

SOC 155: SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY
CRN: 11373
Fall 2010: Tuesday/ Thursday 10:30-11:45 PM
Classroom 265

Instructor: Dr. Laura Hamilton
Office: COB 229
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We are all experts of sorts on the family: We have lived in families, observed family dynamics, and compared our own family experiences with those of others. Families have been at the center of our personal and emotional lives. This course will provide an opportunity to look at something familiar (the family) in a new way. We will focus on the family as a social institution—a set of structured social arrangements for meeting certain human needs—and we will examine the larger social forces that shape those structures. We will use a comparative approach to families, emphasizing their diversity both across time and space and within present-day U.S. society—paying particular attention to how social inequality shapes family experiences. By the end of the semester, you should be able to place your own personal experience of families in a larger social, cultural, and historical context.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Understand the causes of social inequities in family experiences. You will learn how systems of privilege organized around gender, race, class, and sexual orientation structure family life.
2. Think critically about how family shapes social life at both individual and structural levels.
3. Effectively communicate what you have learned about the sociology of family in both written and oral form.
4. Read and evaluate scholarly research on family.
5. Take your sociological education outside of the classroom and into your everyday life.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course is graded on a point system. You have the potential to earn up to 400 points. There are no opportunities for extra credit.

Three Required Texts:

1. Risman, Barbara J. 2010. *Families as They Really Are*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
2. Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

3. Powell, Brian, Bolzendahl, Catherine, Geist, Claudia, and Lala Carr Steelman. 2010. *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

These books are available at the campus bookstore. Additional readings will be available through the course CROPS site. These are indicated with a bold **Online** in the class schedule.

Readings: You are expected to read all assigned readings *before* class. This is critical as class is predominately based on discussion *around the readings*. Some days have light reading, while others have heavier reading. Plan ahead if you know heavy reading days are coming. Not reading beforehand will lead to a failure to participate and an inability to understand the material on the exams. This will severely impact your grade in this course. I will often post questions online to help guide you as you read the material and help you to focus on the key components of each reading.

Exams: There will be two 120 point exams in this course (**Thursday 3/3 and Tuesday 4/26**). Mark the dates on your calendar *now*. All exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and mini essay questions. Exams will cover *anything* we do in class (discussion, movies, lecture material, films, activities, etc.) lectures, readings, in-class activities and discussions. The exams will be non-cumulative with regards to the reading material, but will build on your general sociological knowledge of families. You will not be permitted to leave the class during an exam to use the restroom or for any other reason, so please plan ahead. **You must bring a scantron (the thin green one), a pencil, and an exam blue book to class for all exams.**

Final Papers: You will be expected to complete a final paper (worth 100 points). It is due on **Thursday 4/28 at noon, in my mailbox** (the mail room is across from my office). **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED, PERIOD.** The final paper will be 10 pages long, on a family topic of your choosing. I will require you to turn in a topic, as well as a mid-semester progress report on the paper—all of which factor into your grade. I discuss specific guidelines for the paper in class.

Participation: Sixty points of your grade come from participation. This is a combination of attendance and involvement in class discussion and activities. This class is unique in that it is largely discussion-based, so I expect you to be actively contributing to the success of the class.

GRADING POLICIES:

*If you wish to contest any grading on an exam or assignment, you must submit a written request for re-grading within **1 week** of receiving your graded exam/paper. Your request should specifically outline why you think your answer is correct and which course material you are basing this claim upon. If I deem your request reasonable, I will re-grade your **ENTIRE** exam/paper. This means you could **either** lose or gain points (or your grade could remain the same). This policy *does not* apply to simple errors of calculation which you are welcome to alert me to more informally (but you must do so within a week of receiving your graded exam).*

Grades will be posted on the course CROPS site. I will notify you by email when they are up.

GRADING:	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage of Final Grade</i>
Exam 1	120	30%
Exam 2	120	30%
Final Paper	100	25%
Participation	60	15%
Total	400	100%

Final Course Grade

<i>Letter</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A+	= 388-400	97-100
A	= 372-387	93-96
A-	= 360-371	90-92
B+	= 348-359	87-89
B	= 332-347	83-86
B-	= 320-331	80-82
C+	= 308-319	77-79
C	= 292-307	73-76
C-	= 280-291	70-72
D+	= 268-279	67-69
D	= 252-267	63-66
D-	= 240-251	60-62
F	≤ 239	≤ 59

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Services Center. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through Disability Services (Kolligian Library, West Wing Suite 109). Please stop by or call 209-228-6996 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

In order to make this course a valuable learning experience, there are several basic course requirements. First, **you should attend class each day**. I will often talk about material not covered by your readings for which you will nonetheless be responsible on exams. Class discussions are a key way you will learn in this class. If you miss class you must obtain the lecture notes and other information (such as any assignments due the next class) from a classmate. I do not provide my notes to students, but I am always willing to answer any questions you have regarding the course material. Further, a sizable portion of your grade is determined by your active participation in class. If you must miss class, you should notify the professor **BEFORE** the class (via email). Again, you can miss up to **three** classes unpenalized, no questions asked. If you use them all up and then get sick, I cannot excuse you. Only hospitalization, serious illness, and serious family emergencies will qualify as excused after you miss three classes.

Second, **you are responsible for reading the assigned material before the class meets.** You should come to class prepared and are expected to be involved in the discussion. I do occasionally call on students to discuss readings in class, particularly if students are not contributing.

Third, **you should be present for the in-class exams.** It is in your best interest to take the exam when it is given, *as make-up exams are usually more difficult.* If you have a legitimate excuse for missing an exam you must notify me **BEFORE** the exam time and take the exam within the time-frame I specify (usually within 48 hours unless you provide written documentation for why this is not possible).

Fourth, **you should check the course web page on UCMCROPS regularly.** Some of your required readings are only available from this site. Your grades will be posted here. Also, if you miss class you can check UCMCROPS for any assignments or announcements you may have missed. You should be sure that the email address linked to your UCMCROPS account is current so that I have a reliable way to reach you if need be.

Fifth, **students in this class are required to be respectful toward other students and the professor.** In practical terms respect includes several elements which are obvious to most of us. You must arrive and leave on time. If you must leave early on a rare occasion, please notify the professor before class begins. Students coming and going from the classroom during lectures/discussion is disruptive, so you should be sure to use the bathroom before class starts to minimize avoidable disruptions to the class (if you have a medical condition that requires frequent trips to the bathroom, please let me know early in the semester and I will refrain from harassing you about your bathroom use!) Also, turn off your cell phone or other noisy device for the duration of the class, and don't text during class. I do not allow computers in the classroom unless medically necessary (documentation required). Do not talk or read the newspaper while the professor or a fellow student has the floor. Finally, it is not appropriate to verbally attack or insult another person in this class, nor to use derogatory language. We will be discussing material that many of you may have differing opinions about. Your opinions will be more effectively communicated if you refrain from using inflammatory language and instead ground your argument in academic discourse and scholarship. If you are disrupting the class with any these or any other behaviors, I will ask you to leave. In turn, I will help create a positive, friendly environment in which you should feel comfortable asking questions.

Sixth, **if you plagiarize, or otherwise cheat, on any exam or assignment, you will fail this course and your transcript will note your violation of the academic honesty policy.** Plagiarism involves intentionally representing someone else's words or ideas as your own. If you use outside sources—either in the form of quotes or ideas—you must cite them to indicate where they come from. Please see or email me if you need help with citations. When in doubt, ask! If you cheat, or let someone else represent your work as their own, you are in violation of the student code of conduct. You will fail this course, and your failing grade will be identified on your student transcript as resulting from academic dishonesty. Please consult the office of student life website if you require further information: <http://studentlife.ucmerced.edu/> (then go to "Student Judicial Affairs" and look at the "academic honesty policy").

Your enrollment in this course indicates your willingness to comply with all requirements and policies.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

*Note: This is a tentative schedule. Readings and topics may be adjusted based on how quickly we cover material. If there are changes to this schedule, you will receive adequate notice. **Exam dates will not change.** You will be expected to read the assigned material **by the beginning of class** on the date listed. Readings are from the required texts unless marked with a bold **Online** after the title. These marked readings can be accessed on CROPS. **Exams are BOLD and listed on the date on which they occur.***

UNIT	DATE	READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
Introduction to the Class	T 1/18	Syllabus Review
History of the American Family	Th 1/20	1) Risman (5): <i>The Evolution of American Families</i> 2) Risman (7): <i>African Americans and the Birth of the Modern Marriage</i>
How Americans Define Family	T 1/25	3) Powell (Chapter 2): <i>Who Counts as Family?</i> 4) Powell (Chapter 3): <i>Family Accounts: How Americans Talk about Family</i>
Marital Name Change	Th 1/27	5) Powell (Chapter 7): <i>Family Names Count: Marital Name Change and Definitions of Family</i>
Marriage	T 2/1	6) Risman (19): <i>Briefing Paper: Marriage, Poverty, and Public Policy</i> 7) Risman (News pg. 194): <i>A Poor Excuse for Marriage</i> 8) Risman (15): <i>Briefing Paper: Marriage Reduces Social Ties</i> 9) Risman (News pg. 155): <i>The Greedy Marriage</i>
Divorce	Th 2/3	10) Risman (18): <i>Briefing Paper: How Do They Do That?</i> 11) Risman (16): <i>The Case for Divorce</i> 12) Risman (News pg. 170): <i>How to Stay Married</i>
Effects of Divorce on Children	T 2/8	13) Online: Downey: <i>The School Performance of Children from Single-Mother and Single-Father Families</i> 14) Risman (17): <i>Briefing Paper: The Impact of Divorce on Children's Behavior Problems</i> 15) Risman (News pg. 178): <i>Divorce May Not Cause Children's Bad Behavior</i>
Cohabitation	Th 2/10	16) Risman (13): <i>New Couples, New Families</i>

Same-Sex Families	T 2/15	Movie in Class: <i>I Can't Marry You</i>
	Th 2/17	17) Risman (20): <i>From Outlaws to In-Laws: Gay and Lesbian Couples in Contemporary Society</i> 18) Risman (9): <i>Briefing Paper: Will Providing Marriage Rights to Same-Sex Couples Undermine Heterosexual Marriage?</i> 19) Online: Stacey and Biblarz: <i>(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?</i>
Interracial Families	T 2/22	20) Risman (10): <i>Interracial Families in Post-Civil Rights America</i> 21) Risman (11): <i>Briefing Paper: The Steady Rise of Nontraditional Romantic Unions</i> 22) Risman (News): <i>Interracial Marriage: A Cultural Taboo Fades</i>
Adoptive Families	Th 2/24	23) Online: Hamilton, Cheng, and Powell: <i>Adoptive Parents, Adaptive Parents</i>
REVIEW DAY	T 3/1	Test Review in Class
EXAM 1	Th 3/3	Exam 1
Beyond Family Structure	T 3/8	1) Risman (23): <i>Beyond Family Structure</i> 2) Risman (6): <i>American Childhood as a Social and Cultural Construct</i>
Social Class and Childhood	Th 3/10	3) Lareau (1): <i>Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth</i> 4) Lareau (3): <i>The Hectic Pace of Concerted Cultivation</i> 5) Lareau (4): <i>A Child's Pace</i>
	T 3/15	6) Lareau (6): <i>Developing a Child</i> 7) Lareau (7): <i>Language as a Conduit for Social Life</i>
	Th 3/17	8) Lareau (8): <i>Concerted Cultivation in Organizational Spheres</i> 9) Lareau (9): <i>Concerted Cultivation Gone Awry</i>
SPRING BREAK!!!	BREAK	Have Fun!!!
Social Class and Childhood, Cont.	T 3/29	10) Lareau (10): <i>Letting Educators Lead the Way</i> 11) Lareau (11): <i>Beating with a Belt, Fearing the "School"</i> 12) Lareau (12): <i>Power and the Limits of Social Class</i>

Social Class and Young Adulthood	Th 3/31	13) Risman (14): <i>Parenting Adult Children in the Twenty-First Century</i> 14) Online: Furstenberg: <i>Growing up is Harder to Do</i>
Gender Socialization	T 4/5	15) Online: Etaugh and Liss: <i>Home, School, and Playroom</i> 16) Risman (30): <i>Betwixt and BeTweeen: Gender Contradictions among Middle Schoolers</i>
Gender and Sexuality	Th 4/7	17) Risman (31): <i>Orgasm in College Hookups and Relationships</i> 18) Online: Hamilton and Armstrong: <i>Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood</i>
Working Moms	T 4/12	19) Risman (36): <i>Briefing Paper: Moms and Jobs</i> 20) Risman (News pg. 416): <i>Working Moms More the Norm than Exception</i>
Work-Family Balance	Th 4/14	Movie in Class: <i>Juggling Work and Family</i>
The Division of Household Labor	T 4/19	21) Risman (34): <i>Briefing Paper: Men's Changing Contribution to Housework and Childcare</i> 22) Risman (37): <i>Briefing Paper: Women's Money Matters</i> 23) Risman (38): <i>Briefing Paper: "Traditional" Marriages Now Less Stable</i>
REVIEW DAY	Th 4/21	Test Review in Class
EXAM 2	T 4/26	Exam 2
FINAL PAPERS DUE	Th 4/28	Final Papers Due: in my mailbox by 12 noon