

Proposal for Connections: Social and Cultural

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1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)
 - SOCL 220: Marriage and Family
 - Social and Cultural
2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.
 1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
 - Families shape individuals and, in turn, individuals shape society. That is a classic view of the family using the sociological imagination. In this course, students learn about the private role of the family (in providing emotional support, companionship, love, etc.) but perhaps more importantly, they learn about the public/institutional role of the family in caring for dependent relatives. Specifically, two primary roles of the family as a social institution involve appropriate socialization of children (fundamental for ensuring each member in society is productive), and humane care for the elderly, a group which has made past contributions (worked, paid taxes, been involved in their community, etc.) but presently play a reduced role due to the effects of aging. Families matter for society and it is important for students to both understand the role of the family in society as well as how individual experiences may differ from those of other families across the country/world. By learning about family issues (such as marriage, cohabitation, divorce, fertility, gender and families, sexualities), students are equipped with the knowledge necessary to make more informed decisions in their own lives and understand how family issues effect individuals and society at large.
 2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
 - Individuals tend to rely on what they know about their own families when forming opinions on family issues. Thus, this course challenges students to step outside of their own family “bubble” and examine families in a scientific way. One result is that the conclusions drawn from such empirical study may contradict what they “know to be true” about families. Further, students will engage in discussion and learn from peer experiences, evaluating how these equally valid experiences may differ from their own. Family is a very personal topic, but through this course students will be able to broaden their understanding of family and family functioning. Such critical analysis and reflection has the potential to result in more evidence-based decisions and opinions on news worthy/policy based topics such as gay marriage, covenant marriage, concerns over divorce, parenting, youth culture, increases in nonmarital childbearing, cohabitation, and single-parent families, and issues of poverty and family.

3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.
-To reiterate, there are many public concerns over the state of the family which has motivated changes in public policy. It is important that students are able to disentangle their own experiences and feelings from the scientific literature and to be able to draw on research to inform their opinions thereby having the capacity to make educated decisions. This course both examines numerous real-world social and cultural problems/issues and requires students to identify solutions that utilize and informed decisions process. Methodological issues and appropriate use of statistics are discussed throughout the semester so that students are not only learning about sociology of the family but also learning about quality scientific methodology.
3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.
 - As a sociology course, the goal is to develop students' sociological imagination – the ability to see how individuals impact society and how society impacts individuals. Although stated a little differently, this is the goal of the Connections category. This course in particular applies the sociological imagination to arguably the most important institution in our lives, the family. It is important for students to look at the family scientifically to understand its importance for individuals as well as society at large. So much of our public discourse about the state of our country in general (in terms of education, poverty, labor force participation) is influenced by and has influence on the family. In addition, there are a number of family issues that are at the forefront of public policy debates (same sex marriage, marriage promotion more generally, concern over family issues such as divorce and childrearing, gray divorce, nonmarital fertility, etc.) that students must have exposure, from a scientific perspective, in order to develop informed opinions and contribute to the discussion in a productive way. Finally, this course allows students to compare families across international contexts, imperative for gaining a broad understanding of family issues – which may help to solve issues here at home.
4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.
 - The course prerequisites are, SOCL 100 (a course already accepted into the explorations column of colonnade) or consent of instructor.
5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to

- define “family,” and describe the implications of such a definition;
- explain the historical context from which the family has evolved;
- describe the major demographic processes of the American family & justify why they are important; &
- analyze families and family processes from a sociological perspective.

6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.

- The department assessment committee will review an assignment given by the instructor – one of the short writing assignments – from a random sample of 10% of the students. The review will determine if the student has achieved the following three learning objectives:
 - i. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
 - ii. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
 - iii. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems

7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

- The final research project requires students to research a family related topic not cover in class. This assignment calls for students to present their research in a brochure for classmates on the same day that they orally present their findings. Finally, the project requires that they evaluate their topic using academic literature (i.e., quality evidence) and synthesize the information in an argument delivered to their peers. While the above project is a single assignment in which students use quality evidence to make a valid argument, students are required to actively participate in class discussions throughout the semester wherein they discuss, analyze, and critically evaluate the empirical evidence assigned that day.

8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

- We will offer two sections a year and at least one in the summer. Additionally, the course is always available via Independent Learning.

9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.

SOCL 220: Marriage & Family

Spring 2014

M W F 12:40 – 1:35 PM

Grise Hall 130

Contact Information:

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Office Hours:
M W 2:00 – 3:00
by appointment

Course Description

The sociology of families is deceptively hard to study. The topic of family is familiar, as most everyone spends time in a family. Because of this familiarity, the family may seem easy to study – you can call on your own personal experiences and personal knowledge of this subject. To be sure, your insight into the social forces that shape your personal experiences of family is a worthwhile objective. However, this familiarity may fog ideas and perceptions of the family. It is therefore important to draw on personal experiences of the family as a beginning point only. As a class, a sociological lens through which we will ultimately understand the family, as a larger social concept, will be developed. We will evaluate families as both public and private institutions full of diversity.

As young scholars, we will initially approach this course from an elementary level. However, by the end of the semester, you will be able to

- define “family,” and describe the implications of such a definition;
- explain the historical context from which the family has evolved;
- describe the major demographic processes of the American family & justify why they are important; &
- analyze families and family processes from a sociological perspective.

Course Policies

Respect:

The climate of this class should be open, warm, and professional. Every student is to show respect for me and their classmates at all times. Everyone is entitled to ask as many questions as necessary to understand the material. There are no stupid or silly questions. The discussion questions may spark some controversy. You are entitled to your opinion and to disagree with each other but please do so in a professional, respectful manner. Remember to always use course material or supplementary material to support your opinions. Personal information may be used as examples so we should all maintain professionalism and confidentiality. No racist, homophobic, sexist, or other alienating comments will be tolerated.

Note about Email:

Please send proper emails. Make sure to put “SOCL 220” or “Marriage & Family” in the subject line and to include your full name in the text. Also, use proper capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Emails should come from a wku.edu address (emails from other accounts will not be opened).

Writing Guidelines for Typed Work:

I will only accept hard copies. No emailed work will be accepted. All papers are to be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, and with one inch margins. You must have page numbers. **I will not accept papers that do not follow this format!!!!** Grammar, spelling, and punctuation count; points will be deducted for more than a few errors. I strongly encourage you to consult the Writing Center or the Learning Center for help on improving your work.

Assignment Late Policy:

One part of being responsible students and employees is being able to meet deadlines; therefore, all assignments are expected to be turned in on time. However, if for any reason you have to turn in an assignment late, you will be docked a half letter grade for every **day** that it is late (this includes weekend

days). No assignment will be accepted after seven days or after it has been graded for other students. If there is a problem or a situation presents itself, please let me know before the assignment is due.

The Learning Center (TLC):

Should you require academic assistance with your WKU courses, [The Learning Center](#) (located in the Downing University Center, A330) provides free supplemental education programs for all currently enrolled WKU students. TLC @ DUC offers certified, one-on-one tutoring in over 200 subjects and eight academic skill areas by appointment or walk in. Please call TLC @ DUC at (270) 745-6254 for more information or to schedule a tutoring appointment. www.wku.edu/tlc

Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

The academic dishonesty policy prohibits cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. I take academic dishonesty VERY, VERY seriously. Students who violate this policy will automatically receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to their academic dean for disciplinary action.

From the Office for Student Disability Services:

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUCA-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Required Text and Materials

Textbook: There is one required textbook for this course, available for purchase at the WKU Bookstore:

Risman, B. (2010). *Families as They Really Are*. W.W. Norton Company. (R)

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard in the folder for that unit (see schedule) (BB).

Course Requirements

Exams

The class will consist of three examinations. Each exam will predominately cover material from the readings; however exams will also include supplemental material covered in lecture, readings, videos, and class discussion. Exams may be multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay.

Letters to Grandma Helen

Throughout the semester, you will be given five topics for “letters to Grandma Helen.” Grandma Helen is my grandmother, and loves to get mail. These “letters” are designed to let you develop your thoughts and ideas about our class topics and advance proposals about family issues and solutions to family problems. Each “letter” will be assigned in class and will be due one week later by the start of class. You need to choose **four** out of the five letters to submit. Therefore, late “letters” will not be accepted. “Letters” will be graded on three components: (1) your understanding and explanation of the topic at hand (did you accurately and completely explain/address the issue), (2) your thoughtful reflection (did you develop and express your own sociological ideas), and (3) your overall professionalism (is your “letter” written clearly and without spelling and grammar issues). While you may use a somewhat informal letter writing style, you must follow the basic rules of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. A works cited or references list should be included at the end of your “letter” as appropriate. You must use APA style. Lecture material and material from the textbook must be included in this list. “Letters” should be no longer than two double-spaced, typed pages (not including references). Please follow the writing guidelines above and include your name and assignment name at the top of your “letter.”

Student Paired Project

In groups of two, you will research and present on a chosen family-related sociological topic from a list I provide. Each pair will select a topic (no pair may select the same topic). Your group will be responsible for researching the chosen topic – for example, the history of the topic, the current issues/problems related to the topic, the policies surrounding the topic, and other such subtopics. Your group will first prepare a brochure on your topic to be handed out to your classmates (it is recommended that you use a program such as Microsoft Publisher). Be sure to bring enough copies for all students and the instructor and to fold your brochure. Your brochure must include a complete and accurate citation list, so be sure to leave space for this during the design stage. Your brochure should highlight key points from your research and should be formatted both creatively and clearly. Your group will then present your research to the class (using PowerPoint, approximately fifteen minutes). Your presentation will expand on your brochure by including examples and illustrations from your research, as well as highlighting your research findings. Both your brochure and presentation will be due on your presentation date (presentation dates will be chosen later in the semester). Your research should concentrate on academic and scientific sources (try the library first), rather than popular sources (magazines, newspapers, or websites, although you may use these sources to support your other research). You may not use Wikipedia or dictionaries/encyclopedias. This project will be graded based on the accuracy and quality of the information included in the brochure and presentation, and the clarity and creativity of your work (grammar, spelling, formatting, etc.). There will be set-aside class time for you to work with your partner, but you should plan on arranging out-of-class meetings times as well. You are strongly encouraged to start this project early, as the semester will only get busier as it progresses. Material from these presentations will be included on the final exam. Working with a group may be a new skill you will have to learn. If your group is having issues working together, you should first try to work them out yourselves. If that does not work, please come see me as soon as possible.

Active Participation

The participation grade will be based on your active involvement (both quantity and quality) in class discussion – both answering and asking questions, contributing to the discussion, illustration of comprehension of assigned readings, and being respectful of others. Students who come to class but never talk will get at 75% for this portion of the grade. Homework/in-class work will be included in this part of the grade.

Weight of the Course Requirements:

Grading Scale:

Exams (3 X 15%)	45%	A	90 – 100
Letters to Grandma Helen	20%	B	80 - 89
Student Group Project	20%	C	70 - 79
Active Course Participation	15%	D	60 - 69
Total	100%	F	<60

COURSE SCHEDULE

Subject to Change

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Due Dates and Exams
1	1/27	Course Introduction
	1/29 & 1/31	Introduction to Studying Families Read: (R) 1, 2, 3, 4, In the News: Not Much Sense in those Census Stories (p. 24)
2	2/3 – 2/7	Introduction to Studying Families Read: (R) 8
3	2/10 – 2/14	History of the Family Read: (BB) The Way We Never Were & (R) 5, 6, In the New: A “Golden Age” of Childhood? (p. 59), In the News: How We Took the Child Out of Childhood (p. 61)
4	2/17 – 2/19	Cohabitation and Marriage Read: (R) 12, 13, 14, 15
	2/21	No class on 2/21
5	2/24 – 2/26	Cohabitation and Marriage Read: (BB) Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006; Manning & Cohen, 2012
	2/28	Exam 1
6	3/3 - 3/5	Divorce Read: (R) 16, In the News: How to Stay Married (p. 170), Briefing Paper: The Impact of Divorce on Children’s Behavior Problems (p. 173), In the News: Divorce May Not Cause Kid’s Bad Behavior (p. 178), In the News: The Good, Bad, and Ugly of Divorce (p. 180)
	3/7	Project Work Day
7	3/10 – 3/14	Spring Break- No Classes
8	3/17 – 3/21	Step Families Read: (BB) Brown & Manning, 2009; Sweeney, 2010
9	3/24 – 3/28	Social Class and Families Read: (R) 23, 25, 26, 28, 19, In the News: Both Sides of Inequality (p. 299), In the News: Book Examines Trends of Unmarried Parents (p. 321)
10	3/31 & 4/2	Race/Ethnicity and Families Read: (R) 7, 10, 11, In the News: Interracial Marriage A Cultural Taboo Fades (p. 115)
	4/4	Exam 2
11	4/7 - 4/11	Work and Families Read: (R) 33, 34, In the News: Chores for Two? (p. 406), 36, In the News: Working Moms More the Norm than Exception (p. 425),
12	4/14 – 4/18	Gender and Families Read: (BB) “Doing Gender” by West and Zimmerman ; (R) 30, 31, 37, 38, In the News: Matrimonial Bliss Lies in the Mop Bucket & Broom (p. 433)
13	4/21 – 4/25	Sexualities Read: (R) 9, 20, 21, Fact Sheet: Myths & Realities about Same-Sex Families (p. 228), (BB) Amicus Brief – Same Sex Marriage
14	4/28	Project Work Day
	4/30 & 5/2	Project Work Days/Study Days – No Class
15	5/5 – 5/9	Project Presentations – All Brochures/PowerPoints are due on Monday
16	5/15 – 1-3pm	Exam 3

