Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: SOCI 214

Course Title: The Family

Number of Credit Hours: 3  Lecture Hours: 3  Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Survey of structures, functions, processes, alternative life styles and problems in the contemporary family. Course meets World/Eastern Culture graduation requirement. Offered odd Fall.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): None.

Text(s): Instructors are encouraged to use a primary text, from this initial list, and a supplemental reader or text from the following list.

Most current editions of the following:

- Benokraitis, Nijole V. *Feuds About Families: Conservative, Centrist, Liberal, and Feminist Perspectives*. Prentice Hall.
- Ferguson, Susan J. *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. Mayfield Publishers.

Supplemental Texts:

- Casper, Lynne M. *Continuity and Change in the American Family*. Sage Publications.


Wallerstein, Lewis and Blakeslee. *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.* Hyperion.


**Course Objectives:**

- To develop a sociological understanding of the family as a historical and social construction, and thus to be able to understand family diversity along social class lines, racial and ethnic lines, as well as along the lines of sexual orientation.
- To understand sociological perspectives on the family, particularly functions of the family and conflict perspectives on the family.
- To develop critical and analytical skills through the analysis of family problems such as domestic violence, child abuse, divorce, family poverty, and the effects of incarceration on families; as well as through the interrogation of the social construction of the following concepts: ‘motherhood,’ ‘fatherhood,’ and ‘childhood.’
- To develop understanding of the effects of social policy on families.

**Measurable Learning Outcomes**

- Understand the historical and social construction of the ‘family.’
- Explain family diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class and the manifestations of such differences.
- Identify and describe the structures and functions of the family in society.
- Describe and analyze the social psychological factors that affect the pairing process and the
development of intimate relationships.
- Understand family crises such as domestic violence, child abuse, divorce and family poverty from a sociological perspective.
- Establish understanding of the role of social polity toward families.
- Explain the social construction of ‘motherhood,’ ‘fatherhood,’ and ‘childhood’
- Explain significant demographic changes and their affects on families (i.e.: an aging population)

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):
- The family from a historical, social constructionist perspective.
- The major sociological theoretical perspectives on the family.
- Motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood--social roles.
- Family diversity
  - race and ethnicity
  - social class and the family
  - alternative family forms: gay and lesbian families, single parent families, cohabitation, childless couples
- Family crises
  - divorce, remarriage, and step-families
  - domestic violence and child abuse
  - families in poverty
- The mate selection process and theories

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: Kathleen J. Fitzgerald

Date: May 20, 2005

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

Office of Academic Affairs
12/04