Course Description

“A socio-cultural study of family/household variations in the Americas; special emphasis on the cultural and ethnic diversity and the adaptability of family/household forms to changing environmental contexts; historical and cross cultural perspectives. Meets General Education Pluralism in Contemporary Society requirement.”

---- Messiah College Catalog

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of the family from a sociological, anthropological and historical perspective. It is important to see the family as a social institution which is embedded in larger social and cultural settings. Because the course also functions as part of the general education program's emphasis on pluralism, the themes of racial, ethnic, and class differences will be evident in the course. Students from a variety of majors and backgrounds are encouraged to use this course as an opportunity to understand their own experiences of “family” and to gain some understanding of the larger social and cultural world of which they are a part.

Course Objectives

The following objectives are stipulated by the general education curriculum:

1. To have students attend to contemporary issues arising out of the racial, ethnic, social class, gender, and religious diversity of American society.

2. To help students examine contemporary American society from diverse viewpoints and through these increase self-awareness.

3. To help students become aware of the effects of inequality, prejudice, and discrimination in American society.

4. To encourage students to articulate and practice an informed and faithful Christian response to this increasing diversity of American society.

In addition, the following specific objectives are part of this course:

1. To make students aware of the distinctive contributions to the study of the family made by disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and history.
2. To show how social structures and cultural patterns shape the relationships between individuals and families.

3. To encourage students to develop an appreciation for the variety of family forms that exist both within and beyond American society.

4. To provide a context for reflection on what it means to live a life of “service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society” by focusing on issues related to the family.

Course Requirements

Required readings: The materials in this course include two textbooks and one additional book chosen from an approved list by the student. Students will be tested over their reading of the assignments and they will be asked to write a paper over one of the books they will read.

Evaluations: There will be three major exams and a number of “feedbacks” or quizzes. The exams will consist of a three unit exams each covering about one third of the course. Feedbacks or quizzes will usually be given on Fridays according to the announced schedule (see course outline). The grades for the course are as follows:

- Feedbacks/Quizzes: 10 points each (10 x 10 = 100 points)
- Exams: 100 points each (3 x 100 = 300 points)
- Term Paper: 100 points ( = 100 points)
- Class Participation: 50 points ( = 50 points)
- Total Points - 550 points

Grade Scale
- “A” range = 505 to 550
- “B” range = 450 to 504
- “C” range = 395 to 449
- “D” range = 341 to 394

Class Participation: Student participation in class is expected and encouraged. The class will be organized so that part of the time will be devoted primarily to discussion over the readings and lecture material. Discussions are most likely to occur in connection with feedbacks or quizzes but they may also be part of any class session. Attendance will be taken and will be considered as part of the grade for class participation. Feedbacks/Quizzes and assignments are due when scheduled. If you anticipate being excused from classes according to official college policy, please discuss this with your instructor prior to your absence. Missed quizzes and assignments due to unexcused absences will be assigned a grade of zero. Feedbacks and other assignments missed because of excused absences must be submitted no later than one week after the due date. Failure to make up missed work in a timely manner will result in a grade of zero.
Term Paper: Family and Society as reflected in contemporary literature. The study of literature can be a rich resource for understanding socio-cultural phenomena. It allows the reader to enter into worlds that they might never otherwise have access to. The instructor has chosen four books that have much to tell us about “family” and how families fit into different racial, ethnic and social class contexts. Each student will be required to complete a term paper following these instructions:

1. Choose a book from the following list (NO Substitutions will be accepted):

   Julia Alvarez: *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent*
   bell hooks: *where we stand: class matters*
   Barbara Kingsolver: *Pigs in Heaven*
   Amy Tan: *The Kitchen God’s Wife*

2. Prepare a 4 to 5 page "critical review" of the book you have chosen that follows this format:
   a. The paper must follow usual standards for college writing (appropriate grammar, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, etc.). Although this is not a "writing" class the quality of your written expression will be part of your grade. Be sure to proof read your paper!
   b. Summarize the essential nature of the book (one page maximum).
   c. For each of the following components use the book to illustrate the ideas studied in the class as they relate to the concept:
      1. social class
      2. racism
      3. gender
      4. a social policy issue
      This should be the heart of your paper and should reflect both a careful reading of the book as well as application of the knowledge you have gained from the course (two to three pages).

3. The paper is due on April 24 (no late papers will be accepted) and will be worth 100 points toward the final grade. We will discuss the books for this project in class after the papers have been completed.

Students with disabilities: Students who have identified disabilities should work with Dr. Keith Drahn and Messiah College Disability Service (Hoffman Building) to arrange for appropriate accommodations. Students who have questions about this area are encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Academic Integrity Policy: This course will be conducted in accordance with the college’s Academic Integrity Policy. The policy may be found published in the Student Handbook. These policies include procedures for dealing with cases of cheating,
plagiarism and other types of academic violations. For more detailed information, students should consult the Student Handbook.

Textbooks


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Mar. 6  Understanding gender                        ZE – 6 Work and Family
Mar. 7  Required lecture: Dr. Christian Smith [evening class]
Mar. 8  “Katie Brindle…” / Work .. family         Lareau – 5 (Feedback)
Mar. 10 [no class – March 7 lecture substitutes]

Mar. 11 – Mar. 19  Spring Break

Mar. 20  Work and family                         ZE – 8 Contemporary Marriage
Mar. 22  Marriage trends                         -
Mar. 24  “Language Use….”                        Lareau – 6,7 (Feedback)
Mar. 27  Parenting trends                        ZE – 9 Parents/Children
Mar. 29  Parenting trends                        -
Mar. 31  EXAM TWO                               ZE - Chapters 5,6,7,9

Apr. 3   Family problems                        ZE – 10 Violence in Families
Apr. 5   Family problems                        -
Apr. 7   “Stacey Marshall/Melanie Handlon”        Lareau – 8,9 (Feedback)
Apr. 10  Family problems                        ZE – 11 Divorce/Remarriage
Apr. 12  “Wendy Driver….”                       Lareau – 10 (Feedback)
Apr. 14 – Apr. 17     Good Friday/Easter Break  -
Apr. 19  The future of the family               ZE – 12 Emergent Families
Apr. 21  “Billy Yanelli…..”                     Lareau – 11 (Feedback)
Apr. 24  The future of the family               PAPER DUE
Apr. 26  Social policy issues                   ZE – 13 Social Policy

CourseOutline
Date       Topic                        Assignments
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Apr. 28  “Power and limits of class”  Lareau – 12 (Feedback)

May 1  Social policy Issues  -

May 4 to May 9  EXAM THREE  (final exam period)