NOTE to prospective students: This syllabus is intended to provide students who are considering taking this course an idea of what they will be learning. A more detailed syllabus will be available on the course site for enrolled students and may be more current than this sample syllabus. Summer term courses may be accelerated – please check the Ecampus Schedule of Classes for more information.

SOC 312
SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

COURSE CREDIT:

(4) This course combines approximately 120 hours of instruction, online activities, and assignments for 4 credits.

PREREQUISITES, CO-REQUISITES AND ENFORCED PREREQUISITES:

(SOC 204 [D-] or SOC 204H [D-])

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Survey of the family as a social institution. Addresses historical and cultural perspectives with emphasis on family diversity, variations in family form and life style, interdependence between family and other institutions, analysis of major family issues, forces for change in the family. Baccalaureate Core Course Attributes: Core, Pers, Diff/Power/Disc

**Before beginning it is important to know that the structure of this course is such that students must be active participants.** Some weeks will involve online group discussion forums. Other weeks you will participate in “real-time” virtual discussions with classmates and the instructor. You will have some flexibility in scheduling these virtual discussion sessions, but you should be prepared to participate in some kind of discussion every week. As such, you must complete the readings and review the lecture materials in a timely fashion, ideally by Monday of each week.

Sociologists understand that "family" is socially constructed. As such, it is important to explore the meaning of families by situating them in socio-historical contexts. Therefore, we will look at how the structure of marriage and form/function of families have changed over time and how family experiences vary by sociodemographic factors such as age, race/ethnicity, and social class. Another important contextual issue concerns the meaning of families based on your social positioning within them. For instance, the meaning of family may be different across generations (parents, children, grandparents) and gender (husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters). This class will explore the structure of relationships within families and the broad social forces that impact families, as well as the structure of families across time and space.
CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please post all course-related questions in the General Discussion Forum so that the whole class may benefit from our conversation. Please email your instructor for matters of a personal nature (missed assignments/discussion sessions, illness/family emergencies, etc.). The instructor will reply to course-related questions and email within 24-48 hours. **NOTE: students are responsible for checking the Announcements section on the course Blackboard site at least TWICE per week.

Instructor: Shelley Nelson
Instructor email: nelsoshe@onid.orst.edu (email is the best way to reach me)

Sample syllabi may not have the most up-to-date information. For accuracy, please check the ECampus Schedule of Classes to see the most current instructor information. You can search for contact information by name from the OSU Home Page.

LEARNING RESOURCES:

Required Books


**Any additional readings will be posted under the Weekly Action Plans.

NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please always check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website. Sample syllabi may not have the most up-to-date information.

Students can also click the ‘OSU Beaver Store’ link associated with the course information in the ECampus schedule of classes for course textbook information and ordering.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students should be able to do a sociological analysis of family lives. They should be able to demonstrate how broad social forces have shaped families over time. Using material from the readings, class discussion and lecture material, students should also be able to show how the social locations of families produce different experiences of family life, while the positioning of people within families creates variations in the meanings and experiences of individual family life. Evidence of the ability to do a sociological analysis will be assessed through weekly reflection blog posts, virtual discussion sessions, a midterm exam, reality check mini-projects and a group project.

Critical thinking will be developed in a number of ways. Each week we will be posing important questions relevant to understanding diversity in family life. The assigned readings and lectures will provide the background material necessary for students to develop reasoned responses to these questions. Virtual discussion groups (the equivalent to “class participation”) will allow students to communicate with one another, questioning their thinking about the material from the course. The focus will be on conceptual understanding rather than descriptions of family life. Course term projects will provide opportunities to show critical thinking in written form.

Note that some of the material in the lectures included in this class comes from the following text:


Karen Seccombe and Rebecca Warner have the copyright to this text and we allow the core of our text here for lecture material. The text was written primarily for a multi-disciplinary audience.

Supplemental lecture material is drawn from a variety of scholarly books and journal articles, as well as popular sources such as The New York Times and other online media outlets. The combination of material from the required texts and popular sources, plus the perspectives of the instructor, provides a diversity of approaches to the complex and controversial issues covered in the course. This is an upper division course in sociology. We hope that the combination of several key texts from the sociology of the family, original lectures drawing on a variety of primary and secondary sources, and guidance from the instructor will enable students to become more sophisticated observers of family life in the U.S.

Baccalaureate Core

The primary conceptual goal for this course is to develop within students a sociological imagination regarding family lives in the U.S. However, because successful completion of this course partially fulfills OSU’s Baccalaureate Core course requirements in the Difference, Power and Discrimination (DPD) category another goal is to understand how structural inequality in the U.S. has shaped the ways families live.
“The DPD requirement engages students in the intellectual examination of the complexity of the structures, systems, and ideologies that sustain discrimination and the unequal distribution of power and resources in society. The unequal distribution of social, economic, and political power in the United States and in other countries is sustained through a variety of individual beliefs and institutional practices. These beliefs and practices have tended to obscure the origins and operations of social discrimination such that this unequal power distribution is often viewed as the natural order. Examination of DPD course material will enhance meaningful democratic participation in our diverse university community and our increasingly multicultural U.S. society.” Core requirements of DPD courses include the following:

1. Explain how difference is socially constructed
2. Using historical and contemporary examples, describe how perceived differences, combined with unequal distribution of power across economic, social, and political institutions, result in discrimination
3. Analyze ways in which the interactions of social categories, such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and age, are related to difference, power, and discrimination in the United States.

Throughout our discussions and critiques of scholarly and non-scholarly works, we will work to explore issues of difference, power and discrimination as they relate to families and family issues. Additionally, your final project for the course will include a section devoted to exploration of DPD issues.

(For more information on the Difference, Power and Discrimination Program, see their website at [http://oregonstate.edu/dept/dpd/](http://oregonstate.edu/dept/dpd/)).

In order to pursue such an intellectual study of the family, it is important for students to be critical thinkers. A “critical thinker” is someone who:

- raises vital questions and problems;
- gathers and assess relevant information to interpret them effectively;
- comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions;
- thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, being cognizant of your own assumptions and their implications for thinking; and
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.


**COURSE CONTENT AND POLICIES:**

**Group Discussion Forums – Odd Weeks**
This class requires regular and frequent participation. In odd weeks (Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9), you will be provided with discussion prompts (available at NOON on Sunday of odd weeks). Each student is required to post one original post by 5pm on Wednesday. Then, by 5pm on
Friday, you will need to respond to a post by one of your classmates. These posts should be thought of as short SOCIOLOGICAL essays; they will need to be grounded in course materials (with proper citations), demonstrate critical thought and be written at a college level. Similarly, response posts need to be thoughtful, well-developed and respectful responses to the points that your classmate(s) brought up in their original post. You should approach these responses as though you are engaging in discussion in a classroom. They should build on the points that your classmate has established and address things that you did not discuss in your original post.

Participation in the group discussion forums is worth up to 20 points for each of the five weeks – up to 10 points for your original post and up to 10 points for your response.

**Original Posts**
- Due by 5pm on Wednesday
- Must address (sufficiently and SOCIOLOGICALLY!) at least one of the questions posed in the prompt (more detail will be given in the prompts)
- Has to be college-level writing (including proper citations)
- Recommended length is approximately one single-spaced page

**Response Posts**
- Due by 5pm on Friday
- Must post a detailed, thoughtful response to at least one classmate
- Has to be college-level writing (including proper citations)
- Has to be respectful to your classmates
- Recommended length is approximately one half of a single-spaced page

**Virtual Discussion Sessions – Even Weeks**
In even weeks (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10), we will “meet” in small groups to discuss the readings/lecture materials via the Chat room (under Tools – Collaboration). During these discussion sessions (~1 hour), groups of students (~4-5) will engage in a SOCIOLOGICAL discussion (facilitated by the instructor) of the readings/lecture materials for that week.

Sessions will be held on three different days and at varying times to accommodate class/work schedules. You do not need to attend the same day/time each week, but you will need to SIGN UP for each virtual discussion session in advance using the link provided on Blackboard in the Weekly Action Plan section for even weeks. [NOTE: I use an online scheduling system (Doodle.com) for sign-up for these sessions, but that site is only used for scheduling purposes. The actual sessions are held in the Blackboard chat room (under Tools – Collaboration).]

**Midterm Exam**
There will be one exam given in this course. It is scheduled for the end of Week 5. This take-home essay exam will be available at NOON on Friday. You will have 48 hours to complete and submit it (as a Word document attachment) through the course Blackboard website Exams tab (no later than NOON on Sunday). This is an open book, open notes take-
home format essay exam; you do not need a proctor. HOWEVER, you may not consult others (students in the course or otherwise) and must cite all sources (and include a references page).

Reality Check Mini-Projects
In the Reality Check assignments, you will be engaging in sociological investigation of families through your own data collection efforts and/or the analysis of existing data on families in the U.S. (and abroad). Detailed guidelines will be provided (under the Weekly Action Plans tab for Weeks 3, 7 and 9).

Issue Project
For this project you will be examining an issue facing families today (you will submit a topic proposal for my approval by the end of Week 4). Rather than writing a paper, however, you will be creating some kind of multimedia presentation – NOT simply a PowerPoint presentation!! We will discuss the forms this can take in more detail after topics are approved, but some past projects have included interactive websites, podcasts, narrated slideshows (PowerPoint, Keynote or Prezi), videos of mock panel discussions (complete with actors playing sociological experts!), animated videos, and a brief graphic novel (created using Bitstrips). The goal here is to provide a sociological analysis in an original and engaging way – so be creative!!

Course Content (NOTE: Lecture materials can be found under the Weekly Action Plans tab.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Studying Families from a Sociological Perspective</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 1-4; In the News (pgs. 24-27) Lecture Materials Social Theories doc</td>
<td>Group Discussion Forums</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual Discussion Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Changing Families</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 5, 7-11; In the News (pgs. 246-48) Lecture Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dating, Courtship and Sexuality over the Life Course</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 12, 25, 30-31 Lecture Materials</td>
<td>Group Discussion Forums</td>
<td>• Reality Check #1 due by NOON on Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading and Discussion Materials</td>
<td>Lecture Materials</td>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Marriage and Cohabitation</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 13, 14, 19, 28 and 38; In the News (pgs. 155-58 and pgs. 170-72)</td>
<td>Virtual Discussion Sessions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 16-18, In the News (pgs. 178-79 and 180-81)</td>
<td>Group Discussion Forums</td>
<td>• Midterm Exam due by NOON on Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Family Diversity I</td>
<td>Risman: Article 19; <em>Promises I Can Keep</em></td>
<td>Virtual Discussion Sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Family Diversity II</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 20-22; In the News (pgs. 194-96); Fact Sheet (pgs. 228-30)</td>
<td>Group Discussion Forums</td>
<td>• Reality Check #2 due by NOON on Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Work/Family Balance and the Gender Revolution</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 32-37</td>
<td>Virtual Discussion Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Parenting and Childhood I</td>
<td>Risman: Articles 6, 23, 26-27; Fact Sheet (pgs. 274-75); In the News (pgs. 299-300)</td>
<td>Group Discussion Forums</td>
<td>• Reality Check #3 due by NOON on Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Parenting and Childhood II</td>
<td><em>Longing and Belonging</em></td>
<td>Virtual Discussion Sessions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Makeup Exams**
Makeup exams will be given only for missed exams excused in advance by the instructor. Excused absences will not be given for airline reservations, routine illness (colds, flu, stomach aches), or other common ailments. Excused absences generally will not be given after the absence has occurred, except under very unusual circumstances.
Incompletes
Incomplete (I) grades will be granted only in emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of your child), and if the student has turned in 80% of the points possible (in other words, usually everything but the final paper). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don’t wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.

Evaluation of Student Performance
Each week students will begin reading the lecture materials on Blackboard along with the assigned readings from the texts. The materials for each week also will include prompts for weekly discussions, as well as information on any discussion sessions and/or assignments that are due that week. There also will be a (take-home format) midterm exam and a final project. Details follow.

Grades are based on the accumulation of points in the following activities:

1. Group Discussion Forums
   Odd Weeks (@ 20 pts each) 100 points available

2. Virtual Discussion Sessions
   Even Weeks (@ 20 pts each) 100 points available

3. Midterm Exam (Take-Home Format) 100 points available

4. Reality Check Mini-Projects
   Weeks 3, 7 and 9 (3 @ 50 pts each) 150 points available

5. Issue Project 150 points available

Total: 600 points available

Grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 93%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% – 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83% - 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77% - 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

< 70% - 72%  | C-    |
| 67% - 69%   | D+    |
| 63% - 66%   | D     |
| 60% - 62%   | D-    |

Course site login information
Information on how to login to your course site can be found HERE.
Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Oregon State University is committed to student success; however, we do not require students to use accommodations nor will we provide them unless they are requested by the student. The student, as a legal adult, is responsible to request appropriate accommodations. The student must take the lead in applying to Disability Access Services (DAS) and submit requests for accommodations each term through DAS Online. OSU students apply to DAS and request accommodations at our Getting Started with DAS page.

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Additionally, Canvas, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a vendor statement certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct (OSU policy)

Students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. Intentional acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism may be penalized by imposing an “F” grade in the course.

Student conduct is governed by the universities policies, as explained in the Office of the Dean of Student Life: Student Conduct and Community Standards. In an academic community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity, and respect.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g. on discussion boards, email postings, etc.) in compliance with the university’s regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded to themselves. Disrespectful behavior (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors are unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Student Conduct and Community Standards.

For more info on these topics please see:

Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct
Student Conduct and Community Standards - Offenses
Policy On Disruptive Behavior
Plagiarism
You are expected to submit your own work in all your assignments, postings to the discussion board, and other communications, and to clearly give credit to the work of others when you use it. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F.”

Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct
Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

Turnitin Plagiarism Prevention
Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. Turnitin generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through Turnitin and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited.

Papers you submit through Turnitin for this or any class will be added to the OSU Turnitin database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information on Turnitin please click HERE.

Technical Assistance
If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the OSU Computer Helpdesk online.

COURSE DEMO
GETTING STARTED

Tutoring
For information about possible tutoring for this course, please visit our Ecampus NetTutor page. Other resources include:

Writing Center
Online Writing Lab
Student Evaluation of Teaching

The online Student Evaluation of Teaching form will be available in week 9 and close at the end of finals week. Students will be sent instructions via ONID by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation. Students will log in to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted. Course evaluation results are very important and are used to help improve courses and the learning experience of future students. Results from questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and unit heads/supervisors. Unless a comment is “signed,” which will associate a name with a comment, student comments on the open-ended questions are anonymous and forwarded to each instructor. “Signed” comments are forwarded to the unit head/supervisor.

Refund Policy information

Please see the Ecampus website for policy information on refunds and late fees.