

**Marriage & Family in the U.S.**  
**SOCY/WGST 3016**  
**Spring 2019**  
**MWF 10:00am-10:50am**  
**Classroom: HUMN 1B80**

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**Instructor:** Jennifer Pace

**Office:** TBA

**Office Hours:** Mondays 11:00-12:00pm  
& by appointment

**Email:** Jennifer.Pace@colorado.edu  
*\*Note: I will return emails within 48 hours,  
excluding weekends.*

**Course Description:**

Sociology is the scientific study of society, social institutions, and social relationships. We all have experience living in society and interacting with other people. Sociology, however, is an unfamiliar way of looking at the familiar. The goal of this course is to embark on a comparative and historical examination of marriage and the family within the U.S. context. This course will emphasize changing family roles and family structures, as well as consider alternatives to the nuclear family and traditional marriage. We will explore both old and new definitions of family. This course has **strongly recommended** prerequisites: SOCY 1001, and SOCY 3001 or 3011. It is also restricted to junior/senior SOCY majors; or consent of the instructor.

**Required Text:** Cherlin, Andrew J. 2009. The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and Family in America Today. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

*\*All additional readings will be available on our Canvas course website.*

**Grading:** Grading for this course will be determined by the following breakdown:

Participation & Assignments	25%
Paper: Policy Proposal	25%
Exam #1	20%
<u>Exam #2</u>	<u>30%</u>
 TOTAL	 100%

*\*\*The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus as necessary\*\**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Participation & Assignments (25%):** Because we will be working collaboratively and because there will be regular in-class discussions and exercises, it is essential that you attend class and that you are prepared to participate. *Participation will be worth 5% of your overall grade* and will be calculated by your attendance and participation in class discussions. *Assignments will be worth 20% of your overall grade.* There will be 14 total assignments collected over the course of the semester and 12 will count toward your grade (see below). The week's assignment will *either* be a summary of the week's readings *or* an "interview & report." See below for details.

**\*Weekly Summaries:** Every week (by class time on **Monday**), you should prepare for class by writing a **summary of ALL of the week's readings** along with **three discussion questions**. Your summary of the week's readings should be approximately 1 page in length (**typed**). Handwritten summaries/questions will not be accepted. Summaries should demonstrate that you have read all of the readings assigned for the week. Your discussion questions should be based on the readings for the entire week. You will use these summaries/questions to facilitate your participation in class, for group discussions, and/or to help prepare you for exams.

- I will collect summaries 12 weeks of the semester (see schedule for dates).
- You may skip 2 summaries without penalty (10 summaries will be counted toward you grade).
- This means you will get 2 free "drops" – use them wisely (e.g. illness, travel, etc.)
- I will collect summaries in class, hardcopy, on Monday, Wednesday, *or* Friday of the week.
- There will be no options for turning summaries in early OR late.

**\*Interview & Report #1: Exploring Coupling** This is your opportunity to explore marriage & partnership in a real world environment and bring your feedback to our class. You should interview at least two people (outside of class) about their experiences with **marriage and/or partnership**. You should develop at least 3-5 questions to ask your interviewees about their experiences. Those questions should be informed by what you have learned in class about marriage and family. *Your written report of the interview should be **typed**, approximately one page, and include the questions you asked, the responses you received, and your analysis of the findings.* (Make sure you **do not** include any identifiable information about the people you interviewed. You want to keep their identities private and confidential.) This assignment is due on **Friday, 2/15** hardcopy, in class.

**\*Interview & Report #2: Exploring Families** This is your opportunity to explore marriage & partnership in a real world environment and bring your feedback to our class. You should interview at least two people (outside of class) about their experiences in **different family forms**. Ideally, your two interviewees should vary in their experiences with family forms (i.e., stepfamily, biological, nuclear, same-sex, single-parent, other). You should develop at least 3-5 questions to ask your interviewees about their experiences. Those questions should be informed by class discussion about marriage and family. *Your written report of the interview should be **typed**, approximately one page, and include the questions you asked, the responses you received, and your thoughts about what you learned.* (Make sure you **do not** include any identifiable

information about the people you interviewed. You want to keep their identities private and confidential.) This assignment is due on **Monday, 4/29** hardcopy, in class.

- There will be 2 “interview & report” assignments due over the course of the semester (see schedule for details).
- You *cannot* use your 2 free “drops” for these assignments.
- There will be no options for turning in “interview & report” assignments early OR late.

**Paper: Policy Proposal (25%):** You will develop a 5 to 7-page paper (not including title or reference pages) addressing either: coupling/marriage (such as legal benefits or rights), or family life (such as work or childcare policies). In this paper, you will use course materials and outside academic (and possibly other) materials to develop a set of (or single, if sufficiently developed) policy proposals to address an issue facing contemporary families. *Additional information will be given later in the semester.* This paper is due on **Friday, 3/22** on our D2L course website. (\*Late papers will be penalized 10 points for each day they are late.)

**Exams (50%):** There will be two exams. The first exam is worth 20% and the second exam is worth 30% of your final grade. Exam material will be drawn from lectures, readings, and other course content/activities. The exams will consist of a combination of True/False, essay, and short answer questions. Exam questions will synthesize content from across course topics. More details will be provided closer to the exam date. The first exam is scheduled for **Friday, 2/22**. The second exam is scheduled for **Friday, 5/01**. Both exams will be taken in class, during our regular class time.

*Exam Make-Up Policy: Missed exams can only be made up with official documentation of an extenuating circumstance (see details below).*

## OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION

### Grading Scale:

Letter	Percentage	Description
A A-	94-100 90-93	Exceptional: Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what is required.
B+ B B-	88-89 83-87 80-82	Good: Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required.
C+ C C-	78-79 73-77 70-72	Average: Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work.
D+ D D-	68-69 63-67 60-62	Below average: Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality is below satisfactory.
F	59 and below	Failing: Almost none of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is unacceptable.

### **Extenuating Circumstances:**

The University of Colorado authorizes extenuating circumstances. Anticipated extenuating absences must be cleared with the instructor prior to the event, (and whenever possible, at the beginning of the semester). An independent official must verify unanticipated or emergency circumstances. Examples of such absences/circumstances and the required documentation/verification are as follows:

#### *Anticipated*

Official university function  
Required court or jury appearance  
Required military obligation  
Religious observances

#### *Required Documentation*

University official authorizing the absence  
Clerk of the Court  
Copy of orders, or commanding officer  
Student initiated request

#### *Emergency/Unanticipated*

Extraordinary illness or injury  
Death of family member  
Closed campus/inclement weather  
Open campus/inclement weather  
Required employment travel

#### *Required Documentation*

Physician  
Copy of death certificate/notice of services  
No verification required  
Highway department closed road verification  
Immediate supervisor

### **Disability:**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>. If you have an undocumented disability that impacts you in your student role, please see me during the first two weeks of class to discuss options. Exams/tests for students **who qualify for accommodations through Disability Services** can be administered by Sociology Staff Mondays 3:30 – 5:00, Tuesdays 3:00 – 5:00, Wednesdays 9:30 – 1:30, and Fridays 12:30 to 3:00. Exams/tests must be scheduled through the Sociology Staff at least one day in advance. **The student must be approved by the student's Disability Access Coordinator** to have accommodations provided. Please provide the student's accommodation letter to the staff along with the Sociology exam/test proctoring form. More information can be found at this link: <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/faculty-staff/working-disability-services-students/providing-accomodations>. Students needing to cancel an exam/test scheduled with Sociology Staff need to communicate with the professor and Sociology Staff no less than 2 hours before the scheduled exam/test. Students should expect that exams/tests will be proctored, and that they will be observed in person. A proctor is allowed to check materials that the student has in her/his possession. Items such as notes, books, and calculators cannot be used by the student unless confirmed by the professor prior to the exam. Personal items may not be taken into the testing area. Food, drinks, and gum (excluding water) are not allowed in the testing area unless it is an authorized accommodation. Students are responsible for bringing her/his own supplies and references, as have been permitted by the professor or per the student's accommodations letter. If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty during an exam, Sociology staff will inform the professor who will determine any consequences.

**Religious Observance:**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. If you have a religious observance conflict, you will need to provide written proof of the conflict and I will work with you on an individual basis to address the issue. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus, note any possible conflicts, and discuss alternatives with me at the beginning of the semester.

See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)

**Academic Honesty:**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, bribery, threatening behavior, and aid of academic dishonesty. Those found to be in violation of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Code Council. Please refer to [www.colorado.edu/honorcode](http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode) to view the specific guidelines. If you have any questions related to this policy, please contact the Honor Code Council at [honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu).

**Classroom Behavior:**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavior standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities.

**Course Policies:**

1. No laptops or cell phones are allowed in lecture. If you have an accommodation that allows the use of a laptop, please see me outside of class so we can discuss your accommodations.
2. There are no "make-ups" or "early turn-ins" for in-class work/assignments/exams.
3. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. For in-class notes, please contact one of your classmates (see "class contacts" at the end of this syllabus).
4. In this class, as in many sociology classes, our discussion will often focus on controversial issues that may arouse intense feelings and disagreement. While enthusiastic discussion and debate of these issues is wholeheartedly encouraged, insensitive or inappropriate comments will not be tolerated.
5. As the instructor, I reserve the right to ask you to leave if I believe your comments and/or actions are contributing to a classroom environment where not all individuals (myself included) feel respected and safe.
6. Please do not get up and leave class, or start packing up to leave, before our time is up. Please avoid consistent lateness to class. It is distracting to both me and the other students.

If you must leave early or come late, please let me know ahead of time. Repeatedly disrupting class by being late/leaving early will have a negative impact on your in-class participation grade. For repeated tardiness, you may also be asked to leave class for the day.

7. I do not post lecture slides online. However, they are available for review in office hours.

**Peer Contact Information (your first source for missed material)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email/Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email/Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email/Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# COURSE SCHEDULE

- ❖ Readings/summaries of readings for the week are due by **Monday** at the beginning of class.
- ❖ Readings marked with \* can be found on our D2L course website.
- ❖ Readings from Cherlin are found in the book we are reading this semester, *The Marriage Go Round*.

## ***Unit #1: History, The Modern Family, & Marriage in the U.S. Context***

### Week 1 (1/14-1/18): Introduction & Course Concepts

*Readings:*      \*Qualitative Methods  
                      \*Quantitative Methods  
                      \*Mills: *The Sociological Imagination*

*Due & Events:* In-class small groups, group summaries of readings

### Week 2 (1/21-1/25): History of Marriage and Family Life

*Readings:*      -Cherlin – *Ch. 1 How American Family Life is Different*  
                      -Cherlin – *Ch. 2 The Historical Origins of the American Pattern, 1650-1900*  
                      -Cherlin – *Ch. 3 The Rise of the Companionate Marriage, 1900-1960*  
                      \*Coontz: *The Evolution of American Families*

*Due & Events:* No Class on Monday (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)  
                      Summary #1 due

### Week 3 (1/28-2/01): Family Forms & Functions

*Readings:*      \*Coontz – *The Way We Wish We Were: Defining the Family Crisis*  
                      \*Smith – *The Standard North American Family: SNAF/ Ideological Code*  
                      \*Holstein & Gubrium – *Deprivatization and the Construction of Domestic Life*

*Due & Events:* Summary #2 due

### Week 4 (2/04-2/08): Modern Marriage

*Readings:*      -Cherlin *Ch. 4 – The Individualized Marriage & Expressive Divorce, 1960-2000*  
                      -Cherlin *Ch. 5 – The American Way of Marriage*  
                      \*Gerstel & Sarkisian – *Marriage: The Good, the Bad, and the Greedy*  
                      \*Edin, Kefalas, & Reed – *What Marriage Means for Poor Unmarried Parents*

*Due & Events:* Summary #3 due

## Week 5 (2/11-2/15): The (Messy) Politics of Marriage

- Readings:
- \*Heath – *One Marriage Under God: The Campaign to Promote Marriage in America*
  - \*Weigt – *Heavier Burden: The Gendered Contours of Sexual Partnering after Welfare Reform*
  - \*Whitehead – *The Nuptial Deal: Same-Sex Marriage and Neo-Liberal Governance*

Events & Due: **Interview & Report: Exploring Coupling (due Friday, hardcopy, in class)**

## Week 6 (2/18-2/22): Parents & Children

- Readings:
- \*Hays – *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood: Why Can't a Mother be More Like a Businessman?*
  - \*Mollborn – *Children Having Children*
  - \*Lareau – *Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth*
  - \*Miller – *The Relentlessness of Modern Parenting* (link to NY Times)

Events & Due: Summary #4 due Monday

**EXAM #1 ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> (in class)**

## ***Unit #2: Race, Class, and Gender in Marriage & Family***

## Week 7 (2/25-3/01): Gender in Marriage & Family

- Readings:
- \*Chesley – *Stay at Home Fathers and Breadwinning Mothers: Gender, Couple Dynamics, and Social Change*
  - \*Coltrane – *Elite Careers and Family Commitment: It's Still About Gender*
  - \*Gerson – *Moral Dilemmas, Moral Strategies, and the Transformation of Gender: Lessons from Two Generations of Work and Family Change*
  - \*Cohen – *Jump-Start the Struggle for Gender Equality* (link to NY Times)

Events & Due: Summary #5 due

## Week 8 (3/04-3/08): Race, Ethnicity, & Migration

- Readings:
- \*Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila – *I'm Here but I'm There: Transnational Motherhood*
  - \*Coontz – *The Myth of Black Family Collapse*
  - \*Pyke – *The Normal American Family as an Interpretive Structure of Family Life Among Grown Children of Korean and Vietnamese Immigrants*

Events & Due: Summary #6 due



## Week 9 (3/11-3/15): Social Class & Stratification

*Readings:*     -Cherlin – *Ch. 7: Blue-Collar Blues & White-Collar Weddings*  
                  \*Hays – *Flat Broke with Children: Pyramids of Inequality*  
                  \*Mollborn, Pace, & Rigles – *Children's Health Lifestyles*  
                  \**Why all Americans Believe They Are Middle Class (Link to The Atlantic)*

*Events & Due:* Summary #7 due

## Week 10 (3/18-3/22): Intersectional Analyses

*Readings:*     \*Cheng – *The Accumulation of (Dis)advantage: The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Long-Term Wage Effect of Marriage*  
                  \*Elliott & Aseltine – *Raising Teenagers in Hostile Environments: How Race, Class, and Gender Matter for Mothers' Protective Carework*  
                  \*Shows & Gerstel – *Fathering, Class, and Gender: A Comparison of Physicians and Emergency Medical Technicians*

*Events & Due:* Summary #8 due (on Monday)  
**POLICY PAPER DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup> (by 11:59pm, online).**

## Week 11 (3/25-3/29): SPRING BREAK

*No classes*

## ***Unit #3: The Changing Landscape of Marriage & Family Life***

## Week 12 (4/01-4/05): Same-Sex Marriage & Families

*Readings:*     \*Powell – *Who Gets to Count as Family?*  
                  \*Stacey & Biblarz – *How Does Sexual Orientation of the Parent Matter?*  
                  \*Berkowitz & Marsiglio – *Gay Men: Negotiating Procreative, Father, and Family Identities*

*Events & Due:* Summary #9 due

## Week 13 (4/08-4/12): Cohabitation

*Readings:*     \*Sassler & Miller – *Waiting to Be Asked: Gender, Power, and Relationship Progression Among Cohabiting Couples*  
                  \*Smock, Manning, & Porter – *How Money Shapes Decisions to Marry Among Cohabitors*  
                  \*Manning & Cohen – *Premarital Cohabitation and Marital Dissolution: Examination of Recent Marriages*

*Events & Due:* Summary #10 due

## Week 14 (4/15-4/19): Marital/Relationship Dissolution

*Readings:*      \*Cherlin – *Ch. 8: Slow Down*  
                     \*Amato – *Research on Divorce: Continuing Trends and New Developments*  
                     \*Cohen – *Millennial Divorce Drops*  
                     \*Cohen – *Millennial Divorce Rate Drops Explained*

*Events & Due:* Summary #11 due

## Week 15 (4/22-4/26): Stepfamilies & Single-Parent Families

*Readings:*      \*Sweeney – *Remarriage & Stepfamilies: Strategic Sites for Family Scholarship*  
                     \*Moore – *Gendered Power Relations among Women: A Study of Household Decision Making in Black, Lesbian Stepfamilies*  
                     \*Coles – *Single Father Families: A Review of the Literature*  
                     \*Hertz – *Why Women Are Choosing Parenthood without Marriage*

*Events & Due:* Summary #12 due

## Week 16 (4/29-5/01): Course Wrap up & Review

*Readings:*      *No readings this week. On Monday, we'll discuss your Interview & Report on family forms, do a "course wrap up," and review for exam #2. Wednesday, we'll take exam #2.*

*Events & Due:* **Interview & Report: Exploring Families (due Monday, hardcopy, in class)**  
**EXAM #2 ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 1<sup>ST</sup> (in class)**

**\*We do not have an exam scheduled for finals week.**