



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

SOC 8 - Introduction to Marriage, Family and Intimate Relationships

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course is a sociological analysis of contemporary issues in family life, including historical and recent changes and the socio-cultural and economic forces shaping these changes. Cross-cultural analysis will also be considered. (C-ID SOCI 130).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify and describe the historical, cultural and political contexts of family life and structure.
2. Identify and describe the major sociological theories of the family in the United States.
3. Describe the family as a system of relations shaped by socialization, culture, social class, gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexuality and sexual preference, immigration status, and social norms.
4. Describe how intimate relationships include alternative and diverse definitions.
5. Explain the basic dimensions of social inequality and social change as it relates to family life.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Methodological Approaches to Marriage and Family Studies	3.00
Theoretical Perspectives of Family Structures in Sociology	3.00
The Traditional Family and Changing Family Forms	3.00
Cultural Diversity and Varieties of Family Structures and Norms	3.00
Dating, Mate Selection, and Gender Roles in the Family	3.00
Single-Hood, Marriage, and other Forms of Family Structures	3.00
Communication and Sexuality Patterns	3.00
Parenthood, Childrearing, and Socialization	3.00
Families and the Economy: Work and Consumerism	3.00
Family Crises and Change	3.00
Separation, Divorce, and Co-Parenting	3.00
Socio-Cultural Influences on Family Life: Class, Status, Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Immigration Status, and Age	3.00
Social Policy and the Future of Family Life	3.00
The Global Perspective: Cross-Cultural Analyses of Family Life and Family Policies	3.00
Families and the Life Course: Aging and Family Structure	3.00
Historical, Economic and Political Context of the Family	6.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Group Discussions
- B. Guest Speakers
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Lecture
- E. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Quizzes
- C. Papers
- D. Written Assignments

- E. On written assignments, students will be required to produce a minimum of 1,500 words for credit in the course. This work must be typewritten and will be evaluated on content, clarity of thought, analysis, grammar, spelling and syntax.

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the handout titled 'No Baby on Board.' Compare and contrast why some couples choose not to have children, while others do. Be prepared to discuss in class the various reasons for both groups.
2. Read the chapter on cohabitation. Compare and contrast the various issues related to cohabitation versus the historical concept of courtship leading to marriage. Be prepared to discuss in depth in class discussion.

Writing Assignments

1. Choose and describe in detail 10 virtues you wish your future partner to possess. Detail in a 2-3 page essay what these virtues represent to you, why you have chosen those virtues and defend your choices. If you are already married or in a committed relationship still choose 10 virtues. Then compare and contrast your ideal with the reality of your current relationship. Be prepared to discuss in class.
2. Write a 2-3 page biography of yourself including family history and cultural background. Identify family members by including race, gender, ethnicity and social class for each member. If you are without immediate family members, write about your 'fictive kin' including the information above, along with who they represent and why. Be prepared to discuss in class.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Conduct cross-cultural research on family norms and values from 3 different countries. Present a research paper detailing the various influences culture, tradition, custom and socialization represent in teaching the family norms and values to subsequent generations in class.
2. Watch the movie "It's Complicated". Critique the following issues as they relate to the movie: infidelity, children of divorce, mature couples dating issues, emotional and psychological ramifications with divorce and healthy mature relationships. Be prepared to discuss them in detail in class.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Baca Zinn, Maxine. (2021). Diversity in Families. *Pearson, 10th*. 9780137496549.

Strong, DeVault, and Cohen. (2021). The Marriage and Family Experience: Intimate Relationships in a Changing Society. *Cengage Learning, 14th*. 9780357378229.

Olson, DeFrain, and Skogrand. (2022). Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Diversity and Strengths. *McGraw Hill Humanities, 10th*. 9781264169467.

Minimum Qualifications

Sociology (Masters Required)

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