

SOCIOLOGY 412: FAMILY DEMOGRAPHY

12:30 – 1:45 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays, 125 Francis Scott Key Hall

Spring Semester 2009

Prof. Steve Martin

3125 Art-Sociology, 301-405-3464

Office Hours: Tu 2:00 – 3:00, W 10:00 – 11:00, and by appointment

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Subject Matter and Objectives:

As in many courses on the family, we will investigate how culture, economics, and population characteristics can shape family structures, how the role of families has changed in recent decades, and how families are important in people's lives. We will study important (and measurable) events in people's family lives, such as cohabitation, marriage, divorce, and childbearing. We will also study how family roles are changing for fathers, mothers, and grandparents. Finally, we will examine a few important social issues that have impacts on many families, such as poverty, child care, and immigration.

What makes this course different from other courses on the family is our use of demographic tools that help us compare families across time periods, across social groups, and (to some extent) across countries. We will study how people collect and organize information about the family, and we will be doing our own quantitative analyses.

Prerequisite: The prerequisite of Sociology 410 is no longer required for this course.

Required Texts: The following text is available at the University Book Center, the Maryland Book Exchange, and through various online bookstores.

Casper, Lynne M., and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 2002. Continuity and Change in the American Family. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.

Various assigned readings from the UMD online library.

We will also visit several academic and government websites and learn how to download data for our own analyses.

Website: Homework assignments and other course materials will be posted online as the semester progresses. My website for classes is <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/socy/smartin/>

Lectures: Outlines of lecture notes will be posted online one week in advance of the scheduled lecture. These outlines are useful but cannot convey everything we discuss in class, so add your own notes if you intend to get a high grade in the class.

Missing lectures, leaving early, arriving late: If you miss a class, contact other students to catch up on what you missed. If you are late or must leave early, please come for as much time as you can, but plan your entry and exit so that it won't disrupt the flow of the class.

Homework: There will be three small homework projects to help you download and present demographic data. Homework assignments will get grades of 0, 0.8, or 1.0. If you miss an assignment or get a zero, you can turn it back in (before the final exam) for a maximum grade of 0.8.

Papers: In this course you will write a term paper which includes your own demographic analyses. You will also turn in a proposal about a week and a half before the final draft, and a presentational poster with the main findings and graphics from your paper. I will hand out detailed instructions as the due dates approach.

Your data source for the papers is likely to be the General Social Survey at <http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive>, at UC Berkeley's Website for Survey Documentation and Analysis. Students have also used the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census, or other data sources for their own paper topics.

Late Papers: Papers turned in late will be penalized by one grade.

Plagiarized Papers: Plagiarized papers will result in a referral to the student honor council.

Examinations: There will be a midterm and a final examination. The test questions will involve short essays. Each lecture outline includes a list of potential essay questions to study. I will randomly select questions from the list for the test.

Time Limits on Examinations: Because classes are limited in length, you will have 1 hour and 15 minutes to write your midterm. I do not like to rush students more than necessary, so I try to write examinations that take a typical, well-prepared student no more than 60 minutes to answer fully. The final will be the same length as the midterm.

If you have writing or reading difficulties that make it difficult to write 600 – 900 words in an hour and fifteen minutes, please contact me before the testing period, and we will make appropriate accommodations without penalties.

Accommodating students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss accommodations, please contact me by the second class session.

Students requiring religious accommodation: If you need academic accommodation by virtue of your religion (e.g. missing a class, rescheduling an examination), please see me as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty: "The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students.

As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>."

Grading: Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- 6 % homework (three assignments)
- 4 % paper proposal
- 20 % paper
- 10 % poster
- 30 % midterm
- 30 % final
- 100 % total

I assign letter grades as follows:

- 90.0 – 100 % = A or A-
- 80.0 – 89.9 % = B+ or B or B-
- 70.0 – 79.9 % = C+ or C or C-
- 60.0 – 69.9 % = D
- 0 – 59.9 % = F

Plus- or minus- grades do not affect your grade point average, but they help me assess your performance if you ask me to write a letter of recommendation. For students who are on the border between two letter grades, I will consider class participation, careful homework, and improvement from the midterm to the final. If you disagree with a score on an assignment or a test, please come to me during my office hours.

Incompletes: Please avoid incompletes if at all possible – students who take incompletes tend to do less well on the examinations and term projects.

Calculators: Bring a calculator to class, and bring one to the midterm and final examinations.

Teacher evaluations: I will request your evaluations part-way through the class, and at the last lecture. Your comments at any time are welcome.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS

The order or coverage of these topics may change as we move through the semester.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Lecture 1: January 27. Course Description.

Lecture 2 – 3: January 29 – February 3. Tools for Demographic Research. A household as a unit of analysis.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 1.

Visit online websites to be announced.

Lecture 4 – 5: February 5 – 10. Cohabitation.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 2.

Cherlin, Andrew J. 2004. “The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(4): 848 – 861.

Homework 1 Due February 10.

Lecture 6 – 7: February 12 – 17. Marriage.

Schwartz, Christine R., and Robert D. Mare. 2005. “Trends in Educational Assortative Marriage from 1940 to 2003.” *Demography* 42(4): 621 – 646.

Homework 2 Due February 17.

Lecture 8 – 9: February 19 – 24. Separation and Divorce.

Cherlin, Andrew R. 1999. “Going to Extremes: Family Structure, Children’s Well-Being, and Social Science.” *Demography* 36(4):421-428.

Homework 3 Due February 24.

Lecture 10 – 12: February 26 – March 5. Childbearing and Childlessness.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 3.

Schoen, Robert, Young J. Kim, Constance A. Nathanson, Jason Fields, and Nan Marie Astone. 1997. “Why Do Americans Want Children?” *Population and Development Review* 23:333-358.

MIDTERM: March 10.

Lecture 13 – 14: March 12, March 24 Single Mother Families.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 4.

Edin, Kathryn. 2000. “What Do Low-Income Single Mothers Say About Children?” *Social Problems* 47(1):112-133.

(No class March 17 or 19 due to Spring Break)

Lecture 15: March 26. Discussion of Term projects.

Lecture 16: March 31. Fathers. Biological differences between the sexes.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 5.

Udry, J. Richard. 1994. "The Nature of Gender." *Demography* 31(4):561-573.

Lecture 17 – 18: April 2 – 7: Grandparents.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 6.

Bengtson, Vern. 2001. "Beyond the Nuclear Family: The Increasing Importance of Multigenerational Bonds." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 63:1-16.

Preston, Samuel H. 1984. "Children and the Elderly: Divergent Paths for America's Dependents." *Demography* 21(4):435-457.

Term Paper Proposal Due April 7.

Lecture 19 – 20: April 9 – 14: Child Care and Child Well-Being

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 7.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 8.

Short, Susan E., Frances K. Goldscheider, and Berna M. Torr. 2006. "Less Help for Mother: The Decline in Coresidential Female Support for Mothers of Young Children, 1880 – 2000." *Demography* 43(4): 617-629

Lecture 21 – 22: April 16 – 21. Work and Family.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 10.

Bianchi, Suzanne M. 2000. "Maternal Employment and Time With Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?" *Demography* 37(4): 401 – 414.

Lecture 23 – 24: April 23 - 28. Economic Causes and Consequences.

Casper and Bianchi Chapter 9.

McLanahan, Sara. 2004. "Diverging Destinies: How Children are Faring Under the Second Demographic Transition." *Demography* 41(4): 607 – 627.

April 30: To Be Announced.

(I will be at the meetings of the Population Association of America today.)

Lecture 25: May 5. Special Topic: Gay Marriage.

Kurdek, Lawrence A. 2004. "Are Gay and Lesbian Cohabiting Couples Really Different from Heterosexual Married Couples?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(4): 880 – 900.

Lecture 26 – 27: May 7 - 12. Poster Presentations and Course Review.

Term Paper Due May 7.

Posters Due May 7.

FINAL EXAM: May 19 (Tuesday) 1:30 – 3:30 PM.