Course Description and Objectives

This course explores families in the United States from a sociological perspective. We will examine the family as an institution rooted in historical and social context, focusing on the ways in which society shapes family norms, opportunities, and behaviors. We will emphasize the connection between social change (major historical transformations in society) and corresponding family changes. We will also learn about individuals within families, and how family relationships have changed over time.

Course Objectives:

In order to meet this broad goal, the course has been designed to achieve several specific objectives:

(1) to provide information about historical and contemporary families in the United States;
(2) to explore the relationships between individuals, families, and other social institutions;
(3) to develop analytical and communication skills that will enable you to examine and assess divergent ideas and perspectives on contemporary family issues.

Liberal Studies Statement

The Liberal Studies Program at Florida State University has been designed to provide a perspective on the qualities, accomplishments, and aspirations of human beings, the past and present civilizations we have created, and the natural and technological world we inhabit. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for Liberal Studies Area III, History and Social Science, and in combination with your other Liberal Studies courses, provides an important foundation for your lifelong quest for knowledge.

Required Materials

Students are expected to read assigned material according to the pacing reflected on the course calendar. You should purchase the following required textbook:


This text is available in many formats, including an eBook, an unbound version and a traditional hard copy. I will provide additional materials and readings throughout the semester as files available on the course website. Please contact your mentor or me if you have any problems obtaining the required books or using the course website. Quizzes, exams and assignments in this course are drawn entirely from the assigned course material. It is critical for students to understand that in this distance learning course, the required textbooks and assigned readings are the way in which course material is communicated. You MUST have the text to be successful in this course.
IMPORTANT: You are expected to ensure that your computer and internet connection are functioning properly prior to exams or other online exercises. If necessary, please seek technical assistance from ACNS or other online resources listed on the Bulletin Board under “Help with FSU Procedures and Technology.” Additionally, you must have the required texts for successful completion of this course. All assignments will be drawn from the required resources as listed above.

Syllabus Change Policy The syllabus and course calendar are guides for the course and are subject to change with advanced notice.

Class Communication – Email and Course Website

The official method of communication at FSU is your ACNS garnet email account. FSU policy states: “In order to stay informed and aware, you are required to check it 3 times per week. If you choose to have your garnet account forwarded; you still will be responsible for all information distributed.” This applies to our class and you will be responsible for information emailed to the class and posted on the course website. Be connected! Please check for class emails (that will go to your garnet account) and check the Announcements page of our course website frequently.

Course Requirements:

Your final grade will be based on the quality of your performance with respect to the course assignments and responsibilities. The allocation of points is as follows:

(1) Writing Portfolio - Group Discussions – 40%. At four points in the semester, a discussion topic will be posted in the Groups folder on Blackboard. The class will be divided into groups, and you will participate in a discussion board with other members of your group. Each student is expected to post a position statement, a 200-500 word essay, in response to the discussion topic and to post two replies to other students’ statement postings. Replies should be between 75 and 200 words. Position statements must include a citation to material and a word count. Based on the quality of your posts, you can earn a possible 10 points for your contribution in each group discussion. There will be no credit given for late postings on the discussion board, non-academic discourse or other inappropriate responses. Initial posts are due by 9 pm on Wednesdays and replies are due by 9 pm on Fridays. Posting deadlines are specified on the course calendar.

(2) Quizzes - 30%. Ten multiple-choice unit quizzes (including the first day attendance quiz) will be posted in the weekly folder corresponding to their date on the course calendar. You will be able to find the answers to each of the five questions on these quizzes in the assigned readings or online material for the current and previous week. Not only will these quizzes be “open-book,” but you will be given the questions before you begin taking the quiz. You will have a five-day window to take each quiz (7am Monday – 9 pm Friday). The unit quizzes, together with the First Day Attendance Quiz, will be averaged for the quizzes category.

(3) Two Short Answer Essay Exams – 30%. The two exams will cover material from the text, the reader, and other assigned materials posted in on Blackboard. Each exam will include five “open-ended” (short-essay) questions, worth three points each for a total of fifteen points. The questions will ask you to write a paragraph or two about important theories, concepts, research findings, criticisms, or other points discussed in assigned readings and online material. Each exam will be scheduled on a specific day and will be available to students during a six-hour window, from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET. Once you begin taking an exam, you must complete it within one hour. We will grade each question on a three-point scale, where a good, complete answer is worth three points, a partially correct answer is worth one-two points, and an incorrect answer earns zero points. Grammatical or spelling errors detract from the quality of your answer and may result in a point deduction.
Grading Summary

Exam and Quizzes = 60 percent
Writing Portfolio = 40 percent
Total = 100 percent

The formula to figure your weighted course grade is:

Discussion board average (.40) + Exam average (.30) + Quiz average (.30) = your grade

Grading Scale

A  93-100
A- 90-92.99
B+ 87-89.99
B  83-86.99
B- 80-82.99
C+ 77-79.99
C  73-76.99
C- 70-72.99
D+ 67-69.99
D  63-66.99
D- 60-62.99
F  below 60

Excused Absences / Missed Assignments

Students must take exams (and complete other assignments) during the times indicated on the syllabus except by making prior arrangement with the instructor at least one week in advance. If you are severely ill or otherwise unable to complete a requirement as scheduled, you must contact your mentor or me as soon as possible and be prepared to provide appropriate documentation. Medical illness refers to conditions that are serious in nature and require treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Any missed work will receive a score of zero, except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Documentation is required to make up missed work and assignments must be completed within two weeks. Please provide a copy of the documentation to your instructor and keep a copy for your own records. Read the course calendar carefully and check the Blackboard website frequently for dates of assignments. Missing work is not a sufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete ("I").

Incomplete Grades
Missing work or uncompleted assignments are insufficient reasons for a grade of Incomplete. An Incomplete grade will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Note that the College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.

**Academic Honor Policy**

Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Policy of the Florida State University, including the statement on Values and Moral Standards published in The Florida State University General Bulletin. The Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of these expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Policy: http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor’s discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the university administration for further disciplinary action as specified in the Academic Honor Policy (http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf).

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities visit http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/.

**Religious Holidays**

Students are allowed to miss class due to observance of religious holidays, but they are still responsible for all materials assigned outside and covered in class on the day(s) missed. You must talk with your instructor in advance of missing a class for religious holiday observance reasons.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

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