

Southern Illinois University
SOC 304i Global Perspectives on the Family
Spring 2009

Class Times: TR 3:35pm-4:50pm (Engineering Bldg A 308)

Instructor: Chris Wienke, Ph.D.

Office: Faner 3432 Tel: 453-7629

Office Hours: TR 11:00am-1:30pm; 5:00pm-5:30pm

Email: cwienke@siu.edu

Overview

This course is designed to provide students with a cross-cultural understanding of family life. The course will focus on a variety of family patterns in western countries and contrast them with those of families in parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including many traditional societies. The goal is to use historical, theoretical, and comparative perspectives to better understand the diverse and changing nature of family life in the United States and around the world. Through reading assignments, discussions, classroom debates, writing assignments, out-of-class interviews, and examinations, students will become better acquainted with the interrelationship of family patterns and their social and cultural contexts. Substantive areas include globalization and family life; family theory; family change and history; gender and sexual divisions of labor; race, ethnic, and class diversity; sexuality and incest taboos; mate selection and courtship; intimate relationships and marriage; divorce and remarriage; intergenerational relationships; family violence; and the future of family life..

Required Materials

1. Leeder, Elaine, 2004, *The Family in Global Perspective: A Gendered Journey*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. [**Leeder**]
2. Pasternak, B., Ember, C., & M. Ember, 1997, *Sex, Gender, and Kinship: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Upper Saddle Rive, NJ: Prentice Hall. [**Pasternak et al.**]
3. Selected readings available on Blackboard. [**Blackboard**]

Course Requirements and Grading

1. *Exam I, Exam II*: The learning you do in this course will be assessed in part through two exams. The exams will be take-home, which means you are encouraged to use your notes and readings to answer the questions. Exams must be typewritten or word-processed, double-spaced, and in standard 12-point fonts. While it is acceptable to discuss general approaches to exam questions with your classmates, the composition of your answers must be an **individual** effort. “Cloned” answers will be regarded as instances of cheating, and will receive “cloned” grades of zero. Exams are worth 55% of the final grade. (**Note: Exams must be submitted on time; late work will be penalized a letter grade per day from the due date**)

2. *Oral & Written Project*: Parts of eight class periods (depending on enrollment) will be devoted to classroom debates on controversial issues related to the themes that organize the course. Two groups will be responsible for presenting the opposing views. As an individual you are responsible for:

1. Meeting with the other members of the group to discuss the arguments from both sides of the controversy. Together, you must prepare two lists: a column of arguments on one side, and a column of arguments on the opposing side (just draw a line down the middle of the page to create the two columns). The assignment is due the week before your scheduled debate. Use course readings, lectures, and outside materials to prepare your lists. Also, make sure that the arguments on both sides of the debate reflect a cross-cultural understanding of the issue, which is the emphasis of this course. Try to use historical and comparative perspectives, examples, and evidence. You'll receive comments from the instructor regarding your lists before your scheduled debate. You may use the instructor's feedback to shape the arguments in debate.

2. Preparing a position paper stating your argument. This should be roughly 3-4 pages long (not including the cover sheet or reference page) and is due the day of your debate. This paper must be in your own words, and must include the argument, any hypotheses, and evidence based on the materials you marshaled to produce your two-column list (and anything else you wish to add). This position paper must *take a position on the issue, presumably the same position you are arguing in the debate*. Your paper must include a clear thesis statement, supporting evidence, and a conclusion. Your supporting evidence should include material from the course as well as outside references; do not just write a paper that is purely your opinion or your personal experience. Rather, use the paper as an opportunity to show that you have engaged the course material and other relevant information. Again, make sure that your argument is informed by a global or cross-cultural perspective. You should consider perspectives, examples, and evidence from cultures beyond your own.

General formatting of in-text citations and the bibliography should follow APA style guidelines. For more information on APA style, you should check out the *Publication Manual of the APA, Fifth Edition* or search the APA style website at <http://www.apastyle.org/> (I also encourage you to see me or someone from the SIU Writing Center if you have any questions about the mechanics of writing a "position" paper). The paper **must** contain a minimum of 5 academic references from either professional journals or books, and must follow all university rules related to academic honesty. For journal articles, consider using these search engines: *SocINDEX*; *PsycINFO*; *Family Studies Abstracts*; and *Social Science Citation Index* (Just go to the SIU library website and click on "Databases/Find Articles"). Also consider *WorldCat*, which is useful in searching books.

Papers must be typewritten or word processed, double spaced, and in standard 12-point fonts. Be sure to hand in a *final draft* -- that means a draft that you have revised based on the comments of either one or more of your teammates or of a consultant at the Writing Center (or both). It should contain no grammatical or typographical errors. **(Note: Written work must be submitted on time; late work will be penalized a letter grade per day from the due date)**

3. Presenting your position with other members of your team in class. You may bring notes on a *single* 3" by 5" note card. You may **not** read a prepared statement. Each team member will have 1-2 minutes to make an initial statement and each team will have 3 minutes to make a rebuttal statement in which you engage with the opposing teams' arguments and make counter-arguments. You will then have to answer questions from your classmates and participate in the subsequent discussion.

Each student will prepare *one* controversy presentation and paper over the course of the semester. The most successful debates make it clear *who is on which side*, rather than simply having each

participant present materials and arguments at random. Don't just make inflammatory statements in order to provoke discussion; build and support the arguments on each side of the controversy by sharpening the contrast between your two teams. Present your rival hypotheses and evidence clearly and persuasively. **(Note: Failing to present will result in a zero for this assignment)**

Your oral and written project grade will be based on the presentation, the group list, and individual position paper and is worth 25% of the final grade.

DEBATE DATES AND TOPICS:

1. Feb. 5: Is Globalization a Positive Trend for Family Life?
2. Feb. 12: Do Sexually Egalitarian Societies Exist?
3. Feb. 17: Should Sociologists and Anthropologists Work to Eliminate the Practice of Female Circumcision?
4. Feb 26: Is Immigration a Problem in Developed Nations?
5. Mar 31: Are Arranged Marriages a Good Tradition?
6. Apr 2: Should We Accept Alternatives to Monogamous, Heterosexual Marriage?
7. Apr 9: Should Divorces be Difficult to Obtain (as they are in many other societies)?
8. Apr 21: Should Spanking a Child be Illegal (as it is in many countries)?

3. *Interview Assignment:* This assignment requires that you conduct an in-depth interview with someone from another country, and write a report based on the interview. You should follow these steps:

1. Select the topic you wish to investigate and think about the kind of questions you would like to ask. Looking through your reading materials should help. Decide on the area of the world you would like to research. Maybe you already have a friend from another country than your own (whose parents are not from your country), or maybe you have always been interested in a particular area of the world.

2. Locate someone who would be willing to tell you about family life in his or her country. This person should be an adult who has grown up to at least age 18 in another country than your own. There is an international student organization on campus if you have no other resources. Also, there are several professors/instructors on campus from abroad. You also may be able to find someone from abroad to interview using various internet social networking sites.

3. Once you have someone to talk to, do some background reading on the part of the world that person is from (doing this part, is important!). Draw up your list of questions about your family topic. Be sure not to ask any presumptive, leading, or offensive questions. Consider what is likely to be the best order in which to ask questions. The order may be important in establishing an easy relationship with the interviewee. The manner in which you ask questions certainly will be. Consider tape-recording the interview if your respondent is willing. It is also usually a good idea to have a final question similar to: "What other question(s) should I have asked you to find out more information about the family? Is there anything that you think is important that I have left out?" in case there was some big point you didn't ask about.

When you set up the interview, be sure to arrange a time and place (whether virtual or real) where you will not be disturbed. Be sure to leave plenty of time so you don't have to hurry the conversation, but do not take a lot more time than you originally suggested. Be sure to introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the interview. A good way to begin the interview is by

collecting some biographical information – age, marital status, family background, why he or she came to the U.S., etc.

5. The next step is to write the report. You should follow these steps: (1) Describe your topic of research (1 paragraph). (2) Give some background on the family practices in the specific country from your library research and tell me the sources you used (1 page). You **must** use at least 2 academic sources. (3) List the questions used in the interview. (4) Give the biographical information about your respondent (½ page). (5) Describe what you learned in the interview, including how you went about it (2-4 pages). (6) Bibliography.

The interview assignment is due on **April 30**, and is worth 20% of the final grade. An interview plan (questions, background write up, and name of interviewee) is due **February 26**.

4. Writing Exercises. From time to time, you will be asked to write and hand in a response to a writing exercise. The writing exercises will be linked to concepts, issues, or questions drawn from the reading and lecture material. These exercises will serve several purposes: (1) to “jumpstart” the process of thinking sociologically during the class period; (2) to help you make sense of reading and lecture materials; (3) to develop students’ critical thinking and writing skills; and (4) to help the instructor assess who is having difficulty understanding the material and/or expressing ideas in writing so that appropriate measures may be pursued. The writing exercises will be graded only as “complete” or “incomplete” and should be considered as practice, rather than as an evaluation by the instructor. However, they will help me assess student attendance; therefore, no-make-up or late exercises will be accepted because of absence or tardiness.

5. Attendance. Naturally, attendance is expected and necessary in order to successfully complete this course as readings will be a supplement to and not a reiteration of lectures and class discussion. Attendance grades will consist of sporadic attendance checks. You are allowed to miss up to 4 class sessions. You will be docked 3 percentage points per class session for any additional class sessions you miss, **REGARDLESS OF THE EXCUSE. (Note: If you fail to come to class on time or leave before class is dismissed, you will be marked “absent”)**

6. Other Classroom Expectations and Policies.

- You are expected to treat your peers’ contributions with **respect** (which means taking them seriously and challenging them as well as extending basic courtesy).
- You are expected to come to class having **read the required readings** extremely carefully, and to actively **participate in the course** (Participation does not mean mere attendance. Nor does it mean discussion related to matters that are not clearly pertinent to the curriculum. Participation does mean active, engaged discussion based on ideas that link the readings, lecture material, and your own thoughts and experiences. It also means asking questions).
- **Computer laptops** are not allowed in class unless you have written permission from “Disability Support Services.”
- Please turn off your **cell phone** before class begins. If your cell phone must be on for medical, childcare, or other reasons, please set it to vibrate, not ring.
- Anyone caught **text messaging, reading the newspaper, or engaging in other non-class related activities** will lose 2% points on the next exam.

7. Emergency Procedures. Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our

control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT's website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Grading Scale: *Out of 100 Percentage Points:* A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 and below.

- Exam 1 = 27.5 %
- Exam 2 = 27.5 %
- Oral & Written Project = 25%
- Interview Assignment = 20%

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Jan 13-15	Leeder: Chapter 1; Pasternak et al: Chapter 1
Jan 20-22	Leeder: Chapters 1 & 2; Pasternak et al: Chapters 1 & 11.
Jan-27-29	Leeder: Chapter 3. Blackboard: Giddens "The Global Revolution in Family and Personal Life"; Popenoe "Beyond the Nuclear Family: The Changing Family in Sweden Today" & "The Swedish Family in Institutional Decline". Jan 29: <i>Debate Group One: Two-column arguments due</i>
Feb 3-5	Leeder: Chapters 4 & 5. Feb 5: DEBATE 1: "Is Globalization a Positive Trend for Family Life?" Feb 5: <i>Debate Group Two: Two-column arguments due</i>
Feb 10-12	Leeder: Chapter 6. Pasternak et al: Chapter 3. Feb 10: <i>Debate Group Three: Two-column arguments due</i> Feb 12: DEBATE 2: "Do Sexually Egalitarian Societies Exist?"
Feb 17-19	Leeder: Chapters 6 & 7. Pasternak et al: Chapter 3. Feb 17: DEBATE 3: "Should Sociologists and Anthropologists Work to Eliminate the Practice of Female Circumcision?" Feb 19: <i>Debate Group Four: Two-column arguments due</i>
Feb 24-26	Leeder: Chapter 7. Feb 26: DEBATE 4: "Is Immigration a Problem in Developed Nations?" Feb 26: <i>Exam one</i> distributed <i>Interview Plan (questions, background write up, name of interviewee) due</i> (My mailbox or office by February 26)

- Mar 3-5 No Class, work on Exam One
EXAM ONE DUE (My mailbox or office by March 5)
- Mar 10-12 No class: SPRING BREAK
- Mar 17-19 Pasternak et al: Chapter 2, 5, & 6.
- Mar 24-26 Leeder: Chapter 8 (pp. 175-190). Pasternak et al: Chapters 4,7, & 8. Blackboard:
Coontz “What’s love got to do with it? A brief history of marriage”.
Mar 24: *Debate Group Five: Two-column arguments due*
Mar 26: *Debate Group Six: Two-column arguments due*
- Mar 31-Apr 2 Leeder: Chapter 8 (pp. 175-190). Pasternak et al: Chapters 4,7, & 8. Blackboard:
Coontz “What’s love got to do with it? A brief history of marriage”.
Mar 31: DEBATE 5: “Are Arranged Marriages A Good Tradition?”
Apr 2: DEBATE 6: “Should We Accept Alternatives to Monogamous, Heterosexual Marriage?”
Apr 2: *Debate Group Seven: Two-column arguments due*
- Apr 7-9: Leeder: Chapter 8 (pp. 190-199). Pasternak et al: Chapter 9.
Apr 9: DEBATE 7: “Should Divorces be Difficult to Obtain (as they are in many other societies)?”
- Apr 14-16 Leeder: Chapter 9.
Apr 14: *Debate Group Eight: Two-column arguments due*
- Apr 21-23 Leeder: Chapters 9 & 10.
Apr 21: DEBATE 8: “Should Spanking a Child be Illegal (as it is in many countries)?”
- Apr 28-30 Leeder: Chapter 11. Pasternak et al: Chapters 13.
Apr 30: **Interview Assignment Due** (Apr. 30)
Apr 30: **Exam Two** distributed
- May 5: **EXAM TWO DUE** (My mailbox or office by May 5)