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Welcome to SOCI 3337: The Family

New to the course?

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the [Syllabus](#) and *review the information carefully*.

Be sure to fill out the [Course Pacing Guide](#)

You must submit it as your first assignment before you will be able to proceed with this course.

Click [Get Started](#) to begin your course.

Returning to the course? Click **Modules** in course navigation and resume where you left off.

Important reminders:

This is a **9-month, online, correspondence self-paced course**.

All submissions, including exams, must be completed by the course expiration date. When you registered for the course, you were sent an email to your Texas State account indicating registration and expiration dates.

You may not submit more than 2 assignments per week.

You must receive graded Assignments 1 through 5 before requesting to take the midcourse exam. You must receive graded Assignments 6 through 10 before requesting to take the final exam.

Meet Your Instructor

Michael Whitehawk has been teaching in the Department of Sociology at Texas State University since 2005. He is currently teaching Criminology and Introduction to Sociology. His interests are far reaching, but include race/ethnicity and crime, the institution of the family, sociology of disability and complex organizations. He has experience as a mental health case manager for Comal County and spent five years as an academic advisor for the College of Liberal Arts. In 2011, he was honored with The Alfred H. Nolle Chapter of the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society Favorite Professor Award.

Click Next to proceed to Correspondence Course Information.

SOCI 3337

THE FAMILY

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Mr. Michael Whitehawk
mw39@txstate.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A comparative study of the family in various cultures, both historical and contemporary, with attention to the family in terms of social organization, social change, and social disorganization.

COURSE MATERIALS

Lamanna, Mary Ann and Riedmann, Agnes, *Marriages and Families*, 7th ed., Wadsworth. ISBN 0-534-52507-5

COURSE PROCEDURE

Correspondence courses such as this give you the freedom to set your own pace in reading and assimilating the subject matter, unlike regular campus courses which have a structured time schedule. For a non-traditional student who has to work full-time to support a family or for a new mother, correspondence courses are an ideal solution for securing college credits. However, this solution also has some setbacks. If you do not have the self-discipline and resolve to work by yourself, this correspondence course is not a viable option. By and large, though, most of you who opt to take correspondence courses have a valid reason for doing so, and have a chosen career goal to work toward. Correspondence courses require you to have the resolve and determination to set up and rigidly adhere to a daily schedule in which you allocate your time for each of the courses you have signed up for. If you do not have such a regimen, and if you do not strictly follow the regimen, you will fall behind your work each day and soon it will become impossible for you to catch up. The first thing you need to do is to decide how many hours you need for each of the subjects you have signed up for, and to make that amount of time available for your studies. Make sure that no matter what the temptations are, you do not break the routine. The [Course Study Schedule \(.pdf\)](#) will help you plan your time and submissions.

There are ten lessons in this course, each tailored to be completed in approximately one week. Some of these lessons are more demanding than others, and you may have to spend more time on those lessons. The first thing to do is to decide when you want to take the exams. Be realistic and expect that it will take a minimum of twelve to fourteen weeks to complete the course. Use the [Course Study Schedule \(.pdf\)](#) to help you map out a plan for the course. You must strictly adhere to this timetable in order to be successful in this course. If you follow this routine, you will find the whole experience exciting and fruitful. Begin each lesson by reading the assigned chapter(s) from the text; one or more text chapters will be assigned for each lesson. I suggest that you take careful notes as you read the chapters, paying special attention to terms, information in boxes, case studies, tables and figures. Then, read the course content. After completing all reading, attempt the self-assessments. Find out where you went wrong and two or three days later, try the same questions again. This time you are bound to get them all correct. Then, complete the written assignment to help consolidate the information you have gained from the readings. You will be responsible for the content of self-assessments as well as other material on the midcourse and final examinations.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Written Assignments

Assignments will vary, requiring you to answer questions, define and give examples of terms, diagram models, and discuss perspectives. Please ensure correct, university-level neatness, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Answer questions with more data rather than less. I have no way of knowing your grasp of concepts, terms, and other material unless you show me in your assignments.

Do not plagiarize. This means that you should always answer questions in your own words, even though there may be perfectly good definitions in the text. Refer to the academic honesty policy on the following pages.

Examinations

You must take closed-book midcourse and final examinations. Questions on the midcourse examination will be divided equally among material in Lessons 1 through 5. Ninety percent of the final examination will cover Lessons 6 through 10; the remaining ten percent will be comprehensive (including material in Lessons 1 through 5).

You must receive graded Assignments 1 through 5 before requesting to take the midcourse exam. You must receive graded Assignments 6 through 10 before requesting to take the final exam.

Examinations will include discussion and objective questions (multiple choice, true/false, and matching). Objective questions will count one point each; discussion questions will usually count from four to ten points each.

Three hours will be allowed to complete each examination. At your testing site, you will be provided with a blue book for use in answering questions.

Grading Criteria

Your grade for the semester will be determined as follows:

Written Assignments (10 @ 25 points each): 250 points

Midcourse examination: 100 points

Final examination: 100 points

Based on a 450-point scale, your letter grade will be as follows:

A: 405 - 450 points

B: 360 - 404 points

C: 315 - 359 points

D: 270 - 314 points

F: 269 points or below

Please note that plus and minus grades are not used as final grades.

You must pass the final examination with a grade of 60 percent or higher to receive credit in the course.

FREE ONLINE TUTORING

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. All correspondence students have access to several hours of free online tutoring from Smarthinking for subjects ranging from grammar and writing to mathematics and Spanish. Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the [Texas State Writing Center](#). For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](#) page. Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the [Student Learning Assistance Center \(SLAC\)](#) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library and from the [Math Lab](#) in Derrick 233.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The [Office of Distance and Extended Learning](#) is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their education goals. A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking. Students who require special accommodations (e.g., testing accommodations, information in alternative format, sign language interpreting services) need to provide verification of their disability to the [Office of Disability Services](http://www.ods.txstate.edu/) (<http://www.ods.txstate.edu/>), Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, (512) 245-3451 (voice/TTY) of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to avoid a delay in accommodations.

TRACS TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Texas State's Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) provides phone and LiveChat technical support for TRACS 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To take advantage of these services, visit [ITAC online](#) or call 512.245.ITAC (4822). Note also that a number of online TRACS tutorials are available from [TRACS Facts](#).

Before beginning this online course, it is recommended that you review the minimum hardware and software requirements and other important information available on the ITS [Course Information page](#).

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE INFORMATION

As a correspondence studies student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with correspondence-related policies and services. To this end, I encourage you to review the [Correspondence Course Information \(.pdf\)](#) page as well as the [Correspondence Studies Student Handbook](#).

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

The [Texas State Academic Honor Code](#) applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standards of integrity in all actions related to the academic community.

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

As members of the university community, students are expected to be aware of and abide by university policies regarding academic honesty. By the same token, members of the faculty within the university community are expected to enforce those policies. Members of the Department of Sociology operate on the assumption that each student has thoroughly reviewed the university policies regarding academic honesty and that the policies will be followed. Accordingly, members of the Department of Sociology will enforce all policies related to

academic honesty. The specific policy statements in this regard are to be found at the following websites: [Texas State Student Handbook](#) and [UPPS No. 07.10.01](#). The following is not a substitute for the statement of policies found in the above referenced material. Rather, it serves to call each student's attention to the breadth and depth of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes the following: Cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or abuse of resource materials. Each term or phrase is defined in some detail in the above referenced material. Because the offense of plagiarism can be confusing to students, the following information is provided as essential reading by all students. "Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit" (Texas State University Handbook, UPPS No. 07-10-01). Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- downloading or buying a research paper
- cutting and pasting information from several sources to create a paper
- leaving out quotation marks around quoted material, placing quotation marks around some but not all copied information
- leaving out quotation marks around copied information but adding a citation implying that the information is the student's summary of the source
- leaving out quotation marks for more than three consecutive words taken directly from a source
- providing a reference/bibliography page but leaving out the reference citation in the body of the paper
- faking a citation
- unintentionally using words or ideas or quotes without citing them in the body of the paper and on the reference/bibliography page

(<http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or having plagiarized in the past without having been penalized does not excuse such acts in the Department of Sociology. Any student charged with plagiarism may appeal in writing in accordance with Texas State University policy.

Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of [free tutoring resources](#) are available for students enrolled in Texas State correspondence courses.



FREE TUTORING



University Writing Center

The Texas State University Writing Center's online tutoring service allows Texas State correspondence, self-paced study students, to work with a writing tutor in real time in an online environment. During the online tutorial, both the student and the tutor are

Submission 1: Course Pacing Guide/Course Study Schedule

Start Assignment

Due No Due Date **Points** 0 **Submitting** a file upload

Download and add target dates to this [Course Pacing Guide/Course Study Schedule](#).

Then click Submit Assignment and attach and submit your completed document.

After you upload your document, click Next to proceed with the course.



You are currently logged into Student View

Resetting the test student will clear all history for this student, allowing you to view the course as a brand new student.

Reset Student

Leave Student View

L1: Lesson Objectives & Readings

After completing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- discuss the various definitions of family;
- identify functions of families;
- discuss the impact of social class, race, ethnicity, age, religion and social events on families;
- distinguish between assumptions and facts relating to families;
- review methods used by sociologists in studying the family; and
- discuss various theoretical approaches to the study of family life.

Readings

In your textbook, read the following:

- Chapter 1, "Family Commitments: Making Choices in a Changing Society"
- Chapter 2, "Exploring the Family"

Click Next to proceed to L1: Discussion

L1: Discussion

What is a Family?

A necessary beginning for a study of the family is to answer one basic question: what is a “family”? This is not so easily answered, however, because sociologists, the Census Bureau, and other research entities often define “family” differently.

For this course, a family will be defined as having the following characteristics:

- two or more persons living together who are related by blood, marriage and/or adoption;
- a primary group (a group with close, face-to-face relationships) that forms an economic unit and cares for its children;
- individuals who assume identities that are compatible with the family unit as a whole; and
- individuals who are committed to maintaining the family over extended periods of time.

Box 1.1, on p. 5, gives excellent examples of the variety of family groupings found in the United States and in other countries.

Types of Families

In this course the assumption can be made that a family need not include marriage, though it usually does. Those families in which marriage is not the norm include single-parent families, homosexual couples and their children who live together, other singles who cohabit as a primary group, and cross-generational groupings. Terms often used to identify types of families include the following:

- *family of orientation* - the family into which a person is born;
- *family of procreation* - the family a person establishes at marriage;
- *nuclear (or modern) family* - husband, wife and children who live together;
- *post-modern family* - family groupings other than the nuclear family;
- *extended/multigenerational family* - relatives of husband and wife who may or may not live with the nuclear family;
- *voluntarily child-free family* - family that chooses not to have children; and
- *reconstructed/blended families* - a new family formed by a husband, wife, and one or more children from a previous marriage.

Family Functions

As a part of American society (and other societies in the world), families are expected to contribute in constructive ways. Functions of families include the following:

- regulating sexual behavior of family members;
- reproducing the species;
- rearing children responsibly and teaching them the rules of society (socialization);

- defining gender roles;
- providing economic and emotional security; and
- placing family members within a larger societal strata, e.g., upper class, middle class, working class.

Interpretations of these functions often vary among families. For example, what one family believes to be the exemplary sexual code might not be satisfactory to another family, e.g., sexuality prior to marriage. Each family must make important decisions based on its own values, history, needs and current situation. Additionally, what may be appropriate today may not be appropriate next year. Norms and values change.

Family Decisions

Decisions a family must make are discussed in detail in the text. Family decisions provide guidelines for family members at any given point in time. Because of the impact of family decisions on individuals, it is wise to give considerable thought to important family matters.

Societal Influences

One of the reasons decisions are not easily made relates directly to the society in which we live. Pressures to behave in certain ways bombard us via television, magazine, and newspaper ads; religious leaders, and governmental entities. Only a few of society's influences are discussed in the text, but they are important. These influences are related to the following factors.

Historical events such as wars, depressions, nation-wide high unemployment rates, and inflation are examples of events over which families have no personal control. Our behavior—even the age at which we marry—is often affected by these social conditions. Additionally, the age at which we die may also be affected by society at large. Today approximately three-fourths of Americans live to be sixty-five or older (a hundred years ago, one-third of our population did not reach adulthood). As people age, the need for health care becomes more evident. How prevalent, however, is medical care for all segments of the population? How many families have insurance to cover the costs of expensive treatment? A society's policies regarding medical care affect individuals.

Race and ethnicity are also a factor. Most of us would like to believe that Americans behave in ways compatible with the intent of the Constitution, giving equal rights and privileges to all citizens. In actuality, this is often not the case. Part of this, again, is due to historical events. For example, slavery was prevalent in southern America prior to the Civil War. In some families, the aftermath of slavery has extended into present-day prejudices. Some Anglo families are prejudiced against other racial groups. Some non-Anglo families are prejudiced against Anglos and other racial groups.

Additionally, educational disadvantage is often correlated with race. For example, African-American children are significantly less likely than Anglos to complete all four years of high school or attend a college or university. On the other hand, some races tend to have a distinct advantage: Anglos and some Asian-Americans. Part of this is due to societal conditions and part to ethnic traditions. Ethnic

traditions include the language spoken within the home; holiday celebrations; birth, marriage, and death ceremonies; and work ethics. Asian Americans traditionally have been oriented toward a strict work ethic: to excel. As a result, many Asian Americans are both financially and intellectually advantaged. Read “Family Ties and Immigration,” Box 1.3 on p. 16, to gain a better understanding of ethnic diversity, especially among immigrant families.

Social class has the most obvious societal impact on families. By this we mean a family’s standing with regard to employment (profession), income (salary/wages), and education. Social class is also sometimes measured by prestige (community standing) and wealth (assets owned that lead to income). A baby born into an economically disadvantaged family will lead a very different family life than one born into a wealthy family. In 1994, the top twenty percent of families in America received forty-nine percent of the country’s income; the poorest twenty percent received 3.6 percent of the income.

Religion defines a family’s lifestyle. Religions often teach habits to foster and those to avoid, e.g., mealtime prayer. The specific religion a family chooses (and over ninety percent of American families profess a belief in a deity and a high percentage are affiliated with a specific religious denomination) will often be a major influence on family life.

Regional residence affects the type of automobiles we drive, the schools we attend, and the clothes we wear. All of these are often related to where we live: the section of the country (north, south, east, mid-west, west), a large city, a suburb, a small town, a farm, or a ranch. Family recreational pursuits, religious habits, and gender beliefs are also affected by geographical settings.

Age expectations also have an impact on families. “Youth” tends to be important to Americans. This does not mean childhood youth—it means youth in general. Many Americans gear their daily habits toward staying youthful: clothing, exercise habits, recreational pursuits, automobiles, neighborhoods. Even though senescence (the regular process of aging) is a natural part of life, many Americans tend to disregard the mental, physical, and other contributions of older Americans.

Facts About Families

Societal expectations and our own biases often dictate what we believe to be true about families, although these biases and expectations are not always factual. Box 1.2, on pp. 7-10 in the text, outlines numerous facts about American families today. These include racial/ethnic distribution of the population, prevalence of individuals living alone, birth rates and other data. Take time to study the facts presented. You will be held responsible for this data on tests.

Methods and Theories Used When Studying Families

Family theories are assumptions about how families operate—concepts which are believed to explain family behavior. The text discusses six major theories that are closely related to family research.

The *family ecology perspective* explains how societal forces (government) and environments impact family life:

- strength: enables a more realistic appraisal of outside forces that influence family life; and
- weakness: tends to be too broad in scope.

The *family development perspective* focuses on how families change over time: life cycles, and predictable factors which change family make-up (marriage, having children):

- strength: presents potential positive and negative changes that may affect individual families; and
- weakness: assumes all families change in the same ways at approximately the same points in time.

The *structural-functional perspective* outlines the ways in which families fit into the structure of society, e.g., regulate sexuality within the family. Societies expect families to contribute to the equilibrium of society as a whole and to rear children responsibly, provide economic support for family members, and provide emotional security:

- strength: outlines the ways in which families help to maintain the good health of a society; and
- weakness: assumes that the “traditional” family will best promote the health and wellbeing of society.

The *interactionist perspective* takes into consideration the personal interaction among family members, assumes that each family is composed of individuals who think and act differently, and expects these differences to affect the functioning of the family as a whole.

- strength: takes individuals into consideration; and
- weakness: neglects the impact of society, environment, and other more general conditions.

The *exchange perspective* presents the functions of “behavior exchanges” among family members, with each exchange involving costs (effort it takes to make the exchange) and rewards (positive results of the exchange). It also suggests that families who survive have more equitable and positive exchanges than one-sided and negative exchanges:

- strength: points out power figures within the family and/or equitable relationships; and
- weakness: fails to recognize the emotional involvement of family members in every-day interactions.

The *family systems perspective* views the family as an organism composed of many parts, with each part considered necessary to the functioning of the whole. It proposes that a change in any one part (family member) will affect all other members in either a positive or negative way:

- strength: views the family as a whole rather than a fragmented group of individuals; and
- weakness: lacks a specific focus on either positive or negative family interaction.

The *conflict-feminist perspective* examines power roles within a family group and the results of unequal use of power and resources:

- strengths: examines negative outcomes resulting from certain behavior and examines the differences in roles among family members; and
- weakness: tends to be primarily negative in viewing family relationships

Studying Families

Using one or more of the preceding theories as a starting point, sociologists and other researchers apply scientific investigative techniques when studying families. Though types of research vary, each project is undertaken in a detailed, step-by-step process. The most common types of research include the following:

- *surveys* – questionnaires or face-to-face interviews utilizing random samples;
- *laboratory experiments* - carefully planned projects designed to show cause-and-effect relationships; use of experimental and control groups in a laboratory setting;
- *naturalistic observation* - observation of behavior in its every-day setting;
- *case studies* - in-depth interviews or records that provide de- tailed analyses of topics or persons; and
- *historical and cross-cultural studies* – use of historical records or other published data.

Concluding Comments

As you study the material in Chapters 1 and 2, take special note of the boxes and figures as well as the case studies. Figure 1.1, on (p. 13), for example, depicts unemployment rates in the United States; Figure 2.1, on p. 31, depicts the family ecology theoretical perspective.

Click Next to proceed to Self-Assessment 1

Assignment 1

Start Assignment

Due No Due Date **Points** 25 **Submitting** a file upload

This assignment is worth 25 points.

Per your Syllabus, you may submit no more than two assignments per week.

Answer the questions below in a single document with one-inch margins on all sides. Each question should be answered in clear and concise sentences, using proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You do not have to retype each question, but you should clearly number the question you are answering. Remember to **answer the question**.

At the top of your assignment document, type the course number, the assignment number, and your name.

Name and save your file using your name and assignment number, e.g., "JaneSmith2." Then attach the saved document as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf file, and click **Submit**.

Answer each of the following in detail using your own words:

1. Select two of the theoretical perspectives used in studying families. Discuss each theory in detail, giving the major premises, strengths, and weaknesses. (14 points)
2. When a researcher develops a survey to examine how a wife's employment affects marital satisfaction, a "representative sample" is needed. What is a representative sample? (1 point)
3. How do "historical events" affect family life and family decisions? (Be specific and detailed in your response.) (5 points)
4. Name and discuss four characteristics of knowledgeable decision-making. (5 points)

Submission

Your submission will be sent to Turnitin to be electronically reviewed for plagiarism. Only the following file types will be accepted: Word 97-2003 (.doc), Word 2007+ (.docx), Excel (.xls, .xlsx), PowerPoint (.pps, .ppsx, .ppt, .pptx), PDF (.pdf), PostScript (.eps, .ps), plain text (.txt), HTML (.htm, .html), WordPerfect (.wpd), OpenOffice (.odt), rich text (.rtf), Hangul (.hwp)



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Resetting the test student will clear all history for this student, allowing you to view the course as a brand new student.

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