Marriage and the Family  
Instructor: Abedin Quader

Office Hours: Monday 4:45pm-5:45pm and by appointment  
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Course Objectives: This course is designed to explore marriage and family in contemporary U.S. society. We often take the understanding of marriage and family for granted and are inundated with many myths and beliefs about what these structures are like. In reality, we have multiple familial structures and conflicting views on marriage. Using both primary and secondary sources we will explore the different forms of marriage and family that are observed in society and the way that these systems interact with other institutions, namely the political, legal, medical, and cultural spheres. Additionally, we will explore the methodological approaches to studying the institution of marriage and the structure of family and will learn the appropriate ways to analyze and discuss this aspect of daily life. We will examine such social phenomena as divorce, changes in conception and child rearing, alternative family structures, changes in courtship rituals and intimate relationships, and we will also look at the shifting understandings of gender, race and class. Given the extraordinarily fast pace of the semester class sessions will be a mixture of lecture, multi-media presentations and in class group work. Students should be prepared to participate actively in the classroom to facilitate the learning experience.

Course Goals:  
1. Understand the institution of marriage and family through the main sociological perspectives  
2. Be able to break down and apply the different methodological approaches to understanding marriage and family  
3. Understand how our views on marriage and family are shaped by, and relate to, other institutions in society  
4. Be able to interpret and analyze the different ways that marriage and family are approached by individuals and society.

Course Requirements: It is recommended that students complete an Introduction to Sociology course prior to taking this course. Students should be familiar with the course requirements and the schedule detailed in the syllabus. It is expected that students will come to class prepared, having read the assigned material and ready to discuss the topic of the day. Participation will be dependent on student involvement in the classroom as well as completion of assignments. At
times this can be a very sensitive subject matter. All students are expected to treat others with respect and to listen to the views of their peers with an open mind. Debate and discussion is very much encouraged but this must be conducted with decorum.

There will be 4 quizzes over the course of the semester, each worth 10 points. There will be no make-up quizzes so be sure to note when they are scheduled. Each student will be responsible for posting discussion questions or comments on blackboard or in the class that pertain to the reading over the break as well as during the semester. Students will need to make at least 4 posts during the semester, 2 of which must be done during the break. Each post is worth 5 points. If a student makes more than 4 posts it will be counted as extra credit toward the final grade in the class. These questions and thoughts will be integrated into the class discussion. Students will also be evaluated on in-class discussions and participations.

The final exam will be an in class essay exam. Make up exams will only be given if the student has documented evidence of a personal emergency. Finally, there will be a Research Paper to be handed in before the final exam. This will give you an opportunity to research and express your thoughts on a given topic.

In all instances late work will be subject to penalty. There will be a 5% penalty for everyday an assignment is late.

If at any time you have questions about the material or something we discussed in class please feel free to come and see me or to send me an e-mail. I hope that you will take advantage of my office hours or will plan a time to meet with me.

Academic Honesty and Cheating: Students submitting plagiarized material or cheating on exams in class will fail the course and be subject to disciplinary proceedings. What is plagiarism? Handing in someone else’s work with your name on it. Cutting and pasting work by someone else into your own work, and handing it in as your own work, or helping someone else to cheat. See “Academic Integrity” guidelines for Rutgers if you would like more information, or speak with me.


There will also be articles assigned and handed out in class. This information will be updated in Blackboard.

Grading:
Quizzes (4) 40 points
Blackboard Postings or short papers 15 points
Research Paper 15 points
Class attendance and Participation 10 points
Final 20 points
TOTAL: 100 points
Black board posting or short paper 1:

Paper 1: DUE 1/3

Take a sample of 5-7 of your peers and investigate their views on family, how their family structure is and how they want their future families to be like. Does the traditional model of the family still seem to be important? What other family structures exist? In the assignment please include the questions that you asked. You are expected to synthesize your findings on the family and to also relate them to some aspect of the reading that you were assigned over the break. This exercise will allow you to think about ways to engage with people on this topic as well as to learn how to report on your findings in a way that both gives a voice to your subjects and is academically rigorous.

Blackboard posting or short Paper 2: DUE 1/10

The media is constantly sending out messages regarding marriage and family. Pop culture pervades many areas of our lives and does influence our understanding of the world around us. For this paper you should take an in-depth look at a television show of your choosing and analyze the way marriage and/or family is portrayed. What messages are being sent out? Are they overt or covert? When taking into consideration the readings and class discussions thus far how does your understanding of what you are watching change, if at all?

Research Paper: Due 1/12

A topic on Marriage and Family should be selected by the student relating to the chapters we discuss in the class. Topic should be submitted to the instructor by January 3, 2012. Length of the research paper should be 2000-2500 words. The paper will have to explore the areas of problem relating to marriage and family. It should be in-depth.

Schedule:

December 23rd: Introduction to the course, What is family? What is marriage? How should we study these institutions? What are the best methodological approaches?

Winter Break:
From Shifting the Center:
Sullivan, Maureen: “The Emergence of Lesbian-Coparent Families in a Postmodern Society”
Coontz, Stephanie: “Historical Perspectives on Family Diversity”
Hill, Shirley: “The Politics of Theorizing Black Families: Old Debates, New Directions”
On Blackboard:
The Picture Perfect American Family?
**Note that your first paper is due January 3rd. The readings assigned, in addition to what we cover on the first day of class, should help inform your paper.**

**January 3rd: Courtship, Dating and Power  QUIZ 1**
- Whyte, Martin. “Choosing Mates-The American Way”,
- Pasupathi, Monisha. “Arranged Marriages: What’s Love Got to do with it?”
- On BB: Orgasm in College Hookups and Relationships

**January 4th: Gender roles and dynamics in relationships**
- Stone, Pamela and Lovejoy, Meg: “Fast Track Women and the ‘Choice’ to Stay Home”
- Cerrington, Christopher: “No Place Like Home: The Division of Domestic Labor in Lesbian Families”
- On BB: Briefing Paper: Men’s Changing Contribution to Housework and Child Care
- On BB: In the News: Chores for two?

**January 5th: Marriage, Cohabitation and Partnership  QUIZ 2**
- Seltzer, Judith. “Families Formed Outside of Marriage”
- Thai, Hung Cam: “Clashing Dreams: Highly Educated Overseas Brides and Low-Wage U.S. Husbands
- On BB: Will Providing Marriage Rights to Same Sex Couples Undermine Heterosexual Marriage?
- On BB: Interracial Marriage: A Cultural Taboo Fades

**January 6th: Divorce and Remarriage**
- Adams, Michele and Coltrane, Scott: “Framing Divorce Reform: Media, Morality, and the Politics of Family”
- On BB: In the News: How to Stay Married
- On BB: In the News: Divorce May not Cause Kids’ Bad Behavior
- On BB: In the News: The Good, Bad and Ugly of Divorce

**January 7th: Motherhood and Fatherhood  PAPER #2 DUE, QUIZ 3**
- Collins, Patricia Hill. “Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood”,
- Coltrane, Scott. “Fathering: Paradoxes, Contradictions, and Dilemmas”
- On BB: Parenting Adult Children in the 21st Century
- On BB: Not just Provide and Reside: Engaged Fathers in Low-Income Families

**January 10th: Parents and Children  QUIZ 4**
- On BB: Surrogacy: Artificial means of reproduction and our understanding of the family. By: Macklin, R.. Hastings Center Report, Jan/Feb91, Vol. 21 Issue 1, p5,
January 11th: Families and Work
- Nakano Glenn, Evelyn: “Creating a Caring Society”
- Dreby, Joanna: “Negotiating Work and Parenting over the Life Course: Mexican Family Dynamics in a Binational Context”

January 12th: Families and Violence Research Paper Due
- On BB: Domestic Violence in Heterosexual Relationships

January 13th: Families and Poverty
- Rank, Mark. “As American as Apple Pie: Poverty and Welfare”
- Hays, Sharon. “Flat Broke with Children: The Ground-Level Results of Welfare Reform”
- On BB: Briefing Paper: Marriage, Poverty and Public Policy

January 14th: Final Exam (In Class)
**First hour of class will be for review**