Welcome to the Sociology 512 on-line course!

Textbook Required: *Marriages & Families* by Mary Lamanna & Agnes Riedmann, Ninth Edition (2006), ISBN: 0-534-61859-6. Belmont, CA: Thompson/Wadsworth. You may contact the university book store in Commerce at 903-886-5830, or buy it through on-line. The book store may have an option for leasing the book or getting access to an e-copy and online sources may have various options too. It is important that you have a full access to the 2006 edition of the textbook.

I am confident that you will like my selection of the textbook. It is one of the top sellers in the market. Lamanna & Riedmann is famous for using and emphasizing the importance of the perspective of “making choices” related to various notions or ideas on critically understanding and thinking about marriage and family issues. That perspective has gained value in studying marriage and family issues from a social change and liberal outlook.

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF THIS COURSE**

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

1. You must read regularly the syllabus and 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 syllabus and announcements should not be an excuse in any manner. That will be the key to doing well in the course.
2. 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.

3. You can e-mail me whenever you have challenges or questions, particularly those that you don’t want to share with your classmates. Only use this address: raghu.singh@tamuc.edu

4. This is an online course and we will never physically meet as a class. If you need to see me in person, please e-mail me about your need and days and times convenient to you for our meeting on Commerce campus. Give your home and cell phone #s in your e-mail so I can contact you, if necessary.

5. A Note on Academic Honesty: Academic honesty involves an Honor Code which is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must work to provide an environment in which everyone is fair and moral. University regulations regarding academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a general survey course in the American institution of marriage and family. You should read journal articles in journals related to marriage and family and relevant articles on the internet (I will also suggest some internet links for you) while working on your assignments. I will also be providing you with my own research publications and handouts on-line for you to read.

Through readings (text book, on-line materials, and other appropriate books/articles) and discussions through e-mail or one-on-one meetings with me (when possible), 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 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 from a sociological perspective.

2. It will enable you to consider American institution of marriage and family in a comparative and 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 and apply 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 communication problems, problems of conflict and
violence, and seriousness of the divorce process. The course will provide you examples of research studies in the area.

5. The course is not expected to be a ‘fault-finding’ outlook for the most basic institution in human society. You will hopefully explore strategies of prevention and problem solving related to marriage and family issues.

GRADING SYSTEM: EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS

Grading will be based upon total 420 points accumulated from 12 discussions, 2 exams scores, and an assignment or ‘term paper.’ 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 so forth.

Your final grade will be based on the following procedures given under A, B & C:

A. Discussions (worth 120 points)

I will post various discussion questions on marriage and family issues for first 12 weeks. Be sure you log into discussions at the home page of the course and respond to a question during each week. Specific dates (starting and ending) for each discussion are stated in your calendar at the end of this syllabus. You shall not be able to submit each discussion after each week’s deadline. So make sure you work on discussions on scheduled time to earn points.

You will be able to earn up to 10 points for your participation in EACH discussion depending on how meaningful you are based on your reading of materials assigned that week in your comments, how much you respond to others’ comments (you can only have 5 maximum postings; one posting consisting of your own response to a weekly question and up to 4 maximum responses to others’ postings: however, make sure that your response should be more than simply agreeing or disagreeing with others’ comments—you must give your logic of reacting to others’ ideas), and how much critical thinking you demonstrate in your discussion comments.

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 in class can understand what you are talking about. These discussions are meant to be a debate on critical issues. I will give you credit for your discussions accordingly.

B. Closed-Book Exams (a total of 200 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 consist of essay
questions and will constitute 100 points for the final grade. There will be no other make-up exam.

**Dates for the three exams are given the calendar given at the end of this syllabus (each exam will be available on-line starting past midnight each day; the exam closes at midnight on the same day it is scheduled). YOU WILL HAVE 60 MINUTES TO COMPLETE EACH EXAM. YOU WILL BE LOGGED OUT OF THE EXAM AFTER 60 MINUTES. SO TIME YOURSELF CAREFULLY.**

I will e-mail you before each exam for providing you additional guidance.

- **Exam 1** consisting of 100 points based on Chapters 1 to 9 (stated below) to be given on Monday, **February 25**.
  1. Family Commitment & Making Choices
  2. American Families in Social Context
  3. Exploring the Family
  4. Gendered Identities
  5. Loving Process
  6. Our Sexual Selves
  7. Choosing Mates
  8. Marriage as Public & Private Affair
  9. Alternatives to Marriage

- **Exam 2** consisting of 100 points based on Chapters 10 to 18 (stated below) to be given on Monday, **April 15**.
  10. To Parent or Not
  11. Raising Children
  12. Work & Family
  13. Communication
  14. Power & Violence
  15. Family Stress
  16. Divorce
  17. Remarriage
  18. Aging

- **Final-comprehensive-optional-make up exam** consisting of a score of 100 points based on all chapters (1 to 18) to be taken on **May 7**. You must take the final, even if it is ‘optional,’ if you missed taking Exam 1 or 2 for any reason. There will be no other makeup exam during the semester.
- Additional instructions for each exam will be provided through e-mails later when necessary.
- All exams will be closed-book and will consist of short essay questions only. I will guide you for each exam.
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. We cannot control circumstances if your personal computer freezes or has other technical problems. So make sure that no one will distract you while taking the exam.

I want you to do well in answering essay questions in the closed-book exams. If you lose some points in any essay, you may have

- answered a question thoroughly and correctly;
- been too brief in your answer and might not have elaborated on your answer demonstrating your understanding as well as critical thinking;
- not provided a sociological interpretation of issues, even though psychological, counseling, or other perspectives are important;
- lacked relevance and clarity; or
- not providing examples illustrating your points, where needed.

C. **THE MAJOR ASSIGNMENT** (a total of 100 points)

The assignment consists of a research paper (about 5 to 6 pages long in 12 font & double-space, using APA writing manual). Do provide a list of references used by you at the end of your paper. So your paper should be based on a review of selected and relevant ideas and studies. You may first note ideas and references mentioned in the textbook on the topic selected by you. Try to select as **specific or focused** topic as possible. For example, a topic such as ‘male dominance’ may be too broad. Instead, you may consider a topic on male or female dominance negatively affecting communication or satisfaction in marriage.

Select your focus related to **ONE** of the following general issues related to marriage and family (you may select a different issue after consulting me):

1. ‘measurement’ or ‘assessment’ of intimacy or love in a marriage;
2. a serious forms of family violence (such as sexual abuse of children, spousal abuse, etc.) and ways for minimizing its negative impacts;
3. the ways that the communication plays a role in resolving conflicts in marriage in the contemporary American society;
4. how people select a mate for marriage in complex ways and means in the contemporary society;
5. the role of human sexuality in marriage relations;
6. the major arguments in support of and in opposition to ‘no fault’ divorce;
7. the ‘dominant’ sex or gender in human society;
8. the glaring examples of negligence and exploitation of senior citizens in America;
9. promoting enrichment of or happiness in marriage and family relations; and
10. the future of the institution of marriage/family.

I will appreciate if you post your topic in the Virtual Office. I will promptly post my ideas on how you can be more focused, if needed. That way others in class will become aware of various topics in our class.

While you start with consulting 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.

The assignment must be submitted in the Drop Box by the midnight on MAY 5. Please submit your paper in MS Word document. 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.

Please submit assignment on time. Late submissions will lose points.

University Policies Relevant to Online Courses

1. “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). Please make sure you use professional language in discussions, even when disagreeing with each other.

2. Special Needs: ADA Statement

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 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835; Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services
CALENDAR CONTAINING DATES FOR DISCUSSIONS, REQUIRED EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS

(Please be sure to put all dates and deadlines in your monthly calendars as I will be firm on our schedules.)

Week 1: Monday, 1/14 to Sunday, 1/20: Read Chapter 1 and work on Discussion 1.

Week 2: Monday, 1/21 to Sunday, 1/27. Read Chapters 2 & 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 & 9 and 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 10 & work on Discussion 7.

Week 8: Monday, 3/4 to Sunday, 3/10: Read Chapter 11 & work on Discussion 8.

Spring Break: 3/11-3/17

Week 9: Monday, 3/18 to Sunday, 3/24: Read Chapter 12 & work on Discussion 9.


Week 11: Monday, 4/1 to Sunday, 4/7: Read Chapters 15 & 16. Work on Discussion 11.

Week 12: Monday, 4/8 to Sunday, 4/14: Read Chapters 17 & 18. Work on Discussion 12.

Take EXAM 2, covering chapters 9 to 18, on Monday, April 15.


Term Paper Assignment due on May 5.

Take FINAL COMPREHENSIVE-Optional-Makeup EXAM, covering all chapters and topics covered by exams 1 & 2, on May 7.

(Final Grade available to you on May 8)