

SOC.320: THE FAMILY

Dr. Hicks Marlowe / Summer 2010 / Session 1
PSY-155 (9:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.) Tues & Thurs
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TEXT (required): **THE FAMILY**, 12th ed. (Eshleman and Bulcroft, 2010)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The family is the most comprehensive and pervasive agent of socialization. The values, perceptions, and skills it transmits affects virtually every aspect of our later life. We obviously experience many important changes as we progress through the life cycle, but they all are influenced by our experience in this first, and most significant primary group. Our level of self-esteem, who we consider to be an appropriate intimate partner, and what we feel we can expect from life are but a few of the dimensions affected by our family experience. The structure and functioning of the family, in turn, is significantly affected by historical and societal factors. Our examination of the family as a social institution and social system will hopefully help you to see your own family experience within a broader perspective.

TEACHING/LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

In any class I teach I would like to create an atmosphere which allows the student to learn and retain as much of the course content and perspective as possible. I personally feel that such an atmosphere is more likely when instructor/student interaction is as informal and nonthreatening as we can make it and still meet the basic requirements I have set for the course. Accordingly, I will have you fill out a brief information sheet. I will also take a picture of you to mount on the info card, so I can get to know you as an individual early in the course. I also invite you to ask questions in class and/or discuss the course content and its practical implications for your life after class or whenever else we have the opportunity. If you do this I believe the course can be a more meaningful and lasting experience for both of us.

EVALUATION AND ATTENDANCE

- (1) **Exams** - We will have 3 exams. Each exam will be worth 100 points. Exams #1 and #2 will have both objective and essay questions. I will provide detailed review materials prior to each exam. Combined, the three exams represent about 60% of your total grade.
- (2) **Exercises** - Throughout the course we will have discussion questions or exercises based on the text and/or lecture material. There will be about 15-20 of these, with satisfactory completion of each worth 5 points. **NOTE:** The purpose of the exercises is to encourage you to keep up with your reading and allow you to share your information and observations with others in the class. Although some make-ups of exercises will be permitted, make-ups are strongly discouraged because they defeat both aspects of their basic purpose. Exercises will represent about 20% of your total grade.
- (3) **Short Papers** - You will write two papers (about 5-10 pages each) focusing on the analysis of family structure and functioning. I will provide a format sheet for each, and we will discuss the requirements of each assignment. For **both** papers, the framework for analysis should be the concepts, processes, and issues discussed in the text. Each paper will be worth 50 points. Combined, the papers represent about 20% of your total grade.
 - (a) **Comparative Movie Review** - Select **two** movies (or videos) that focus on family structure and relations (e.g., "The Joy Luck Club," "Mi Familia"). The backgrounds of the families should be significantly different (e.g., ethnic or social class differences) so you can demonstrate your knowledge of the course material. This paper will be due at the **end of week three**.
 - (a) **Family Members Interview** - The basis for this paper will be interviews with at least two members of your immediate and/or extended family. The two respondents should be from significantly different age cohorts or generations. The objective will be to compare their perceptions and values regarding the family, and, in turn, to compare them to your own and the trends described in our

course materials. Possible respondents could be mother (or father) and grandmother (or grandfather). This paper will be due at our **last class meeting**.

Note: Any papers you submit in the class should be typed, double-spaced, and written at a level of competence that demonstrates "college level writing skills." The written assignments are designed to fulfill the Upper Division General Education Interdisciplinary Courses requirement stating that such courses "...will integrate into the course a substantial writing component" which demonstrates college-level writing skills and are evaluated "...not only on content but also on organized coherence and integration of disciplinary perspectives."

Your overall grade will depend on your ranking on a final cumulative distribution of points for all course requirements. However, so you will know where you stand at any particular point in the course, I will try to work up a running cumulative distribution of scores after each exam. My model for assigning letter grades is very similar to that of a normal curve, but we will discuss in what minor ways it differs.

You will not be graded on attendance per se. But since lectures, class discussions, and handouts which may be distributed during class will be an integral part of the course, it is your responsibility to arrange to obtain notes and course-related materials and information for any class you have to miss. In this regard, it would be a very good idea to get to know at least one or two other students in the class and exchange phone numbers so you will know what information or materials you will be responsible for if you are absent.

MAKE-UP POLICY

Exams:

The condensed time frame for this course offers very little flexibility for making up exams. For completely unavoidable situations I will try to work something out. However, as a minimum you should:

- (1) Have a very serious and valid reason for missing an exam
- (2) Contact me (at home) by phone before the scheduled exam. My home number is on the front sheet of this syllabus.
- (3) Make arrangements with me before the next class to schedule a time to make up the missed exam.

Exercises:

As I mentioned above, the exercises are designed to allow you to share your understanding of the reading material in putting theoretical concepts and processes into practice. This is best accomplished in group discussion. However, I will allow up to 4 exercises to be submitted as make-ups. They will be worth full credit, given the following conditions:

- (1) You download the missed exercise from our class web site, and submit it at the following meeting.
- (2) All questions on make-up exercises must be completed, and each make-up exercise must be typed.

Specific week-by-week reading assignments will be distributed separately for each exam.