



Shanghai Jiao Tong University

SO926 Sociology of Family and Intimate Relations

Instructor:	Caitlin Slodden, Ph.D	Email:	cslodden@brandeis.edu
Instructor's Home Institution:	Brandeis University	Office:	TBA
Office Hours:	TBD		
Term:	May 27-June 27, 2019	Credits:	4 units
Classroom:	TBD	Teaching Assistant(s):	TBD
Class Hours:	Monday through Thursday, 120 mins per teaching day		
Discussion Sessions:	2 hours each week, conducted by teaching assistant(s)		
Total Contact Hours:	66 contact hours (1 contact hour = 45 mins, 3000 mins in total)		
Required Texts (with ISBN):	Edin and Kefalas, Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage. 978-0520271463 Cohen, Philip. The Family: Diversity, Inequality and Social Change. Second Edition. 978-0-393-66444-7.		
Prerequisite:	None		



Course Overview

We are all part of a family, for better or worse, but rarely do we think about family and intimate relationships beyond our personal experiences. This course is designed to expand our understanding of the family by analyzing the many complex structural forces that shape kinship and sexuality and the types of relationships that have been socially and legally sanctioned (or not) throughout contemporary American history. We will look at modern families through the context of diversity, inequality, and social change. While it is impossible to cover every aspect of the family as an institution, we will examine changing trends in marriage, cohabitation, divorce, motherhood, fatherhood, and the division of labor within the household. This course is devoted to critically exploring how social location—race/ethnicity, class, gender, migration status, and sexual orientation—profoundly shape life chances, patterns of family formation (and dissolution), and the lived experience of “doing” family. A major theme throughout the course is the diversity of the American family, problematizing assumptions about the nuclear family as the “ideal” type of family formation.

Course Goals

1. To critically read texts, recognizing and understanding the author’s theoretical position, methodology, evidence presented to support claims, and the underlying assumptions about the family as a social institution.
2. To recognize the family as an institution that is socially and historically constructed.
3. To identify social factors that contribute to the emergence of problems within marriage and families.
4. To analyze the family’s dramatic demographic changes over the last century, linking these trends to broader patterns of social and cultural change, such as women’s increasing involvement in the public labor market and the feminist movement.

Grading Policy

In-Class Midterm	30%
Take-Home Final Essays	35%
Observation paper	20%
Participation and Attendance	15%



Grading Scale is as follows:

Number grade	Letter grade	GPA
90-100	A	4
85-89	A-	3.7
80-84	B+	3.3
75-79	B	3
70-74	B-	2.7
67-69	C+	2.3
65-66	C	2
62-64	C-	1.7
60-61	D	1
≤ 59	F (Failure)	0



Class Schedule

DAY 1: Introductions and Review of the Syllabus**

Readings with ** = provided to you

Day	Topics	Readings/Chapter
Day 2	A Sociology of Families—Defining, Counting, and Problematizing Families & Kinship	Fischer and Hout, “The Family in Trouble: Since When? For Whom?” ** Cherlin, Andrew. “One Thousand & Forty-Nine Reasons Why It’s Hard to Know When a Fact Is a Fact”**
Day 3	A Sociology of Families—Defining, Counting, and Problematizing Families & Kinship	Cohen textbook, chapter 1 Minnow, Marla “Redefining Families: Who’s In and Who’s Out” **
Day 4	A Sociology of Families—Defining, Counting, and Problematizing Families & Kinship	Struening, “Families in Law & Families in Practice:” Does the Law Recognize Families as They Really Are? ** Blackstone and Greenleaf, “Childfree Families” ** Stacey, Judith. “Toward Equal Regard for Marriages and Other Imperfect Intimate Affiliations” **
Day 5	The Family in History	Cohen textbook, chapter 2 Mintz, “American Childhood as a Social Construct” ** Zelzer, excerpt from <i>Pricing the Priceless Child</i> **
Day 6	Changing Romantic Relationships	Cohen textbook, chapter 7
Day 7	Marriage & Cohabitation	



		Cohen textbook, chapter 8
Day 8	Marriage & Cohabitation	Smock and Manning, “New Couples, New Families” ** Bernard, Jessie, “The Two Marriages” ** Avashni, “The Marriage Movement” **
Day 9	Divorce, Remarriage & Blended Families	Cohen textbook, chapter 10 Cherlin, Andrew. “Stepfamilies in the United States: A Reconsideration” ** (skim)
Day 10	Divorce, Remarriage & Blended Families	Rutter, “The Case for Divorce” ** Hackstaff, Karla, “Wives’ Marital Work in a Culture of Divorce” ** Coleman and Ganong, “Stepfamilies as They Really Are: Neither Cinderella No The Brady Bunch”** **Start reading <i>Promises I Can Keep</i>
Day 10	Families and Social Class	PREPARE FOR MIDTERM EXAM; no reading
Day 11	MIDTERM	Cohen Textbook, chapter 4
Day 12	Families & Social Class	Edin and Kelfalas <i>Promises I Can Keep</i> (Pages TBA)
Day 13	Families & Social Class	Lareau, Annette. <i>Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life</i> (Excerpt) Pugh, “Consumption as Care and Belonging: Economies of Dignity in Children’s Daily Lives” **
Day 14	Race and Ethnicity	Cohen textbook, chapter 3



Day 15	Reproducing Hegemonic Gender Roles within the Home	<p>Garey, Anita. "Constructing Mothering on the Night Shift: 'Working Mothers as Stay-At-Home Moms'" **</p> <p>Banerjee, "When Men Stay Home" **</p> <p>Leonard, "Forgotten Fathers: Parenting and the Prison Industrial Complex" **</p>
Day 16	Reproducing Hegemonic Gender Roles Within the Home	<p>Reich, Jennifer. "Neoliberal Mothering and Vaccine Refusal"</p> <p>Slodden, Caitlin. "To A Parent Dying Young: Parents Dying Young" **</p> <p>** OBSERVATION PROJECT DUE</p>
Day 17	Mediating the Work/Family Struggle	<p>Cohen textbook, chapter 11</p> <p>Arlie. "The Time Bind" **</p>
Day 18	The Commodification of Childrearing: Transnational Parenting	<p>Hochschild, Arlie. "Love and Gold" **</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parrenas, Rachel. <i>Children of Global Migration</i> (excerpt)</p>
Day 19	The Future of Family?	Cohen textbook, chapter 12
Day 20	WRAP UP, SPILL- OVER DAY	Work on Take-Home Final Exam Essay