

Wayne State University: Department of Sociology
SOC 5410: Marriage and Family Problems
Monday 5:30-8:15 p.m.
0213 State Hall

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Pare; Department of Sociology

Office Hours: By appt. Available immediately before or after lecture.

Email: erpare@wayne.edu

Place in subject line: SOC 5410 (if this is not in subject e-mail may not be read!!!)

Catalog Description: Social and historical context of marriage and family problems. Discussion occurs in class about power, conflict, communication and crisis as they relate to the nature and dynamics of the family. Problem solving techniques as related to specific family problems such as: divorce or child abuse.

Course Objectives:

- ✓ Discuss how human beings manage, learn, and maintain interpersonal relationships in the family.
- ✓ Explore how couples and family solve problems; be able to discuss how you would apply these techniques.
- ✓ Explore how different socio-cultural factors may impact interpersonal familial relationships.
- ✓ Critically assess the variations of marriage and family dynamics, and how these effect the family and larger society.
- ✓ Critically assess theoretical and policy discussions in relation to the above.

TEXT: *Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths. Seventh Edition. David H. Olson, John DeFrain, and Linda Skogrand. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.* (REQUIRED!). Available at campus bookstores. I will not provide any books; you are responsible for acquiring your own.

Other materials for in class: Scantron, #2 pencil and college ruled paper. You will use the Scantron & #2 pencil for exams. Paper will be used for any in-class work as part of participation/attendance.

Method of Instruction: Class time will be allocated between lectures on assigned chapter topics from our text, in class discussion and activities wherein we will analyze real world events, apply the theoretical concepts we have learned and develop a deeper understanding of the world around us.

Assignments & Grading:

Exam 1=15%

Exam 2=15%

Exam 3=15%

Reflection Assignment #1: 15%

Reflection Assignment #2=15%

Reflection Assignment #3=15%

Participation/Attendance=10%

There are **no** additional questions on exams or assignments given for the course. There is **NO** extra credit. If at any point students have any questions on their grades students should schedule a meeting with me outside class time. I am also immediately available before or after class and by email any time to set up a meeting to discuss your grades face to face

Exams: Exams will cover all readings and lectures. Exams will be multiple-choice. Exams will include questions that relate to: knowledge, comprehension, and application. Students are responsible for all reading assignments even if the information is not covered in class. Late or make up exams are generally not given (see policy below). Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade in the course.

Participation/Attendance: Participation/Attendance will be taken 10 times during the school semester. IF you are here you receive credit. IF you are not here, you don't. It is your responsibility to attend class, read the material prior to our meeting and be able to readily participate. Participation/attendance will consist of students "signing" via completion of various tasks and again you will want to make sure you are up to date on reading as indicated on the syllabus *before* coming to class! This is worth 10% of your final grade in the course.

Reflection Assignment #1, #2, #3: You will receive a handout (as indicated on the syllabus) regarding more detail on each the week before they are due. Papers must be: 4-5 pages in length, 12 pt. Times New Roman Font, double spaced; page numbered and include a title page. Late assignments will generally *not* be allowed. The policy for late assignments is the same as the Make-up Exams (see policy below). These are papers wherein students will be asked to provide a reflection & discussion on a particular topic. Essentially these are take home essays. Each essay is worth 15% of your final grade in the course.

Writing Assistance: If students have concerns about their ability as writers and would like assistance I suggest visiting Wayne State University's Writing Center at 2310 Undergraduate Library (313-577-2544). You will find great assistance there for any/all of your courses. Additionally, students will find a page of writing resources posted on the Department of Sociology's website: <http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/Sociology/WritingResources>

Final Grading Policy

A 89.45-100% A- 86.45-89.44%

B+ 82.45-86.44% B 79.45-82.44% B- 76.45-79.44%

C+ 72.45-76.44% C 69.45-72.44% C- 66.45-69.44%

D+ 62.45-66.44% D 57.45-62.44% D- 50.00-57.44 E 49.45% and below

There are no additional questions on exams or assignments given for the course. If at any point students have any questions on their grades students should schedule a meeting with me outside class time. I am also immediately available before or after class and by email any time to set up a meeting to discuss your grades face to face!

PLEASE NOTE: Your final grade is not a straight point system but a weighted total, with each assignment/exam worth a percentage of your final grade.

Obtaining grades: Please do not call the department for grades. The department does not give out grades over the phone. For further information on college grading policies see the WSU Bulletin.

FERPA STATEMENT\IMPORTANT FERPA REMINDER: Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), college personnel are not allowed to release student's personal information to

anyone, including other students. If you have any questions regarding FERPA, please refer to the current University Catalog.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES:

Blackboard: Students should be familiar with Blackboard. Instructions on how to use Blackboard are located on the website. Blackboard will be used to post cancellations, course related material, grades and other important information. It is the student's responsibility to check Blackboard regularly.

Makeup exams: Makeup exams & or paper extensions will generally *not* be allowed. A student must demonstrate that an extreme circumstance prevented him/her from taking the exam or turning in the paper at the regular time, subject to instructor approval. In cases of medical problems, a note from a physician may be required. A makeup exam or extended paper due date must be discussed with the instructor within **one day** after the regularly scheduled exam date. If you do not contact the instructor within this time you will not be considered for a makeup exam or paper extension, no exceptions. *Simply being absent is not a valid reason for make-up exams or any other missing student work/grades.*

Students who arrive late on exam days may be refused the opportunity to take the exam & may miss the exam entirely. Please arrive on time if you want to receive credit.

Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty: The principle of honesty is recognized as fundamental to a scholarly community. Students are expected to honor this principle. Thus plagiarism, cheating on exams and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. I will adhere to the University's guideline for dealing acts of dishonesty by taking the following course of action: (a) giving a failing grade on the assignment; (b) giving a failing grade for the course; or (c) suspension or exclusion. Information on procedures is available in the Office of the Dean.

Electronic Device Policy: Cell phones and etc... (Includes texting): All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off before class begins! Students whose cell phone or electronic device rings during class will be asked to leave the class and not return until the next session, they will be counted as absent for that class. Do not text in class, it's rude. Further, do not surf the internet or look up inappropriate material in the course, the same grade policy applies in these cases. *After the first warning for every repeated violation of this requirement I reserve the right to lower your final course grade.*

Inappropriate language and behavior: It required that all students act respectful of each other and the instructor. Further, the instructor will treat all students with equal respect. Violation of this policy will result in a warning for the first time. If violations continue proper steps may be taken to ask the student to leave the class permanently.

Contact via Email: Think of this as your start in learning to be a professional! When you send an email it should always include the course and course number in the subject, if not I may not read it. Also, it is best to use your university email (e.g. erpare@wayne.edu). You can send email from Blackboard & it automatically adds in the subject line. Further, emails should follow a professional format not a texting format: always sign your full name, use punctuation, full sentences, correct spelling, correct grammar,

and capital letters at the beginning of sentences, but never use all capitals to write, and above all no text abbreviations! And when you address your email please address me by my proper title: Dr. or Professor. Please check out the following for more academic email etiquette not only for this class but for all your courses:

<http://udel.edu/~jsoares/How%20to%20Use%20Proper%20Email%20Etiquette%20When%20Writing%20to%20a%20Professor.pdf>

Course Add/Drops/Withdrawals: The university policy will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of deadline dates for dropping courses. It is the student's responsibility to initiate action at student services for a formal withdrawal. Students who do not officially withdraw but stop attending class and/or do not take scheduled exams may receive a failing grade.

Course incompletes: For an Incomplete (I) to be assigned in my course two main components must be met: 1) Incomplete (I) grades are assigned only under extraordinary circumstances. 2) Incomplete (I) grades are reserved for when the student has completed nearly all the course requirements (e.g., 80% or more) with a C or better grade and is confronted with an exceptional situation (e.g., incapacitating accident, family member death) that prohibits them from completing the course. Further, Incomplete (I) grades require a contract to be signed both by myself & the student, the contract must be signed 2 weeks before the end of the school semester & are time limited (no longer than one year). The Incomplete (I) assignment does require students adhere to all deadlines set forth or the contract will be revoked & grade as it stands will be given.

ADA Notification: If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University. Further, information about students with disabilities and the services WSU provides located here: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

The chapter material as listed below is to provide a framework for class discussion. You should have read the chapters listed for each class date BEFORE coming to class.

Date	Material Covered	Assignment
Sept. 9	Syllabus Chapter One: Perspectives on Intimate Relationships	
Sept. 16	Finish 1 Chapter Two: Cultural Diversity and Diversity in Family Structure: Family Strengths and	

	Challenges	
Sept. 23	Chapter Three: Understanding Marriage and Family Dynamics	<u>Handout Reflection Assignment #1 Sheet</u>
Sept. 30	Chapter Four: Communication and Intimacy Chapter Five: Conflict and Conflict Resolution	Reflection Assignment #1 Due
Oct. 7		Exam One: Chapters 1-5
Oct. 14	Chapter Six: Sexual Intimacy	
Oct. 21	Chapter Seven: Gender Roles and Power in the Family	
Oct. 28	Chapter Eight: Managing Economic Resources	<u>Handout Reflection Assignment #2 Sheet</u>
Nov. 4	Start Chapter Nine: Friendship, Intimacy, and Singlehood Finish Chapter Ten: Dating, Mate Selection, and Living Together	Reflection Assignment #2 Due
Nov. 11		Exam Two: Chapters 6-10
Nov. 18	Chapter Eleven: Marriage: Building a Strong Foundation	
Nov. 25	Start Chapter Twelve: Parenthood: Satisfaction and Challenge	We Will Watch “The Other F Word” You will be expected to write about it in your 3rd paper!
Dec.2	Chapter Thirteen: Midlife and Older Couples Chapter Fourteen: Stress, Abuse, and Family Problems	<u>Handout Reflection Assignment #3 Sheet</u>

Dec. 9	Finish Chapter 14 Chapter Fifteen: Divorce, Single-Parent Families, and Stepfamilies Finish any remaining material	Reflection Assignment #3 Due
Dec. 16		Exam Three: Chapters 11-15

Disclaimer: I reserve the right to make any changes I see fit to this schedule and the class as a whole. Students will be required to abide said changes and if applicable know any and all new class material. If class must be cancelled for acts outside instructor control (i.e. illness, death of family member, extreme weather or WSU closing) all students are still required to know material listed above and return when class resumes its sessions.

❖ **GROUND RULES FOR CLASS DISCUSSION** *

I am distributing these ground rules to help guide all 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 his or her social location. I would like each of you to think in terms of the relationship between society and the individual when contributing to class discussions, or in other words, adhere to a “sociological imagination.” In addition, please follow the following guidelines:

1. Recognize that the various axes of our social location -- our gender, race, class, sexuality, age, etc. -- accord 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 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. Actively pursue information about our own groups and those of others.
8. 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.

9. Agree to combat actively the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls which prohibit group cooperation and group gain.
10. Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. Do not repeat specific comments by students to other students outside the class or use past comments against students to create a hostile environment.

* *These ground rules are adapted from the following source: Weber, Lynn. "Ground Rules for Course Discussion." Women's Quarterly 18 (Spring/Summer 1990): 126-134.*