

Sociology of The Family
SOCL 3433-201
Spring 2022 | MWF 9:00am-9:50am
Classroom: Prothro-Yeager, Rm 100

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Pace

Office: O'Donohoe 131 (PY Building)

Email: Jennifer.Pace@msutexas.edu

**Note: I will return emails within.
48 hours, excluding weekends*

Office Hours: Mon & Wed: 12:00-2:00PM

Fri: 12:00-1:00PM
& by appointment

Required Text: No textbook. *All required readings are available on our D2L course website.*

Course Description:

Sociology is the scientific study of society, social institutions, and social relationships. We all have experience living in society and interacting with other people. Sociology, however, is an unfamiliar way of looking at the familiar. The goal of this course is to embark on a comparative and historical examination of marriage and the family within the U.S. context. This course will emphasize changing family roles and family structures, as well as consider alternatives to the nuclear family and traditional marriage. We will explore both old and new definitions of family. This course has **prerequisites:** SOCY 1133 or PSYC 1103. It is also **strongly recommended** for advanced (junior/senior) level students.

Evaluation:

Grading for this course will be determined by the following breakdown:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Exam #1 | 25% |
| Exam #2 | 30% |
| Policy Paper | 25% |
| Weekly Summaries | 10% |
| <u>Participation/Class Activities</u> | <u>10%</u> |
| TOTAL | 100% |

1) Exams (55%): There will be two exams to cover the content for this course. Exam material will be drawn from lectures, readings, and other course content. The exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice and free response/essay questions. More details will be provided closer to the exam date. **Both exams will be taken in class, during our regular class time.**

Exam Make-Up Policy: Missed exams can only be made up for full points *with documentation of an extenuating circumstance* (see below for details). You must notify me either prior to the exam (if you know you will be absent) or within 24 hours after the missed exam (if you had an emergency). *Note: If you know that you have a conflict with an exam date, it is your responsibility to set up an appointment at the beginning of the semester to discuss with me.*

2) Policy Paper (25%): You will develop a 6 to 7-page paper (not including title or reference pages) addressing either: coupling/marriage or family life. In this paper, you will use course materials and outside academic sources to develop a policy proposal to address an issue facing contemporary families. More details are available on our D2L course site. **Policy papers are submitted on our D2L course site** (see schedule for due date).

3) Weekly Summaries on D2L (10%): Every week by **11:59pm on Tuesday**, you should prepare for class by writing a summary of ALL of the week's readings along with three discussion questions. **Summaries are submitted on our on our D2L course site.**

Your summary of the readings should be a *minimum* of 1 full page in length (double spaced, 12 point font and 1-inch margins). Summaries should demonstrate that you have read all of the readings assigned for the week. Your three discussion questions should be based on the readings for the entire week. You will use these summaries/questions to facilitate your participation in class, for group discussions, and/or to help prepare you for exams.

*There will be 12 weekly reading summaries assigned and 10 will count toward your grade. This means you get **two free “drops”** – use them wisely. There are no “make-ups” for weekly summaries. If you are sick, need to travel, oversleep, just want to skip one, etc., then you can use one of your free drops.

4) Participation & Class Activities (10%): Participation, attendance, and engagement are essential for this course. If you are in class regularly and on time, engage in class discussions, and complete class participation activities, then you can ensure high points in this portion of your grade. Your participation grade is captured by 1) class activities and 2) active engagement.

1) Class Activities: Our classes will include in-class activities and remote class activities. To complete in-class activities, you must be in class and on time. If you are not in class and on time to participate in the activity, you will not receive points. To complete remote class activities, you will work outside of class and submit your assignment on D2L.

*You have **two free “drops”** for class activities to use at your discretion. Each missed activity past your second will result in the deduction of one percentage point from your overall participation & activities grade.

2) Active Engagement: Your grade in this portion of the class requires active engagement in class, including quality contributions to discussions. You must be present and on time to actively engage in class. Your contributions should be on-topic and demonstrate that you have prepared by reading/viewing course material. Both the quality and quantity of your contributions will factor into your grade. You are expected to be fully present; students using mobile phones, reading non-class materials, or otherwise not fully engaging in class will have points deducted from their grade. Distracting/inappropriate conduct constitutes non-engagement and will result in grade deduction.

*****Important Information Regarding Grades & Course Policies*****

--*Note on lateness*: Coming to class late is disruptive – you are asked to avoid arriving and disrupting class after we have started for the day. If you arrive late and miss the class activity, you will not be able to make it up later. If you arrive late, your lateness will be recorded and will negatively impact your grade. If you arrive late, you may be asked to sit in a seat near the door to minimize disruption of the class.

For excessive lateness, you may be asked to leave for the day. If you repeatedly find yourself unable to arrive to class on time, then the timing of this class clearly does not work for your schedule – you are encouraged to consider dropping the course and rescheduling a different class that works better for you.

--*Note on excessive absences*: Students may be **dropped** for excessive absences (6+) at the professor's discretion. In accordance with MSU Texas policy, students will be issued one warning prior to being dropped from the class. If you are not able to attend class regularly and on time, then this class is not a good fit for you.

--*Note on syllabus and policies*: This syllabus serves as the notice of course policies, including those listed above. Students are responsible for reading this syllabus and understanding these policies. Students are always welcome to attend office hours for clarification of course policies. Having not read this syllabus and/or post-hoc declarations of misunderstanding course policies will not be considered justification(s) for not following these policies and will not be considered justification(s) in arguing for a higher grade.

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

Extenuating Circumstances:

Emergencies and other extenuating circumstances happen. If you experience an extenuating circumstance and you want to submit a request for a special allowance (missing an exam, etc.), you must provide documentation and ATTEND OFFICE HOURS to discuss. Emailing a request and/or documentation without attending office hours to discuss will not be considered an approved request for special allowance. You are REQUIRED to provide documentation and

discuss your request IN OFFICE HOURS. If you are unable to attend in person, you may request a Zoom appointment. See MSU Texas [Student handbook – Class Attendance Policy](#)

Documentation for University/Texas State Regulated Extenuating Circumstance:

- Written evidence of attending a mandatory university-sponsored activity (band, athletics, etc.), documentation must come from college dean, Athletic Director, and/or Provost
- Official documentation of mandatory military service
- Religious observance or Holy Day(s) (ask professor about documentation)

Documentation for Extenuating Circumstance given at the discretion of the faculty member:

- A written note from a physician or MSU infirmary (including for COVID-19 related circumstances)
- A written note from the MSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (including for COVID-19 related circumstances)
- A written note from a physician for a family member/loved one's illness (ask professor about documentation)
- Official documentation of required jury or court appearance
- Death of a family member/loved one (ask professor about documentation)

Notes on Other Special Circumstances:

EMERGENCIES (MSU Texas Student Handbook, pp. 61-62):

Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities - For personal emergencies such as hospitalization or family emergency, or a prolonged absence, a student should notify the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

ILLNESS (MSU Texas Student Handbook, pp. 61-62):

Vinson Health Center - When a student's illness warrants verification, the student may seek medical treatment through the Vinson Health Center, after which the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and/or faculty members will be notified by the Vinson Health Center.

COVID-19:

If you are concerned that you may test positive for or may have been exposed to COVID-19, follow the instructions outlined on the MSU Texas website: <https://msutexas.edu/coronavirus/> If you have been directed to quarantine, you will need to provide documentation from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR). Be sure to follow the medical guidelines and contact OSRR for assistance with contacting your professors and managing your classes. The OSRR will send an email to your professors notifying them of your situation. University policy states that individual faculty have the option to make allowances for absences of this nature at their discretion. This is up to individual faculty and you will need to discuss with your professor.

For this class, if you have a cumulation of more than 6 absences (including COVID or otherwise related), you may be advised to drop the class and/or may be dropped by the professor, at the professor's discretion. You will be contacted by the professor and given a warning before this occurs. Six absences equal two entire weeks of the course. This is only a 15-week course. Two weeks of missed content negatively impacts quality education. Being dropped from the class

under these circumstances is not a punishment. When missing this much class, even for extenuating circumstances, it is best to prioritize quality education and have students retake the class in the future.

ACADEMICALLY RELATED ACTIVITIES (MSU Texas Student Handbook, pp. 61-62)
 MSU Texas Student Handbook policy states: “*Academically-related activities (class field trips, attendance at conferences, etc.) which result in absences require the cooperation of individual faculty members. Even though such activities are educational in nature, they do not qualify as university-sponsored activities. Faculty members who organize such activities should assist their students in contacting and informing relevant faculty of the planned activity. Excused absences for such activities may be given at the discretion of the faculty member whose class is missed.*”
 Students may submit requests for consideration of special allowance for academically-related activities by ATTENDING OFFICE HOURS (not via email). Such requests must be made prior to the event. Keep in mind, requests are not automatically granted. Requests will be granted at professor’s discretion.

Grading Scale:

| Letter | Percentage | Description |
|---------------|---------------------|--|
| A | 90-100 | Exceptional: Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what is required. |
| B | 80-89 | Good: Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required. |
| C | 70-79 | Average: Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. |
| D | 60-69 | Below average: Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality is below satisfactory. |
| F | 59 and below | Failing: Almost none of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is unacceptable. |

The Americans with Disabilities Act:

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Office of Disability Accommodation. The telephone number is 397-4618.

Religious Observance: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. If you have a religious observance conflict, you will need to provide written proof of the conflict and I will work with you

on an individual basis to address the issue. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus, note any possible conflicts, and discuss alternatives with me at the beginning of the semester.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. All students of Midwestern State University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, bribery, threatening behavior, and aid of academic dishonesty. Those found to be in violation of the MSU Texas Student Honor Creed will be reported to the university and are subject to being dropped from the class with an F.

Classroom Behavior:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavior standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. If you do not adhere to such conduct standards, you will be asked to leave for the day and may be dropped from the class/reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. If you do not leave on your own accord, MSU Texas police department will escort you out, you will be dropped from the class/reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for disciplinary action.

Course Policies and Grades:

Students may discuss course policies and grades with the professor at any time during the semester. Students are in their right to dislike or disagree with a course policy or with a grade, with the understanding the professor has final ruling over the policies of their course and grades given within that course. Once final grades are submitted at the end of the semester, students who wish to discuss a grade may contact the professor at the start of the next semester and attend office hours. Discussions regarding student-contested grades will conclude at the discretion of the professor. (To clarify: If you are contesting a grade you received, the professor will listen to and consider your concerns and will make a ruling. At that point, the discussion will cease, and the student will refrain from further arguing with the professor.)

Other Course Policies:

1. No laptops or cell phones are allowed in lecture. If you have a disability or special circumstance that requires you to use a laptop, please see me to discuss accommodations.
2. There are no "make-ups" or "early turn-ins" for in-class work/assignments/quizzes.
3. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. You should first review the syllabus and then contact a classmate to ask for notes, etc. You should not email your professor to ask "what did I miss?" If you have questions after viewing the material you acquire from another student in class, feel free to attend office hours.

4. In this class, as in many sociology classes, our discussion will often focus on controversial issues that may arouse intense feelings and disagreement. While enthusiastic discussion of these issues is encouraged and disagreements may occur, inappropriate/disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated. As professor for this course, I reserve the right to ask you to leave if your comments and/or actions are deemed to be inappropriate and/or are contributing to a classroom environment that is disruptive. If you do not leave on your own accord, MSU Texas police department will escort you out, you will be dropped from the class, and you will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for disciplinary action.
5. Please do not get up and leave class, or start packing up to leave, before our time is up. **Please avoid being late to class.** It is distracting to the entire class. If you must leave early or come late, let me know ahead of time. Disrupting class by being late/leaving early will have a negative impact on your grade. If you are late to class, you may be asked to leave for the day.
6. Students should refer to the MSU Texas Student Handbook for additional information about university policies, procedures, and/or for additional questions/concerns. If, for any reason, you have been asked to leave the class for the day and do not do so on your own accord, the following will occur: MSU Texas police department will escort you out, you will be dropped from the class, and you will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for disciplinary action.

(Students who violate these policies are subject to being dropped with an F for the class at the faculty member's discretion)

Peer Contact Information (your first source for missed material)

Name _____ Email/Number: _____

Name _____ Email/Number: _____

Name _____ Email/Number: _____

COURSE SCHEDULE

- ❖ Readings for the week are due by at the beginning of class on **MONDAY**
- ❖ Summaries for the week are due on D2L by 11:59PM on **TUESDAY**
- ❖ Readings can be found on our D2L course website
- ❖ *Note: Readings and scheduled items are subject to change*

Week 1 (1/10-1/14): Introduction & Course Concepts

Readings: *Mills – *The Sociological Imagination*
 *Coontz – *The Evolution of American Families*

Due & Events: N/A

Week 2 (1/17-1/21): History of Marriage and Family Life

Readings: *Coontz – *The Way We Wish We Were: Defining the Family Crisis*
 *Mintz & Kellogg – *Domestic Revolutions: Introduction*

Due & Events: Summary #1 due
 No class Monday – MLK Jr Day

Week 3 (1/24-1/28): Family Forms & Functions

Readings: *Smith – *The Standard North American Family: SNAF/ Ideological Code*
 *Holstein & Gubrium – *Deprivatization and the Construction of Domestic Life*

Due & Events: Summary #2 due

Week 4 (1/31-2/04): Modern Marriage

Readings: *Cherlin – *The American Way of Marriage*
 *Gerstel & Sarkisian – *Marriage: The Good, the Bad, and the Greedy*

Due & Events: Summary #3 due
 Remote Activity (Interview: Family Forms & Functions)

Week 5 (2/07-2/11): The (Messy) Politics of Marriage

Readings: *Heath – *One Marriage Under God: The Campaign to Promote Marriage in America*
*Whitehead – *The Nuptial Deal: Same-Sex Marriage and Neo-Liberal Governance*

Events & Due: Summary #4 due

Week 6 (2/14-2/18): Parents & Children

Readings: *Hays – *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood: Why Can't a Mother Be More Like a Businessman?*
*Lareau – *Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth*

Events & Due: Summary #5
Remote Activity (Interview: Parenting)

Week 7 (2/21-2/25): REVIEW AND EXAM

Readings: *NY Times: *The Relentlessness of Modern Parenting*

Events & Due: Exam #1 (Friday)

Week 8 (2/28-3/04): Gender in Marriage & Family

Readings: *Chesley – *Stay at Home Fathers and Breadwinning Mothers: Gender, Couple Dynamics, and Social Change*
*Gerson – *Moral Dilemmas, Moral Strategies, and the Transformation of Gender: Lessons from Two Generations of Work and Family Change*
*NY Times: *Jump-Start the Struggle for Gender Equality (Link on D2L)*

Events & Due: Summary #6
Remote Activity (Interview: Gender in Families)

Week 9 (3/07-3/11): Race, Ethnicity, & Migration

Readings: *Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila – *I'm Here but I'm There: Transnational Motherhood*
*Coontz – *The Myth of Black Family Collapse*

Events & Due: Summary #7 due

Week 10 (3/14-3/18): SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (3/21-3/25): Social Class & Stratification

- Readings:
- *Hays – *Flat Broke with Children: Pyramids of Inequality*
 - *Edin, Kefalas, & Reed – *What Marriage Means for Poor Unmarried Parents*
 - *The Atlantic: *Why all Americans Believe They Are Middle Class (Link on D2L)*

Events & Due: Summary #8 due

Week 12 (3/28-4/01): Intersectional Analyses

- Readings:
- *Elliott & Aseltine – *Raising Teenagers in Hostile Environments: How Race, Class, and Gender Matter for Mothers' Protective Carework*
 - *Shows & Gerstel – *Fathering, Class, and Gender: A Comparison of Physicians and Emergency Medical Technicians*

Events & Due: Summary #9 due
Policy Paper topics/brief abstracts due in class on Friday

Week 13 (4/04-4/08): Same-Sex Marriage & Families

- Readings:
- *Powell – *Who Gets to Count as Family?*
 - *Stacey & Biblarz – *How Does Sexual Orientation of the Parent Matter?*

Events & Due: Summary #10 due
Remote Activity (Interview: Changing Families, Part I)

Week 14 (4/11-4/15): Cohabitation

- Readings:
- *Sassler & Miller – *Waiting to Be Asked: Gender, Power, and Relationship Progression Among Cohabiting Couples*
 - *Smock, Manning, & Porter – *How Money Shapes Decisions to Marry Among Cohabitators*

Events & Due: Summary #11 due
No class Friday – Holiday Break

Week 15 (4/18-4/22): Divorce, Single-Parenting, and Remarriage/Stepfamilies

Readings: *Amato – *Research on Divorce: Continuing Trends and New Developments*
 *Sweeney – *Remarriage & Stepfamilies: Strategic Sites for Family Scholarship*

Events & Due: Summary #12 due
 Remote Activity (Interview: Changing Families, Part II)

Week 16 (4/25-4/29): REVIEW & EXAM

Readings: *Cohen – *Millennial Divorce Drops*
 *Cohen – *Millennial Divorce Rate Drops Explained*

Events & Due: **Exam #2 (Wednesday, in class)**
 No in-person class Friday – Writing Day

FINALS WEEK

POLICY PAPER DUE MONDAY MAY 2ND ON D2L