Overview

Our goal is to investigate the nature, scope, and sociopolitical forces that impact the formation and development of the family. For example, how have American laws defined marriage and how have laws impacted family development? How do changing notions about gender roles, ethnic and non-ethnic identities, and work, shape family development? We examine various definitions and concepts of the “family” and some of its common themes including love and marriage, wealth and poverty, divorce, work, and violence. To explore these as well as other questions about family development, we use multicultural, feminist, and gender role perspective.

Required Texts and Assigned Readings (title/author/publisher/year):

Man and Wife in America: A History (Hardcover)
Hendrik Hartog, Harvard University Press, 2000

The Year of Magical Thinking
Joan Didion, Knopf, 2005

Without a Net: Middle Class and Homeless in America: My story
Michelle Kennedy, Viking Adult, Feb 2005

It the Chocolate Pudding? A Story for Little Kids About Divorce

Dim Sum, Bagels, and Grits: A sourcebook for Multicultural Families
Myra Alperson, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001

Additional reading assignments will either be handed out before class, or will be available in the SESP student affairs office. The Student Affairs office is located in Annenberg Hall, Room 121.
Context

Classroom environment may include discussions, lectures, group assignments, and in-class exercises. Students are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, “Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A basic guide”. For details regarding academic integrity, please review: http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/. If you would like a copy of the brochure please visit the SESP student affairs office.

Students are encouraged to be engaged as active listeners, and at times, verbal participants. I also view class participation as a reflective and internal process, and this process can be reflected in your short response papers. All assignments will cover the assigned readings, lectures, guest speakers, and videos in class or media viewed over the Internet. Attendance will not be taken in this class but I will make note of unusual or consistent lateness or absences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All assigned readings are mandatory.

REACTION PAPERS: You will be required to complete 6, one to two page response papers, single spaced, 12 pt font. The purpose of the papers is to show your reading comprehension, critical thinking, and depth of knowledge. You can choose various approaches to your papers, for example, they may be cumulative in nature showing your growth throughout the course, relate to family policies, or have a philosophical tone. The first paper you will write will not be graded. I will return those papers to you and you can use these as an example of my grading and feedback style.

In your papers, you must show that you have read and understood the main points of the article or chapter. Your papers should highlight the main point(s) of the article, and then move toward discussing your thoughts, reactions (both positive and negative to the readings). You do not have to share the position of the author, or others in your group, but you must make a clear statement on what you think and how you arrived at your critique or supportive position.

Papers will be graded in a group ranked order. There will be a three tier grading system; top tier will receive A’s (95%), second tier will receive B’s (85%), and third tiers will receive Cs (75%). Top tier: clear, concise, organized, creative, critical, and originality: Second Tier: could use more organization, clarity, or criticality, etc.: Third Tier: Lack some or all of the above, typos, etc. Late reaction papers will NOT be accepted. 5 papers = 40% of your final grade.
LEADING CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES. Students are required to collaborate on a team and to lead a debate on a given topic (see hand out for more information).

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: A 6-8 page typed, double-spaced paper on some aspect of the family that you have learned about over the course. Student names should be at THE END OF THE PAPER. Students are expected to meet with Professor Ragsdale by 2/9 to discuss their topics. All topics must be pre-approved. Final Papers will be due on Thursday, March 9th by 5:00 pm, by email.

GRADING SCALE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>(%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 - 100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 94</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>55 - 59</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - 54</td>
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</tbody>
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Tuesday, Jan. 3  What is a Family?
Introduction, review of syllabus, group creation

In class reading (to be handed out)

(Small group discussion)

Thursday, Jan. 5  Family as a System
_The Family System, Chapter 12, 400 - stop at 407, The Functions of Family Members_

Man and Wife, Introduction, The Scene of a Marriage, 1 – 39

Tuesday, Jan. 10  Family Functioning and International Family Policy
_The Family System, 408 - 430_

Sanya Declaration, World Declaration for a Comprehensive Family Policy “Achieving the Millennium Declaration With and For the Family”

View Internet, about Katrina Family

(Small group discussion)

Thursday, Jan. 12  Dissolutions, Reformations, and Deinstitutionalization
Reflection/Response Paper #1 due, not graded

Lecture from Cherin, Deinstitutionalization of Marriage

Man and Wife, Abigail Bailey’s Divorce, 40 – 62

_Stepfamily Success depends on Ingredients, (APA Monitor, The 21st Century American Family), 58-61_

(Small group discussion, 3 questions from Group A)
Tuesday, Jan. 17  
**Husband and Men**
Man and Wife, Acting Like A Husband, 136-166

Man and Wife, John Barry and American Fatherhood, 193-217

*Meet the Renaissance Dad, (APA Monitor, The 21st Century American Family), 62-64*

Retreat of the Male by Eric Hobsbawm (Review of Between Sex and Power: Family in the World 1900-2000 by Göran Therborn (Routledge, p. 379)

**Thursday, Jan. 19**
Year of Magical Thinking, 1-41

**Tuesday, Jan. 24**
Year of Magical Thinking, 42-75

(Small group discussion, 3 questions from Group B)

**Thursday, Jan. 26**
Reflection/Response Paper #2

Year of Magical Thinking, 76-141

**Tuesday, Jan. 31**
Year of Magical Thinking, 142 to end

**Thursday, Feb. 2**  
**Biology, Gender, and Reproduction—Part 1**
*Sandra Bem, Lenses of Gender, Biological Essentialism, 7-38*

Group A: 9:10 to 9:40
Group B: 9:40 to 10:10

**Tuesday, Feb. 7**  
**Biology, Gender, and Reproduction—Part 2**
*Sandra Bem, Androcentrism, 39-79*

Group C: 9:10 to 9:40
Group D: 9:40 to 10:10

**MID TERM, take home**
Thursday, Feb. 9  Black Feminist Thought, Part 1
Reflection/Response Paper #3

Twila, Perry, Family Values, Race, Feminism and Public Policy, p 1-10

Patricia Hills Collins, Black Feminist Thought, Chapter 3, Work, Family and Oppression, 23-67


Tuesday, Feb. 14  Black Feminist Thought, Part 2

Twila, Perry, Family Values, Race, Feminism and Public Policy, p 10-18

Angela David, Racism, Reproductive rights, chapter 12, 202-221

Dim Sum, Bagels, and Grits, Confronting Prejudice, 140-165

Race Traitor, Manifesto of a Dead Daughter, 84-89

(Small group discussion, 3 questions group C)

MID TERM DUE

Thursday, Feb. 16  Violence and Disruptions

Man and Wife, 218-241, The Right to Kill

Anne Russo, Struggle for integrity, in an unjust world, 185-206

U.S. children with incarcerated parents
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/family_celebration.htm

Tuesday, Feb. 21  Adoption

MID TERMS RETURNED

Reflection/Response Paper #4

Adopting a New American Family, (APA Monitor, The 21st Century American Family), 70-71

Dim Sum, Bagels, and Grits, Chap 1, 2, and 3—page 3-63

(Small group discussion, Group D)
Thursday, Feb. 23  Gay and Lesbian Families
The Kids are All Right, (APA Monitor, The 21st Century American Family), 66

Gay and Lesbian Families in the United States: Same Sex Unmarried Partner Households
A Preliminary Analysis of 2000 United States Census Data
http://www.hrc.org/Content/ContentGroups/Publications1/census.pdf

(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter? Judith Stacey, Timothy J. Biblarz
http://sociology.fas.nyu.edu/docs/JO/319/asr.pdf

Tuesday, Feb. 28  Poverty and Work

Without a net, 1-76
(Small group discussion, no group order)

Thursday, March 2
Reflection/Response Paper #5

Without a net, 76-120

Tuesday, March 7
Without a net, 120-190

Thursday, March 9  Final Paper Due by 5:00 pm, by email
Bibliography, chapter excerpts from course packet
Vol. 36, No. 11
New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
New York: Routledge.

Website you might want to browse
Written Statement About Debate Format (2 page document)

The debate format requires that your group meets and develops both pro and con positions to Bem’s articles. To be handed in on the day of your group’s debate, each member in the group must submit a brief written statement. This statement should provide me with an overview of your group. For example, describe the group learning process, how many times all of you met, how the group decided on who would speak, other important processes in terms of participation and contribution of group members. These statements will be taken into account during the grading process. If you have additional questions about working on your team and/or group processes, please come to see me during my office hour on Thursdays, room G14, 10:30 to 11:30 am.

Debate Structure

1. By a flip of a coin on the day of the debate, this will determine which group will be taking either the pro or con position.
2. Carefully point out how her thesis and/or arguments relate to or do not apply to family development or some important aspect of family functioning.

Debate Procedures and Format

1. Both groups will make an opening statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>9.05 to 9.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con</td>
<td>9.08 to 9.11</td>
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</tbody>
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2. Pro group will make one 5-minute opening statement, 9.11 to 9.16

3. Followed by con group making a 5-minute rebuttal to this statement. 9.16 to 9.21

4. Con group will make a 5-minute opening statement, or they may choose to use this time for continued rebuttal. 9.21 to 9.26

5. Followed by the pro group making a 5-minute rebuttal. 9.26 to 9.31

6. There will be then a 10-minute recess. During this time, everyone who is not involved in the debate will have the opportunity to formulate two
questions, one for the pro group and the other for the con group. Please make sure to put on the index card either pro or con group. 9.31 to 9.41

7. Professor will randomly select a number, and the person with that number index card will read their question.

8. The group called will have 5 minutes to prepare their response 9.41 to 9.46

9. Group will have 3 minutes to make their response 9.46 to 9.49.

10. Another random number will be drawn, and the next question should be addressed toward the other group, and so forth. 9.50 to 9.55 group will have 5 minutes to confer and then 3 minutes to respond 9.55 to 9.58

11. Pro Group will make 3 minute final closing statement 10 to 10.03

12. Con group will make 3 minute final closing statement, 10.03 to 10.08

Voting Procedures

1. Votes will be tallied on index cards, and you must submit one card with either PRO or CON. Write which group was more persuasive in their argument, irrespective of your own “personal” pro or con position.

2. Final Grading will be based on written statements of group process, peer ratings persuasiveness of position, and the degree to which arguments drew upon prior readings and class discussion. Good luck!