



Wells College

Professor: Daniel Renfrow, PhD  
Office: Cleveland 107  
Email: drenfrow@wells.edu

Office Hours: Wed & Fri 9am-10am; 1:30pm-2:30pm  
and by appointment  
Phone: (315) 364-3340

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a broad overview of the historical, social and cultural influences on the family and intimate relationships in the U.S. While we will discuss recent demographic trends, our primary focus will be on understanding families and intimate relationships as both social institutions and as cultural practices. Along these lines, a primary theme of the course will be that social forces have a considerable impact on romantic love, courtship and mate selection, cohabitation, child-bearing and parenthood, and relationship dissolution. A second theme will center on how everyday practice, as well as important cultural rituals such as weddings or the naming of a child, allow for the (re)production and perpetuation of societal inequalities. Throughout our readings and discussions, we will trouble the family literature by drawing attention to its allegiance to heteronormativity and by exploring a multitude of meanings for the concept of “family.” (3 semester hours)

### COURSE GOALS

Throughout the semester, we will work toward several goals. All of the tasks and assignments will help you:

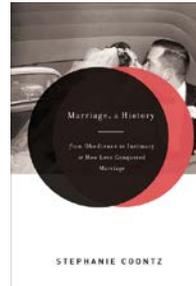
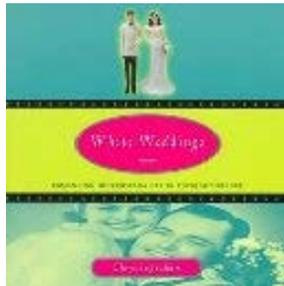
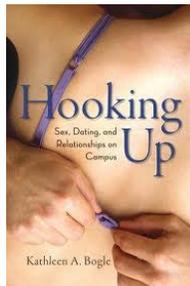
- to develop and use a sociological vocabulary for the study of families and intimate relationships
- to apply and critique five theoretical approaches to the study of families and intimate relationships
- to understand the family as both a social institution and social practice embedded within cultural and historical context
- to understand pathways into and out of intimate relationships
- to develop informed opinions and become a critical consumer of information about contemporary and controversial family issues such as divorce, teen pregnancy, marriage equality, etc.
- to forecast the future for families and intimate relationships
- to strengthen critical thinking skills
- to refine oral and written communication

### REQUIRED READING

We will read the following books:

- Bogle, Kathleen. 2008. Hooking Up: Sex, Dating and Relationships on Campus. NY: NYU Press.
- Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage. NY: Penguin.
- Ingraham, Chrys. 2008. White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture, 2ed. NY: Routledge.

Moore, Mignon. 2011. Invisible Families: Gay identities, relationships, and Motherhood among Black Women. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.



Reading assignments from these books is denoted on the schedule by an asterisk (\*).

Required readings also include online reserves stored on our Globe page. I will provide instructions for locating these readings during our first class meeting.

The course schedule identifies when each reading is due. Be prepared to discuss the readings on the day they are listed on the schedule.

**PREREQUISITES**  
SOC 151 or SOC 158

**REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

This statement has been prepared so that you understand course requirements. Read it carefully. Mark the important parts. Ask questions about any parts that are unclear to you. Refer back to the syllabus when you have questions later in the semester. I may modify the course requirements and schedule. You are responsible, not only for the deadlines specified in the syllabus, but also for any changes announced in class. *I expect you to bring your knowledge and experience into the classroom and to constructively share your insights. As your instructor, I will primarily serve as facilitator, co-learner and guide in this process.*

**General Course Guidelines**

- a. *Class discussions.* Being a successful student at Wells requires that one be engaged with course material and masterful in the art of discussion. I ask that we all abide by the discussion guidelines developed by psychologist, Lynn Weber. These include the following: 1) Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist. 2) Acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. is that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups. 3) Agree not to blame ourselves and others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise. 4) Assume that people—both the people we study and members of the class—always do the best they can. 5) Actively pursue information about our own groups and those of others. 6) Share information about our groups with other members of the class, and we will never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences. 7) Agree to combat actively the myths and

stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls which prohibit group cooperation and group gain. 8) Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. If members of the class wish to make comments that they do not want repeated outside of the classroom, they can preface their remarks with a request that the class agree not to repeat the remarks.

- b. *The language we use.* It is a truism that words matter. Please let me know what your preferred name and pronouns are, and I will do my best to see that everyone in class uses them.
- c. *Your written work.* Unless instructions are given to the contrary, all work completed outside of class must be typed, 12 font, double spaced on 8 1/2 and 11 inch white unlined paper. I will **not** accept work turned in via email. Your work should be printed and turned in during class on the scheduled day/time, or as I otherwise instruct. Written work should follow the style guide provided by the students' major discipline. For example, sociology majors should follow the ASA Style and Guidelines.
- d. *Scheduled days and times.* I expect you to be in class and on time. In order to pass this course, you must complete examinations at the scheduled times and complete all assigned work on the required/assigned days and times. I'll allow early examinations or assignments only under the most exceptional of circumstances, usually only with prior notification and arrangement confirmed in writing.
- e. *Office Hours.* Appointment times are posted on my office door. Be sure to sign up for an appointment, and speak with me if you can't make regularly scheduled office hours. I **do not** schedule appointments via email. Throughout the semester, I occasionally will have committee or other meetings scheduled during my office hours. To make sure that I'll be in during office hours, please check my sign-up sheet.
- f. *Late work.* I will not accept late work for a grade, although all assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for the course. All work, no matter how late, must be completed in order to pass the course.

***You should always make a duplicate copy of your work or be sure that you have one reliable electronic copy as back up. Technology failure is never an acceptable excuse for late work.***

- g. *Course Adaptations/Accommodations.* If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, let me know as soon as possible. Adaptations and accommodations must be recommended by Megan Reidl, Coordinator of Student Achievement, ext. 3432.
- h. *Academic Integrity.* We will follow the honesty policy described in the Wells Student Honor Code regarding student misconduct, cheating and dishonesty, and I will enforce this policy. Any deviations from these principles—including plagiarism, intended or not—will result in severe penalties, including a failing grade on the assignment AND community court sanctions.
- i. *Technology in the Classroom.* Please keep classroom distractions to a minimum. Cell phones should be switched off or silenced. Computers, while useful for keeping notes, should only be used for class-related activities. If your use of technology becomes a disturbance, I will dismiss you for the day and your technological device for the rest of the semester.

- j. *Inclement Weather.* Please register with Wells Express Alerts through the Globe in order to receive information about campus closure due to winter weather conditions. If I decide to cancel class, for any reason, I will send an email to your Wells account.

### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**All course requirements must be completed in order to receive a passing final course grade. Failure to complete any assignment will result in a failing grade (F) in the class, regardless of other performance.**

*Essays.* While we will be reading and thinking a great deal about families and intimate relationships, we will also write on the issue. During this semester, students will write 3 essays (approximately 8 pages each). Each paper will ask you to write with a different purpose in mind and for a different audience. Each will help develop particular skills that will be useful during your time here at Wells. I will provide more details on each paper in the weeks to come.

*Discussion Facilitation.* Being a successful student at Wells requires that one be engaged with course material and masterful in the art of discussion. Small groups of students will facilitate a discussion on a set of readings from the schedule. I will provide more instructions on discussion facilitation during the first few weeks of class. Remember the goal is to engage your peers in a thoughtful conversation – not just talk at them.

*Attendance and Participation.* In order to participate in class, you must be present. However, attendance alone is not enough to receive full credit. Students must actively engage in discussions. Your participation will be assessed by the quality of your contributions and the extent of your engagement in classroom exercises.

### STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

*Everything counts.* Your overall grade for SOC 365 will come from the following:

Essays	300	<u>Grade Ranges</u>	A	360 or more
Discussion Facilitation	50		B	320 - 359
<u>Attendance and Participation</u>	<u>50</u>		C	280 - 319
TOTAL	400		D	240 - 279
			F	239 or below

***As evident from this list of graded assignments, I do not plan to give quizzes or exams. However, if it becomes clear to me that students are not doing the assigned readings or are failing to fully participate in class discussions, I reserve the right to add them as necessary.***

When evaluating your written work this semester, I will use the following general guidelines in addition to the specific criteria I provide for individual assignments:

- An “A” range assignment is both ambitious and successful. It presents a strong, interesting argument with grace, confidence, and excellence. It *exceeds* the assignment requirements *and* has a maximum of 2 grammatical errors. The assignment follows the ASA style guide with few to no errors.
- A “B” range assignment is one that is ambitious but only partially successful, or one that successfully achieves modest aims. It meets the assignment requirements and/or has a maximum of 4 grammatical errors. The assignment follows the ASA style guide with some errors.

- A “C” range assignment has significant problems in articulating and presenting its argument, or seems to lack a central argument entirely. It approaches meeting the assignment requirements and/or has multiple grammatical errors. The assignment attempts to follow the ASA style guide but with errors.
- A “D” range assignment fails to grapple seriously with either ideas or texts, or fails to address the expectations of the assignment. It fails to meet the assignment requirements and/or has an abundance of grammatical errors. The assignment makes little attempt to follow the ASA style guide.
- An “F” assignment is like a “D” assignment but is significantly shorter than the assigned length, or doesn’t actually exist. It fails to meet the assignment requirements and/or is unintelligible due to grammatical errors. The assignment makes little or no attempt to follow the ASA style guide.

**Tentative Schedule**

	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
Week One: <i>Defining Families</i>	Jan 21  Introductions and Syllabus	Jan 23  <u>Readings:</u> Newman, <i>Defining Families</i> ; Dill, <i>Fictive Kin Paper Sons and Compadrazgo</i> ; Coontz, <u>Marriage, a History</u> Introduction and Ch. 1*  (* denotes required book; otherwise readings are Globe reserves)
Week Two: <i>Historical Approaches to Intimacies</i>	Jan 28  <u>Readings:</u> Coontz, <u>Marriage, a History</u> Ch. 2, 3, and 5*	Jan 30  <u>Readings:</u> Coontz, <u>Marriage, a History</u> Ch. 7, 8, and 9*; Newman, <i>Declining Families</i>
Week Three:	Feb 4  <u>Readings:</u> Coontz, <u>Marriage, a History</u> Ch. 10, 12, and 14* Cherlin, <i>The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage</i>	Feb 6  <u>Readings:</u> Coontz, <u>Marriage, a History</u> Ch. 15, 16, 17, and Conclusion*; Bengston, Biblarz, and Roberts, <i>How Families Still Matter</i>
Week Four: <i>Love, Sexuality, and Relationship Formation</i>	Feb 11  <u>Readings:</u> Newman, <i>Love, Sexuality and Relationship Formation</i> ; Crooks and Baur, <i>Ch.6-8 from Our Sexuality</i>	Feb 13  <u>Readings:</u> Simon and Gagnon, <i>Sexual Scripts</i> ; Bogle, <u>Hooking Up</u> Ch 1-3*
Week Five: <i>Contemporary Sexual Scripts</i>	Feb 18  <u>Readings:</u> Bogle, <u>Hooking Up</u> Ch 4-6*; Savin-Williams, <i>Dating and Romantic Relationships Among Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youths</i>	Feb 20  <u>Readings:</u> Bogle, <u>Hooking Up</u> Ch 7-8*  <u>Film:</u> <i>Hooking Up</i>

**Comment [DR1]:** Goals 1, 2 and 4; Objectives 1a, 1b, 2a, 4c (The Coontz text is historical and cross cultural.)

**Comment [DR2]:** Goal 4; Objective 4a (we discuss biological, psychological, and sociological foundations of sexuality and sexual behavior)

**Comment [DR3]:** Goal 2; objective 2a

**Comment [DR4]:** Goal 4; Objective 4c

Week Six: "Getting Serious": Marriage, Monogamy, and Nontraditional Relationships	Feb 25  <u>Readings:</u> Ingraham, <u>White Weddings</u> Ch 1-2*; Newman, <i>Marriage and Cohabitation</i>	Feb 27  <u>Readings:</u> Ingraham, <u>White Weddings</u> Ch 3-4*; Seltzer, <i>Families Formed Outside of Marriage</i> ; Klesse, <i>Polyamory and its "Others"</i>
Week Seven: Entering Parenthood	Mar 4  <i>Reproductive Rights</i>  <u>Readings:</u> Solinger, <i>Race Class and Reproductive Rights in American History</i> ; Newman, <i>Entering Parenthood</i>  <u>Film:</u> <i>American Marriage</i>	Mar 6  <i>Finding Baby: Options and Narratives</i>  <u>Readings:</u> Martin, <i>Anticipating Infertility</i> ; Fisher, <i>Still "Not Quite as Good as Having Your Own"</i> ; Munday, <i>The New Reproductive Landscape</i>  <b>Essay One Due</b>
Week Eight:	Mar 11 <i>Spring Break</i>	Mar 13 <i>Spring Break</i>
Week Nine: Childbearing as a "Social Problem"	Mar 18  <i>Stigma &amp; "Kids having Kids"</i>  <u>Readings:</u> Gregson, <i>The Culture of Teenage Mothers</i> Ch 3, 6, 8	Mar 20  <i>The Multiple Meanings of Children</i>  <u>Readings:</u> Dalla and Gamble, <i>Teenage Mothering on the Navajo Reservation</i> ; Furstenberg, <i>Teenage Childbearing as a Public Issue and Private Concern</i> ; Raley, <i>Avenue to Adulthood</i>

Comment [DR5]: Goal 3; objective 3b

Comment [DR6]: Goal 4; Objective 4b

Comment [DR7]: Goal 4; Objective 4b

Comment [DR8]: Goal 4; Objective 4b

Week Ten:	<p>Mar 25</p> <p><i>Kids: To Have or <del>Not</del>?</i></p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Stacey and Biblarz, <i>(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matters?</i>;  Halberstam, <i>Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies</i>;  Park, <i>Stigma Management among the Voluntarily Childless</i></p>	<p>Mar 27</p> <p><i>(Re)Producing <del>Patriarchy</del>?</i></p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Nugent, <i>Children's Surnames, Moral Dilemmas</i>;  Cast and Cantwell, <i>Identity Change in Newly Married Couples</i>;  Lehr, <i>Social Problems and Family Ideology</i></p>
Week Eleven: <i>Gender and the Family-Work Balance</i>	<p>April 1</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Hodges and Budig, <i>Who Gets the Daddy Bonus?</i>;  Schwartz, <i>Peer Marriage</i>;  Maume, Sebastian and Bardo, <i>Gender Work-Family Responsibilities and Sleep</i></p>	<p>April 3</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Newman, <i>Work and Family</i>;  Cotter et al. <i>Moms and Jobs</i>;  Hayes, <i>Intensive Mothering</i></p> <p><b>Essay Two Due</b></p>
Week Twelve: <i>Familial Roles as Social Constructions</i>	<p>April 8</p> <p><i>Constructing Fatherhood</i></p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Hamer, <i>What it Means to be a Daddy</i>;  Coltrane, <i>Fathering</i></p> <p><u>Film:</u>  Blankenhorn's <i>Why We Need Fathers</i></p>	<p>April 10</p> <p><i>Constructing Childhood</i></p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Vinovskis, <i>Historical Perspectives on Parent-Child Interactions</i>;  Clarke, <i>Histories of Childhood</i>  Wyse, <i>The Demonization of Childhood</i></p> <p><u>Film:</u>  <i>Consuming Kids</i></p>
Week Thirteen: <i>Unequal Families</i>	<p>April 15</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Newman, <i>Diverse Families/Similar Families</i>;  Baca Zinn, <i>Feminist Rethinking from Racial Ethnic Families</i>;  Bahr, <i>The Strengths of Apache Grandmothers</i></p>	<p>April 17</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Newman, <i>Unequal Families</i>;  Moore, <i>Invisible Families</i>  Introduction and Ch. 1 and 2*</p>

Comment [DR9]: Goal 4; objectives 4a-c

Comment [DR10]: Goal 3; objective 3b

Week Fourteen:	<p>April 22</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Lareau, <i>Invisible Inequality</i>  Moore, <i>Invisible Families</i> Ch. 3, 4, 5*</p>	<p>April 24</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Moore, <i>Invisible Families</i> Ch. 6 and Conclusion*</p>
Week Fifteen: <i>Relationship Dissolution</i>	<p>April 29</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Newman, <i>Divorce and Remarriage</i></p> <p><u>Film:</u>  <i>Loving and Cheating</i></p>	<p>May 1</p> <p><u>Readings:</u>  Gregson and Ceynar, <i>Finding “Me” Again</i>;  Ceynar and Gregson, <i>Narratives of Keepers and Changers</i></p> <p><b>Essay Three Due</b></p>