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SOC 301 Sociology of Families

Course CRN: 20335 Class meets: MWF 11-11:50am Admin 300

Semester Taught: Spring 2019 Professor: Katie Nutter-Pridgen (Dr. Pridgen)

Credit Hours: 3 Office Location: Admin 215

Prerequisites: None Office Hours: TBD (See Blackboard)

Email: kpridgen@concord.edu

College/Department Website: <https://www.concord.edu/sws/node/45>

Course Requirements

A) Course Management System: Blackboard

B) Hardware/Software Needed: PC access with internet capabilities

C) Text requirements: Benokraitis, Nijole. 2015. *Marriages and Families: Changes, Choices, and Constraints*, 7th edition. New York: Pearson. ISBN 9780205735365.

MySocLab NOT needed, will not be used.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the sociological perspective and examines topics within the sociology of the family, including the forms of family organization and structure; processes of courtship and relationship development; the contemporary role of families in society; parenthood; family crisis; and family in transition. We will begin with concepts foundational to the sociological understanding of the family: the general sociological approach, various theories specific to the study of family, racial and ethnic variation within and among families, and the shifting role of gender. We will differentiate between family as a social ideal and our own, real families. To place the family in historical context, we will discuss how families in the United States have developed over time, especially regarding how trends in the family respond to certain social and economic changes. We will trace traditional paths to formalizing the family – dating, love, marriage, parenting – and identify a wide array of alternative choices available for contemporary American families (ie: remaining single, cohabitation, reproductive technologies). Finally, we will discuss challenges facing families, including divorce, violence, and poverty, and locate available resources for families dealing with difficult issues. While our class largely focuses on families in the United States, we will bring in cross-cultural information at times for comparison. Understanding the sociological perspective on families gives you familiarity with a variety of cultural practices and can help you place information and experiences within larger contexts.

A) Concord University Educational Goals

1. Skill 2: An ability to employ appropriate observational, logical, analytical, computational, creative, and critical thinking skills within and across disciplines; and to apply these skills in problem-solving
2. Knowledge 1: An ability to discern the reciprocal influences of environments, cultural beliefs and attitudes, and societal institutions and practices.
3. Knowledge 3: An ability to interpret events and trends within historical contexts.
4. Attitudes 3: Respectful attentiveness to differing perspectives and willingness to engage in dialogue across differences in order to seek mutual understanding and equitable conflict resolution.
5. Attitudes 4: Cultivation of and support for attitudes and practices that foster physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

B) Learning Outcomes

1. Identify, explain, and apply basic concepts and theories that make up the sociological perspective on families; also identify the basic principles of the scientific method upon which sociological research is based (Skill 2)
2. Consider how external factors, including media, history, and stratification, influence not only what happens to families but also your own understanding of it (Knowledge 1)
3. Discuss the ways family in America has changed in response to social and historical events (Knowledge 3)
4. Differentiate between the institutionalized concept of the “traditional” family and actual American families; also describe diverse kinds of families and how they differ from ideal and actual families (Attitudes 3)
5. Consider how your own experiences with family (your own and others) reflect (and counter) contemporary sociological concepts and findings (Attitudes 4)

Course Expectations

A) Communication

Email is the best way to get in touch with me – in most circumstances, I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. Check the Blackboard course website and your Concord email address frequently. Announcements about changes to the course schedule, syllabus, or class meeting time will be posted there. Review course materials on Blackboard for information BEFORE contacting me with questions – I will not respond to emails asking questions that are directly addressed in course materials.

ALL communication in the course – in-class, online, or by phone; between students and myself; among students – will be respectful. Deliberately disrespectful behaviors may mean you are ‘called out,’ ignored, penalized, or dismissed from class.

B) Late Work

Out of class assignments (discussion posts, assignments, critical reflections) must be completed BEFORE the due date and submitted on Blackboard by 11:59pm. Late work can be submitted up to one week late and will be penalized as follows:

Late less than 24 hours	10% penalty	Late 48 hours to one week	50% penalty
Late 24-48 hours	20% penalty	Late more than one week	Not accepted
Late more than 48 hours	25% penalty		

If you have any problems with the course website or submission of assignments, contact the IT Help Desk at 304-384-5291 or cuhelpdesk@concord.edu. Computer problems are **NOT** an acceptable excuse for missing a due date, so I suggest you complete and submit each one as early as possible.

Tests are completed out of class and have special circumstances. Tests must be made up (completed) within 2 weeks of original due date and:

1. Inability to complete test within the given 24 hours is due to serious (physical or mental) illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (ie: field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays or participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Court-imposed legal obligations (ie: jury duty, appearance, or subpoena) will also be excused. Other reasons may also be approved, please talk to me directly.
2. You contacted me before your absence if possible and *no later* than 24 hours after the assessment is due.

C) Cheating

No cheating. This includes – but is not limited to – plagiarism (the use of any work from books, articles, other students, the Internet, or other sources that are incorrectly cited). All written work must be your own original content and written in your own words. If you have questions about citations, plagiarism, or cheating, please ask me. All work will be scanned by TurnItIn and checked by the instructor.

Course Details

A) Course Overview

As this course is an introduction to the sociology of family, there is a LOT of information to cover. My goal is to introduce you to the sociological perspective on the family and provide learning opportunities about a wide range of topics studied by family sociologists. To capture some of the breadth of this field, we will typically cover one topic per week. To prepare for class each week, you will need to read (or at least skim) the assigned chapter. In-class pop quizzes that focus on vocabulary are possible, especially if it becomes clear students are not completing the reading before class. Class times on Mondays and Wednesdays will contain a mix of lecture and discussion aimed at clarifying and extending the information from the text. You will complete assignments to bring depth to the topics, reflect on your own ideas about families, and practice applying the course concepts. Comprehension of the topics will be measured by four tests covering the most recent 3-4 weeks of information – there is no final exam. Attendance will be taken each class day. Opportunities for extra credit will be posted on Blackboard.

We will not meet in class on Fridays. Instead, you will complete assignments, discussion questions, critical reflections, and even tests on Blackboard. Due dates for these assessments will be Fridays at 11:59pm; tests will close at this time, as well.

B) Grade Calculation

4 Tests	50 points each	(4x50) = 200 points
4 Assignments	25 points each	(4x25) = 100 points
2 Critical Reflections	50 points each	(2x50) = 100 points
6 Discussion Posts	10 points each	(6x10) = 60 points
Daily attendance and participation		= 50 points
Total Points Possible		= 500*

*Possible points add to 510, I have built in a 10 point curve.

C) Grading Scale

<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Grade</i>
450-500	A	300-349	D
400-449	B	Less than 300	F
350-399	C		

D) Tests

Tests contain a mix of multiple choice, matching, and short answer responses and will cover main vocabulary and key concepts from 3-4 topics/chapters. Tests will be completed on Blackboard; you may use any course materials you wish during the tests but will have limited time to complete them.

Tests open Thursdays at midnight and are due Fridays before 11:59pm. Requests for makeup tests must follow the policy stated above (under “Late Work – Tests”). 4 tests, 50 points each.

E) Assignments

For assignments, you will locate relevant information outside of class materials, allowing you to compare different kinds of families. You will complete assignments in various formats: short essays, powerpoint slides, tables, and/or fact sheets. Assignments are due on Blackboard before 11:59pm on Friday nights. Details about assignments will be posted on Blackboard. 4 assignments, 25 points each.

F) Critical Reflections

Twice during the semester, I will provide a list of films about families. These short papers will give you an opportunity to articulate a well-thought out sociological position or argument about the film. The main goal is to make connections between the film and class material, so you should focus on how class information is reflected in (or challenged by) the movie. Your paper should not focus on providing a summary of the film. Instead, your goal should be to show that you 1) understand course material in an in-depth way and 2) link specific course concepts to specific examples from the film. These reflections should be 2-3 pages double-spaced and be written as an academic paper. Critical reflections are due on Blackboard before 11:59pm on Friday nights. 2 critical reflections, 50 points each.

G) Discussion Posts

Discussion posts will allow you to reflect on important family issues, appreciate diversity in how we think about families, and benefit from the experiences of others. In general, you will post an answer to question on the discussion board. Then, you will read and respond to posts by at least 2 of your classmates.

Original posts due Fridays at 11:59pm; responses due Sundays by 11:59pm. 6 discussion posts, 10 points each.

Original Post – You will be expected to compose an original post that responds to the posted questions in a substantive manner. To receive full credit, you will need to demonstrate that you have understood course concepts and thought critically about the topic – this means you will need to include some information from course materials (put into your own words) AND some analysis, critique, example, or comparison to show you are able to apply the course topics to novel situations. These posts may require some online research, as well. Note that you will not be able to edit these original posts once you have submitted them, so you may want to compose your post in a word processing program before pasting into the box. Original posts should be at least 500 words and are worth 6 points each.

Interaction/Engagement

For the remaining 4 points of your discussion board grade, you will need to interact with your classmates on the discussion board. In other words, you will need to demonstrate that you are actively engaging with the other students in the class by writing critical, thought out responses to their posts. Generic posts such as “I agree with what everyone else said” do not constitute class participation. Note that you will need to

submit your own original post before you are able to view what your classmates have said. Post two 250-word responses to classmates, worth 4 points total.

H) Attendance and Participation – *each class day*

Everyone will start class with 50/50 points for their attendance and participation grade. For each day you are absent, I will subtract 2 points. Points may also be deducted for arriving late, leaving early, sleeping/texting/or being otherwise distracted, or coming to class unprepared. You may earn additional points for especially meaningful contributions to class discussions (in-class OR on discussion board). Excused absences are available **ONLY** with appropriate documentation.

I) Summary List of All Due Dates

Assessments are due Friday nights at 11:59pm on the stated date, unless otherwise noted.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assessment Type</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1/18	Discussion Post	Introduce Yourself
1/25	Discussion Post	Questions about Family
2/1	Assignment	Family in Sociological Perspective
2/8	Critical Reflection	TBA
2/15	Test	Foundations of Sociology of Family (Ch 1, 2, 4, 5)
2/22	Assignment	Visualizing Families across History
3/1	Discussion Post	What is Love? (Baby, Don't Hurt Me)
3/8	Test	Forming Intimate Relationships (Ch 3, 6, 7, 8)
3/22	Discussion Post	Cross-Cultural Commitment (Wedding) Traditions
3/29	Assignment	Comparing Family Policies
4/5	Discussion Post	Parenting Choices Debate
4/12	Test	Formalizing Intimate Relationships... Or Not (Ch 9, 10, 11, 12)
4/19	Discussion Post	TBA
4/26	Assignment	Family Resources: Information and Critique
5/3	Test	Family Challenges (Ch 13, 14, 15)
5/8 (Wed)	Critical Reflection	TBA

University Policies/Required Notices to Students

A) Accessibility/Accommodations

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform your instructor at the beginning of the class semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. It is your responsibility to self-disclose that you are requesting accommodations. The University and instructor will provide you with a reasonable accommodation. You should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry and Jean Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone is 304-384-6086 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at nellison@concord.edu for assistance.

B) Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is morally unacceptable as well as destructive to the learning and teaching atmosphere. Academic dishonesty includes the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or

assignments, falsifying documents, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another). Such dishonesty can lead to a variety of penalties — including but not limited to failure of assignment, failure of course, loss of institutional privileges, or dismissal from the University. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

C) Concord University Honor Code

A Concord University Honor Code was approved by students, staff, faculty, administration, and the CU Board of Governors. The Code states:

"As a member of the Concord University Community I will act with honesty and integrity in accordance with our fundamental principles and I will respect myself and others while challenging them to do the same."

The Honor Code is intended to unite the Concord community behind a culture of honesty, integrity, and civility.

D) Class/Online Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is part of a student's academic obligation at Concord. Irregular attendance may affect academic performance adversely and is detrimental to the atmosphere of a class. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

E) Emergency Alert System

In an effort to increase safety and security on our campus, Concord University encourages everyone to register for instant text message alerts. Alerts will only be used for security and safety notices. All students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive text message alerts on their cell phones or email alerts. Please contact the IT Help Desk for further assistance (304-384-5291).

F) Emergency Information

Emergency/courtesy telephones are located at the main entrance of each residence hall and at various other locations on campus. Emergency telephones can be identified by the flashing blue light and will provide the user with a direct link to Public Safety at the press of a button. To report an on-campus emergency, call 304-384-5357 or 911. The Office of Public Safety is located on the bottom floor of the Rahall Technology Center. For further emergency information go to:

<http://www.concord.edu/administration/office-public-safety>.

G) Inclement Weather Policy

As a general policy, the University will remain in normal operations during adverse weather conditions. In the event of severe weather conditions, the following may occur:

University Closure – No students or employees are to report.

Classes Cancelled – Students do NOT report BUT employees are expected to report to work at their normal time.

Operating on an Inclement Weather Delay – Under this schedule, all 8 a.m. classes will start at 10 a.m. Students and faculty will follow the Inclement Weather Schedule. (See

<http://www.concord.edu/emergency-alerts> for Athens/Beckley Inclement Weather Schedules.)

**Announcements invoking the late schedule or other options referenced above are aired on area radio and television stations and are sent as text and email messages to those enrolled for this service.*

**** On an inclement weather delay, this class is scheduled to meet 12:15-12:55. CHECK BLACKBOARD BEFORE ATTENDING CLASS THOSE DAYS.**

H) Student Conduct

In classrooms, online, laboratories, and during any activities that are part of course requirements, students are expected to observe reasonable rules of conduct.

I) Sexual Harassment & Assault

Federal law, Title IX, and Concord University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (Including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential counseling support through the Concord University Counseling Center (304-384-5290). Alleged Violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Concord University Title IX Coordinator at 304-384-6327 or titleix@concord.edu. Reports to Campus Security can be made at (304-384-5357). As an employee at Concord University, I am a mandatory reporter which means I must report any sexual misconduct I am made aware of. This includes verbal or written (such as in an assignment) disclosures of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

J) Technology Services

Contact the CU Help Desk at extension 5291 from campus or 304-384-5291 off campus. You may also e-mail cuhelpdesk@concord.edu.

Tentative Course Schedule

Syllabus Disclaimer

The schedule of topics will likely be edited throughout the semester, especially due to inclement weather. The most up-to-date course schedule can be found on Blackboard.

Dates	Topic	Assigned Reading	Assessment (Due Fri 11:59pm)
Jan 14 – Jan 16	Introduction to Course	Syllabus	Discussion Post: Introduce Yourself
Jan 23 (Jan 21 No Classes)	Introduction to Sociology of the Family	Ch 1	Discussion Post
Jan 28 – Jan 30	Family Theories	Ch 2	Assignment
Feb 4 – Feb 6	Race and Ethnicity	Ch 4	Critical Reflection
Feb 11 – Feb 13	Gender and Sexuality	Ch 5	Test
Feb 18 – Feb 20	Family in Historical Perspective	Ch 3	Assignment
Feb 25 – Feb 27	Love and Sex	Ch 6 and 7	Discussion Post
Mar 4 – Mar 6	Dating and Mate Selection	Ch 8	Test
Mar 11-Mar 15	Spring Break	---	---
Mar 18 – Mar 20	Marriage	Ch 10	Discussion Post
Mar 25 – Mar 27	Alternatives to Marriage	Ch 9	Assignment
Apr 1 – Apr 3	Becoming a Parent	Ch 11	Discussion Post
Apr 8 – Apr 10	Raising Children	Ch 12	Test
Apr 15 – Apr 17	Separation and Divorce	Ch 15	Discussion Post
Apr 22 – Apr 24	Violence*	Ch 14	Assignment
*Trigger warnings will be provided for abuse and sexual assault; alternative course materials always available			
Apr 29 – May 3	Economy and Family	Ch 13	Test
Wed May 8	Finals		Critical Reflection