

# SOC 5400/8400: THE FAMILY

Fall 2014

**Mondays, 3:00-5:45pm**  
**0208 State Hall**

Professor: Dr. Heather Dillaway  
Office Location: 2237 Faculty Administration Building (FAB)  
Office Hours: Mondays 1pm-2:30pm, or by appointment. **Office hours begin on 9/22/14.**  
Phone Number: 313-577-2930 (you can leave a message for me)  
Email Addresses: [dillaway@wayne.edu](mailto:dillaway@wayne.edu) (*quickest way to reach me*)

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a sociological framework for analyzing families in contemporary U.S. society. An emphasis will be placed on changing definitions of “family,” helping students become acquainted with family lives across time and space. We will also think about the organization and structure of families, interactions among family members across the life course, and the conflicts and changes that occur in families. Throughout the course, we will focus on family differences created by class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, technology, history, and politics. In addition, we will analyze current debates over the family from time to time, and delve into specific topics such as paid work and family, motherhood, fatherhood, marriage, divorce, reproductive technologies, family violence, and social policy. This is a combined undergraduate- and graduate-level course, in that students in this course are enrolled in either Sociology 5400 or Sociology 8400. Sociology 5400 is coded as both an advanced undergraduate course and a Master’s level course. Sociology 8400 is a PhD level course. Students enrolled in Sociology 8400 should expect additional readings and assignments, and may be required to have separate meetings with me from time to time.

Attendance is mandatory for this course, and students are required to participate when I open topics up for discussion. Students should complete all assigned readings before coming to class and be prepared to discuss with the larger group the key ideas found in the readings.

The broad learning objectives of SOCIOLOGY 5400 and 8400 are to help students from a range of disciplines:

- 1) understand and analyze the complexity and diversity of families in the United States;
- 2) contemplate the importance of both structure and agency when looking at U.S. families, to help students understand the choices families have and the constraints they face;
- 3) realize the socially constructed nature of our perceptions of families;
- 4) think beyond present-day family life to consider what families lives have been like across time and space; and
- 5) understand the reasons for and substance of current debates about U.S. families.

If students have questions or concerns about the course at any point during the semester, I will be available before/after class, during office hours, or by appointment. Also, students may contact me via email or phone using the contact information listed above.

*One Last, Very Important Note:* Because this is a course on families, students must be ready to keep an open mind and engage thoughtfully with written material, lecture material, and their own and others’ ideas about particular families. *If you are not ready to keep an open mind while reading, writing, and participating in class, this course may not be for you.* Please review this syllabus and contact Heather Dillaway if you have any questions or concerns.

## REQUIRED READINGS

### **Required Books for Soc 5400:**

1. Baca Zinn, M., Eitzen, D. S., & Wells, B. (2015). Diversity in Families (10th Edition) [Hardcover or Paperback is fine]. Pearson Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-93648-9 (It is okay to get the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 9th edition instead)
2. Ferguson, Susan. (2011). Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families (4<sup>th</sup> edition) [Paperback]. McGraw-Hill. ISBN-13: 978-0-07-340423-3. (please get the most recent edition)
3. I will post additional readings on Blackboard from time to time. I will note whether these additional readings are required readings or not.

### **Required Reading for Soc 8400:**

1. Baca Zinn, M., Eitzen, D. S., & Wells, B. (2015). Diversity in Families (10th Edition) [Hardcover or Paperback is fine]. Pearson Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-93648-9 (It is okay to get the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 9th edition instead)
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3. White, J., Klein, D. M., & Martin, T. F. (2015). Family Theories: An Introduction. [paperback]. 3rd edition. Sage Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-1-4522-7018-0 (please get the most recent edition if you can)
4. I will post additional readings on Blackboard from time to time. I will note whether these additional readings are required readings or not.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Course Requirements for Sociology 5400:**

- Attendance and Participation = 20 points (10% of your course grade)
- Facilitation of Discussion = 20 points (10% of your course grade)
- Reading Reaction Journal (10 journals) = 20 points (10% of your course grade)
- Two Reflection Papers = 80 points (40 points each) (40% of your course grade)
- Research Paper = 60 points (30% of your course grade)
- Total number of possible points = 200 points*

### **Course Requirements for Sociology 8400:**

- Attendance and Participation = 20 points (10% of your course grade)
- Facilitation of Discussion (Twice) = 20 points (10% of your course grade)
- Two Reflection Papers = 80 points (40 points each) (40% of your course grade)
- Theory Paper = 80 points (40% of your course grade)
- Total number of possible points = 200 points*

### **Explanation of Course Requirements:**

1. *Attendance:* You may miss two (2) classes during the semester, no questions asked. After these two absences, every subsequent absence will affect the final course grade. There are NO exceptions to this policy, unless you have a VERIFIABLE emergency and we work something out. If you are absent due to medical reasons, I will need to see a doctor's note. **Attendance will be recorded at ALL class sessions, starting on September 15, 2014, and ending on December 15, 2014.** Students are responsible for making sure that I have recorded them as "present" on any given day. Please be advised that *the instructor will NOT provide lecture notes for students, but all students ARE responsible for all material covered and announcements made during class.* Therefore, if students must be absent at some point during the course, it is their responsibility to find a classmate who is willing to share her/his notes with them.

2. *Participation and Facilitation of Discussion:* **All students are required to participate actively during discussion.** This is part of all students' grades. It is not enough to simply attend class. We will dedicate time to group discussion of readings, lecture material, and course assignments, and all students should be prepared for those discussion times. **Each student also will have responsibility for facilitating discussion during one class meeting.** (Students will be assigned a discussion day on **September 15<sup>th</sup>** during class and 2-3 students will be assigned to facilitate discussion during each subsequent class meeting.) Facilitation of discussion will include coming to class with a list of key themes, concepts, and questions that one wants to discuss with the larger group and/or a list of questions that one thinks will stimulate discussion of key issues in the readings (see "Guidelines for Facilitating Group Discussion" at the end of the syllabus). Student facilitators are also encouraged to think of innovative ways to create discussion through large or small group activities. While I will help facilitate discussions, students should be ready to be in charge of the discussion on their appointed day. NOTE: *If there is more than one facilitator per class meeting, students are also responsible for coordinating their discussion of the course material so that there is no overlap and so that multiple topics are covered in discussion each day.*

3. *Reading Reaction Journal* (for Soc 5400 students only):

"Reading Reaction Journals" consist of 1-2 page summaries of and reactions to weekly readings. To receive full credit for this assignment, students are required to turn in 10 Reading Reaction Journals. Reading Reaction Journals are due before the beginning of class each week, starting on the week of September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Journal entries should have three parts, in that students are required to (1) summarize at least one reading assigned for that week, (2) answer two questions about the reading, and (3) come up with one question for class discussion based on the reading. This assignment is something that you will do on your own time. You will receive credit for making an entry in your journal for ten weeks of the course and for covering the three parts outlined above in your writing. This assignment is worth 10% of the SOC 5400 course grade. **YOU WILL TURN IN YOUR READING JOURNALS ONLINE EACH WEEK BEFORE COMING TO CLASS.** I will give you detailed directions on September 15<sup>th</sup> about how to submit these online journals. The first journal will be due before class on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

4. *Reflection Papers:* This part of the course grade will be determined by the student's ability to reflect on ideas that have been discussed in lecture and/or in the readings and film and relate these ideas to sociological theories, current family debates or current media conversations, and/or their own family experiences. Students are required to turn in **TWO** out of three reflection paper assignments over the course of the semester. Reflection papers will be due in class on September 29<sup>th</sup>, October 20<sup>th</sup>, and November 24<sup>th</sup>. For each paper, I will hand out detailed instructions explaining how you should go about writing these assignments. Each paper should be 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and with one inch margins all around. Reflection papers are due in class on days that are reserved for

discussion of readings. Reflection paper topics will relate directly to the topic for that week's discussion, and therefore completing reflection papers will help students prepare for these discussion days.

5. *Research Paper* (for Soc 5400 students only): Students will choose to write about one of two types of topics for their research papers: (1) either a current political debate or hot topic in the media about families (e.g., same-sex marriage debates, whether women should stay at home to raise kids, how involved fathers should be, the benefits of public daycare for children, the use of reproductive technologies to achieve parenthood, trends toward delayed marriage and childbearing, elder caregiving, child abuse or elder abuse), etc., or (2) a type of family structure (e.g., dual career families, single parent families, childless families, lesbian or gay families, divorced families, remarried families, extended families, etc.). Once students pick their topic, they are required to find at least 10-12 academic sources of their own on this topic, to bolster what they have already read on this topic in class. Students will then produce their own research paper on this topic, based on guidelines that I will hand out in class in future weeks. This paper should be approximately 10-12 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and with one inch margins all around. Students will be required to turn in a one-paragraph description of their research paper topic in early October, and a list of their outside sources by mid November. The due date for this paper is Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.

6. *Theory Paper* (for Soc 8400 students only): Because Soc 8400 is a PhD-level course, students enrolled in the graduate-level version of this course have an additional book to read on family theory. After reading this book, students will be asked to write a paper that represents a comparison of at least two family theories and how those theories apply to their own topic of interest within family studies. This paper should be approximately 15 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and with one inch margins all around. The due date for this assignment is Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. *Additional guidelines for this paper will be discussed individually with Soc 8400 students at a later date. This assignment will be tailored to specific students in Soc 8400 each semester.*

## OTHER COURSE POLICIES

1. *Assignment Deadlines:* If students hand in papers or exams late, they will automatically lose points on their grade for that assignment. As a rule, assignments that are one day late will be moved down one grade step (e.g., A to A- or C+ to C). Assignments that are two days late will be marked down a full letter grade (e.g., A to B or C to D). Assignments that are three days late will be moved down one full letter grade plus another grade step (e.g., A to B- or B- to D). Assignments that are four days late will be marked down two full letter grades (e.g., A to C or B to D). Assignments that are more than four days late will not be accepted.
2. *Responsibility for All Material Covered During Class:* You are responsible for all announcements made during class, as well as all information relayed during lecture, all discussions we have as a group, and all films (if any) we view during class meetings. I do not provide notes for students; thus I encourage you to find someone in the class who would be willing to share notes with you if you are absent or late to class.
3. *Cell Phones, Pagers, iPhones, iPads, iTouches, etc.:* All phones, pages, and other electronic devices should be turned off (or turned to a silent ringer option) before you enter the classroom and before the class period begins. Students should also refrain from texting, facebooking, tweeting, or surfing the web during class time. If you are using a laptop during class time, please use it for note-

taking purposes only. Please respect your classmates who are trying to learn course material. *I reserve the right to lower students' participation and attendance grades if students are disruptive in class because they are online during class time.*

4. *Course Withdrawals and Incompletes:* Incompletes will only be given in the cases of medical or other VERIFIABLE emergencies. If students are not doing well in this course, they have the responsibility of formally withdrawing from this course. Please note that the withdrawal system at Wayne State is student-initiated, in that students who desire to withdraw from the course do so themselves via Pipeline. When students withdraw, they may receive a “withdraw passing” (WP), “withdraw failing” (WF), or “withdraw not enough information” (WN) on their transcript, depending on how much of the course is completed. According to the university’s grading policies, students who do not formally withdraw from the course but stop attending class and do not complete scheduled assignments will receive a failing grade (F) in the course. *Before withdrawing from the course, you should talk to the instructor about why you are withdrawing.* The last date to withdraw from this course is November 9<sup>th</sup>. The last day to withdraw from this course AND get your money back is September 10<sup>th</sup>.
5. *Course Ground Rules:* All rules of courtesy and respect are in effect during class time. Please respect your fellow students and your instructor by coming to class on time, staying until class is over, being patient and courteous while others are talking, etc. Treat others as you yourself would like to be treated. I reserve the right to lower students’ attendance and participation grades if students are disruptive in class. Please also review the course “ground rules” found at the end of the syllabus.
6. *Concerns about the Course:* If you have any concerns about the course (grade-related or otherwise), you should speak to me immediately and directly about your concerns. However, class time will NOT be used to discuss your course concerns. The concerns you have about the course should be discussed PRIVATELY with the instructor, as they are *your* concerns and not your classmates’.
7. *Problems with Writing?* The grade for written assignments will depend partially on student’s ability to write a coherent, well-organized, and grammatically sound written product. If students have concerns about their writing abilities, they should visit Wayne State University’s Writing Center in the Undergraduate Library (313-577-2544). There is also a page of writing resources posted on the sociology department’s website that might help you:  
<http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/Sociology/WritingResources>
8. *Student Disability Services:* If you are a student with a disability or condition (physical, emotional, or other) that might affect your performance in this course, you should inform me of this as early as possible. Students with a range of disabilities can also receive help from Student Disability Services, located in the Undergraduate Library (phone number: (313) 577-1851; email: [studentdisability@wayne.edu](mailto:studentdisability@wayne.edu); website: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/> ).
9. *Plagiarism & Cheating:* All university rules about plagiarism and cheating are in effect during this course. Please make a note of this.
10. *Class Cancellations:* **Class is cancelled on October 20<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>.** Besides these cancellations, please expect the course to meet at its scheduled time every week unless there is a weather or university emergency.

11. *Changes to the Syllabus:* Information in this syllabus is always subject to change. Please pay attention to course announcements each week so that you are informed of any changes. Please also make sure that you have access to your WSU email account so that you will receive emails that I may send via the course's Blackboard site.

**FINAL GRADES**

**FINAL GRADES WILL BE DETERMINED USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE:**

92.51-100	A	71.51-75.50	C
89.51-92.50	A-	67.51-71.50	C-
86.51-89.50	B+	64.51-67.50	D+
82.51-86.50	B	59.51-64.50	D
78.51-82.50	B-	54.51-59.50	D-
75.51-78.50	C+	54.50 or below	F

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

*(SOC 8400 STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE A SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS.)*

**A. PERSPECTIVES ON THE FAMILY**

**September 8<sup>th</sup> – Introduction to the Course**

**September 15<sup>th</sup> – What is the Family? Ideas, Myths, Definitions**

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 1
- Ferguson, Readings 1, 2, 4

**September 22<sup>nd</sup> – History of Families and Family Variation**

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapters 2 & 3
- Ferguson, Readings 3, 5, 6, 9, 10

**September 29<sup>th</sup> – Societal Upheavals and Structural Transformations that Impact Families**  
**\*\*REFLECTION PAPER #1 DUE TODAY IN CLASS\*\***

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 4
- Ferguson, Readings 19, 51, 52, 53, 54 (we will divide up these readings)

**October 6<sup>th</sup> – Theories of the Family, Past and Present**

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 6
- Ferguson, Readings 7, 8, 21, 36, 48 (we will divide up these readings)

**B. ASSORTED TOPICS CONCERNING FAMILIES**

**October 13<sup>th</sup> – Work and Family Issues**

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 7
- Ferguson, Readings 19, 45, 46, 47

**October 20<sup>th</sup> – NO CLASS (CATCH UP ON READINGS)**

**October 27<sup>th</sup> – Motherhood and Fatherhood**

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 10
- Ferguson, Readings 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 (we will divide up these readings)

**November 3<sup>rd</sup> – Intimacy and Marriage**

Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapters 8 and 9
- Ferguson, Readings 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20 (we will divide up these readings)

## **November 10<sup>th</sup> -- Divorce and Remarriage**

### Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 12
- Ferguson, Readings 37, 38, 39, 40

## **November 17<sup>th</sup> – Families, Violence, and Power**

### Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 11
- Ferguson, Reading 41, 42, 43, 44

## **November 24<sup>th</sup> – Children and the Elderly**

**\*\*REFLECTION PAPER #3 DUE TODAY IN CLASS\*\***

### Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 5
- Ferguson, Readings 33, 34, 35, 50

## **December 1<sup>st</sup> – NO CLASS (Catch up on your work! Work on Papers!)**

## **December 8<sup>th</sup> – Changing Families**

### Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 13
- Ferguson, Reading 50
- Blackboard Readings: To be announced

## **December 15<sup>th</sup> – Family Policy**

### Required Reading:

- Baca Zinn, Eitzen, & Wells, Chapter 14
- Ferguson, Reading 4
- Blackboard Readings: To be announced

## **December 19<sup>th</sup> – SOC 5400 RESEARCH PAPERS AND THEORY PAPERS DUE TODAY BY MIDNIGHT (THIS IS A FRIDAY. THERE IS NO CLASS ON THIS DAY.)**



### **Guidelines for Facilitating Group Discussion:**

On one designated day during the semester, each student will help discuss reading assignments. (Signups for facilitation of discussion will occur on September 15<sup>th</sup> during class.) Appointed students will direct our conversations about the chapters/articles we have read during the current week. Students' tasks include the following: (1) *briefly explain some of the key themes of the readings*; (2) *identify questions the articles raise so that we can carry out our group discussion*; and (3) *highlight confusing/problematic sections of the readings so that we can clarify their meaning*. Student facilitators are also encouraged to think of innovative ways to create discussion through large or small group activities. This assignment will give students experience in identifying critical issues and themes in scholarly works, and also presentation/teaching experience. Below are some questions to think about when preparing to facilitate discussion. These questions are simply guides; students may discover that there are more important questions to address than the ones I suggest.

#### **Finding Themes in the Articles You Read:**

1. What is/are the major research question(s) or theme(s) of the work(s) you have read? Define the theme(s) and come up with an example of each theme you define.
2. What is/are the key findings or conclusions of the book chapters/articles in recent weeks? Can you summarize these findings in one or two sentences? Are these findings controversial and debatable at all?
3. What is/are the connection(s) between readings and lecture topics?
4. What are the readings really saying about families today?

#### **When Thinking of Questions to Discuss with the Class, Perhaps Try to Answer the Following:**

1. Can you identify ways in which the researcher(s) could have gone farther in exploring this particular topic?
2. What implications do the authors' findings have for our definitions of family?
3. Why did I pick this reading for a "family" course? Do you think the subject of the readings is appropriate to discuss, or are there more important subjects that we should be discussing?
4. What is most interesting to you about this reading? What is most controversial? Does it make you think differently about family/certain types of families?
5. How does your reading fit with or contradict all the other readings assigned for this week/prior weeks?? How are the readings similar to each other and how are they different? Are there any common themes? Do authors of these readings contradict each other?
6. Given the argument that the author(s) present(s), could you play "devil's advocate?" In other words, could we argue the opposite viewpoint?
7. Is the author presenting a biased viewpoint? If so, how do you know? Would you discuss the author's topic differently?
8. Who is the audience for this reading? How does this impact the author's arguments or presentation of the topic?
9. In what ways does this reading make you think deeper about the subjects covered in this class?
10. What might be the most interesting aspect of this reading for individuals in the class – i.e., students at Wayne State or residents of the Detroit Metropolitan Area? How is this reading relevant for us?
11. What argument/theme in the readings did you dislike and why?
12. Based on the readings you have done, do we need to do more research in order to understand U.S. families? In other words, does the research push our knowledge far enough?
13. How can we take authors' conclusions and learn from them? What should we take away from this reading?

#### **Ideas for Small/Large Group Activities:**

1. Have groups of students take opposite viewpoints on a particular "family" debate related to our readings, and ask them to present their viewpoints.
2. Have students critique an article's findings.
3. Bring in current event articles or media items that relate to course material for that week, and discuss connections.
4. Brainstorm about how to study this topic further.
5. Pair up students and have them interview each other on a common question about families that is related to our readings, and then compare answers/experiences.
6. Make students talk about how they would deal with certain family situations/problems.
7. Come up with your own idea!

~ See me if you have problems or questions about facilitating discussion on your designated day. ~

## GROUND RULES FOR CLASS DISCUSSION\*

We are distributing these ground rules to help guide future class discussions. Everyone in this class has an individual social location and a personal perspective to go along with that location. To facilitate class discussion, I encourage you to think about how everyone's perspective is shaped by their social location. I would like each of you to think in terms of the relationship between society, ideas about "the family," and the individual when contributing to class discussions.

1. Recognize that the various axes of our social location – our gender, race, class, sexuality, age, etc. – grant us different amounts of power and prestige in society.
2. Acknowledge that sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism and other forms of institutionalized oppression exist.
3. Acknowledge that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups.
4. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
5. Agree not to "blame victims" for the conditions of their lives.
6. Assume that people – both the people we study and the members of this class – always do the best they can.
7. Acknowledge that, perhaps, there is no "correct" type of "family." Accept the diversity in family experience and try to understand it rather than critique it.
8. Actively pursue information about our own groups and that of others.
9. Share information about our own groups with other members of the class and never demean, devalue, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences.
10. Agree to combat actively the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain.
11. Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. If members of the class wish to make comments that they do not want repeated outside of the classroom, they can preface their remarks with a request that the class agrees not to repeat their remarks.
12. Follow general rules of courtesy and respect for others. Take turns speaking so that no one dominates discussion and acknowledge everyone's opportunities to speak/share knowledge with the class.

\*These guidelines were adapted from guidelines written by Lynn Weber and Rita Gallin.

## First Day Family Survey

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and turn your survey in before you leave today, if you feel comfortable doing so. Thank you in advance for participating in the survey.

1. How many people are in your family? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What kinds of people do you consider to be part of your family?

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3. What are the two most important events in your family life? (These events can be negative or positive for you, or both.)

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4. Do you have your own children? If so, how many children do you have, and what are their ages?

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5. How would you define "family"?

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6. What is your marital status?

- a) Single, never married
- b) Cohabiting (living with a partner but not married)
- c) Married
- d) Divorced
- e) Separated
- f) Widowed
- g) Domestic Partnership
- h) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your race/ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your sex?

- a) Female
- b) Male