

Sociology 111AC

Sociology of the Family

UC Berkeley, Fall 2020
MWF 10-11, Wherever you are

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2:15-4:15 (sign-up) and Fridays 11-11:30 (drop-in), and by appointment.

Sign up here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ktudw>

Course Description: This course explores contemporary family life with a focus on the United States. It will introduce you to how sociologists study families and consider topics that seem (and are!) personal and emotional from a scientific perspective. We will consider both the “public” and “private” sides of families over the course of the semester and explore ways they are connected. Exploring the public side of families means looking at the family as an institution tasked with accomplishing the socially necessary work of raising children and caring for others and that is a target of public policy. The private side refers to examining the family as the place where we are expected (and often hope) to find love, intimacy and meaningful personal relationships. We begin the course by considering the meaning of “diversity” in the family context and how U.S. families have changed since the mid-20th C. A key part of this part of the course is examining relationships between changing social and economic trends and patterns of family organization and relationships. Then we move on to exploring contemporary family experiences, with attention to socially patterned variations by social class, race and gender. We cover topics such as family structure and its consequences for children and society; families and social policy; relationships between intimate partners; contemporary parenthood and relationships between parents and children; and families and market work and the marketplace.

What’s Different This Semester ?

To start by stating the obvious, this semester’s course will be totally different from usual in that we will be fully remote and online. Like it or not, you and I are part of this experiment in remote learning while we collectively struggle as a society through the COVID-19 pandemic. I ask for your flexibility and understanding as we figure this out together, and I will extend the same to you.

In addition to the hardships resulting from fully remote learning and the changes the pandemic has brought to our lives, some of us are likely to experience

disruptions from power-safety-shutoffs and wildfires in our areas this fall. All of this means that I may need to make adjustments to the course and plans as we proceed.

- **Recorded and “Live” Lectures:** This semester there will be both recorded lectures (“asynchronous “ material in the remote learning jargon) and “live” zoom classes. All material will be recorded and made available to you. Attendance is not required at the “live” classes, but please make an effort to attend. Live classes will be discussion based and I will expect you to participate, in a friendly, low-stakes way. I anticipate that we will usually have “live” (or “synchronous”, in the remote learning jargon) classes on Wed. and Friday, but this may change from week to week. Please make an effort to be available during our scheduled class time on these days. Some weeks will have more material to review independently, others more discussion. I will take care that the “live” classes and other materials together do not add up to be more than the three hours of class time allotted for this course.
- **Class schedule:** Each Monday, by class time, I will post a plan for the week on “Pages”. This will tell you when we are having “live” classes, if there is recorded material or videos to watch, zoom links, readings, homework, etc. I will intend that the “Page” for the week will have all the information you need. I will be creating materials as we go, so I will not be able to post all materials for the semester in advance.
- **Reading Schedule:** For any given week, please read in the order listed on the syllabus. Readings are assigned for the week (rather than the day) to allow for more flexibility in the class, but we will generally consider them sequentially. In general, try to use Monday as a reading day and complete all the reading for that week before Friday’s class.
- **Homework:** Instead of in-class participation, most weeks there will be a short homework assignment or quiz. These will not be graded but their timely completion will count towards 20% of your course grade. Assignments will center around understanding course concepts and readings and scaffolding the larger assignments.
- **Due dates:** All assignments will have a due date, as usual. However, in consideration of the altered circumstances many of us are in due to the pandemic, after the due date I will have a grace period of two days (48 hrs. after “official” due date) when an assignment can still be turned in without being late.
- **Announcements:** The bCourses “announcement” feature will be an important way I will communicate with students this fall. Please make a habit of checking announcements regularly on the course site as there were some glitches with them going out by email last spring.

Required Readings:

All readings will be available to you through bCourses, under “Files” or through “Pages” or the library (books). However, you may choose to purchase readings for greater ease and convenience.

Books: All books can be purchased in the bookstore or via online sources. They are available as electronic resources through Oski-Cat on the UCB library website.

1. Gerson, Kathleen. (2010) *The Unfinished Revolution: How a New Generation is Reshaping Family, Work and Gender in America*. New York: Oxford University Press
2. Edin, Kathryn & Maria Kefalas. (2005) *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
3. Mason, Mary Ann & Eve Mason Eckman. (2007) *Mothers on the Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*. New York: Oxford University Press

Reader: The course reader can be purchased at the Copy Central Store at 2411 Telegraph Ave. If you want a hard copy, they will send you one. This year, Copy Central is also offering rentals of digital readers. These have several helpful features, such as highlighting, bookmarking, read aloud and more.

Articles: Journal articles that are available through the library’s website are posted on bCourses but are not in the physical copy of the reader, if you buy one.

Supplemental References: Throughout the semester, I post documents I think will be useful to you in the “Supplemental Resources” folder under “Files” on bCourses.

Evaluation:

Paper 1: Your Family, in Sociological Perspective Paper: 20% of grade

Take-home Midterm: 20% of grade

Paper 2: Young Adults’ Family Plans Qualitative Analysis Paper, 25% of grade.

-**Interview and write-up:** 5%

-**Paper:** 20% of grade

Take-home Final Exam: 15% of grade

Homework: 20% of grade

Papers: You will write two papers during the semester. In the first paper, you will use your own family as a case study as you analyze trends in how families have changed over time. In the second paper, you will do your own qualitative analysis, drawing on interview data that you and other students will gather during the second part of the semester. The second paper assignment has two parts—doing an interview and writing it up, and then the paper itself. *Detailed instructions for each paper are posted on bCourses—be sure to read these now so you know what is expected.*

Exams: All exams will be take-home essay exams. Essay prompts for both the midterm and the final will be posted one week before the exams are due. Instructions for formatting and length will be on the exam prompts.

Homework: The purpose of homework this semester is to create opportunities for staying engaged and caught up in the class, to help you prepare for the larger assignments, and to reward students who put effort into that. There will be a short homework assignment most weeks of the semester, announced on Monday. It is meant to be completed the week it is assigned but you will have until the following Wed. to complete it. The homework assignments will not be formally graded but we will check them to make sure they reflect adequate effort. Everyone will be able to miss one homework without it counting against them, and I will give you the chance to make up an additional one or two missed homework assignments at the end of the semester.

Grading Policies:

Late Assignments Policy: If you have a personal emergency or are ill, contact me at the *earliest opportunity* to discuss alternative arrangements. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day they are late after a special grace period of two days (Fall 2020 semester only). At times, I may request documentation of an illness, emergency or other situation.

Re-grade policy: Please first talk with the person who graded your assignment for more feedback on your work. Readers have the authority to change grades if they believe it is warranted. If you believe a mistake was made on your assignment, and want me to review it, write a short statement explaining why you think your assignment deserves a different grade, making sure to reference the assignment rubric. This statement should be about the substance of your work, rather than effort. I will then re-grade your paper and determine the final grade for the assignment. Please be aware that if I re-evaluate your work, it is possible that your grade could go down, so consider these requests carefully. All re-grade requests must be made within a week of when an assignment is handed back. Per University policy, no re-grades are possible for final exams.

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes are an option of last resort for students experiencing true medical or other emergencies that make it impossible for them to complete their coursework on time. To be considered for an incomplete grade, students need to speak with me about it DURING the semester, have completed at least half of the coursework, and provide documentation of the reason for the request.

Turnitin: All of your assignments will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin. Please be aware that this program keeps a database of work previously turned in for this class by other students, as well as any of your own work that you turned in for credit in a previous class.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. It is extremely important that everyone submits their own work. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the office of student conduct and dealt with according to university policies. *Be aware of plagiarism.* Word for word use of even a single sentence from any author, publication or website without proper citation is plagiarism and is unethical and unacceptable. So is very closely following the structure and wording of another author's work. In addition, please be aware that you may not turn in any portion of *your own* previous work submitted for credit in another course without substantial revision. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam in question with no opportunity to rewrite, as will any other kind of academic dishonesty. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, ask during office hours, and consult Ch. 6 of the writing guide "Writing for Sociology", available on the Soc. department website.

Zoom Meetings: Please turn your video on if you can! I understand that there are many legitimate reasons why students do not always have their video on during "live" class meetings, and that we all experience internet and technology failures from time-to-time. Therefore, I am not requiring it. That said, I truly appreciate it when you turn your video on.

Office Hours:

I will have sign-up office hours on Wednesdays from 2:15-4:15. Sign up here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ktudw>

I will have drop-in office hours on Fridays from 11-11:30 (same Zoom meeting as class, as long as we are meeting that day)—no appointment necessary.

If you are having trouble with the class, or are experiencing personal problems that are hindering your ability to do well in it, please come to office hours early in the semester. I can't help you if you don't communicate with me!

Please also come to office hours for whatever reason—dropping by to say “hi” is a good reason. So are questions about the class topics and readings and your interests in them, or to share a personal experience. Remember also that if I know you, I will be able to write you a much better letter of recommendation if you find yourself in need of one in the future.

Email: This is generally a good way to get in touch with me, but I may not be able to respond right away, especially this semester. Do not expect a response on weekends or outside of regular working hours. I do not answer emails when the answer is easily found on the course syllabus (i.e., “when are your office hours?”).

Other:

Accommodations: If you require **accommodations** for a disability, university athletics, or have a conflict due to the observance of religious holidays, please email or speak with me early in the semester to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Your Health and Well-Being: Being a college student can be full of excitement and possibilities, but at times may feel overwhelming or be difficult in other ways. Some degree of this is to be expected, but if you are experiencing a lot of distress, anxiety or have a pre-existing mental health issue, there are resources on campus to help. You are not alone; many others share your difficulties. Even if you don’t think you need them, I encourage you to look at these websites now, so you know what is available. There is much more than counseling appointments: there are web tutorials and videos, support groups and mindfulness classes, for example. Counseling center staff have told me these groups and classes can be a great preventative resource, and are a great way to get the semester off to a good start. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), (510) 642-9494, <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>. More general resources on mental health, services are at <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/health-topics/mental-health> .

Student Resources for Fall 2020: I will make an effort to link to student resources here and make you aware of information that comes my way.

Campus FAQ for students about remote instruction:

<https://registrar.berkeley.edu/service-adjustments/instruction-faq>

Student Technology Equity Program: <https://technology.berkeley.edu/STEP>

Course Schedule*:

Week 1, Aug. 26, 28: Introduction to the course: thinking about families sociologically

Readings: Course syllabus and assignment prompts!

Cohen, P. (2014) "Family Diversity is The New Normal For America's Children". Council on Contemporary Families, briefing paper

Week 2, Aug. 31, Sept. 2, 4: Changes in U.S. families over time: an overview

Readings: Coontz, S. (2000) "Historical Perspectives on American Families." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 62, no 2

Cherlin, A. (2014) *Labor's Love Lost*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch. 1

Recommended: Coontz, S. (1999). *Marriage, A History*. New York: Penguin. Ch. 14, 15

Week 3, Sept. 9, 11: Sociological explanations for diversity in family practices

Readings: Takaki, R. (2008) *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. New York: Back Bay Books. Ch. 1, 14-16

Jackson, D. (2001). "This Hole in Our Hearts: The Urban-Raised Generation and the Legacy of Silence." Pp. 189-206 in eds. Lobo, S & Peters, K. *American Indians and the Urban Experience*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press

Week 4, Sept. 14, 16, 19: Transitions of the later 20th C.: Have things changed much in 40 years?

Readings: Hochschild, A. (1989) *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books. Ch. 4, 6, 8, 9

McLanahan, S. & Sandefur, G. (1994) *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1

Week 5, Sept. 21, 23, 25: Contemporary Family Forms: What young adults want

Readings: Gerson, K. (2010) *The Unfinished Revolution*. Oxford Univ. Press.

Recommended: Pew Research Center (2010) *The Decline of Marriage and the Rise of New Families*, Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends Report. Executive Summary and Overview

Week 6, Sept. 28, 30, Oct. 2: Contemporary Family Forms: More diversity and choice

Your Family, In Sociological Perspective Paper due Sept. 30, 5 pm.

Readings: Moore, M. & Stombolis-Ruhstorfer, M. (2013) "LGBT Sexuality and Families at the Start of the 21st Century". *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, pp. 491-507 (bC)

Carlson, M. & England, P. (2011). "Social Class and Family Patterns in the United States". In eds. Carlson, M. & England, P. *Social Class and Changing Families in an Unequal America*, pp. 1-9. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Week 7, Oct. 5, 7, 9: Families, the state and social policy

Readings: Berger, L. & Carlson, M. (2020). "Family Policy and Complex Contemporary Families: A Decade in Review and Implications for the Next Decade of Research and Policy Practice". *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82 (Feb. 2020): 478-507

Week 8: Oct. 12, 14, 16: Families, the state and social policy

Readings: Dreby, J. (2015) *Everyday Illegal: When Policies Undermine Immigrant Families*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 3 & 4 (R)

Abrego, L. & Hernandez, E. (2020). "#FamiliesBelongTogether: Central American Family Separations From the 1980s to 2019". *Critical Dialogos in Latina/o Studies*, forthcoming

Prof. Abrego will join us as a guest on Oct. 16th to talk about her work.

Week 9, Oct. 19, 21, 23: Pathways to parenthood; contemporary motherhood

Readings: Edin, K. & Kefalas, M. (2005). *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Week 10, Oct. 26, 28, 30: Contemporary Motherhood

Take-Home Midterm due Oct. 26, 5 pm.

Readings: Hays, S. (1996) *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Ch. 5

Villalobos, A. (2014). *Motherload: Making It All Better in Insecure Times*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 1

Elliott & Reid. (2016). "The Superstrong Black Mother". *Contexts*, Vol. 15, 1

Recommended: Elliott, Powell & Brenton (2015) "Being a Good Mom: Low-Income Black Single Mothers Negotiate Intensive Mothering". *Journal of Family Issues*, 36 (3):351-370

Week 11, Nov. 2, 4, 6: Contemporary Fatherhood

Schmitz, R. (2016) "Constructing Men as Fathers: A Content Analysis of Formulations of Fatherhood in Parenting Magazines". *Journal of Men's Studies*, Vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 3-23

Petts, Shafer & Essig (2018) "Does Adherence to Masculine Norms Shape Fathering Behavior?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* (March 22, 2018)

Lee, J. & Lee, S. (2016) "Caring Is Masculine: Stay-at-Home Fathers and Masculine Identity". *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* (Oct. 6, 2016)

Week 12, Nov. 9, 13: Parents and children: family relationships and dynamics Interview Write-Up due Nov. 14 (Thursday) before midnight.

Readings: Lareau, A. & Weininger, E. (2008) "Class and the Transition to Adulthood" in *Social Class: How Does it Work?* Pp. 118-151 in eds. Lareau, A. & Conley, D. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

VanCampen, K.S. & Russell, S. T. (2010) "Cultural Differences in Parenting Practices: What Asian American Families Can Teach Us". Frances McClelland Institute for Children, *Youth and Families ResearchLink*, Vol.2, No. 1. Tuscon, AZ: The University of Arizona

Zhou, M. (2011). "Conflict, Coping and Reconciliation: Intergenerational Relations in Chinese Immigrant Families". In Eds. Skolnick, A. & Skolnick, J., *Family in Transition*, pp. 472-84. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Week 13, Nov. 16, 18, 20: Work, families and the marketplace: family and careers

Readings: Mason, M. & Eckman, E. (2007). *Mothers on the Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*. New York: Oxford University Press

Week 14: Thanksgiving week (Nov. 23): Work, families and the marketplace: family and careers

No new material. Use the week to catch up.

Week 15, Nov. 30, Dec. 2, 4: Work, families and the marketplace: childcare

Young Adult Family Plans Paper due Dec. 3 (Thursday), 5 pm

Readings: Pettit, B. & Hook, J. (2009) *Gendered Tradeoffs: Family, Social Policy and Economic Inequality in Twenty-One Countries*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Ch.1 "Gender Inequality in the Labor Market in Comparative Perspective"

Bradley, R. & Vandell, D. (2007) "Child Care and the Well-Being of Children". *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 161(7):669-676

Recommended: Macdonald, C. (2011) *Shadow Mothers*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 3, 5, and 6

"RRR" week: Dec. 7-11

Final Exam: Take Home Final Exam is due on Dec. 17th, 5 pm. Questions will be available one week prior to the due date.

***Course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**