

West Virginia University
Division of Sociology/Anthropology

221 – Families and Society

Course: Soc/A 221
Instructor: Nancy Feather
Email: nfeather@mail.wvu.edu

Days: M, W, F
Time: 2:30-3:45
Location: BKH-D 125

General Course Description

In this course we will examine a wide variety of theoretical positions and research findings on the institution of the family and the dynamics of family life. The major focus will be on modern U.S. families, however, we will also consider historical forms and understandings of families. Particular attention is paid to the diversity of families and family experience based on the interconnecting categories of gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.

Course Objectives

- to understand and apply the major theoretical understandings of families and family life
- to probe issues of family life and family policy which are under discussion in contemporary societies
- to understand families within a specific social and historical context
- to provide a safe environment in which students from a diversity of experiences and backgrounds can openly share, discuss, and debate

My office is located in Knapp Hall, Room 200. I may be reached by email at nfeather@mix.wvu.edu or you may phone 293-5801x3223 and leave a message. Office hours will be on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00 and Fridays from 3:00-4:00. If you are unable to meet during scheduled office hours, other times may be arranged.

Required Text- *Marriages and Families- Changes, Choices, and Constraints* (6th edition) by Nijole V. Benokraitis Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Grading

There will be a total of 400 points for the course. Grades will be based on the following point scale:

A= 360-400
B= 319-359
C= 278-318
D= 237-277
F= 236 and below

Exams

There will be **3 exams** worth **100 points** each. Exams may consist of fill in the blank, true/false, matching, multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.

Assignments

There is one assignment during the semester. This assignment is worth 16 points and is due on February 13. This is an assignment which allows creativity. Students are required to make a written or otherwise artistic presentation about the meaning of love as they see it. The meaning of love or characteristics of love must be clearly shown. It must be done neatly. Pictures,

poems, artwork, etc. may be used for this assignment. Photos must be labeled. This creative presentation may not be any larger than 11inches x 15 inches.

Quizzes

There will be **4 quizzes** worth **16 points each** for a total of **64 points**.

Quizzes are scheduled for March 10, April 14, April 23, April 30.

If students are not present on days when quizzes are given in class, it will result in a “0” for each missed quiz.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class, and you will benefit from doing so. Not attending class causes students to miss out on class discussion, videos, and, yes, LECTURE. On random days throughout the semester, attendance will be taken. There will be a total of **20 possible attendance points** by semester's end. Attendance points are part of the credit for this course and, thus, will be added on to students' point total when determining final grades. There will be **no excuses for missed days without official university documentation.**

Tentative Class Schedule

January 14	Introduction <u>Chapter 1- The Changing Family</u> Marriage and family Functions of a family Myths about marriage and family Three perspectives on the changing family
January 16	continued
January 21	Martin Luther King's Birthday- recess
January 23	continued
	<u>Chapter 2- Studying Marriage and the Family</u> Why family research? Understanding families from Sociological Perspectives
January 28	continued
	<u>Chapter 3- The Family in Historical Perspective</u> American Families throughout history
January 30	continued
February 4	<u>Chapter 4- Racial and Ethnic Families</u> Diversity of U.S. families Race and ethnicity Prejudice and discrimination
February 6	<u>Chapter 5- Gender Roles and Socialization</u> Sex and gender Learning gender roles Benefits and costs of traditional gender roles

February 11	continued <u>Chapter 6- Love and Loving Relationships</u> What is love? Functions of love and loving When love goes wrong
February 13	continued <u>“LOVE” assignment due</u>
February 18	<u>Chapter 7- Sexuality and Sexual Expression Throughout Life</u> Sexual orientation The sexual double standard Sexuality throughout life Infidelity Gay, lesbian, and bisexual relationships Sexually transmitted diseases
February 20	continued
February 25	<u>EXAM 1 Chapters 1-7</u>
February 27	<u>Chapter 8- Choosing Others: Dating and Mate Selection</u> Why date? Forms of dating Choosing whom we date Harmful dating relationships
March 3	continued <u>Chapter 9-Singlehood, Cohabitation, and Other Nonmarital Options</u> Single and why Who cohabits and why Benefits and costs of cohabitation Gay and lesbian couples
March 5	continued <u>Chapter 10- Marriage and Communication in Committed Relationships</u> Why marry? Prenuptial agreements Sex differences in communication Communication problems Dealing with conflict
March 10	continued <u>QUIZ</u>
March 12	<u>Chapter 11-To Be or Not to Be a Parent: More Choices, More Constraints</u> Birth Control Pregnancy Childbirth Infertility Adoption
March 17	continued

- March 19 **Chapter 12- Raising Children: Prospects and Pitfalls**
 Theories of child development
 Parenting approaches
 Disciplining children
 Parenting across the life course
 Non-parental child care
 Foster care
- March 22-30 **Spring Recess**
- March 31 continued
- April 2 **EXAM 2 - Chapters 8-12**
- April 4 **Chapter 13- Families and Work: Facing the Economic Squeeze**
 Poverty
 Homelessness
 Working women
 Family social policies
- April 7 **Chapter 14- Family Violence and Other Crises**
 Marital and intimate partner violence
 Cycle of domestic violence
 Why women stay
 Violence against infants and children
 Explaining family violence
 Other family crises
- April 9 continued
- April 14 continued
QUIZ
- Chapter 15- Separation and Divorce**
 Phases of separation
 Process of divorce
 Who is apt to divorce and for what reasons?
 Effects of divorce
 How to help children after divorce
 Some positive outcomes of divorce
- April 16 continued
- April 21 **Chapter 16- Remarriage and Stepfamilies: Life After Divorce**
 Remarriage
 Remarriage effects
 Stepfamilies
 Characteristics of successful stepfamilies
- April 23 continued
QUIZ
- April 28 **Chapter 17- Aging and Family Life: Grandparents, the Widowed and Caregivers**
 Changes in Physical, Mental and Social Status

Retirement
Grandparenting
Dealing with death and dying
Caregiving

April 30 continued
QUIZ

May 6- FINAL from 8-10

Have a safe and fun summer break!
MAKE SMART CHOICES!!!!!!!!!!

Conditions For Giving an “I”

Students are expected to complete course work in the semester in which the course is taken. From time to time events that are clearly beyond the control of the student may prevent the timely completion of a course. Should you find yourself facing such circumstances, you may wish to discuss this with your instructor to determine if an incomplete should be given until the late work can be completed. Faculty are not required to give an incomplete and would not be expected to do so where there are not compelling reasons to justify the request.

Social Justice

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700). The instructor of this course concurs with West Virginia University's commitment and expects to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect.