

Families and Modern Social Theory

Fall, 2019

Syllabus

Philip N. Cohen

This course is designed to build knowledge about theories of modernity, with emphasis on modern families. Thus, it combines some core theories of modernity (Giddens, Bourdieu, Foucault), with key theoretical debates about families and intimate relationships (economics and economic sociology, gender, race, class), and social change (development and new family forms).

Assignments

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and upload a weekly comment to ELMS by 5pm the day before the seminar meeting each week. The comment should be less than 500 words, and include a specific issue from the readings that you would like to discuss, with your question or comment. Please do not summarize the readings – at all.

Students will write three more elaborate thought papers engaging the readings from the previous weeks. These exploratory essays will be approximately 2000 words, and make a critical argument, offering a hypothesis to explore, or making empirical connections between the course material and other research, bringing in some sources from outside the course. This is a chance for you to explore your own work in relation to the concepts and research in the course.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on participation (33%), weekly writings (33%), and exploratory essays (33%). Final scores of 90% or more get A's, 80-89% get B's, below 80% get C's.

Device restrictions

Students may not use laptops, tablet computers, or mobile phones in class, except as by individual arrangement (e.g., as learning accommodation).

Universal learning

The principle of universal learning means that our classroom and our interactions should be as inclusive as possible. Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Students with particular needs should contact the UMD Disability Support Service (<https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>), which will forward the necessary information to me. Please do it now instead of waiting till late in the semester.

Difficult subjects.

The content of this course may include topics that are difficult for some people to confront or discuss. I cannot anticipate what those topics are, or who will be affected, but I can be sensitive and work with students who let me know of their needs. If there is a topic you are unable to discuss or need to be warned about, please notify me so we can make appropriate arrangements for your work. However, we cannot prevent all students from being exposed to topics or ideas that they find objectionable or offensive.

Academic integrity

Students must be familiar with the UMD Code of Academic Integrity (<http://president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf>). In this course there is zero tolerance for academic dishonesty.

Schedule and readings

Part 1: Modernity

August 28: Introduction

Cohen, Philip N. 2018. *The Family: Diversity, Inequality, and Social Change* (2nd edition). New York: W. W. Norton & Company. Chapter 1, “A Sociology of the Family.”

Cohen, Philip N. 2018. *Enduring Bonds: Inequality, Marriage, Parenting, and Everything Else That Makes Families Great and Terrible*. University of California Press. Chapter 1, “Modernity, Parenting, and Families.”

September 4: What is modernity?

Giddens, Anthony. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. John Wiley & Sons

September 11: Modern relationships

Giddens, Anthony. 1993. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. 1st edition. Stanford University Press.

September 18: Habitus and field

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford University Press.

September 25: Discipline

Foucault, Michel. 2012. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Part 2: Families

October 2: U.S. family history [FIRST PAPER DUE]

Coontz, Stephanie. 2016. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. Revised edition. New York: Basic Books.

October 9: Status and identity

Dow, Dawn. 2019. *Mothering While Black*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

October 16 – TBA

October 23: New families

Pugh, Allison J. 2015. *The Tumbleweed Society: Working and Caring in an Age of Insecurity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

October 30: Economics over all

Blau, Francine D., Marianne A. Ferber, and Anne E. Winkler. 2013. *The Economics of Women, Men and Work*. 7 edition. Boston: Pearson. Chapters 3 & 4.

The Austin Institute. 2014. The Economics of Sex.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO1ifNaNABY>.

Bridges, Tristan, Paula England, Barbara J. King, and Philip N. Cohen. 2018. "Review Symposium of Cheap Sex: The Transformation of Men, Marriage, and Monogamy." SocArXiv. January 31. <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/tqrwu/>.

England, Paula. 1989. "A Feminist Critique of Rational-Choice Theories: Implications for Sociology." *The American Sociologist* 20 (1): 14–28.

November 6: Family economics [SECOND PAPER DUE]

Boushey, Heather. 2016. *Finding Time: The Economics of Work-Life Conflict*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Part 3: Progress

November 13: Economic sociology of intimacy

Zelizer, Viviana A. 2009. *The Purchase of Intimacy*. Princeton University Press.

November 20: Modernity, development, and demography

Thornton, Arland. 2001. "The Developmental Paradigm, Reading History Sideways, and Family Change." *Demography* 38 (4): 449–65. doi:10.2307/3088311

Greenhalgh, Susan. 2003. "Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy." *Population and Development Review* 29 (2): 163–96.

Kirk, Dudley. 1996. "Demographic Transition Theory." *Population Studies* 50 (3): 361–87. doi:10.1080/0032472031000149536.

Lesthaeghe, R. "The Second Demographic Transition in Western Countries: An Interpretation." In Mason, Karen Oppenheim, and An-Magritt Jensen (eds.). 1995. *Gender and Family Change in Industrialized Countries*. Clarendon Press.

November 27 - Thanksgiving

December 4: Decoupling, families, and modernity

Stacey, Judith. 2011. *Unhitched: Love, Marriage, and Family Values from West Hollywood to Western China*. New York University Press.

December 10: [SECOND PAPER DUE]