Sociology 120: Marriage and the Family
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Tues & Thurs, 9:30-10:45am
Location: Online
Fall 2020

Administrative Information

Course Website: https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/214940
Use Google Chrome as your browser!

Professor
Name: Prof. Felix Elwert
Office Hours: Tue & Thu 11:00-noon
   By appointment at https://felix-elwert.youcanbook.me
   Your booking will generate a Zoom link (Zoom is free via UW)
Email: elwert@wisc.edu

Teaching Assistants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jill Richardson</td>
<td>Tue 11-noon, Thu 1-2PM online</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jerichardson@wisc.edu">jerichardson@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline Brighouse Glueck</td>
<td>Fri 9-10 (by appt.) online</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brighouseglu@wisc.edu">brighouseglu@wisc.edu</a></td>
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<td>Fri 10-11 (open)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jin Hyung Kim</td>
<td>Wed 12-1PM, Thu 5:30-6:30 online</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kim669@wisc.edu">kim669@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaomei Sun</td>
<td>Mon 9-10AM, Wed 9-10AM online</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xsun95@wisc.edu">xsun95@wisc.edu</a></td>
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See section syllabi on Canvas for section meeting times and locations and announcements.

Credits: 3. Approximately 10 hours of lecture, section, and readings/homework per week.

Requisites: None

Course Designation: Breadth - Social Science

Level: Elementary

L&S Credit: Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Modern syllabi are insanely long. You still have to read this entire document. I’m sorry!


“\textit{I thoroughly enjoyed the class and would recommend it to other students!}”

“\textit{Coming into this course I thought it would be an easy A, and it was not. One has to work and study a lot in order to get a good grade in this course.}”

Course evaluations, Fall 2017

\textbf{COURSE DESCRIPTION}

The family is a fundamental building block of social life, in at least two senses. First, families provide the context in which individual lives unfold—they set the stage for birth, life, love, and death. In this sense, families are “private institutions.” Second, families have consequences for the greater good—they educate children and care for the elderly, but they also generate and perpetuate social inequalities. In this sense, families are “public institutions” that matter for society as a whole.

This course will examine families as private and as public institutions from the perspectives of family sociology and social demography. The course will focus primarily on aggregate patterns and historical trends within and between groups as defined by class, race, and gender, and less on individual experiences.

A major goal of this course is to learn about differences in family structure throughout history and in the contemporary United States. While it may be tempting to assume that there can only be one “best” or “natural” way to organize family life, research indicates that the family is constantly changing and adapting. What may work in one situation may not work in another: the consequences of family structure and family behaviors often depend on their context.

Sociology 120 is an introductory course designed for inquisitive students who are new to sociology. Seniors and other students with a background in social science are welcome, of course, but may alternatively wish to consider the more advanced family course Soc 640.

\textbf{FORMAT}

\textbf{Lectures:} All lectures are streamed live (synchronously), via Canvas. You must complete all required readings \textit{before} class. Have your notes ready and be prepared to ask and answer questions through the online chat function. Lectures will assume that you have completed the readings, draw attention to select issues from the required readings, and also present new material not covered in your readings. I will post lecture outlines on the course website a few hours before lecture. Please print these outlines to facilitate note taking, or load them on a device of your choice for electronic note taking.

\textbf{Sections:} Section meetings are held online, via Canvas. You must complete all required readings \textit{before} class. Weekly discussion sections give you the opportunity to engage with the material more deeply. Section discussions are an integral part of this course, and section attendance is required. Your TA will distribute a separate section syllabus with further instructions. Sections are your time to shine!
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Understand key facts about the American family in history and present, its diversity, and its changing nature. Analyze key social-science theories and arguments about the family. Identify central arguments exchanged in recent family debates. Connect course material to the daily news through written assignments.

REQUIREMENTS

There are five requirements for passing Soc 120: (1) Doing the readings, (2) section attendance and participation, (3) weekly online reading quizzes, (4) two news reflections, and (5) two midterm exams.

1. Readings: The majority of your readings are drawn from the textbook:


   The textbook and all additional required and recommended readings are available on Canvas.

   To access the entirety of Cherlin’s textbooks as an eBook, go to the course website on Canvas, click “McGraw-Hill Connect,” then click “Connect Library,” where you will see the textbook, which you can annotate.

   You’ll also be able to access the textbook as a SmartBook via the reading quizzes (filed under “Assignments” on Canvas). However, please note that the eBook (under Connect Library) and the SmartBook (that comes with the assignments) are not interlinked, so your highlights in one will not transport to the other. You’re free to choose whichever way of accessing Cherlin’s textbook works best for you.

   The best browser for accessing the online content is Google Chrome.

   I have intentionally kept the required reading load for this course at a very moderate level (under 30 pages in most weeks). In return, you will engage the material in depth. You may find it helpful to team up with a group of classmates to discuss the readings (your TAs will help you find study partners in section). We encourage you to contribute the fruits of your out-of-class discussions in lecture and in section. You will enjoy this class more and get a better grade.

   The last page of this syllabus contains a bibliography of additional optional readings. These are great books that will allow you to dig deeper. Take a look.

2. Reading Quizzes: Starting Tuesday, September 8, before (almost) every lecture, you will complete an online reading quiz on the required readings. Access these quizzes under “Assignments” on Canvas. The quizzes will become active a few days before the due date, so you can take them at your leisure. You can take each quiz as often as you wish before its deadline, until you are satisfied with your score. Your quiz scores will account for a total 10% of your final grade. This is a big deal.
For your convenience, the online quizzes for your textbook readings link to the relevant passages in the textbook. Additionally, the quizzes may contain questions about the required readings that are not part of your textbook, which are not linked from within the quiz.

3. Sections: Section is an important component of this course, accounting for 16% of your final grade (11% participation, 5% attendance). Because we’ve never held online sections before, we reserve the right to adjust the weight of sections participation for your final grades until October 1, when the final weight will be announced.

Thoughtful section participation is key. You will be graded on the quality, and not just the frequency, of your section participation. You should prepare for section. Complete all readings in advance of section and contribute your questions, reflections, and observations. Engage your classmates creatively and constructively and advance the discussion.

Section attendance is required. For most of you, section will be held online. You may miss up to two section meetings without penalty, no questions asked. It is your responsibility to make up all missed work and to borrow notes from a classmate. Your attendance grade will drop to 2% with your third absence, and to 0% with your fourth absence. Please note that 5% for attendance is a big deal: 5% can amount to a full letter grade of your final grade. If you have a medical or other emergency that prevents you from attending several section meetings, please email both Professor Elwert and your TA to notify us. Sections begin on Thursday, September 8. (NB: If you’re in a Monday section, your first section will occur asynchronously; watch for an email announcement.)

4. News Reflection: You will compose two short assignments on current news related to select topics in Soc 120, accounting for a total of 14% of your final grade (7% each). The purpose is to connect what you have learned in class to what’s going on in the world around you. For each reflection, you will find two news articles on a given topic from approved sources that have appeared after September 1, 2017. You will first summarize each article in up to two sentences and then write an insightful 300-word mini-essay relating your articles to the material you learned in class. Reports are due electronically at 9:15AM on the due dates noted in the syllabus. Late assignments will receive a grade of zero without exception. Plan to submit your assignment well ahead of the deadline. Please see the instructions posted on the course website for details.

5. Exams: You will take two online midterm exams on Canvas, accounting for 60% of your final grade. All material presented in lecture and in your required readings is fair game. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions that emphasize concepts, facts, and mechanisms discussed in class and in your readings. Additionally, each exam will include several fill-in-the-blank questions and two mini essays. The exams are non-cumulative. Since I appreciate that everybody may have a bad day once in a while, I will give greater weight to your better midterm score: your higher score will count more (35%) and your lower score will count less (25%).
No “final” exam: Your online schedule may list a “final exam” time during exam period. Pay no attention to it. There is no “final exam” in Soc 120 during exam period.

If you must miss an exam: Unfortunately, a class of this size cannot accommodate make-up exams. If students are compelled to miss the first exam because of serious illness, a serious family emergency, or a required university-sponsored activity, their second exam will simply count more. In other words, there is no penalty for missing the first exam. Nevertheless, I strongly recommend that you take it. Past experience suggests that it is a bad idea to skip the first midterm hoping for a better grade on the second—too much will ride on the second exam. Besides, success requires practice. Students compelled to miss the second exam must demonstrate compelling cause prior to the exam or receive a score of zero on the missed second midterm.

Online proctoring: Honorlock will proctor your two midterms exams on Canvas. Honorlock is an online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. You do not need to create an account, download software or schedule an appointment in advance. Honorlock is available 24/7, and all that is needed is a computer, a working webcam and microphone, your ID, and a stable internet connection.

To get started, you will need Google Chrome and download the Honorlock Chrome Extension. When you are ready to complete your assessment, log into Canvas, go to your course, and click on your exam. Clicking "Launch Proctoring" will begin the Honorlock authentication process, where you will take a picture of yourself, show your ID, and complete a scan of your room. Honorlock will be recording your exam session through your webcam, microphone, and recording your screen. Honorlock also has an integrity algorithm that can detect search-engine use, so please do not attempt to search for answers, even if it’s on a secondary device.

Honorlock support is available 24/7/365. If you encounter any issues, you may contact them through live chat on the support page or within the exam itself. Some guides you should review are Honorlock MSRs, Student FAQ, Honorlock Knowledge Base, and How to Use Honorlock.

We will schedule a mock exam (ungraded) to give you a chance to familiarize yourself with the online exam system and Honorlock well ahead of time.

Grading Summary:

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<tr>
<th>Grade Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>35% for your higher midterm score, 25% for your lower score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Up to two absences without deductions, 2-0% thereafter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Participation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Quality and preparedness are key.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Reflections</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7% each; no late submissions for any reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10 quizzes—we count your 8 best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Curve:** Final grades will be curved to a median grade of B. Straight As are reserved for consistently excellent work. Experience suggests that approximately 15-20% of students will earn this distinction. Sustained effort is a prerequisite for a passing grade. Fs are individually earned and not the result of a curve.

**OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

**Online office Hours:** Use them! This is your chance for one-on-one conversations with the professor and your TA. Schedule your meeting online (see the first page of this syllabus).

We look forward to meeting you!

**Grade disputes:** You may contest grades on your exams or assignments \textit{up to two weeks} after each exam or assignment has been returned to you. Please raise minor issues (e.g. computational errors in your score) with your TA. Any substantive concerns about the contents of your answer should be discussed with the professor. We pledge to review all concerns without prejudice. Your score may go up or down as a result of the review.

**Email Etiquette:** Due to the large size of this class, please adhere to the following rules. If you have questions or concerns, always check the course website and syllabus first. If you can’t find what you need there, contact your TA. If issues remain, make an appointment to see Prof. Elwert during online office hours.

Email is a professional communication tool, and proper form matters (e.g. salutation, syntax, signature). This website provides great guidance for emailing professors and TAs: [www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor](http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor). We try to respond to all emails within two business days.

**Accommodations.** Please send the professor an email by the end of the second week of classes if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or if you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: [http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/). If you become eligible (or anticipate becoming eligible) after the start of the semester, please email your instructors right away.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request
accommodation. Following UW policies, we will accommodate religious observances if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university’s web page for details: https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698.

**Academic honesty.** As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University’s rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students at http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/.

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students’ website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor or one of the TAs.

**Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights.** The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the professor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science.

**Department learning objectives.** Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology.

- **Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:** Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.

- **See Things from a Global Perspective:** Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds
and experiences among individuals. They understand the ways events and processes in one country are linked to those in other countries.

Copyright, Intellectual Property, Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement
Lecture materials and recordings for Felix Elwert are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university’s policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.
COURSE OUTLINE

Subject to change; please monitor your email for announcements.

All non-textbook readings are available on the course website.

Complete all readings in preparation for the listed date.

September

3 Introduction

8 Kinship & Course Logistics
   Required: Cherlin, pp. 4-11
   Quiz 1 due (Canvas)

10 Early Family History
   Required: Goldthorpe, Family Life in Western Societies, pp. 8-16
   Recommended: Coontz, “What’s Love Got To Do With It?”
   Recommended: Goody, The European Family, Chapters 3-5
   Quiz 2 due (Canvas)

15 U.S. History I
   Required: Cherlin, pp. 35-43
   Required: Coontz, “The Evolution of American Families”
   Recommended: Goldthorpe, Family Life in Western Societies, Ch. 2, pp.18-40
   Quiz 3 due (Canvas)

17 U.S. History II
   Required: Cherlin, pp 51-64
   Recommended: Cherlin, “American Marriage in the Early 21st Century”, pp. 33-
43.
Quiz 4 due (Canvas)

22  Sociological Approaches to the Family & Research Methods
Required: Cherlin, pp. 12-31
Quiz 5 due (Canvas)

24  Gender
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 3
Required: Orenstein, “What’s Wrong with Cinderella?”
Recommended: Maglaty, “When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink”
Recommended: West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender”
Quiz 6 due (Canvas)

29  Class, Status, and Families
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 4
Recommended: Schmidt and Mollica, “Impact of Childhood Trauma Reaches Rural Wisconsin.”
Quiz 7 due (Canvas)

October
1  African American Families
Required: Cherlin pp. 44-48, 117-132
Recommended: Franklin, “African Americans and the Birth of Modern Marriage”
**News Reflection #1 (Gender and Families) due at 9:15AM**
Quiz 8 due (Canvas)

6  Race, Interracial Marriage
Required: Cherlin, pp.133-145
Quiz 9 due (Canvas)
8 Sexual Orientation
Required: Cherlin, pp. 48-51; 154-164
Quiz 10 due (Canvas)

13 Sex
Required: Cherlin, pp. 164-184
Required: Wade, “The Promise and Peril of Hookup Culture.”
Recommended: Wade and Heldman, “Hooking Up and Opting Out—Negotiating Sex in the First Year of College.”
Recommended: Armstrong et al, “Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?”
Quiz 11 due (Canvas)

15 **Midterm I**
Exam administered via Canvas, normal class time.

20 Marriage and Cohabitation I
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 7
Quiz 12 due (Canvas)

22 Marriage and Cohabitation II
Required: Waite, “Does Marriage Matter?”
Quiz 13 due (Canvas)

27 Work and Families I
Required: Cherlin, pp. 214-217; 256
Recommended: Bianchi, “Maternal Employment and Time with Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?”
Recommended: Kiesling, “Paid Child Care for Working Mothers? All It Took Was a World War.”
Quiz 14 due (Canvas)
29 Work and Families II
   Required: Cherlin, pp. 217-230
   Required: Hochschild, “Joey’s Problem”
   Quiz 15 due (Canvas)

November
3 Children and Parents
   Required: Cherlin, Chapter 9
   Required: Lareau, “Invisible Inequality” (Reader)
   Quiz 16 due (Canvas)

5 Old Age and Widowhood
   Required: Cherlin, Chapter 10
   Quiz 17 due (Canvas)

10 Divorce I
   Required: Cherlin, pp. 321-329
   Quiz 18 due (Canvas)

12 Divorce II: Consequences and Causality
   Required: Cherlin, pp. 329-337
   Recommended: Li, “The Impact of Divorce on Children’s Behavior Problems”
   Required: Elwert, notes on causality (course website)
   News Reflection #2 (Parents and Children) due at 9:15AM

17 Remarriage and Stepfamilies
   Required: Cherlin, pp. 338-346
   Quiz 19 due (Canvas)

19 Same-Sex Marriage
Required: Cherlin, 205-206; 406-407.
Required: TBA
Recommended: Meezan & Rauch, “Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting, and America’s Children”
Quiz 20 due (Canvas)

Legal Approaches to the Family; Domestic Violence
Required: Minow: Redefining Families
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 11
Quiz 21 due (Canvas)

THANKSGIVING BREAK NOV 23-26

December

1 Family Change At Home and Abroad
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 13
Recommended: Lesthaeghe, “The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition”
Quiz 22 due (Canvas)

3 Public Policy
Required: Cherlin, Chapter 14
Quiz 23 due (Canvas)

8 Separating Children from Parents
Quiz 24 due (Canvas)

10 **Midterm II**
Exam administered via Canvas, normal class time.
Note: The second midterm is *not* cumulative.
**There is no “final exam” during exam period.**
REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS (EXCEPT TEXTBOOK)

All of these readings are available online on the course website under “content.”


http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/24/magazine/24princess.t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0


http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/When-Did-Girls-Start-WearingPink.html?c=y&page=1


**FURTHER READING**

This is a short list of great books for further reading. Many of these books are highly engaging reads and would ideally supplement your studies. Take a look!


