SOCIOLOGY 316.02W

Courtship/Mate Selections Marriage/Family Patterns

Spring 2013

ON-LINE COURSE SYLLABUS

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Course Information

I. Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Required Textbook: Benokraitis, *Marriages and Families: Changes, Choices and Constraints,* 7th Edition (2012). Pearson/Prentice Hall, ISBN: 10-205-00673-6. Older edition of the book will not work.

You can contact the Texas Book Store located in 115 Sam Rayburn Student Center on our campus in Commerce. Visit the book store, or call at 903-886-5215, to buy it; or buy book through on-line.

Supplementary Readings: You will be provided copies of handouts posted on-line and a list of recommended readings to accomplish the course objectives and learning outcomes.

II. Course Description:

Welcome to the SOC 316 online!

I am confident that we will have a productive semester in learning selected issues related to the sociological perspective on marriage and family. Your responsibilities in completing this course are stated below.

1. **It will be very important that you all read regularly the syllabus and ALL Announcements posted at the home page of this course very carefully and follow all instructions about course objectives, grading procedures, etc. Ignorance about details given in classes as well as in the course syllabus and various announcements posted on the eCollege web site cannot be accepted as excuse in any manner. I urge that you FULLY understand course requirements, grading procedures, and details on exams and assignments. That will be the key to doing well in the course. Also, please feel free to ask me questions about the course requirements through e-mails as well.**

2. **Read instructions under each week carefully. Your study guide (in terms each chapter's learning objectives, overview summary, and guidance for succeeding in fulfilling the requirements) is given under weeks 1 to 14 (not counting official holidays).**

3. **It is important that you log into each week and use the study guide to complete work regularly. You also should take weekly practice quizzes under each week. Although there is some flexibility given to you for illness, emergencies, or travel, it is necessary that you log into the course regularly and timely for at least 3 hours per week in order to succeed in making the highest grade.**

4. **All of your closed book exams and open-book practice weekly quizzes (as well as open-book essays assignment) will mainly be based on your text book. In addition, you may consult web sites through Google search and other suggested readings to work on your assignments. Go over guidelines about chapter objectives and other components of information under each of the 14 weeks. That will help you like a study guide in order to share and focus on course contents.**

5. **In addition, you may introduce yourself to other students in the Student Lounge accessible to you at the home page of the course. Share with them any challenges and opportunities you are having in the course.**

6. **You can post your questions at VIRTUAL OFFICE in the Home Page of this course. The virtual office will serve our learning needs of being in touch with not only me but with all persons in the class whenever you have questions or comments about the course (for example, about quizzes, exams, study guides given on every week, and other aspects of the syllabus).**

7. **You can e-mail me whenever you have challenges or questions, particularly those that you don't want to share with your class mates. Only use the e-mail address given on the first page of this syllabus.**

Another specific example for this course concerns your two assignments. Let us say you start working on your Assignment #I and select a marriage and family related book or movie for review but you are not sure if you made the right selection. In that case, you can e-mail me. But you do not need to do so if you are sure that the book or movie you selected is directly related to marriage and family issues. I will respond to you on that if your choice is not approved by me or needs to be changed. If you do not hear from me, you should proceed with your choice.

Provide in your e-mail info on: your full name and the course # you are enrolled in so that I check your record before responding to your need or question.

8. **You can also come by my office during my office hours stated earlier in your syllabus.**

9. **I will post various discussion questions on a number of issues at least once a week. Be sure you log into discussions at the home page of the course and respond to questions during almost each week. You will be able to earn bonus points for your participation in EACH discussion (up to 2 points for each week's topic depending on how meaningful you are through your reading of materials assigned that week in your comments, and how much critical thinking you demonstrate in your discussion comments based on logical arguments). That can add up and will be an opportunity to improve your grade in the course. Your score achieved in discussions out of a total of 24 points in 12 discussions will be calculated and added to your total score in two major exams. Your participation in discussions will enhance your chances of making higher grades.**

   REMEMBER THAT EACH WEEKLY DISCUSSION CAN ONLY BE RESPONDED TO BY YOU DURING SPECIFIC DATES OF EACH WEEK (AS STATED IN SYLLABUS) IN ORDER TO EARN BONUS POINTS.

   I will be able to find out through eCollege which one of you spent how much time on discussions and were meaningful and relevant in your comments. Elaborate in your discussion so that every one of you in class can understand what you are talking about. If someone in your class gives some arguments in discussions that you agree or disagree, be sure to be courteous and state your views accordingly. This is meant to be a debate to promote critical thinking. I will give you credit for your discussions accordingly. Please take weekly discussions seriously as this will help you relate to our important issues and express views on them.

10. **Read all announcements posted at the Home Page of the course and read all e-mails sent by me at your My Leo account in the eCollege. If you have problem with your e-mail system, please**

contact the Instructional Technology office. Do follow university deadlines in schedules (such as last date to drop the course) given at the university's website.

II. Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This is a general survey course in the American institution of marriage and family, particularly focused on mate selection and intimacy process, gender issues, and marriage and family enrichment. You should read articles in journals related to marriage and family and relevant articles on the internet while working on your open-book exam and other assignments. Through readings (text book, on-line materials, and other appropriate books/articles) and class discussions, we will pursue the following course objectives:

1. **The course is aimed at providing you critical thinking and an in depth understanding of the sociological perspective to selected marriage and family issues and problems. It will help you to become familiar with the language and literature as well as the key ideas, concepts, theories, and issues commonly associated with discourse on marriage and family relations in the United States.**

2. **It will enable you to consider American institution of marriage and family in a comparative, global perspective by examining examples of the institution in other nations in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.**

3. **The course will help you identify various sociological principles, theories and concepts relevant to marriage and family.**

4. **You will examine critical issues relevant to crises in the institution of marriage and family, including ones such as mate selection, communication problems, problems of conflict and violence, and seriousness of the rising divorce rate. The course will provide you examples of research studies in the area.**

5. **You will explore strategies of solving problems related to marriage and family. The course should also help you apply sociological principles to real-life marriage problems.**

The learning outcome assessment for the goals stated above will be based on essays exams, weekly discussions, and assignments to insure:

1. **That you have adequately learned basic concepts relevant to marriage and family in human society;**
2. **That you fully understand the origin and forms of various issues involving marriage and family; and**
3. **That you have developed critical thinking grasping various sociological theories explaining marriage and family problems and issues.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

Grading will be based upon total 450 points accumulated from 2 exams scores, and 2 assignments. Details on all requirements and grading procedures are stated below:

At the end of the course an "A" will be equal to 90+, a "B" will be equal to 80-89, a "C" 70-79, and a "D" 60-69 of the total points out of the grand total.

A. Weekly Practice Quizzes:

There will be practice (not required, though strongly recommended) weekly quizzes.

Each quiz on-line will be based on the reading assigned to each week, will consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. You will be allowed to retake a quiz as many times as you want since these quizzes are only for practice. However, some of the questions in the required exams may be based on questions in various quizzes. I urge you to take them seriously.

Practice Quizzes are NOT restricted by any dates. You can take them any time during the semester. However, take them before each exam so they help you. Also, I will not give you the key to answers in quizzes. You will need to figure out the 'correct' answers by carefully reading the textbook.

Your final grade will be based on the following procedures given under B & C (although practice quizzes will help and weekly discussions will provide you bonus points) :

B. Closed-Book Exams (a total of 300 points):

There will be three major exams. You will be required to take two out of the three exams. If you take all three of them, I will drop the lowest score. Each exam will constitute 150 points for the final grade. There will be no other make-up exam.

Dates for the three exams are given below (each exam will be available on-line starting past midnight each day and it closes at midnight on the same day it is scheduled):

- **Exam 1 consisting of 75 objective questions worth 150 points based on Chapters 1 to 8 available on-line on Monday, February 25, 2013. YOU WILL HAVE 90 MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE EXAM. YOU WILL BE LOGGED OUT OF THE EXAM AFTER 90 MINUTES. SO TIME YOURSELF CAREFULLY.**

- **Exam 2 consisting of 75 objective questions worth 150 points based on chapters 9 to 17 on Monday, April 15, 2013. YOU WILL HAVE 90 MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE EXAM ON-LINE. YOU WILL BE LOGGED OUT OF THE EXAM AFTER 90 MINUTES. SO TIME YOURSELF CAREFULLY.**

- **Final exam consisting of 75 objective questions worth 150 points based on all chapters (1 to 17) available on Monday, May 6, 2013. YOU WILL HAVE 90 MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE EXAM. YOU WILL BE LOGGED OUT OF THE EXAM AFTER 90 MINUTES. SO TIME YOURSELF CAREFULLY.**

If you have already taken the first two exams, you do not have to take the comprehensive final. However, if you are taking it to improve your bad score in one of the first two exams, it can only help you and will not bring your grade down even if you fail it. The final will be required if you have missed one of the first two exams. If you missed both of the first two exams, you must have dropped the course by the university deadline for dropping to avoid receiving a failing grade in the course.

- ***Additional instructions for each exam may be provided through my-leo e-mails to you when necessary. All exams will be closed-book.***

  - **You must write dates for exams on your calendar. I will not be able to change dates for any students. Since I have already allowed flexibility to you of dropping one exam, you should do fine.**

  - **You will be logged out of each exam after the maximum allowed time. Do not take any break. Once you start the exam, you must complete it in one sitting. It will be a good idea if you take the exam at one of the computer centers on Commerce, Metroplex or Navarro campuses particularly if your computer is older or if you might get disrupted at home. We cannot control circumstances if your personal computer freezes or has other technical problems. So time yourself carefully and make sure that no one will distract you while taking the exam.**

  - **It is your responsibility if you log out of the exam unless you are taking it in one of computer labs in Commerce or other campuses stated above and the person supervising the computer lab can certify that the technical problem was unavoidable. Please call Help Desk and you may e-mail me immediately if that happens giving the name, phone #, and/or e-mail address of the person in-charge of the computer lab. I will then let you know what needs done.**

  - **HOW TO DO WELL IN ESSAY QUESTIONS IN ALL EXAMS/ASSIGNMENTS/DISCUSSIONS:**

I want you to do well in answering essay questions in weekly discussions as well as in the open-book essays assignment. The essay questions may not only help you to improve your scores but they represent critical thinking on your part on serious questions. I encourage all of you to do your best in essay questions.

If you lose some points in any essay, reasons for that could include:

- **you may not have answered a question correctly;**
- **you may not have answered all parts of each question;**
- **you may have been too brief in your answer and might not have elaborated on your answer demonstrating your understanding;**
- **you may have included irrelevant materials in your answers;**
- **you may have lacked clarity; or**
- **you may not have provided examples illustrating your points, where needed.**

Some of my students in my courses ask me to give them 'special assignment or project' so they can make up for deficiencies in exams. Of course, any project I assign will have to be given to all students. I totally believe in equal opportunity to be fair to all students. I also believe in complete objectivity and professionalism in my teaching.

C. TWO ASSIGNMENTS (a total of 150 points)

- **Both assignments are due on dates given below as well as in your calendar given below for each. Please submit each on time. Late submissions will lose points.**

- **Assignments must be submitted in the drop box. MAKE SURE THAT YOU SUBMIT THEM IN MS/OFFICE WORD DOCUMENT ON THE DATE IT IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED. I will not be able to accept any submissions as e-mail attachments, nor in any other formats such as word perfect. Please contact the help desk in eCollege if you have difficulty submitting in the drop box on-line.**

- **While you can consult your text book, on-line sources or other references should also be consulted for completing your**

assignments. All submissions will be subjected to on-line checks for plagiarism.

ASSIGNMENT I.

Book or Movie Review (50 points allocated to assignment):

You will need to select a fiction work or a novel or a movie based on a true story, biography, or autobiography related to marriage and family.

In a double-spaced review of approximately 3 to 4 pages (12 font in MS Word), write an analysis of the book/movie you have selected from the standpoint of sociology. You should relate your review paper to the content of the course. The paper should apply sociological concepts, issues, and theories to the analysis of the book selected. In short, you are not only to describe the content of the book, but you are to interpret (analyze) its events and characters. For example: How does the book or movie demonstrate issues of marriage and family that may still be relevant to American society? In what ways has the main character or characters of the book or in movie selected experienced problems related to marriage and family relations?

Please select your book/movie by the end of third week in September for sure. THE BOOK/MOVIE REVIEW IS DUE ON MARCH 25, 2013 in the Drop Box.

ASSIGNMENT II.

Developing Essays to Discuss Issues Related to the Sociology of Marriage and Family (100 points allocated to this assignment):

- **Please read each essay question carefully to understand what is involved in applying appropriate sociological concepts and in addressing issues in each essay. Each essay may cover about 1 to 2 pages, double space in 12 fonts. Be sure to make your own comments as well, where possible.**

- **It is an open-book assignment. Consult your book and other sources stated above in thoroughly addressing each essay question. Be sure to**

list references used at the end of each essay. Be sure to give relevant examples where possible. Do not be too brief in answers.

- **Your assignment is due on APRIL 29, 2013. Late submissions may lose points.**

- **While you can consult any available references, I want your discussion and comments written by you only in your own words. As you can see, the open-book exam carries significant weight as compared to other exams and assignments.**

- **Please start developing your notes on this exam right away. Do not simply copy essays from any source. Give your own version of ideas, including your own opinions, to get maximum credit for the assignment.**

ANSWER ANY 10 OUT OF 12 QUESTIONS GIVEN BELOW. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL WEIGHT. FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS.

1. **Based on your reading of the textbook and other materials, critically examine the significance of marriage and family in our lives. What are the functions of these institutions? Give examples.**

2. **Define intimacy or love. What are traits of each of them? How may we 'measure' or 'assess' intimacy or love in a marriage? Why does intimacy in marriage go down over a period of time in the western civilization?**

3. **In what ways and to what extent the problems related to violence exist in marriage and family? Why do we have family violence? What can we do to minimize its negative impacts?**

4. **What are some of the ways that the communication plays a role in resolving conflicts in marriage in the contemporary American society? Why people fail in the**

communication process? What can be done to improve that process?

5. How do people select a mate for marriage in the contemporary society? Why has this process become so complex? What steps may be taken to improve the mate selection process in our culture?

6. What is the role of human sexuality in marriage? How does sexuality affect mental health? What are some of the issues related to sexuality, particularly in marriage, in contemporary world? Give examples.

7. What are some of the factors that can explain why people divorce? What is a divorce process and what can be done to help couples from avoiding extreme steps such as the termination of a relationship?

8. What are the major arguments in support of and in opposition to 'no fault' divorce? Give examples.

9. Some people say that that the institution of marriage is dying. Do you agree? What is the future of marriage and family in America? What are optimistic and pessimistic signs for that?

10. Some people say that male is the dominant sex in human society. Is male a 'superior' sex? Why or why not? What is the impact of the increasing female employment on the institution of marriage and family?

11. What are some of the glaring examples of negligence and exploitation of senior citizens in America?

12. How can we promote enrichment of or happiness in marriage and family relationships?

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

In addition to interacting with me and other students in the class, you can also e-mail me whenever you have challenges or questions, particularly those that you don't want to share with your class mates in regular classes.

Please specify the following in your e-mail: your full name and the course # you are enrolled in so that I can check your record before responding to your need or question.

My goal is to guide each of you in every possible way to succeed in the learning process in this course. I will be objective, professional, and nurturing in my approaches as your teacher.

Although we will not meet as a class, I will be available to interact with each of you and guide you to do your best in the course.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

- **"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).**

- **A Note on Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must work to provide an environment in which each student has the opportunity to be evaluated fairly on the basis of his/her own performance. University regulations regarding academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. At a minimum, any student found to be in violation of university rules will receive a failing grade on the exam or assignment involved. ALL instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to both the Department Head as well as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. These offices may also wish to evaluate the case and decide punishment independent of this professor's actions. I will use the technology to scan your answers and discussions to determine if anyone has copied contents from other students, on-line sources, and from published works. No credit will be**

given to anyone for giving or taking help toward any form of plagiarism beside punitive action in serious cases. While I trust my students, precautions are needed to protect those who genuinely work on the course.

As an example of academic honesty and professionalism, I will trust you but a few students who are unethical spoil reputation of all of us. It is my experience that students who cheat do not succeed in doing well in school and in developing meaningful careers.

❖ **Special Needs: *ADA Statement***

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library
Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

CALENDAR CONTAINING DATES FOR YOUR BONUS-POINTS DISCUSSIONS, AND REQUIRED EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS

(Practice quizzes are not listed. Take as many of them as possible for chapters assigned for each exam.)

Week 1: Monday, 1/14 to Sunday, 1/20: Read Chapters 1 & 2 and work on Discussion 1 on time.

Week 2: Monday, 1/21 to Sunday, 1/27. Read Chapter 3 & work on Discussion 2.

Week 3: Monday, 1/28 to Sunday, 2/3: Read Chapter 4 & work on Discussion 3.

Week 4: Monday, 2/4 to Sunday, 2/10: Read Chapter 5 & work on Discussion 4.

Week 5: Monday, 2/11 to Sunday, 2/17: Read Chapters 6 & 7 & work on Discussion 5.

Week 6: Monday, 2/18 to Sunday, 2/24: Read Chapter 8 & work on Discussion 6.

Take EXAM 1, covering chapters 1 to 8, on Monday, February 25.

Week 7: Monday, 2/25 to Sunday, 3/3: Read Chapter 9 & work on Discussion.7.

Week 8: Monday, 3/4 to Sunday, 3/10: Read Chapter 10 & work on Discussion 8.

Spring Break: 3/11-3/17

Week 9: Monday, 3/18 to Sunday, 3/24: Read Chapter 11 & work on Discussion 9.

Submit your Assignment on Book/Movie Review on 3/25 in Drop Box.

Week 10: Monday, 3/25 to Sunday, 3/31: Read Chapter 12. Work on Discussion 10.

Week 11: Monday, 4/1 to Sunday, 4/7: Read Chapters 13 & 14. Work on Discussion 11.

Week 12: Monday, 4/8 to Sunday, 4/14: Read Chapters 15 to 17. Work on Discussion 12.

Take EXAM 2, covering chapters 9 to 17, on Monday, April 15.

Week 13: Monday, 4/15 to Sunday, 4/21: Work on essays assignment.

Week 14: Monday, 4/22to Sunday, 4/28: Work on essays assignment.

Submit your open-book essays assignment by midnight on April 29.

Take FINAL COMPREHENSIVE-Make-Up EXAM, covering chapters and topics covered by exams 1 & 2, on May 6 (Final Grade available to you on May 8)