**Course Information:**

Course Number: SOCI 208
Credits: 3 Hours
Lecture Times: T, Th 2:45-4:00 pm
Lecture Room: 
Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Professor David Warner
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Office Hours: T, Th 1:15-2:15 and by appointment

**Course Description:**

The family has long been considered the bedrock of all social organizations, the primary and enduring institution. Yet, there is growing concern over "the decline of the family" as telling of the decline of society. Some argue that growing individualism is undermining a once stable component of human existence. Others counter that the family is not in decline, but that it is in transition. This contemporary debate will guide us in our examination of the family.

In this course, we will learn about the functions of the family and the diverse forms that it has taken over time and across different groups. As early socialization and care-giving usually take place within this institution, many of our ideas about the world are closely tied to our families. However, by examining the family from a sociological perspective, including studying national family trends in the United States, we will see how the family institution is connected to larger social factors like race, gender and social class. At the end of the course, students will be able to provide empirically based answers to the question: “Is the modern family in decline?”

**Course Objectives:**

Students successfully completing this course will:

- Describe the role of the family institution in society currently and in the past;
- Understand that the family institution functions as a vehicle of socialization, economic exchange, social norms and social support affecting our personalities, attitudes, values and life choices;
- Understand and describe how social trends and forces, such as population composition, economic restructuring, political change and public policy, affect the family institution as well as individuals, both historically and contemporarily;
- Be familiar with the empirical methods of family sociologists, including how data are gathered and interpreted;
- Critically evaluate the issues surrounding the family decline/transition debate and apply those perspectives to discussion of policy initiatives and implications.
COURSE FORMAT:
As an introduction to family sociology, this course is primarily lecture based. However, lectures will not be passive learning environments as class participation is encouraged and expected (See Course Requirements below). I reserve the right to call on students during class to facilitate participation. Lectures will be supplemented periodically with in-class activities, discussions/debates and videos. Electronic recording of lectures is not permitted.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:
There is one required textbook for this course, available for purchase at the Case Western Reserve Bookstore (Thwing Center, 11111 Euclid Ave.):


In addition to the textbook, students are also required to read several scientific articles, which I have made available via the Course Blackboard Site. These supplemental readings are:


Abbreviated Syllabus

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Students successfully completing this course will carefully integrate the course material and not simply memorize “facts.” This emphasis may be different from other courses with which you are familiar, and is one of the challenges of this course. In this end, I will use the following methods of evaluation to measure careful integration and analysis of the course material.

1) **Class Participation and Assigned Readings:**

   Each class session has a set of readings matched to it. You should complete these readings before the class session for which they are assigned, as they will allow you to follow the lecture more effectively. Students are expected to demonstrate their proficiency with the readings through class participation. I will monitor and record students’ participation in class activities and assess the overall quality of participation at the end of the semester. Students with regular and *relevant* participation will receive the maximum credit.

   To facilitate your reading of the course textbook, and in preparation for the examinations, you are *strongly* encouraged to complete the **Chapter Study Guides** (available in the “Course Documents” tab on the course Blackboard Site).

2) **Mid-Term Examinations:**

   Two mid-term examinations will be administered in-class; the first on **Tuesday, September 30th** and the second on **Thursday, November 6th**. Each exam will cover material from lecture, readings and class discussion. The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blank and essay questions.

   Students who miss an exam due to an excused absence will have the opportunity to take a make-up exam an within *one week* of notification of an excused absence or return to class, whichever comes first. **Please note that all make-up examinations will be essay format.** (See **Attendance** below for the definition of an *excused* absence and other attendance policies).

3) **Final Examination:**

   The final course examination will be administered during the University defined Final Examination Period. The Final Exam for this course is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 9th from 12:30 to 3:30 pm**. The exam will be cumulative in nature, although special emphasis will be given to materials covered since the second mid-term. Students will be required to synthesize the material from the entire course for some portions of the exam. The format of the final exam will be similar to the midterm exams.