

SOC 301: Sociology of Families

TTH 9:30-10:45 Admin 309

Dr. Alecea Ritter-Standlee
Office Hours: MWF 10-11, TTH 11-12
Office: Admin 117
Email: astandlee@concord.edu

Course Description

In this class, we will use sociology as a lens to view the social, economic and demographic changes that have remade American family life over the 20th century. While we all live in families and have opinions about them, sociologists attempt to look beyond their own lived experiences to investigate how culture and social structures shape family life. We will also consider the causes of major changes in American families including the ongoing redefinition of gender roles, growing racial and ethnic diversity, new variations in family experience by class, changing experiences of children and the elderly, the growth of divorce, non-marital childbearing and single-parent families, the movement of large numbers of mothers into the paid labor market, and new federal policies regarding welfare and marriage. Understanding the diverse nature of families and their experiences will be an important theme in this course.

Textbook (Available at the Campus Bookstore and Online)

Zinn, Maxine Baca, D. Stanley Eitzen, and Barbara Wells (2011) *Diversity in Families*, 10th edition

Course Assignments and Grading

- **Attendance and Participation (10%):** You may have three absences throughout the semester. No excuse is required. More than three absences will result in a loss of points for course participation. Students with extraordinary circumstances are required to meet with me.
- **3 Guided Essays (20% Each Essay - 60% Total):** Students will write 3 Guided Essays in response to one of the questions provided. Each essay will be 3-4 pages long. Essays must be properly structured and use appropriate citations. All supporting material must come from academically rigorous sources.
- **Final Paper (30%):** Based on one of the social policy debates presented in the final chapter, students will provide an unbiased analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the policies presented and make a reasoned suggestion regarding the future development, implementation or transformation of the policy. Students are expected to use outside research from academic sources as well as material provided in the text. This is an analytic paper, not an opinion paper and should be written as such. Proper citation is required for the 6-8 page final paper.

Classroom Policies

The professor reserves the right to change the syllabus and assignments. Changes may be made to accommodate the specific needs of the class.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or assignments, falsifying records, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of ideas of another) is not tolerated at Concord University. These behaviors can result in failure of the course or expulsion from the university. Please refer to page 39 of the university academic catalog for the consequences of academic dishonesty.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform me at the beginning of the semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. Students should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry L. Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone number is 304-384-6036 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at nellison@concord.edu for assistance.

Course Readings

Readings listed for each day of class in the course schedule are to have been read **prior** to coming to that day's class. Additional reading maybe assigned and will be distributed in class or on the course Blackboard site.

Student Athletes

Student athletes are required to notify me in advance to be excused from class and are responsible for making up all missing assignments and readings.

Classroom Conduct

This course is heavily reliant on discussion, which includes difficult dialogue at times. **This is an inclusive and safe classroom.** All discussion points and questions are valued; as such students are expected to treat one another and the professor thoughtfully and with respect. Racist, sexist, homophobic or other pejorative or discriminatory language will not be tolerated and students who insist on such behavior will be asked to leave the classroom.

Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off before coming to class.

DO NOT text message or use your phone during class!

Course Schedule

Unit One: Ideals and History

Jan 12 - Introduction and Syllabus

Jan 14 - Zinn Chapter 1, "Images Ideals and Myths"

Jan 19 - Zinn Chapter 2, "Preindustrial Families and the Emergence of a Modern Family"

Jan 21 - Class Activity

Jan 26 - Film: The Way We Never Were

Jan 28 - Film Discussion

Feb 2 - Zinn Chapter 3, "The Historical Making Of Family Diversity"

Feb 4 - Class Activity (Guest Speaker)

Feb 9 - Zinn Chapter 4, "Macro Forces Affecting Families: Economy, Immigration, & Aging"

Feb 11 - Class Activity

Guided Essay One Due

Unit Two: Family and Society

Feb 16 - Zinn Chapter 5, "Class, Race, and Gender"

Feb 18 - Class Activity

Feb 23 - Zinn Chapter 6, "Meshing the Worlds of Work and Family"

Feb 25 - Class Activity

Mar 1 - Zinn Chapter 7, "The Social Construction of Intimacy"

Mar 3 - Class Activity

Mar 8 - Zinn Chapter 8, "Contemporary Marriages"

Mar 10 - Class Activity

Mar 14-18 - No Class, Spring Break

Mar 22 - Zinn Chapter 9, "Parents and Children"

Mar 24 - Class Activity

Guided Essay Two Due

Unit 3: Family Challenges and Transformations

Mar 29 - Film: Flirting With Danger

Mar 31 - Film Discussion

Apr 5 - Zinn Chapter 10, "Violence in Families"

Apr 7 - Class Activity

Apr 12 - Zinn Chapter 11, "Divorce and Remarriage"
Apr 14 - Class Activity

Apr 19 - Zinn Chapter 12, "Emergent Families in the Global Era"
Apr 21 - Class Activity

Guided Essay Three Due

Apr 26 - Zinn Chapter 13, "Family Policy for the Twenty-First Century"
Apr 28 - Class Activity

Final Paper Due: May 4 On Blackboard