfully**, which involves being attentive when others are speaking, thoughtfully considering different points of view, and couching your points in a constructive manner.
- **Limit your distractions by turning off your cell phone and stowing it in your purse or backpack** (you can have it on vibrate mode if you are a caregiver and need to be immediately reachable), **and only use a laptop for class-related reasons, such as to access the readings posted in Canvas.** You may think you can multi-task well, but research demonstrates that none of us are very good at it. You are not encoding and retaining information if you are texting/typing while I'm lecturing or while we're engaging in a discussion. Along these same lines, if there is something you want to google, make a note of it to do after class. Finally, I also recommend that instead of typing notes on your computer during class that you use a pen and paper because there is evidence that the physical act of writing helps you learn better than typing does. See for yourself:
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

Bottom line: *Be engaged in the present moment and be considerate of those around you.* It's a way of being that will serve you well in a variety of professional and personal settings throughout your life.

Policies on Make-ups and Late Assignments

The following policies are aimed at treating everyone fairly with regard to course expectations and due dates and also limiting the need for me to field and assess the legitimacy of requests for extensions:

- ***Make-up exams will be allowed for students with legitimate reasons*** (for example, LCSC-sanctioned absences*) **who communicate with me in advance.** Emergency situations** and serious illnesses*** can also warrant an exam make-up, but in all but the direst circumstances, ***you must contact me prior to the exam availability period in order for me to consider a request for a make-up.***
- ***The weekly class preparation and in-class writing assignments cannot be made up or turned in late.*** Their main purpose is to help you prepare for class discussions, so doing them after the fact defeats that purpose. Also, **remember that your two lowest grades on these assignments are dropped, which is meant to account for *any and all* reasons you might have for missing one or two** (including illness, emergencies, computer problems, etc.). Given this policy, I strongly recommend that you give yourself plenty of time to complete the class preparation assignments to ensure that you are able to submit them by the deadline regardless of anything that might come up on the day they are due, which is always Wednesdays (by 2:30). Also, **be sure to submit class preparation assignments even if you are going to be missing class.** If you miss class on a day that we are doing an in-class writing assignment, that will simply count as one of the two grades that is dropped in this assignment category.
- **Except for in extenuating circumstances, life history/trajectory papers not turned in by the deadline will receive an automatic half-letter-grade (5%) deduction for every 12 hours they are late.** For example, if you turn in your paper after noon on the date it is due but before midnight, 5% will be deducted; if you turn it in after midnight but before noon the next day, 10% will be deducted, and so on. ***If you think you have an extenuating circumstance, you must contact me before the paper is due.*** I will handle such claims on a case-by-case basis. Please note: because those papers are due during finals week, *they cannot be turned in any later than Friday, May 12, at noon* (at which point, a 20% late penalty will have accrued in the absence of an approved extension due to extenuating circumstances).

***LCSC-sanctioned excused absences include required absences related to NAIA sports participation or ASLCSC officer responsibilities. You must notify me by email in advance of LCSC-sanctioned absences in order for me to consider an exam make-up.** If you ever need to submit a class preparation assignment that is due while you are out of town for a sanctioned absence, you will simply submit it on Canvas before you leave or from wherever you're located while

travelling. If you will be absent on a day we are doing an in-class writing exercise, that will simply count as one of the two grades that is dropped in that assignment category.

***Emergencies are serious, unforeseen medical or personal situations affecting you, a family member, a pet, etc., that require immediate attention.** If you face an emergency situation during the semester that impacts your ability to take an exam or submit your final paper on time, please attend to it; then notify me as soon as you are able, and we will work together to figure out appropriate accommodations. Please be prepared to meet with me to discuss the issue if necessary.

***Serious, extended illnesses and hardships:** If you come down with a serious illness or serious personal hardship during the semester that may prevent you from taking an exam or submitting your final paper on time, *let me know as soon as possible, before the exam or paper due date*, and in those cases, we will work together to figure out appropriate accommodations. (Providing medical documentation is helpful but not always necessary, depending on the illness/issue.)

Academic Integrity

All of your written work and ideas expressed therein must be your own work. Following standard practice for academic writing, you will, of course, be asked to integrate and cite insights and occasional key quotes from the assigned readings, but you must do this in an original way (i.e., you must think about the material *yourself* and synthesize the material *yourself*) and not rely on summary sources of information such as Wikipedia or any of the variety of websites that you might google to look up sociological concepts and theories. You are also not permitted to use any form of artificial intelligence to complete assignments/exams/papers or to have someone else write any such assignment for you. ***The point of taking a college class is for you to grapple with the assigned readings and other course materials and demonstrate that you have gained an independent understanding of them.***

With the preceding points squarely in mind, any instance of plagiarism, cheating, or other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. **If you plagiarize or otherwise cheat on an assignment, exam, or paper you will automatically receive a zero** on that assignment/exam/paper, which will lower your overall grade substantially, and I will report the incident to the Vice President of Student Affairs, which will result in a formal sanction. I also reserve the right to assign you **a failing grade for the entire course** in especially egregious cases, such as copying full sentences directly from a website, the textbook, another student's paper, or other sources and presenting them as your own. Also, you should never share your written work (a draft of a paper, a paper written for a previous class, etc.) with another student except for in the context of a formal peer review initiated by an instructor, and you are not allowed to consult with anyone (fellow students, roommates, etc.) while working on exams.

To address a relatively new form of academic dishonesty, **if I suspect the use of artificial intelligence or that someone else has written a paper, assignment, or exam answer that you have submitted, you will be required to take an oral exam on the same material as the paper/assignment/exam in question.** Depending on the outcome of the oral exam, you may be subject to the same sanctions noted above for other forms of academic dishonesty (a zero on the assignment and/or outright failure of the course and a formal report filed with the V.P. of Student Affairs).

The best approach for avoiding academic dishonesty is to carefully read the assigned chapters/articles, give them some thought, and then put ideas into *your own words* in a way that demonstrates that you understand the material, and, when appropriate, cite key ideas and instances of paraphrasing and occasionally include especially relevant direct quotes from others, properly cited and noted with quotation marks around exact phrasing and introduced with a signal phrase or in some other way. **For a review of how to properly integrate information from the assigned readings in your writing, reference the "Writing Resources" section of the "Important Course Resources" module in Canvas.** It contains articles and guides on how to properly cite sources and avoid plagiarism, including a link to the Indiana University Plagiarism Tutorials, which are very detailed.

Finally, another key aspect of academic integrity has to do with the final grade you earn in the class. Final grades are based on the total points you earn throughout the semester on graded assignments, as detailed in the "Assignments and

Grading” section of this syllabus. **Under no circumstances should you ask for extra points to be awarded or for extra credit opportunities at the end of the semester because your final grade is not as high as you were hoping that it would be** (for the purposes of scholarships, sports eligibility, or any other reason). Doing so would be asking me to treat you differently than I treat your classmates, which would be unfair to them and therefore ethically problematic. If you ever have any questions about your grades on particular assignments and/or believe that I have made a grading error, you can address your concerns to me, in writing (via email), within one week of when an assignment has been graded. Any such questions or concerns should be specific and reference the grading criteria (and rubric, if applicable) for the assignment. If warranted, we will then meet to discuss your concerns/questions in order to clarify how the assignment was graded.

If you have any questions about what is meant by the terms “academic dishonesty” or “plagiarism,” please ask me for an explanation or clarification. As the old saying goes, ignorance of the law (or basic concepts and policy in this case) is no excuse. Please do not jeopardize your academic future by engaging in such foolish behavior.

Documented Accessibility Needs

If you have a documented need for accommodations to ensure accessibility, please let me know during the first couple of weeks of the semester, and we will work together to ensure appropriate accommodations.

Audio/Video Recording

Any type of picture-taking or audio/video recording of our class sessions is prohibited. We cover sensitive issues in this course, and everyone should feel free to discuss such issues in an open manner without fear that their words will be taken out of context. If you have trouble listening to lectures and taking part in discussions and taking notes at the same time, we can find a solution through a combination of practice/skill-building on your part and supplemental notes from another student if necessary. Also, the Powerpoint slides will be posted on Canvas, so you can always print out or review those as needed.

Contacting Me and Office Hours

If you have questions about the course material or would like to further discuss any of the topics we are covering, please come chat with me during my office hours, **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:00**. Office hours are specifically for students, so don’t be shy about using them – they’re meant for you! If you would like to schedule a specific meeting time during those office hours, send me an email a day or two in advance, and I’ll pencil you in for your preferred time. Otherwise, you can simply drop by my office, Spalding Hall 222.

If you prefer to meet on Zoom, please email me in advance, so I know you want to meet that way, and I’ll be happy to hop on Zoom during my office hour. Here is the link to use: <https://lscs.zoom.us/j/84258147040>. When you click on that link, you will enter a virtual waiting room at first, and I will then let you into the virtual meeting space as soon as I can (it may be a few minutes if I’m already meeting with another student).

If you cannot meet during my regular office hours, I’m happy to set up an appointment with you for a different time. You can chat with me after class to set up an alternative time or simply email me such a request.

If you need to contact me for quick questions or to relay information to me outside of office hours or class time, the best way to reach me is via email at leearles@lscs.edu. (Please note, this is not an lmail address. Your email may automatically enter an lmail address when you start typing my name or address, but make sure you are actually sending your email to my leearles@lscs.edu address. Otherwise, I may not receive it.) I check email on weekdays before 5 p.m. and will typically respond within 24-48 hours. If your question/issue requires more than a brief response, I may request that we schedule a meeting to discuss things further. Also, this should go without saying, but when emailing me (and any of your other professors) be sure to compose your email as you would to any other professional contact. Include a subject line, a proper salutation (“Dear Prof. Earles”), and use good writing. **All this being said, please use email sparingly.** After all, for most basic questions about the class, you can likely find the answers in this syllabus or catch me right after class to chat.

Course Schedule

The following course schedule is subject to change depending on our progress in covering the material, circumstances beyond our control, etc. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via Canvas, so please get in the habit of checking Canvas a few times a week so that you are aware of any time-sensitive announcements I might make. Also, **it is your responsibility to know what is announced in class, whether or not you are present at the time.** I will post *major* announcements on Canvas, but I also sometimes make brief announcements in class.

Your active engagement with each week's assigned readings is key to your success in this class. The readings listed for each week are posted in alphabetical order (by the authors' last names) in the "Readings" module in Canvas. **All readings should be completed *prior* to class each week**, and for the most part they are listed in the order in which you should read them.

Class preparation assignments are due by 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. They will be posted in Canvas on the Assignments page by Friday afternoons for the following week. The weeks we are instead doing in-class writing exercises are noted accordingly in this schedule (below).

As a reminder, be sure to have the assigned readings with you in class (either as hard copies or via a laptop or tablet).

Week 1 (1/18): Introduction to the course and to sociology

Reading: This syllabus

Week 2 (1/25): Studying marriage and family from a sociological perspective

Readings: Skolnick and Skolnick, "Introduction"
Giddens, "Family"
Baca Zinn, "Feminist Rethinking from Racial-Ethnic Families"

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Week 3 (2/1): Perceived threats to the family: Is there a "crisis" in marriage and family life?

Readings: Giele, "Decline of the Family: Conservative, Liberal, and Feminist Views"
Coontz, "There is No Such Thing as the 'Traditional Male Breadwinner'"
Coontz, "Marriage is Not Antidote to Poverty,"
Page, "Kids were fighting in school. Dads began patrolling campus, and the violence stopped."
Coontz, "Bra Burners and Family Bashers"

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Week 4 (2/8): The centrality of gender in the study of marriage and family

Readings: Collins, "The Ice Cracks"
Coontz, "The Family, Masculine and Feminine Identity [...]"
Life History/Trajectory Paper instructions

****In-class writing assignment***

Week 5 (2/15): Dating, sex, and relationships (not necessarily in that order)

Readings: Coontz, “First Comes Love, Then Comes Marriage [...]” (pp. 253-273 only)

Bailey, “Sexual Revolutions”

Armstrong, Hamilton, and England, “Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?”

Lang, “How the Pandemic Fueled the Rise of ‘Intentional’ Dating”

Lamont, “We Can Write the Scripts Ourselves”

(Recommended: Barosso, “Key takeaways on Americans’ views of [...] dating and relationships”)

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Week 6 (2/22) Modern coupling: from dating to marriage or... another path?

Readings: Settersten and Ray, “What’s Going On with Young People Today?”

Gerson, “Falling Back on Plan B [...]”

Cherlin, “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage”

Ansari, “Searching for Your Soulmate”

Khazan, “The Luxury of Waiting for Marriage [...]”

(Recommended: Wilcox and Cherlin, “The Marginalization of Marriage in Middle America”)

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Week 7 (3/1): Modern coupling (continued) and FIRST EXAM

Readings: Fry, “College grads in U.S. tend to partner with each other [...]”

Graf, “Key findings on marriage and cohabitation in the U.S.”

Fry and Parker, “Rising Share of U.S. Adults Are Living Without a Spouse [...]”

Bolick, “All the Single Ladies”

Rich, “Craving Freedom, Japan’s Women Opt Out of Marriage”

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

*****First exam posted in Canvas on Wednesday, 3/1—due by midnight on Thursday, 3/9***

Week 8 (3/8): Happily ever after? Sometimes yes, sometimes no and FIRST EXAM

Readings: Smith, “Masters of Love”

Ludden, “Why Relationships Can Fail Even When We Do Everything Right”

Gadoua, “Three Reasons Why You Shouldn’t Marry for Love”

Rutter, “The Case for Divorce”

Miller, “The Divorce Surge is Over but the Myth Lives on”

Brown and Lin, “Gray Divorce”

(Recommended: Raley and Sweeney, “Divorce, Repartnering, and Stepfamilies: A Decade in Review”)

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Reminder: First exam due Thursday, 3/9, by midnight.

Week 9 (3/15): Parenting (or not)

Readings: Cowan and Cowan, “New Families: Modern Couples and New Pioneers”

Coltrane, “Fathering”

Schoppe-Sullivan and Adamsons, “How Dads Make a Difference for their Children”

Overall, “Think Before You Breed”

Settle and Brumley, “‘It’s the Choices You Make [...]’”

Tavernise, “Why Birthrates Among Hispanic Americans Have Plummeted”

Valenti, “Not Wanting Kids is Entirely Normal”

(Recommended: Brown, “Growing share of childless adults in U.S. don’t expect to ever have children”)

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Week 10 (3/22): Childhood and family life in the contemporary U.S.

Readings: Lareau, “Invisible Inequality [...]”

Miller, “The Relentlessness of Modern Parenting”

Furstenberg, “Diverging Development [...]”

Douclev, “I was constantly arguing with my child. Then I learned the TEAM method of calmer parenting.”

****In-class writing assignment***

Spring Break (3/27-3/31)

Week 11 (4/5): Family, work, and the economy

Readings: Hochschild, “Joey’s Problem: Nancy and Evan Holt”

Stone, “The rhetoric and reality of opting out”

Coontz, “Why Gender Equality Stalled”

CCF Symposium: Gerson, “Why No One Can ‘Have It All’ and What to Do About It”

CCF Symposium: Dow, “Mothering While Black”

CCF Symposium: Coontz, “Dads Count, Too: Family-Friendly Policies Must Include Fathers”

(Recommended: Coontz, “How to Make Your Marriage Gay”

Pfeffer, “‘Women’s Work’? Women Partners of Transgender Men Doing Housework [...]”)

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Week 12 (4/12): Family, work, and the economy (continued...) and *SECOND EXAM*

Readings: Rubin, “Families on the Faultline”

Newman and Chin, “The Missing Class”

CCF Symposium: Perry-Jenkins, “Work that Works for Low-Wage Workers”

**** In-class writing assignment***

*****Second exam posted in Canvas on Wednesday, 4/12— due by midnight on Thursday, 4/20.***

Week 13 (4/19): Aging within and outside of family settings and *SECOND EXAM*

Readings: Bookman and Kimbrel, "Families and Elder Care in the 21st Century"
Goldstein and Gebeloff, "As Gen X and Boomers Age, they confront living alone"
Russo, "Older Singles Have Found a New Way [...]"
Fried, "Making Aging Positive"

****In-class writing assignment***

Reminder: Second exam due by midnight on Thursday, 4/20.

Week 14 (4/26): Discussion of Life History/Trajectory papers

Readings: Review key chapters/articles you plan to integrate in your paper.

****Post in "Paper Themes" discussion by NOON on Wednesday***

Week 15 (5/3): Course wrap-up

Readings: Review key chapters/articles you plan to integrate in your paper.

****Class preparation assignment due by 2:30 p.m.***

Finals Week (5/10): Life History/Trajectory paper due by NOON on Wednesday, May 10.

Coronavirus-related Caveat

If I contract COVID (or another contagious illness) this semester but have relatively mild symptoms, we may hold one or more class sessions on Zoom in order to keep pace with the course schedule. However, if I am ever too ill to hold class, we may have to slightly modify the course schedule to account for missing a day (or more) of class. I will announce any such changes on Canvas, so please log in regularly to check for any announcements in this regard.