***THIS IS YOUR CONTRACT; PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY***

Sociology/WGST 315-500: The Marriage Institution
Fall 2011
MWF, 11:30-12:20 p.m. HECC 204
Professor Sarah N. Gatson
Academic 427 gatson@tamu.edu
Office hours: 2-5 p.m. W, and by appointment

Course Description: This course will involve an analysis of the social construction and social experience of marriage and the family as institutions. In this course, we will discuss particular concepts of marriage and the family as important cornerstones of ways to structure social interactions on various levels, and especially relations of power and inequality in society. The objective of the course is to challenge our taken for granted notions about these topics, and ask the sociological questions, “How constructed/natural is the family?” and “What is marriage, and what is it for?” Students should leave the course with an understanding of the general sociological perspective on marriage and family as institutions and everyday practices, as well as be able to discuss and present informed and reasoned opinions upon these subjects. Students should be able to express themselves in a variety of written formats, and will produce basic research papers, involving mainly secondary research and preliminary primary research.

Learning Outcomes:

- **Articulate** and **Apply** an understanding of a sociological approach to marriage and family.
- **Interpret** analytical audiovisual media presentations and **Compose** original materials dealing with one’s own questions about course topics.
- **Examine** critically sociological literature and policy materials, and **Appreciate** multicultural media literacy.

Pre-requisites: Junior or Senior Classification, or permission of the instructor.

Books:

*Hard Choices: How Women Decide About Work, Career, and Motherhood* (selected chapters) & *No Man's Land: Men's Changing Commitments to Family and Work* (selected chapters), Kathleen Gerson
*The Second Shift*, Arlie Hochschild, with Anne Machung
*The Way We Never Were*, Stephanie Coontz
*From the Front Porch to the Back Seat*, Beth Bailey
*The Black Family* ed. by Robert Staples (selected chapters)

Articles & Chapters: All available on online course reserve or eLearning
“The Family,” from *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Frederick Engels, 1884
“Sex Roles in the American Kinship System,” Talcott Parsons, 1954 (from Social Theory).
“Introduction,” from The Hearts of Men, Barbara Ehrenreich, 1983.
“Sexual Cruelty and the Case for Divorce in Victorian America,” Robert L. Griswold, 1986
(Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society).
“The Emergence of the Modern American Family,” Carl N. Degler (from Family Relations)
“The Family as a Utopian Retreat from the City: The 19th Century Contribution, Kirk Jeffrey,
“Marriage,” Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd, 1929 (from Middletown).
“Role-Making Among Married Mexican American Women: Issues of Class and Ethnicity,”
“The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen’s Compensation and Mother’s Aid,”
Barbara J. Nelson, 1990 (from Women, the State, and Welfare).
“Making Men into Dads: Fatherhood, the State, & Welfare Reform,” Laura Curran & Laura S.
“Opting into Motherhood: Lesbians Blurring the Boundaries & Transforming the Meaning of
“‘That’s Our Kind of Constellation’: Lesbian Mothers Negotiate Institutionalized Understandings of
“Doing the Right Thing? Single Mothers by Choice & the Struggle for Legitimacy,” Jane D.
“Race, Ethnicity, & Local Marriage Markets,” Kristen Harknott & Sara McLanahan, American
“Kin Support among Blacks & Whites,” Natalia Sarkisian & Naomi Gerstel, American

Recommended Reading:
Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 (1967)
Hollingsworth v. Perry (2013) (Note: These cases may be found on Lexis/Nexis Academic,
available from the TAMU Library electronic index/database search engine.)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*


“McBride meets McDreamy: Television Weddings, the Internet, and Popular Film,” Chrys Ingraham, 2008 (from *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture*).
Course Requirements & Evaluation [200 points total; 180-200 (A), 160-179.5 (B), 140-159.5 (C), 120-139.5 (D), Below 120 (F)]

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE I HAVE ALL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS IN, AND IN ON TIME. Additionally, please note that I WILL NOT RE-GRADE assignments in order to round up to a higher grade. For example, 179 and 179.5 are Bs, and will not be rounded up to a 180/A.

CLASS PARTICIPATION & ABSENCE POLICY: I do not take attendance; it is your responsibility to come to class on time and to be responsible for the material covered therein. While I am happy to answer questions pertaining to the course, I will not re-provide lectures or produce my lecture notes for you – THE POWERPOINTS USED IN CLASS AND AVAILABLE ONLINE ARE NOT FULL NOTES; THEY ARE OUTLINES. If you miss class for any reason, your best option for getting back up to speed is to communicate with other students whom you may ask to share their notes. Please see Rule 7 under Part I (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/search/rule7.htm) for details on excused absences, which I only need to be notified of in the event of missing an assignment or exam deadline, so that make-up work may be scheduled.

ASSIGNMENTS – All assignments should be uploaded to corresponding assignment areas on eLearning. Make sure to save a copy of all assignments. ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO MAKE A BACK-UP COPY; NEVER ERASE YOUR PAPER FROM DISK UNTIL AFTER THE SEMESTER ENDS, TO AVOID “LOST” PAPERS. If you ever have trouble uploading an assignment, MAKE SURE TO EMAIL A COPY to me either through eLearning or to my regular TAMU account by the deadline – emails are automatically time-stamped, and you will not be sanctioned for missing the deadline. When the assignment is one that other students need to review and give feedback on, I will upload it for you when necessary.

Class Participation: 15%/30 points (Class participation will be based on written responses to discussion questions; some of these will be in-class writings and discussion sessions, while many will be held online on eLearning). (6 X 5 points)

Papers (Papers should be turned in to the class eLearning website.)
#1 (10%/20 points) (5-7 pages) Discuss the conceptions regarding marriage and the family with which you entered the class. In light of the readings and discussions of the first five weeks, reflect on your own initial understandings, and those that the course has thus far highlighted for you. In other words, how has a structural, historical, and institutional/legal understanding of marriage and the family affected your understanding of these concepts? You may choose which readings and course materials to address, but you must use class sources. Your papers should be well organized and must deal adequately with the authors’ arguments which you choose to engage, but not in a summary form. Rather, choose critically which issues you want to discuss in light of the first part of the assignment above. DO NOT merely use summary references from the lecture slides.
#2 (20%/40 points) (10-12 pages) For this paper, you may choose from two options:
A: You will do some original research on your own family situation. You may gather data on the history of your family and/or its various members. You may interview your parents or other family members, etc. You may engage in constructing a sociologically-informed narrative of yourself. Then, from among the theories and experiences dealt with during the course, present the sociology of your family. You must incorporate appropriate course materials in your analysis, not merely tell a story about yourself and your family.

B: Using a mass media source (e.g., a television series like Everybody Loves Raymond, or a film like Parenthood; the source does not explicitly have to be about marriage/family), from among the theories and experiences dealt with during the course, present the sociology of family as it is presented in popular culture. You must incorporate appropriate course materials into an analysis, not merely provide a review of the source material (e.g., no “book reports” or “TV reviews.”) You may compare and contrast several episodes in one series, between two or more series, or engage in an extended analysis of a film, or compare and contrast between two or more films. What do(es) the media source(s) say about the family? What sociological paradigm would you say it falls into? What sociological concepts (e.g., gender ideology/gender strategy) does it demonstrate? You should actually watch some specific episode(s)/film(s), not merely rely on your memory of having seen a series; remember, Dr. Gatson is a pop culture geek, and will likely have watched the source(s) that you use.
DO NOT merely use summary references from the lecture slides, and DO NOT use a few cursory references to the sources you choose. While you do not need to touch on every concept/topic/source discussed/assigned during the class, in-depth use of several is the pathway to a superior grade.

Exam #1: (short answer format, 25%/50 points) I will hand out a study guide with the terms and quotations from reading and lecture that you will be expected to know a week prior to the exam. You should spend that time coming up with full and complete answers for all of the material in the guide. For the exam itself, you will be given a number of both definitions and quotations, from which you will be able to choose four definitions/terms and two quotations to answer. While these are short answers, because you have time beforehand to prepare your answers, they must be thorough and detailed, using examples from course materials to fully flesh out the definitions, and contextualize the quotations. The following link provides information on how to write a good answer on an essay type exam: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/737/1/

Exam #2: (30%/60 points) See above. Four terms/four quotations.
Schedule ("*" highlights weeks when an assignment is due):

Week 1: 8/29-9/2:
  M: Introduction to course & Online resource tutorial
  W: Basic perspectives and concepts
  F: Ideological Codes and Frameworks (Smith)

HISTORICAL & STRUCTURAL CONCERNS

Week 2: 9/5-9:
  M: Parsons & The Black Family, pp. 18-24
  W: Lynd and Lynd, Ehrenreich.
  F: Discussion Question #1, in class

Week 3: 9/12-16:
  M: Engels
  W: The Black Family, pp. 25-39; 129-150; Pleck (Gatson, 2003; 2005)
  F: Discussion Question #2, in class

Week 4: 9/19-23: Topic: Nature & Culture
  M: Coontz, 1-121
  W: Bailey, 1-76; Discussion Question assignment
  F: Discussion Question #3, in class

*Week 5: 9/26-30: Gender & the system of "teaching" marriage
  M: Bailey, 77-144
  W: Degler, Jeffrey, (Perkins-Gilman)
  F: Griswold; P#1 due, by 5pm Friday

CONFLICTING EXPERIENCES: Gender, Race, Class, Sexuality.

Week 6: 10/3-7: Fadir Choices. (ch. 1-5; Appendices A-C)
  M: Gerson’s Pushes & Pulls
  W: Gerson’s Pushes & Pulls
  F: Exam #1 handout and discussion

*Week 7: 10/10-14: Changing concepts of masculinity & fatherhood
  M: The Black Family, pp.67-96
  W: Laquer
  F: Midterm Exam

Week 8: 10/17-21: Changing concepts of masculinity & fatherhood
  M: No Man’s Land (Part II; Appendix)
  W: No Men’s Land (Part II; Appendix)
  F: Discussion Question #4, in class

Week 9: 10/24-28: Tensions & negotiations in the home
  M: Hochschild, through ch.16.
  W: Hochschild, through ch.16.
  F: Discussion Question #5, in class

  M: The Black Family, pp. 333-356
  W: Williams
  F: Caldwell and Peplau
Week 11: 11/7-11
M: Dunne
W: Dalton & Bielby
F: Bock

POLICY

*Week 12: 11/14-18: Cultural Frames for Policy
W: Moynihan (pp.2-17 in The Black Family), Lasch, and Norton, Coontz,
121-254
F: Sarkisian & Gerstel; Harknett & McLanahan

Week 13: 11/21-25: How would you formulate family policy?
W: The Second Shift, ch.17
F: Lubeck and Garrett

Week 14: 11/28-12/2:
M: Discussion Question #6, online
W: Discussion Question, in class
F: NO CLASS FRIDAY: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

REDEFINED DAY: Last Class Meeting Monday, December 5: Final Exam handout and discussion.

*Final Paper will be due on December 9, 2011 by 5 p.m.

*Exam #2 will be on December __, 2011 @ __ p.m. (See final exam schedule online)
Teaching philosophy and structure of the course.

My teaching philosophy is based on the idea of non-passive learning. This means that I expect you to participate to a high degree in your own learning process. I expect you to do the reading, and do it critically, and come to class prepared to discuss it, and be prepared to respond to it in writing. This doesn’t mean that I expect you to have all the answers, or to be able to parrot minute details, but rather that you are willing to challenge your own first understanding of the materials. My lectures on will cover the broad outlines of the material, stress the important points of the materials and my approach to them, and introduce connections to materials not in your readings. Discussions are to provide the class with a more in-depth approach, and the opportunity to explore your response to the material and get a bead on that of your peers. As the formally graded discussion occurs in online venues, I also encourage to you to raise questions – for clarity and for exploration – during class.

I stress writing – this is due to my own pedagogical belief that having to use the material that you are learning in critical formats is the best way to retain any knowledge you gain. In addition, learning to communicate well in written form is a skill that will serve you generally in your life.
Format for Papers

All papers MUST conform to the following guidelines; points will be deducted in each area that does not meet these standards:

Cover page: This page should have your name, course and section number, and any other identifying information. Do NOT repeat any of this information in the text of your paper, unless it is in a header or footer (i.e. it should not be used to take up space in the body of the paper).

Margins: All margins (top, bottom, right and left) must be 1 inch. If you are using Microsoft Word, click on File; click on Page Setup; under Margins, enter the number “1” if you have trouble doing this, see me prior to turning in the paper.

Spacing: Double-spaced, except for any lengthy (taking up more than four lines of text) quotations, which should be indented and single spaced. Do NOT put an extra space between paragraphs or indented quotations and the body of the text.

Font: You must use 12-point font. Size matters. Style (as long as it isn’t one of the fancy or symbol fonts) doesn’t. Personally, I prefer Times New Roman.

Length: Adhere to the page-length requirement in the syllabus for each paper assignment – these length requirements are meant to highlight the need for editing to make your paper more concise and clear. If, before you turn in the paper, you find that you are more than a line or two under or over the required length, this is a signal to you that you need to do some re-writing. THE COVER PAGE AND WORKS CITED PAGE DO NOT COUNT AS PART OF THE PAGE-LENGTH REQUIREMENTS.

Grammar and Proofreading: Adhere to standard American English spelling and grammar requirements. Proofread your papers, as spell-checking with a computer program is not the same thing as using language properly, and spell-check will not alert you to typographical errors other than misspelled words. If you have concerns about your proof-reading skills, ask a classmate to proof your paper for you, as it is often easier to catch someone else’s mistakes. You may also go to The University Writing Center (UWC), located in Evans Library 1.214, offers help to writers at any stage of the writing process including brainstorming, researching, drafting, documenting, revising, and more; no writing concern is too large or too small. These consultations are highly recommended but are not required. While the UWC consultants will not proofread or edit your papers, they will help you improve your proofreading and editing skills. If you visit the UWC, take a copy of your writing assignment, a hard copy of your draft or any notes you may have, as well as any material you need help with. To find out more about UWC services or to schedule an appointment, call 58-1455, visit the web page at writingcenter.tamu.edu, or stop by in person.

Sources/Works cited/Bibliography: If the paper is a research rather than a short response paper (i.e., you are required to do outside research of primary and/or secondary materials), please include a full bibliographic section, in alphabetical order, of the sources you used. Within the text itself, you may use whatever citation format with which you are most comfortable. If you are unfamiliar with citation formats, you may check out the online Chicago Manual of Style for commonly used formats: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools.html. The parenthetical method of citation within the text – (Gatson, 1997: 56) or (Gatson, 1997, p.56) is generally more concise and easy to read. Online sources are fine for general research, but must be cited as such, and you must be able to explain why they are relevant when a research article was just as available as a source. News articles may be used as sources if they are being used to illustrate the existence of a phenomenon or cultural concept, but NOT as independent research sources like law review articles or scholarly journal articles or books.
All of the above are meant to be read as requirements aside from the content requirement of critical engagement with the course materials. These requirements may seem nit-picky to you, but they are required because the various ways students have of getting around length and style requirements often make the papers vastly unequal and difficult to grade on an acceptable standard.

The papers will be graded on the following percentage system: 40% for content, and understanding and application of the material; 30% for clarity and structure of your argument; and 30% for the grammar and style/format and proofreading rules. Making the same guidelines errors will result in more points off than that occurrence in the first paper.

**Sample Grading Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of sociological concepts</th>
<th>The writer skillfully intertwines several sociological concepts to advance a sophisticated argument or understanding of social issues</th>
<th>The writer uses 2 or 3 sociological concepts well and develops them, but does not construct a framework that links all of the concepts together.</th>
<th>The writer uses a couple of concepts, but does not explain them in sufficient detail to demonstrate why they can explain or illustrate the social phenomena under examination.</th>
<th>The writer selects sociological concepts inappropriate for the topics under discussion/investigation, and misuses them.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>The paper is clearly organized. For instance, each paragraph's topic sentence clearly introduces a new topic or issue, while advancing an identifiable argument or interpretation of the issues.</td>
<td>The paper is well organized, but there are gaps in the writer's logic in moving from one concept or issue to another.</td>
<td>The paper's topic sentences and explanation of concepts are incomplete and misleading.</td>
<td>The paper lacks coherence. The lack of organization is unacceptable in college writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>The paper is polished and presented in a sophisticated manner.</td>
<td>The paper is relatively well written, but there are a few awkward sentences and phrases that could have been corrected.</td>
<td>The paper has many awkward sentences and phrases, and the sentences do not &quot;hang together&quot; in a way that propels the paper forward.</td>
<td>The paper is not written at a level appropriate for college writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>The paper contains no grammatical errors.</td>
<td>The paper contains minor grammatical errors that could have been corrected with more thorough revision.</td>
<td>The paper contains several grammatical errors unacceptable in college writing.</td>
<td>The paper is rife with grammatical errors that are unacceptable in college writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td>Awesome!</td>
<td>Good work.</td>
<td>Satisfactory.</td>
<td>Needs considerable improvement.</td>
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The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Disability Services in Room B118 of Cain Hall. Phone/TTY: 979-845-1637 • Fax: 979-458-1214 • E-mail: disability@tamu.edu. http://disability.tamu.edu/

Aggie Honor Code

“An Aggie does not lie or cheat or tolerate those who do.”

Our conduct in this class should embody the spirit as well as the letter of the Aggie Honor Code. If you have any questions about the code or Honor Council and its Procedures, please consult the “Know the Code” website found at http://compliance.tamu.edu/CodeConduct.aspx.