

Sociology 0010
Modern Families: Society and the Changing American Family
Fall 2023
University of Pennsylvania

Classroom: Fisher-Bennett (BENN) 201

Class meeting hours: Mondays/Wednesdays, 1:45-3:05 pm

Course instructor:

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Office hours: Mondays, 10:45-11:45 am, Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30 pm, and by appointment.

Course overview: This first-year seminar considers the contemporary American family as a dynamic and robust social institution. Over four primary units, we will consider contested definitions of what a family is, investigate how families sustain themselves, and explore how families absorb and respond to pervasive social inequalities. Our inquiry will be informed by sociological theory and research-based empirical evidence. Students will respond to and synthesize course material through classroom and small-group discussion, response letters, critical essays, and independent research. This seminar offers an opportunity to develop as a critical thinker. This means that building skills to respectfully engage competing ideas and perspectives as a speaker, writer, active listener, and collaborative peer is as central to this course as the content itself.

Course objectives:

- Describe the elements that comprise family relationships and how definitions of family have changed over time
- Summarize key theories that explain how families form and how family members negotiate and enact roles, responsibilities, and expectations
- Debate how public policy may support or inadvertently harm families
- Articulate how axes of social inequality are reflected in family composition and family process and in how families accumulate and distribute resources
- Evaluate the quality of data and argumentation in published empirical research

Expectations and guidelines for success:

- There are no prerequisites for this course.
- This course is small and discussion-driven. Your participation is essential to its success, and one-quarter of your grade is determined by your participation. Regular on-time attendance and active participation are expected, and attendance will be recorded.

- Students are expected to spend about 3 hours preparing for each course meeting. Additional time will be required to complete written assignments.
- Please complete all assigned reading/viewing/listening before class begins. This will make classroom discussions far more interesting and sensible! I expect that you will have actively engaged with the assigned material as you prepare, meaning that you will take notes to summarize key points and flag where things aren't clear. I do not expect that you will always fully absorb the material on the first reading, but I do expect that you will extend your active engagement to the classroom and/or office hours by sharing your questions, observations, and points of confusion for clarification and discussion.
- Sometimes life gets complicated or overwhelming. Course policies regarding absences, assignments, and late work are designed to accommodate occasional conflicts (see below). Please be familiar with these policies, and use the available flexibility wisely.
- Everyone in this class is learning something new. Your peers will rely on you to give them space to learn. Give your peers your respect and full attention, and please do not interrupt. When you disagree with something a peer has said, take issue with the idea - not the person - and speak in a way you'd want to be spoken to. Please respect and welcome all political and ideological perspectives and give them fair and thoughtful consideration. Your role in creating an inclusive, supportive learning environment will contribute to your participation grade.
- Family is a deeply personal and sometimes sensitive topic. Some themes in this course may be difficult to discuss. If there is a topic that you cannot discuss or that is otherwise particularly sensitive, let me know and we can work together to make alternative arrangements. Please note, though, that I am unable to prevent all students from being exposed to topics that might feel challenging or difficult. Keep in mind that you are in no way expected or required to disclose anything from your own life that you do not wish to share in class or in your assignments.

Contact information: Email (pfomby@sas.upenn.edu or through Canvas) is the best way to reach me outside of class time and office hours. I will respond to all emails within 24 weekday hours. I will not reply on weekends. If you do not receive a reply within 24 weekday hours, feel free to send me a reminder. To help me locate your message in my inbox, please include the course number in the subject heading (SOC1 0010).

Office hours: Scheduled office hours appear at the top of this syllabus. I will be in my office to welcome you during those hours, and I am also available by appointment. Office hours serve multiple purposes, and I hope you will find at least one occasion to visit during the semester. You can use this time to ask questions about course content, expand on ideas discussed in class, or plan your approach for upcoming assignments. This is also the time to discuss any problems or concerns you have that you don't wish to discuss in class. Please bring those issues to me early so we can resolve them appropriately and as quickly as possible. You're also very welcome to stop by just to share good news or something you're excited about!

Evaluation

Class participation

Participation includes on-time attendance, informed and constructive contribution to small-group and class discussion and activity, and response to in-class prompts.

Purpose: Your participation is fundamental to the success of our small seminar and will help you to develop skills in active listening and thoughtful and persuasive spoken response.

Class participation will be scored at the end of weeks 5, 8, and 11 and at the end of the course.

Capsule summary

Each student will present a capsule summary of one assigned reading in class. Eligible readings are marked with an asterisk (*) in the reading schedule below. Sign up to present your capsule summary [on this Google Sheet](#) (link also available on the Canvas home page and in the Capsule Summaries module for this course).

Your capsule summary should include:

- A description of what the article was about
- The author's thesis and the main contribution of their argument or research findings
- Something you thought was interesting or novel about the work

Presentations should take 3-4 minutes and will occur at the beginning of our class meeting.

Purpose: This is an opportunity for you to actively engage with a piece of research to distill its purpose, key points, and contributions and to reflect on what might or might not be useful about it. Gaining experience, confidence, and skill in making an oral presentation is an important part of academic and pre-professional development.

Your capsule summary presentation will contribute to your final participation grade.

“Ask a Sociologist” response letters

Sociological theory and research help us to interpret our personal problems in light of the structural and cultural systems that shape emotions, behavior, expectations, and interactions. Sadly, the sociological perspective is often missing in the advice we hear and receive; more often, the causes of personal problems and their solutions are framed as existing between two people outside of their shared social world. This is your turn to be the advice-giver to a person with a problem, serving in the role as a sociologist. The assigned book titled *Dear Prudence* is a collection of advice-seekers' letters and the responses authored by Daniel Lavery in his former role as “Prudie,” an advice columnist at slate.com. In this assignment, you will select a letter written to *Dear Prudence* and replace Prudie's response with your own. You will apply the assigned material (reading, video, etc.) for our upcoming class meeting to provide a sociologically-informed response.

Purpose: Response letters are part of the “pre-work” that you will do prior to attending class. The letters are intended for you to actively engage with the practical relevance (or irrelevance) of the course material. The expectation is that the opportunity to interpret and respond to the course material before our class meetings will prepare you to be an active, rather than passive, participant in class discussion.

You will submit eight “Ask a Sociologist” response letters during the semester. Each letter will include the following:

- Identify the *Dear Prudence* letter you are responding to by page number. Briefly summarize the letter writer’s problem.
- Use the assigned material for our upcoming class meeting to describe the source or larger context of the letter writer’s problem from a sociological perspective.
- Drawing on your interpretation of the assigned course material, offer your sociologically-informed advice to the letter-writer.
- Include attribution to the assigned course material (author and page number) where appropriate.
- Response letters should be approximately 300 words in length excluding any quoted passages.

You may write the response letter as an actual letter or as a more general memo. You may also engage with Prudie’s response (e.g., to agree or disagree), but this is not required. You may select any advice letter from *Dear Prudence*, and you may use the same letter more than once. That is, if you think two different perspectives presented during the semester would yield different responses to the same letter writer, you may write those responses in different weeks.

In most cases I expect that the letters you select will address issues about family relationships (broadly defined), but you may use a letter about problems with a co-worker, friend, or neighbor, for example, if it is well-suited.

If you come across an advice seeker in another forum (e.g., Dear Abby, Ask a Queer Chick, My Brother, My Brother, and Me) that is well-suited to an Ask a Sociologist response letter, you may use that instead of a Dear Prudence letter. In that case, include the full text of the original letter and response with a hyperlink to the original source in your submission. In the interest of confidentiality, please do not use material from your life or from people you know.

You may choose which set of assigned readings to respond to, but **you must submit two letters in each of the units listed below.** You may not make up for a missing letter in the next unit.

- 2 memos due in Weeks 3-5 (September 11-September 27)
- 2 memos due in Weeks 6-8 (October 2-October 18)
- 2 memos due in Weeks 9-11 (October 23-November 8)
- 2 memos due in Weeks 12-15 (November 13-December 6)

Response letters will be submitted as text responses via Canvas Assignments. They are due by 10 am EST on the day that we will discuss the relevant assigned material.

Response letters must be submitted *before* the class session in which we are discussing the assigned reading. No late submissions of response letters will be accepted.

The rubric below describes the criteria on which response letters will be scored.

Points	Characteristics
15 (Excellent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You completely responded to the prompt. You clearly identified the advice-seeking letter you are responding to. The perspective and advice that you provide to the letter writer are clearly informed by the assigned course material. Your response is written in your own words. You make appropriate citation assigned course material (author, page number) and make limited use of direct quotes.
10 (Fair to Good)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You partially responded to the prompt. Your response to the letter writer does not clearly connect to the assigned course material. There are no references to authors or page numbers from the readings. You rely heavily on direct quotes or don't use quotation marks for direct quotes.
5 (Poor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You didn't make a serious attempt to use assigned course material to write an informed response letter. You wrote very little or it's not clear that you did the reading.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You did not submit the assignment or did not submit it on time.

Critical essays: Critical essays will require you to synthesize readings, data, and class discussion to develop and support an argument in response to a prompt provided by the instructor. Two essays will be assigned during the semester. You will have approximately 10 days to complete each.

The body of each essay should be approximately 1,000 words in length (approximately 4 double-spaced pages in standard 12-point font). Information about formatting and reference requirements will be provided with the assignment.

- Essays are due on Thursday, Oct. 5 and Thursday, Nov. 2, 11:59 pm ET.
- Essays will be submitted on Canvas. They should be in Microsoft Word or PDF format.
- Penalties will apply for late submission of critical essays. A submitted essay will lose 10% of the full value of the assignment each day it is late, beginning immediately after the deadline has passed.
- Late submissions will not be accepted more than 3 days after the deadline, including weekend days.**

- Students who submit their critical essays on time may revise and resubmit them for a potential gain in credit. This is intended as an opportunity for you to hone your academic writing skills in response to my tailored feedback. It is not meant as a chance to turn in a less-than-polished paper with the expectation that you can fix it up later. The maximum credit you may gain on a revised submission is 3 points out of a possible 60 (e.g., a revised paper that originally received 54 points could receive a final score up to 57 points).
- Revised essays must be submitted within 72 hours (3 days) after the original graded essay is returned. The 72-hour period is inclusive of weekends.

Final project: The final project is an opportunity for you to apply the theories and frameworks we have discussed during the semester to a new or more focused topic or population of interest. This should be an argumentative, empirical sociology paper that draws upon secondary data sources including published scholarly research that you find for evidence. The course instructor will provide a general prompt for the final project, but the expectation is that you will identify a topic of interest

An *argumentative* paper is one that asserts and defends a thesis, or argument, about why things are the way they are. An *empirical* paper is one that uses observable, measurable evidence or research based on that evidence to support the author's thesis. A *sociology* paper is one that draws upon the theories and perspectives of the discipline to describe why the topic is of interest and to gain insight into the topic.

In addition to assigned course material, you should plan to use 4 to 6 sources from outside of the course syllabus. This may include academic journals or books or reports from public agencies or research organizations. If you are uncertain about what qualifies as a valid source, please ask me.

The final paper will be approximately 2000 words in length, excluding title page and references. The formatted paper should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins all around, and should use a standard font (e.g., 11-point Arial or Calibri or 12-point Times New Roman).

An outline, expected bibliography, and data table to illustrate the topic are due for discussion in class in week 13. The final paper will be due via Canvas on Wednesday, May 3, 11:59 pm ET. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

Components of your grade:

Class participation and capsule summary	25% (120 points)
Response memos (15 points each)	25% (120 points)
Critical essay #1	12.5% (60 points)
Critical essay #2	12.5% (60 points)
Preparation for final paper	5% (24 points)
Final paper	20% (96 points)

Total

100% (480 points)

Grading scale:

You will receive a final letter grade at the end of the term based on the scale below. I will not round grades up or down. For example, 92.99% will receive an A-.

A+	97-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A	93-96%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%
						F	<=59%

Required readings and related material:

Coontz, Stephanie (2016). *The Way We Never Were*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN-13 (paperback edition): 978-0-465-09883-5.

Lavery, Daniel M. (2023). *Dear Prudence: Liberating Lessons from Slate.com's Beloved Advice Column*. New York: HarperOne. ISBN (hardback edition): 978-0-06-314036-3.

Both books are available for purchase through the Penn Bookstore or from online retailers. A copy of each is available on reserve at Van Pelt Library. A PDF version of the readings assigned for Weeks 2 and 3 are available on Canvas.

All other assigned reading and links to audiovisual material will be available on Canvas.

Course Policies

Electronic devices: Electronic devices are permitted in class in order to access course content. Please limit your electronic device use to classroom-focused activities. Repeated misuse of electronic devices for personal entertainment during class will result in a change in course policy. Lecture notes (i.e., Google slides) will be available on Canvas after each class meeting.

Masking: Infectious disease rates associated with COVID-19, RSV, flu, and other viruses continue to fluctuate. At the outset of the Fall 2023 semester, I do not require face masks in the classroom. This policy is subject to change in response to public health and university guidance. If you wish to wear a mask, I will support you. If you have any concerns about this policy, please speak with me.

Attendance: As noted above, your regular attendance is critical to the success of this class. Please arrive on time prepared for discussion. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class meeting. Late arrivals will be noted, and arriving late routinely will affect your participation grade. **You are permitted two unexcused absences during the semester.** Subsequent absences will contribute to a lower participation grade. In the event of an unexpected occurrence such as extended illness or an accident, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

Please note that we will meet virtually when circumstances such as a major storm or a public health emergency pose a threat to public safety.

Use of AI tools: I am not an AI enthusiast but recognize that it will increasingly structure how people approach the task of writing. If you choose to use AI to develop your response letters or essays, please treat AI-generated content as an outline that provides a starting point for a document written in your own words. Bear in mind that clear writing is a product of clear thinking, and the primary purpose of this course – even more than to learn about family sociology – is to develop as a critical, original, and persuasive thinker. That is the human capital that will pay returns for the rest of your life, and you have to do the hard work of developing that capital yourself. Your written submissions should reflect your interpretation of the course material, and all citations and assertions must be factually accurate. Erroneous information such as misstated statistics or misidentified attributions and generic writing will result in a lower score on graded work.

Student Disabilities Services and accommodations for students with disabilities: The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS): <https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/>. Please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations and needs. If you have not yet contacted SDS and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling (215) 573-9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Hamilton Village, 220 S. 40th St., Suite 260 (M-F, 9 am - 5pm ET). All services are confidential.

Other Accommodations

Student athletes, parents and caregivers, and others whose commitments might affect their ability to attend class or complete assignments on time should also speak with me at the beginning of the semester about potential conflicts. You should also speak with me as soon as possible if religious holidays that occur during the semester will require you to miss class. If you unexpectedly experience a life event that presents you with academic difficulties, I can refer you to CaseNet to ensure that you get the support you need:

<https://www.college.upenn.edu/casenet>.

Code of academic integrity: Students are expected to abide by the University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity (available here: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>). I will impose substantial penalties on any violation of the code. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Extensions: Contact me as soon as possible - and before an approaching deadline - if an unexpected situation arises that may require an extension. I will consider extensions for situations that are truly unforeseeable and out of your control (a death in the family, illness). I will not consider extensions for foreseeable circumstances such as having many assignments due in the same week.

Graded assignments: Aside from computational or other minor errors on my part, all grades assigned are final. Critical essays will be reviewed for additional credit after revision as described above, and the assigned grade on the revised essay is final.

Daily schedule and assignments

Note: Starred (*) readings may be selected for capsule summary presentations

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
Week 1		Introduction and Orientation		
W	Aug. 30	No assigned reading		
Week 2		How do sociologists think about the family?		
M	Sept. 4	Labor Day - no class meeting		
W	Sept. 6	<p><i>Sociological Imagination</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from Mills, C. Wright (1959). <i>The Sociological Imagination</i>. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. <u>Read only through section 2.</u> Video: <i>Sociological Imagination</i> (link available in Canvas) Coontz, Chapter 1 	How can we use the sociological imagination to put the personal experience of family in broader perspective?	Remember to submit two response letters by Sept. 27.
Week 3		What is a family, and who decides?		
M	Sept. 11	<p><i>Structural Functionalism</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Video: Talcott Parsons' Theories on the Family. (link available in Canvas) Coontz, Chapter 2 OPTIONAL: Excerpt from Parsons, T. and Bales, R.F. (1955). <i>Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process</i>. New York: Free Press. Pp. 3-26. 	How do work and money shape the way that families organize themselves?	
W	Sept. 13	<p><i>Normative and legal definitions of family</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> * Powell, B. (2014). "Changing Counts, Counting Change: Toward a More Inclusive Definition of 	How do public opinion and the law define what constitutes a family?	

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
		<p>Family.” <i>Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences</i>. 17(1), Article 2.</p> <p>2. OPTIONAL: Rosenfeld, M. (2017) “Moving a Mountain: The Extraordinary Trajectory of Same-Sex Marriage Approval in the United States.” <i>Socius</i>, 3.</p>		
Week 4		Family Relationships		
M	Sept. 18	<p><i>Identity, roles, and conflict</i></p> <p>1. Sanner, Caroline (2023). Studying stepfamilies, surfacing secrets: A reflection on the private motivations behind efforts to humanize family complexity. <i>Journal of Family Theory and Review</i> 15:259-275.</p> <p>2. * Jawando, Will (2022). “Joseph Jacob.” Chapter 1 in <i>My Seven Black Fathers</i>. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux (pp. 15-39)</p>	What are some ways to be a parent or parent-figure? Why and when does conflict emerge among family members around these identities and roles?	
W	Sept. 20	<p><i>Family process</i></p> <p>1. Film: <i>Quest: An Intimate Portrait of an African-American Family</i> (2017, POV). 104 minutes. Available through Penn Libraries, link on Canvas. (Note: The film includes dialogue and musical performances with lyrics that contain a racial epithet. If you wish to pass over these segments, skip 16:02 to 17:07, 59:50-59:54 and the closing credits.)</p>	How do the Rainey family members enact their relationships with one another?	
Week 5		How do families work? Employment		
M	Sept. 25	<p><i>Employment and money</i></p> <p>1. Coontz, Chapter 7.</p>	How have families absorbed the transition	Critical essay #1 assigned.

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
		2. * Reeves, R. V. (2022). Dislocated Dads: Fathers Have Lost their Traditional Role in the Family.” Chapter 3 in <i>Of Boys and Men</i> , Washington, DC: Brookings. (pp. 18-42)	from a “male provider” model to one where women’s labor is a substantial or primary source of family income?	
W	Sept. 27	<i>Employment, time, and identity</i> 1. Sullivan, T. (2013). Greedy Institutions, Overwork, and Work-Life Balance. <i>Sociological Inquiry</i> , 84(1): 1-15. 2. * Perry-Jenkins, M. (2022). “This Parenting Thing Is Harder Than It Looks.” Ch. 5 in <i>Work Matters: How Parents’ Jobs Shape Children’s Well-Being</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.	What does it mean for work and family to be “greedy institutions”, and how does this look different in professional jobs compared to jobs in manual labor? How do roles and identities as workers and family members compete?	Last day to submit second response letter for Unit 1 (Weeks 3-5) by 10 am ET. Participation through week 5 assessed.
Week 6		How do families work? Division of household labor		
M	Oct. 2	<i>Gender and role specialization</i> 1. * Pedulla, D.S. and S. Thebaud (2015). Can We Finish the Revolution? Gender, Work-Family Ideals, and Institutional Constraint. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . 80(1): 116-139. (Don’t worry about the statistical methods, and skip the section on robustness checks.)	What factors contribute to the rise (or fall) of the gendered division of household labor?	Remember to submit two response letters for Unit 2 (Weeks 6-8) by Oct. 18.
W	Oct. 4	<i>Cognitive labor</i> 1. * Daminger, A. (2019). The Cognitive Dimension of Household Labor. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 84(4): 609-633.	How is cognitive labor different from or similar to other types of household labor?	Critical essay #1 DUE tomorrow (Thursday, Oct. 5, 11:59 pm ET).

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
Week 7		How do families work? Parenting		
M	Oct. 9	<p><i>Intensive parenting</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> * Lareau, A. (2002). Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families. <i>American Sociological Review</i>. 67(5): 747-776. Miller, C.C. (2018). Stress, Exhaustion, and Guilt: Modern Parenting. <i>The New York Times</i>. December 25. 	What does it mean to parent “intensively” and why has this become the normative parenting style?	NOTE: Indigenous People’s Day
W	Oct. 11	<p><i>Parenting during young adulthood</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> * Van Stee, E. (2022). Parenting young adults across social class: A review and synthesis. <i>Sociology Compass</i>. 16(9). Miller, C.C. and Bromwich, J.E. (2019). How Parents Are Robbing Their Children of Adulthood. <i>The New York Times</i>. March 17. Oct. (Note: This brief essay authored by a 16-year-old high school student was a winner in the Times’ annual student editorial contest.) 	How does parent involvement during the transition to adulthood help or hinder children’s independence?	
Week 8		How do families work? Responding to stress		
M	Oct. 16	<p><i>Family stress</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> * Nelson, M.K. (2022). The Presence of Absence: Growing Up with Institutionalized Siblings. In <i>Keeping Family Secrets: Shame and Silence in Memoirs from the 1950s</i>. New York: New York University Press, pp. 17-47. OPTIONAL: Senior, J. (2023). The Ones We Sent Away. <i>The Atlantic</i>. September. 	How do stressful events spill over to affect family relationships? What resources or circumstances allow families to be resilient to stress?	

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
W	Oct. 18	<i>Social capital</i> 1. * Dominguez, S. and Watkins, C. (2003). Creating Networks for Survival and Mobility: Social Capital among African-American and Latin-American Low-Income Mothers. <i>Social Problems</i> , 50(1): 111-135.	How does the giving and taking of social support relieve or exacerbate family stress?	Last day to submit second response letter for Unit 2 (Weeks 6-8) by 10 am ET. Participation through week 8 assessed.
Week 9		Family Inequality: Social class		
M	Oct. 23	<i>Economic inequality and marriage</i> 1. * Edin, K. and Kefalas, M. (2005). Unmarried with Children. <i>Contexts</i> , 4(2): 16-22. 2. Silva, J. (2013). The 1 Percent Ruined Love: Marriage is for the Rich. Published at Salon.com, July 27.	How does social inequality make marriage feel less attainable or desirable for people of color and people who are not "rich"?	Critical essay #2 assigned. Remember to submit two response letters by Nov. 8.
W	Oct. 25	<i>Family poverty and public transfers</i> 1. Creamer, J., Shrider, E.A., Burns, K., and Chen, F. Poverty in the United States: 2021. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau. (Focus on pages 1-7 and 15-17) 2. * Sykes, J., Kriz, K., Edin, K., and Halpern-Meehin, S. (2015). Dignity and Dreams: What the Earned Income Tax Credit Means to Low-Income Families. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 80(2): 243-267. (Read, but skim literature review and research methods)	How does exposure to poverty vary by family structure, race, and educational attainment in the United States? How does the once-a-year EITC payment help or hinder low-income working families to get ahead?	
Week 10		Family Inequality: Race, ethnicity, and nativity		
M	Oct. 30	<i>Intersectionality</i>	How does	

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coontz, Chapter 10. 2. * Dow, D. (2014). Negotiating “The Welfare Queen” and “The Strong Black Woman”: African-American Middle-Class Mothers’ Work and Family Perspectives. <i>Sociological Perspectives</i>, 58(1): 36-55. 3. OPTIONAL: Collins, P.H. (1998). It’s All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation. <i>Hypatia</i>, 13:62-82. 	intersectionality help us to understand social advantage or disadvantage in families beyond thinking about single aspects of identity (i.e., race and gender instead of race or gender)?	
W	Nov. 1	<p><i>Transnational Families</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. * Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1997). “I’m Here but I’m There”: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood. <i>Gender and Society</i> 11(5): 548-571. 2. * Dreby, J. (2007). Children and Power in Mexican Transnational Families. <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i>. 69(4): 1050-1064. 	How are families challenged by and resilient to being separated by national borders? How does separation change power dynamics in families?	Critical essay #2 DUE tomorrow (Thursday, Nov. 2, 11:59 pm ET).
Week 11		Family Inequality: Gender and sexual orientation		
M	Nov. 6	<p><i>Fatherhood</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. * Madhavan, S. and K. Roy (2012). Securing Fatherhood through Kin Work: A Comparison of Black Low-Income Fathers and Families in South Africa and the U.S. <i>Journal of Family Issues</i> 33(6): 801-822. 	How is fatherhood complicated by social expectations about the “good provider” role? What pathways are available for men to re-invent fatherhood?	
W	Nov. 8	<p><i>Sexual orientation and gender identity</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. * Reczek, R. and Bosley-Smith, E. (2022). Introduction and Chapter 1 in <i>Families We Keep</i>: 	How do LGBTQ+ adults work to maintain the families they’re given	Last day to submit second response letter for Unit 3 (Weeks 9-11)

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
		<p><i>LGBTQ People and Their Enduring Bonds with Parents</i>. New York: NYU Press.</p> <p>2. Blum, D. (2022). The Joy in Finding Your Chosen Family. <i>New York Times</i>, June 25.</p>	and to build the families they choose?	<p>by 10 am ET.</p> <p>Participation through week 11 assessed.</p>
Week 12		Families in context: Health and education		
M	Nov. 13	<p><i>Health</i></p> <p>1. Coontz, Chapter 6.</p> <p>2. * Reich, J.A. (2018). When the Personal Is Political - And Infectious. <i>Contexts</i>, 17(3): 34-39.</p>	Where do preferences for family privacy and individualism come from, and how do they clash with the public interest?	<p>Final project assigned.</p> <p>Remember to submit two response letters by Dec. 6.</p>
W	Nov. 15	<p><i>Education</i></p> <p>1. * Warikoo, N. (2022). Chapter 4 in <i>Race at the Top: Asian Americans and Whites in Pursuit of the American Dream in Suburban Schools</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>2. OPTIONAL: Calarco, J. (2020) Avoiding Us versus Them: How Schools' Dependence on Privileged "Helicopter" Parents Influences Enforcement of Rules. <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 85(2): 223-246.</p>	How do White and/or privileged parents use their status to influence school policy to their children's perceived benefit?	
Week 13		Families in Context: Incarceration		
M	Nov. 20	<p>1. Film: <i>Tre Maison Dasan</i> (2019, Independent Lens). 94 minutes. Available through Penn Libraries; link on Canvas.</p>	How does a family member's time in jail or prison and the experience of their re-entering society after incarceration affect	

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
			families and children?	
W	Nov. 22	No class meeting		
Week 14		Families in context: Family policy		
M	Nov. 27	1. Cooper, M. (2017). In <i>Loco Parentis: Human Capital, Student Debt, and the Logic of Family Investment</i> . Chapter 6 in <i>Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism</i> . Zone Books. Pp. 215-257. (This is a history of how we went from public financing for public college education to putting the costs on individuals and families. Don't worry about remembering the names of the economists cited throughout.)	How did the costs of a college education come to be the responsibility of families?	
W	Nov. 29	<i>Family Caregiving</i> 1. Campbell, M. (2019). Family Leave: Comparing the United States' Family and Medical Leave Act with Sweden's Parental Leave Policy. <i>Notre Dame Journal of International and Comparative Law</i> , 9(2): 116-142. 2. Popper, N. (2020). Paternity Leave Has Long-Lasting Benefits. So Why Don't More American Men Take It? <i>New York Times</i> , April 17.	Should family leave policies be expanded in the US to cover more time or to provide paid leave? Why or why not? If so, where should the money come from?	
Week 15		The future of the modern family		
M	Dec. 4	In-class discussion of final projects		Submit outline of final project via Canvas by 11:59 pm.
W	Dec. 6	<i>Singlehood</i> 1. DePaulo, Bella. (2017). More People Than Ever	Many people will spend much or most of their	

Day	Date	Assigned Course Material (read/watch ahead of time for class discussion)	Questions to guide your reading	Assignments
		<p>Before Are Single - And That's a Good Thing. <i>The Conversation</i>, April 23.</p> <p>2. Hyman, Sharon (2016). Apartners Live Happily Ever After - In Places of Their Own.</p> <p>3. Barroso, A., Parker, K., and Bennett, J. (2020). As Millennials Near 40, They're Approaching Family Life Differently Than Previous Generations. Pew Research Report.</p>	adult lives without family or living apart from family, and there are many ways to be "single." How should singlehood be incorporated into sociology of the family?	
M	Dec. 11	<p><i>The future of the modern family</i></p> <p>1. Popenoe, D. (1993). American Family Decline: A Review and Appraisal. <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i>, 55(3): 527-542.</p> <p>2. Brooks, D. (2020). The Nuclear Family Was a Mistake. <i>The Atlantic</i>, March, pp. 54-69.</p>	Thirty years ago, Popenoe argued that society would be worse off without the nuclear family at its base. More recently, Brooks has argued that the nuclear family norm is holding society back. What changed in the meantime? Who is right, if either?	<p>Last day to submit second response letter for Unit 4 (Weeks 12-15) by 10 am ET.</p> <p>Participation through week 15 assessed.</p>
M	Dec. 18	Final projects due on Canvas by 11:59 pm. No late submissions accepted.		