

Sociology 3501  
Sociology of Families  
Instructor Trina Smith  
Fall 2004  
Thursdays 6:20 to 8:50 pm  
Anderson 230

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“Convinced that the family, **as the fundamental group of society** and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community” (Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. res. 44/25, annex, 44 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 167, U.N. Doc. A/44/49 (1989), entered into force Sept.2 1990.)

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**Instructor:** Trina Smith  
**Office Location:** 1152 SST  
**Office Phone:** 624-5021  
**Email:** [smit1603@umn.edu](mailto:smit1603@umn.edu) (best way to contact me!)  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays 4:00 to 6:00 pm and by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Birgitta Johnson  
**Office Location:** 1080 SST  
**Office Phone:** 626-1863  
**Email:** john4795@d.umn.edu  
**Office Hours:**

**Sociology Main Office**  
**Location:** 909 SST  
**Phone:** 624-4300  
**Fax:** 624-7020  
**Hours:** Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm

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**Required Text:** *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. 2001. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Susan Feruson, ed. Mountain View CA: Myafield.

**Course Description:** This course will center on sociologically examining issues related to families both in the United States and globally. We will focus on contested definitions of families, theories of families, and historical and contemporary issues dealing with families. Examples of topics include: dating, marriage, and children; divorce; violence; work and families; policies affecting families including families; globalization and families.

**Course Goals:** One of my main goals in this course is to have students learn and apply critical thinking skills. Furthermore, within using critical thinking skills, students will utilize the sociological imagination in learning and thinking about families historically and in our contemporary society.

**Course Objectives:** Utilizing critical thinking skills and the sociological imagination, by the end of the semester students should be able to:

1. Understand why the term sociology of families is a better term than sociology of the family.
2. Understand the diversity and similarities of families in our society, both globally and locally.
3. Understand the social location and history of their own families better.
4. Understand that the family is a social institution and its effects.
5. Understand that the family is a gendered institution
6. Understand the diversity of family forms and different definitions of family.
7. Have a sociologically informed answer to the question of why the family is seen as a fundamental unit to society.

These objectives will be met through all aspects of the course including readings, in class activities, quizzes, the midterm exam, and the final paper.

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### **Course Expectations and Policies**

#### **Classroom Etiquette:**

1. Be respectful of your fellow classmates, the teaching assistant and instructor. This is also an expectation of the TA and myself.
2. Please turn off all cell phones and noise making devices. If you have a legitimate reason to have one on, please talk to me.
3. No reading the paper during lecture.
4. No talking while others are talking unless we are having group discussions.

#### **Class Room Discussions:**

I would love to hear everyone speak in this classroom. I value the diversity of ideas. However, I realize that not all people like to talk in class and some people like to talk a lot. As an instructor, part of my job is to manage the classroom. If you talk a lot and someone else who doesn't wants to speak, they will probably get called on. I may call on you if you don't talk. If you really don't want to speak, you have the right to say pass, but the more diverse ideas we hear in the class, the more we will learn.

#### **Email:**

1. Email is the best way to contact the instructional team. If you're email has not been answered in 48 hours, please send another email reminding us. Technology is not perfect.
2. Assignments may NOT be emailed.
3. Check your University email at least once a week. Class related messages may be sent there.

**Attendance:** Attendance is a vital part of doing well in this course. Though I don't take attendance in lecture, your attendance will be measured through course assignments. The material covered in lecture, which goes beyond the book, will be included on the quizzes, the midterm, and you will be expected to utilize the material covered in lecture in your final paper.

**Lecture / Discussion Notes:** The TA and myself will not give out lecture notes. So if you do miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes and learn the material. Please use the space below to write down two class members' names and contact information to communicate with if you miss class:

Student 1:

Email:

Phone:

Student 2:

Email:

Phone:

**Readings:** You are expected to have the readings done before you come to class. If you have not done the readings you will miss out on a valuable opportunity to learn and participate.

**Participation:** This means paying attention during class, working with your group, and contributing to group and class discussions.

**Missed Midterm Exam:** Midterm Examination make ups will only be granted if you have written documentation for an excused absence (for example, funerals, school activities, or illness.). Please e-mail the instructor explaining the situation **no later than one day after the midterm exam**. If possible, please make arrangements in advance. For more information see:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/semclasses.html>

No other make ups will be allowed. See Trina if you have questions.

**Scholastic Misconduct/Cheating:** By being a student at the University of Minnesota, you have agreed to the University's Student Code of Conduct. Thus, you have agreed not to participate in scholastic misconduct. Scholastic misconduct can include: collaborating on assignments without the instructor's permission, cheating on tests, essays, or papers, plagiarizing (misrepresenting someone else's work as your own), or interfering with another student's ability to complete course work. If you engage in scholastic misconduct, you can receive an F for the course and actions at the University level can be taken. This is a serious matter and will be treated as such.

More information can be found at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/grades&acadwork.html> (last paragraph)

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is prohibited at this University and is a crime. The University's policy and definition of sexual harassment can be found at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/scfa/sexualharassment.html>

**CLA and Sociology Department Policies:** Please see attachment at end of syllabus for information on these policies.

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### **Support Services:**

Disabilities:

I encourage students with disabilities to contact me at the beginning of the semester (preferably before the first assignment). I am committed to making this class accessible to everyone. Along with disability services (listed below) we can arrange to make this class work for you.

Physical or Learning Disabilities: Disability Services, 30 Nicholson Hall, (612) 626-1333

Test Taking:

Skill Building, test-anxiety, counseling, etc: Learning and Academic Skills Center  
104 Eddy Hall, (612) 624-7546

Writing: As there is a paper for this course, I strongly encourage you to utilize the following writing services.

General College Writing Center, [www.gen.umn.edu/resources/arc/writing\\_center.html](http://www.gen.umn.edu/resources/arc/writing_center.html)  
Located in Academic Resource Center, 11 Appleby Hall, walk-in hours Monday-Thursday 9-4 and Friday 9-3

Student Writing Center, Located in the English Department, 306B Lind Hall, Monday-Thursday 9-4, Friday 9-2. (612) 625-1893

The Writing Support Network Website  
<http://cisw.cla.umn.edu/wsn.html>

MISA: The Minnesota International Student Association,  
<http://www.tc.umn.edu/nlhome/g031/misa/>,  
Provides writing tutors to undergraduate international students.

Quick Check Grammar Guide. Provides a helpful guide for grammar problems often encountered by non-native English speakers in their writing.  
[http://composition.cla.umn.edu/CourseWeb/QkCk/QC\\_Contents](http://composition.cla.umn.edu/CourseWeb/QkCk/QC_Contents)

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### **Grading:**

This class is based on a point system, which means you can easily keep track of your grade throughout the semester. I highly advise you to check with your TA throughout the semester to check your grade.

### **Grading Components:**

Quizzes = 80 points; 31% final grade  
Midterm= 50 points; 19% final grade  
In Class Writing/Assignments= 25 points; 10% final grade  
Final Paper=105 points; 40% final grade  
Total Points: 260

### **Grading Scale:**

241 to 260 points	A	93-100%
233 to 240 points	A-	90-92%
223 to 232 points	B+	86-89%
215 to 222 points	B	83-85%
207 to 214 points	B-	80-82%
197 to 206 points	C+	76-79%
189 to 196 points	C	73-75%
181 to 188 points	C-	70-72%
171 to 180 points	D+	66-69%
163 to 170 points	D	63-65%
155 to 162 points	D-	60-62%
154 points and below.	F	59% and below

I do not grade on a curve, so you will not be graded against each other. Thus, every student has the possibility of getting an A, if they perform at an A level.

If you fall in between the point ranges, your grade will be rounded. For example, if you have a

248.5 at the end of the semester, your grade would be rounded to 249. If you would have a 248.25, your grade would be rounded to a 248.

**Late Work:** The only assignments you will be actually turning in from work outside of class are your choice for the final paper and your final paper. It is imperative you turn these in on time. You will lose a point a day for each day the choice for the final paper is late (Due 9/30). For the final paper, you will lose 10 points a day each day it is late (and yes this includes the weekend days also). I will not accept any more papers after Wednesday December 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Incompletes:** Except under extreme and documented circumstances, such as a prolonged illness or death in the family, I do not give out incompletes. If circumstances arise in which you think you will not be able to complete the course, you need to speak with me as soon as possible. An incomplete requires a written contract between the student and the instructor.

**Assignments**

**Quizzes:** (80 points) We will have 4 quizzes throughout the semester. See course schedule below for details. You cannot make these up unless you have a legitimate, documented excuse. I will vary when the quizzes are given (i.e. beginning, middle, or end of class) and these will include information from readings, lecture, and in class activities.

**Midterm:** (50 points) We will have a midterm exam on October 28th. This can include multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay. More details will be discussed closer to the midterm.

**In Class Writing/ Activities :** (25 points) Weeks that we do not have a quiz or the midterm, we will be doing in class writing assignments/activities. These are worth up to 5 points each and we will do these 6 different weeks in the semester (see course schedule for specific dates). However, you can drop your lowest score. These cannot be made up and you can only drop one.

**Final Paper:** (105 points) You will be writing a final paper for this course that is due on the last day of class, December 9. You will have three different options for the paper: a book review, a family history paper, or researching families in global documents. The 105 points includes two components.

9/30- Paper Choice Due: 5 points

12/9- Final Paper Due: 100 points

I will hand out more information during the second week of class.

**Course Schedule**

**\*\* Instructor Reserves Right to Make Changes\*\***

9/9	Week One
Topic	Introduction; Why Study Families
Readings Due	None
Assignments Due	None

9/16	Week Two
Topic	History and Diversity of Families (1)
Readings Due	#1, #2, #4
Assignments Due	In Class Writing Assignment/Activity

9/23	Week Three
Topic	History and Diversity of Families (2)
Readings Due	#5, #7, #8
Assignments Due	Quiz 1 (20 points)

9/30	Week Four
Topic	Marriage and Dating
Readings Due	#9, #14, and #15 (Recommended #12)
Assignments Due	In Class Writing Assignment/ <b>Final Paper Choice Due</b>

10/7	Week Five
Topic	Childhood and Adoption
Readings Due	#16, #45
Assignments Due	In Class Writing Assignment/Activity

10/14	Week Six
Topic	Parenting
Readings Due	#21, #22, #23
Assignments Due	Quiz 2 (20 points)

10/21	Week Seven
Topic	Divorce, Remarriage, and its aftereffects
Readings Due	#25, #28, #18
Assignments Due	In Class Writing Assignment/Activity

10/28	Week Eight
Topic	Violence
Readings Due	#30 (optional #32)
Assignments Due	Midterm Exam (50 points)

11/4	Week Nine
Topic	Families and Disability
Readings Due	#35 and Reserve or Handout
Assignments Due	In Class Writing/Activity

11/11	Week Ten
Topic	Families and Work
Readings Due	#36, #37
Assignments Due	Quiz 3 (20 points)

11/18	Week Eleven
Topic	Policies: Welfare U.S. vs Other Countries
Readings Due	#41, #42, #46
Assignments Due	In Class Writing Assignment/Activity

11/25	Week Twelve
Topic	No Class Thanksgiving
Readings Due	
Assignments Due	

12/2	Week Thirteen
Topic	Reproductive Policies and Marriage Debates
Readings Due	#17, #43, #44,
Assignments Due	Quiz 4 (20 points)

12/9	Week Fourteen
Topic	Global / International Instruments, Policies, and Law
Readings Due	None
Assignments Due	<b>Final Papers Due</b>

