

Syllabus

Family & Society

Sociology 243, Fall 2016
Tuesday / Thursday 9:30-10:45, Art-Sociology Room 1213

Professor Philip N. Cohen

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This is a course in the sociology of the family as an institutional arena in the United States. Students will become familiar with the empirical patterns and trends, political and cultural debates, and policy issues concerning families – and the major theories and research methods used in the sociological study of the family. The readings include a textbook and two research monographs. To succeed, students will attend lecture and participate in discussion; complete quizzes, in-class writing assignments, a data exercise; midterm and final exams; and a final research project in two parts.

Required readings

- *The Family: Diversity, Inequality and Social Change*, by Philip N. Cohen. W. W. Norton (2014).
- *Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City*, by Kathryn Edin and Timothy Nelson. University of California Press (2013).
- *For the Family: How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work*, by Sarah Damaske. Oxford University Press (2011).

Universal learning

The principle of universal learning means that our classroom and our interactions 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 (<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>), which will forward the necessary information to me. Please do it now instead of waiting till late in the semester.

Course components

Exams. There will be a midterm exam and a final exam, each consisting of multiple-choice questions.

Class. There will be quizzes, short in-class writing assignments and data exercises, and discussions. Attendance in the lecture is required. Two unexcused absences will be discounted.

Research project. A final project completed over the course of the semester. First, each student will conduct a work-life calendar filled out with an interview respondent, with a 250-500 word description. We will review and discuss these calendars in class and develop questions to ask during the subsequent interviews. Second, we will generate a combined dataset based on the calendars and learn how that data can be analyzed quantitatively by doing exercises in class and independently. Third, students will

complete a paper on a topic related to work-family balance, conflict or interaction, which makes reference to the work-life calendar interview and the data we collected as a class (1,250-1,750 words). This paper will include at least one recent news article and one academic article, and offer an argument about the causes of, consequences of, or solutions to a contemporary work-family problem. A more detailed description of the assignment will be distributed separately.

Grade weights. Final grades will reflect these approximate weightings: Discussion, quizzes, in-class writing, and data exercises (25%), midterm (20%), final exam (30%), final project (25%). Requests for re-grading may result in higher or lower grades.

Rules

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*. This is a public university; there are many people available to take the place of any student who does not take this opportunity and its responsibilities seriously. Plagiarism in any form, copying or otherwise cheating on any exam or quiz, taking credit for the work of others, or any other violation of the Code not specified here will be ruthlessly prosecuted. Don't do it.

Reading. Students are expected to complete the reading for each week before the first class of the week, unless otherwise specified on the reading schedule. We may have quizzes on the reading any time after it is due.

Classroom conduct. Students should not come to class late, as this creates a distraction for those who are participating. If your schedule regularly does not permit you to be in class from beginning to end, do not take the course. Students who need to leave early should sit at the back and leave quietly. Students may not use laptops, tablet computers, or mobile phones in class. Other forms of distraction or disrespect not specified here are also prohibited. Students violating class rules may be asked to leave with no warning and counted as absent that day. If you have a need for keeping your phone handy in class – such as family obligations – notify the professor or TA in advance for an exception.

Discussion. We will discuss course readings and lectures, as well as current events, social issues, and politics. Everyone is free to express personal opinions and disagree with others, including the professor – just raise your hand. All discussion must be polite and respectful, and differences of opinion are tolerated. The professor will work to ensure the classroom is a safe space for all of use to participate freely. Please let me know if you have any concerns or suggestions for accomplishing this.

Difficult subjects. The content of this course will include topics that are difficult for some people to confront or discuss. As the professor, 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. We will endeavor to be sensitive and considerate. However, we cannot prevent all students from being exposed to topics or ideas that they find objectionable or offensive.

Exams and quizzes. The midterm exam will be **October 13**, in class. There will be no make-up for the midterm exam. Students with valid emergencies – as approved by the professor – may drop the midterm exam. Students missing the exam must communicate the nature of their emergency to the professor as soon as possible or there will be no excuse. The final exam will be **Thursday, December 15, 8:00-10:00 AM**. There will be no makeup for the final exam except as required by university policy governing medical or other emergencies. Students with valid emergencies who cannot take the final exam will receive incomplete grades and take the exam at a later date. Students who have schedule conflicts (except official University activities) that prohibit them from taking the exams when they are scheduled should

not take the class – this includes family vacations, internships, and game show appearances. Missed quizzes and attendance marks cannot be made up, regardless of the reason for missing them.

Communication. Course announcements, supplementary readings, and lecture notes will be posted on the course web site. To contact Prof. Cohen, please call my office, send an email, or come to office hours. Only send email from your UMD email address; do not send text messages. Any email regarding the course should be considered formal communication and will be included in the student's course record – that means grammar, spelling, and style count. Allow several working days for a response.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1: August 30-

- *The Family*, Chapter 1: A Sociology of the Family (complete reading by Thursday class)

Week 2: September 6-

- *The Family*, Chapter 2: The Family In History

Week 3: September 13-

- *Using work-family calendars to study family change*
- *The Family*, Chapter 3: Race, Ethnicity and Immigration

Week 4: September 20-

- *The Family*, Chapter 4: Families and Social Class

Week 5: September 27-

- **September 29: Work-family calendar due**
- *The Family*, Chapter 5: Gender

Week 6: October 4-

- *Class data exercise*
- *The Family*, Chapter 6: Sexuality

Week 7: October 11-

- October 11: midterm review
- **October 13: MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8: October 18-

- *The Family*, Chapter 7: Love and Romantic Relationships
- Edin & Nelson, Introduction – Chapter 2

Week 9: October 25-

- **October 25: Data exercise homework due**
- *The Family*, Chapter 8: Marriage and Cohabitation
- Edin & Nelson, Chapter 3 – Chapter 5

Week 10: November 1-

- *The Family*, Chapter 9: Families and Children
- Edin & Nelson, Chapter 6 – Chapter 8

Week 11: November 8-

- *The Family*, Chapter 10: Divorce, Remarriage, and Blended Families

Week 12: November 15-

- **November 15: PAPER FIRST PART DUE**
- *The Family*, Chapter 11: Work and Families
- Damaske, Chapter 1 – Chapter 3

Week 13: November 22-

- Damaske, Chapter 4 – Chapter 8
- **November 24: NO CLASS**

Week 14: November 29-

- *The Family*, Chapter 12: Family Violence and Abuse

Week 15: December 6-

- **December 6: FINAL PAPER DUE**
- *The Family*, Chapter 13: The Future of the Family

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 15, 8:00-10:00 AM