

SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
(SOCI/CHFD 4610)
University of Georgia
Fall Semester, 2009

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Landers-Potts
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Office Location: 117 Dawson Hall
Office Hours: Mondays, 12:15-1:15pm and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXT:

1. Cherlin, Andrew J. (2008). Public & Private Families: An Introduction (5th ed.). McGraw Hill Higher Education: New York
2. Bel-Jean's Packet

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To gain an understanding of the nature of the American family in its present form(s)
- To be knowledgeable about historical changes in the form and function of the American family over time
- To understand the profound effects that race/ethnicity, social class, and gender have on our experiences within families
- To be familiar enough with the statistical data regarding families to use it in support of your position on issues regarding the Family.
- To stimulate academic and intellectual curiosity in real-world family issues, and to see that the knowledge gained in this class is applicable to our own experiences—past, present, and future—of Family.

COURSE FORMAT:

The course will use a variety of teaching formats, including lectures, discussions, video clips, oral presentations, and community member panels on specific issues. Students will be involved in considering family issues from a variety of standpoints, and will be making observations and having multiple interactions in the 'real world' in order to increase their knowledge of family issues.

EVALUATION:

EXAMS (300 points)

There will be three exams (two exams during the semester and one non-cumulative final exam). The format of the exams will include multiple choice, true false, and short answer questions.

MAKEUPS for exams will be given ONLY to those students providing valid documentation regarding serious incident(s) that precluded them from taking the scheduled exams. THE INSTRUCTOR MUST BE CONTACTED ON OR BEFORE

THE EXAM DAY TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A MAKEUP, or a makeup will not even be considered. Official excuses are due upon the day you return to class. The instructor reserves the right to determine the seriousness or validity of an excuse.

Students must be on time to class on exam day.

SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENTS (185 points)

Students will form groups of approximately five students each by the end of the first week. Group members will collaborate all semester for ten group assignments throughout the semester. (See syllabus below for description and due dates for each of these assignments. There are eleven assignments listed, but Assignment #10 is an individual assignment.)

Group assignments will be graded on the basis of their insightfulness, thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and accuracy with which they were completed. All students in a given group will receive the same number of points available for that particular assignment.

SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENTS MAY NOT BE MADE UP FOR ANY REASON.

Peer Evaluations (Due Sept. 18, Sept, 28, Oct. 7 and Dec. 7)

All group members will begin by receiving the same number of points earned for each assignment. However, a frequent complaint of group work is that some group members do not carry their fair share of the workload or are not prepared for group meetings, tasks or presentations, or that they do not seem invested or contribute ideas. Consequently, students will evaluate each of the individuals in their group on a simple scale of 1 to 4 in terms of effort and preparedness (1 = a lack of preparedness and/or effort; 2 = unreliable preparedness and/or effort; 3 = consistently prepared and put forth effort; 4 = excellent and consistent preparedness and effort).

If more than one group member rates an individual as a '1' or '2', a significant number of points will be deducted from that individual's grade. The number of points deducted will be completely up to the discretion of the instructor. The peer evaluation form must be downloaded from our class's eLC site and should be completed in privacy. Evaluation sheets must be placed in an envelope on my door marked for that purpose (117 Dawson Hall) at some point during the week prior to the due date, but no later than noon on each due date.

No group grades will be recorded or released until all of the individuals in that group have submitted their peer evaluations.

SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT PLANNING SHEET

	Description	Due Date	Max. Point Value
Assignment #1	Newspaper editorial on family & discussion	Mon., Aug. 24	15
Assignment #2	Activity Sheet for Cohabiting Couple	Fri., Sept. 4	20
Assignment #3	Neighborhood & Social Class Project	Mon., Sept. 14 Peer Eval due 9/18	40
Assignment #4	Race/Ethnicity Current Family Statistics Table	Wed., Sept. 23 Peer Eval due 9/28	20
Assignment #5	Informal Dating or Romance Poll	Mon., Oct. 5 Peer Eval due 10/7	40
Assignment #6	Discussion of Marriage Readings	Oct. 7-14	10
Assignment #7	Discussion of Gay & Lesbian Parenthood	Oct. Oct. 16-23	10
Assignment #8	Discussion of Technology & Family	Oct. 26	10
Assignment #9	Write work/family panel questions & attend panel	Nov. 2-9	10
Assignment #10* <i>*Individual assignment</i>	<i>Older Person Interview</i>	Fri., Nov. 20	25
Assignment #11	Write divorce & children panel questions & attend panel	Nov. 30-Dec. 4 Peer Eval due 12/7	10

GRADE CALCULATION SUMMARY

Small Group Assignments	185 points
Interview w/ Older Person Write-up (Assignment #10)	25 points
Exam #1:	100 points
Exam #2:	100 points
<u>Final Exam (not comprehensive):</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total Possible Points	510 points

Bonus Points: Attendance at Family Panels = 6 points (3 points each)

Grades correspond to the number of points earned at semester's end as follows:

A = 472-510	B+ = 446-455	C+ = 395-404	D = 303-353
A- = 456-471	B = 421-445	C = 370-394	F = <303
	B- = 405-420	C- = 354-369	

SYLLABUS:

August 17

DISCUSS SYLLABUS & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

August 19-24

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

Cherlin: Chapter 1, “Public and Private Families” pp. 3-34

- Assignment #1 due in class Aug. 24: Bring in a newspaper editorial (local paper or other) discussing a Family issue. The editorials will be used for an in-class small group discussion. (**15 points**—7 points for bringing in the editorial and 8 points for participating in group discussion)

August 24-28

HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

Cherlin: Chapter 2, “The History of the Family” pp. 35-75

Reading: Coontz, S. (2005). Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage (pp. 1-12). London: Viking Penguin. (*Bel-Jean’s packet*)

August 31-Sept. 4

GENDER AND THE FAMILY

Cherlin: Chapter 3, “Gender and Families” pp. 77-108

Reading: Hochschild, A. (2008). Joey’s Problem: Nancy and Evan Holt. In A. Cherlin (Ed.). Public and Private Families: A Reader, 5th edition, (pp. 183-196). New York: McGraw Hill. (*Bel-Jean’s packet*)

- Assignment #2 due in class Fri., Sept. 4: Each of you will identify a heterosexual couple that lives together (married or cohabiting) and ask them to record their daily activities on a given day (should be the same day for both of them). Please use the schedule available on e-Learning Commons (eLC). Bring these schedules, along with your observations of any differences or similarities that exist between the two, to class. Do you notice any patterns by gender? You will discuss these within your group as a whole, and submit them together along with a write-up of your group discussion (this will be done in class) on Sept. 4. (**20 points**—10 points for bringing the activity sheets and 10 points for participating in the group discussion)

Sept. 7 Labor Day--No Class

Sept. 9-16

SOCIAL CLASS AND THE FAMILY

Cherlin: Chapter 4, "Social Class and Families" pp. 110-141

SOCIAL CLASS & SOCIAL POLICY

Cherlin: Chapter 14, "The Family, the State, and Social Policy" pp. 470-485.

Reading: Edin, K. & Folbre, N. (2008). Unmarried with Children. In A. Cherlin (Ed.). Public and Private Families: A Reader, 5th edition (pp. 167-173). New York: McGraw Hill. (*Bel-Jean's packet*)

- Assignment #3 due in class Mon., Sept. 14: Each group will be assigned a particular social class and will be charged with finding a neighborhood that houses families of that social class in Athens and/or surrounding areas. Your group will need to go to that neighborhood in the evening during the weekday and/or weekend and make observations (the more times you go, the more interesting observations you will make). For example: *What facilities are available? What are people doing? Are they inside or outside? Are they home? Are neighbors/families interacting? If so, then how? What are the benefits or negative consequences of living in that neighborhood? Is there diversity? What else do you notice that tells us something about or has a consequence for family life or social class here? How similar is this neighborhood to those of your group members?*

Groups will present their findings on **Sept.14 and 16** in a 10-12 minute oral presentation , which should include a discussion of how they identified the neighborhood they observed and their impressions of the questions/issues raised above (among any others). Pictures highlighting observations would be helpful in this presentation. A hard copy of presentation materials must also be submitted to the instructor on Sept. 14. **(40 points)**

Peer evaluation sheets must also be submitted by Friday, Sept. 18

Sept. 14-16

Oral presentations of findings for social class and neighborhood projects.

Friday, Sept. 18

>>> **Exam #1**

Sept. 21-25

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND FAMILIES

Cherlin: Chapter 5, "Race, Ethnicity and Families" pp. 142-182

Reading: Lamb, Lynnette (2005). "Adoption Nation," Carleton College Voice, Summer, 2005, 16-21. (*Bel-Jean's packet*)

- Assignment #4 due in class Wed., Sept. 23: Each group will compile the *most recent statistics available* for one racial/ethnic group (to be assigned in class on Sept. 16) in the form of a completed data chart. The data to be collected for each racial/ethnic group is as follows: median household income/earnings, median family income, prevalence of family type (i.e., two-parent, single, etc.), number of children living in different family structures/types, fertility, educational attainment levels, unemployment rates (for adults and also teenagers), maternal employment rates (overall and by age group of children, if possible). A good site to reference, along with others you find, is <http://www.bls.gov/>.

I have provided a link to a MSEXcel table on eLC for our class that I would like each group to use as a template for submitting their data. You can make some slight changes or additions to the table to accommodate data you find.

Peer evaluation sheets must also be submitted by Mon., Sept. 28 (20 points)

Sept. 28-Oct. 5

SEXUALITY & SOCIETY

Cherlin: Chapter 6, "Sexualities," pp. 183-213

Reading: Denizet-Lewis, B. (2004). Friends, Friends with Benefits, and the Benefits of the Local Mall, from New York Times Online Web site: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/30/magazine/30NONDATING.html?scp=3&sq=romance%20denizet-lewis%20may%2030&st=cse>

Ellin, A. (2009). The Recession. Isn't it Romantic?. From New York Times Online Web site: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/12/fashion/12dating.html?_r=1&sq=the%20recession%20%20Isn&st=cse&%2339;t%20it%20romantic?=&scp=1&pagewanted=print

- Assignment #5 due in class Mon., Oct. 5: During class time on Mon., Sept. 28, each group will come up with a question about dating or romance among college students that emerges from class readings, discussion, or their own curiosity. Each group will then take their question and conduct an informal poll of their peers, obtaining responses from at least 50 students altogether. The data from the informal poll should be compiled into some concise, visual form (e.g., a table, pie chart, etc.), and groups will present their findings in class (on Oct. 5) and explain a bit about the methodology used and participants in the informal poll

they conducted. A hard copy of the group's presentation materials must also be submitted to the instructor.

Peer evaluation sheets must also be submitted by Wed., Oct. 7 (40 points)

Oct. 7-14

COHABITATION & MARRIAGE

Cherlin: Chapter 7, "Cohabitation and Marriage," pp. 215-255

Cherlin: Chapter 14, "The Family, the State, and Social Policy," pp. 491-495

Reading: Staton, J. (2008) What is the Relationship of Marriage to Physical Health? A Research Brief from the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, Web site:
<http://www.smartmarriages.com/uploaded/Staton.Health.and.Marriage.pdf>

Bazon, E. (2009). 2 Kids + 0 Husbands = Family, from New York Times Online, Web site:
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/12/fashion/12dating.html?_r=1&sq=the%20recession%20isn&st=cse&_t=20it%20romantic?=&scp=1&pagewanted=print

➔ **Assignment #6:** In-class small group discussion of readings on Marriage (or Family in its absence) **(10 points)**

Oct. 16-23

CHILDREARING

Cherlin: Chapter 9: "Children and Parents," pp. 291-328

Reading: Explore website (<http://richardlouv.com/>) for Last Child in the Woods, a (2005) book by Richard Louv.

Reading: Stacey, J & Biblarz, T. (2007). "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?" In S. Ferguson (Ed.). Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families, 3rd edition (pp. 299-323). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. (**Bel-Jean's packet**)

Optional: Dominus, S. (2004). "Growing Up with Mom and Mom, from New York Times Online Web site:
http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/24/magazine/24KIDS.html?pagewanted=11&_r=1&sq=growing%20up%20with%20mom%20and%20mom&st=cse&scp=1

Documentary Film (Date TBA): "Daddy and Papa"

- Assignment #7: In-class small group discussion of readings and documentary gay and lesbian parenthood following documentary (**10 points**)

Oct. 26

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY/MEDIA ISSUES & FAMILY

Reading: Alter, A. (2009/10) "Is This Man Cheating on His Wife?" In K. Gilbert (Ed.) Annual Editions: The Family, 34th edition (pp. 104-106). New York: McGraw Hill. (*Bel-Jean's packet*)

- Assignment #8: In-class small-group exercise—think of as many new ways that technology and media have affected families, or norms and practices related to the family (e.g., dating, etc.) as you can. Feel free to bring in and submit any articles, web pages, etc. on new gadgets or issues related to this topic. (**10 points**)

Wednesday, Oct. 28

>>> **Exam #2**

Oct. 30 Fall Break—No Class—GO DAWGS!

Nov. 2-9

WORK, FAMILIES, AND CHILDCARE

Cherlin: Chapter 8: "Work and Families," pp. 257-289

Cherlin: Chapter 14, "The Family, the State, and Social Policy," pp. 488-489

Reading: Hirschman, L. (2006). Homeward Bound: The Truth About Elite Women, from the American Prospect Web site:
<http://www.prospect.org/web/page.wv?section=root&name=ViewWeb&articleId=10659>

- Assignment #9: Each group will write four questions during class time for the work/family panelists to address (**10 points**--5 points for contributing to questions and 5 points for panel attendance)

*Work/Family Panel—Monday, Nov. 9

Nov. 13-20

GROWING OLD IN FAMILIES

Cherlin: Chapter 10: "The Elderly and Their Families," pp. 329-364

Reading: Fleck, C. (2009). All Under One Roof, from AARP Web site:
http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourworld/family/articles/wo05_intergen.html?print=1

- Assignment #10 due in class Nov. 20: Bring in a 2-3 page, double-spaced write-up of an interview with an individual over the age of 65 (e.g., a grandparent, older family member or friend)—Use the interview question sheet found on eLC. It is preferable to conduct this interview in person; however, it can be done over the phone, or over e-mail. **(25 points)**

Nov. 23-27 Thanksgiving Break—No Class

Nov. 30-Dec. 4

DIVORCE

Cherlin: Chapter 12: "Divorce," pp. 401-436

Reading: Amato, P. (2007) Lifespan Adjustment of Children to Their Parents' Divorce," In S. Ferguson (Ed.). Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families, 3rd edition (pp. 567-588). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. (*Bel-Jean's packet*)

- Assignment #11: Each group will write four questions during class time for the work/family panelists to address (**10 points**--5 points for contributing to questions and 5 points for panel attendance)

Peer evaluation sheets must also be submitted by Mon., Dec. 7.

*Children and Divorce Panel—Fri., Dec. 4

Dec. 7-8 (Tues, Dec. 8 is Friday schedule)

REMARRIAGE & STEPFAMILIES

Cherlin: Chapter 13: "Remarriage and Stepfamilies," pp. 437-466

Reading: DeAngelis, T. (2009/10) "Stepfamily Success Depends on Ingredients." In K. Gilbert (Ed.) Annual Editions: The Family, 34th edition (pp. 134-137). New York: McGraw Hill. (*Bel-Jean's packet*)

Thursday, Dec. 10 from 12-3pm

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Final Exam

Additional Information Regarding CHFD/SOCI 4610:

- * Any student NOT reporting to class on the first day they are registered are likely to experience an instructor-initiated withdrawal from the course.
- * All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.
- * The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.