**SOCIOL 442/ The Work-Family Intersection**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-12; Wednesdays 2:30 – 3:30, and by appointment

**What is this Course About?**

Most adults organize their lives around two social institutions: work and family. This semester we will analyze those social institutions and their relationship to one another, with an aim to identify how the social construction and organization of family and work roles and institutions creates both challenges and opportunities for working individuals and society at large. We will address a number of broad questions: What are the realities of managing the responsibilities of work and family among contemporary workers? How do people cope with conflicting demands, and what are the implications of conflicting demands for family life, employers, and society more generally? How does involvement in employment and family life enhance outcomes for individuals, families, employers, and society? How do gender, race, and class shape work and family experiences? What policies have organizations and governments instituted to help employees manage both work and family responsibilities? Are these policies effective? Are the experiences of American workers similar to, or different from, the experiences of workers in other countries?

**Learning Objectives for this Course:**

This course will expose you to information and activities that should, when combined with your own effort and the efforts of your classmates, enable you to do the following:

1) Identify the social and demographic changes of recent decades that have created changes in employment, family life, and the intersection of these two institutions;
2) Appreciate how the complexity of employment and family life influence individual decisions;
3) Evaluate how gender, race, and class shape work and family attitudes and behavior;
4) Use theories and empirical research to address specific aspects of a complex social problem;
5) Identify and critically evaluate the effectiveness of workplace and government policy initiatives aimed at helping people manage work and family roles;
6) Develop and refine the skills necessary to work effectively in a team-based professional setting;
7) Hone your evidence-based writing skills.
REQUIRED TEXTS

Undergraduate and Graduate Students:


Graduate Students Only:


All of these books are widely available in soft cover versions new (and often used) through online vendors.

The remaining articles and book chapters will be posted to the course website.

REQUIRED SOFTWARE

Most of the files I post to the website will be Adobe .pdf files or Microsoft Word files. However, some of your individual and group assignments will be much easier to do with slide presentation software, like powerpoint, and spreadsheet software, like Excel. Both powerpoint and excel are readily available on campus computers.
COURSE FORMAT

This course is an on-line seminar. A seminar is defined (in Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary) as “a group of advanced students studying under a professor with each doing original research and all exchanging results through reports and discussions.” Thus, this course requires regular and careful participation from each student. We will spend the majority of our time reviewing and analyzing the readings, although I will often present additional information to you to help frame each topic. You must do the reading – and do it carefully. If you neglect that responsibility, the seminar will suffer. With responsible preparation, the seminar will be interesting and enjoyable.

How will we create a lively seminar? The most critical contribution you will make to this class involves regular weekly posts to the on-line discussion forum. I will provide the structure for drawing out ideas about particular topics, but it is very important that each student carefully read the course materials, think about them (this is probably your most important job), and share your informed ideas and reactions with others in the class.

You will also be engaged in assignments and group projects that will constitute the “original research” part of the seminar. I will provide you with detailed instructions about each of these assignments and projects at various points in the semester, but the deadlines for each are included in the course schedule so that you can plan ahead.
YOUR ASSIGNMENTS AND YOUR GRADE

Undergraduates

Course Prerequisites. Please note that this is an upper-division sociology course with prerequisite requirements of two sociology courses at the 200-level or above. If you have not already practiced formulating sociological arguments and analysis, this class will be difficult for you.

1) Weekly reading and thoughtful participation in on-line forums. To do well in this class you will have to read, and read carefully, each week. By the Monday of each week (9 a.m.), I will post some background for that week's topic and provide a structure for that week's on-line discussion. You will need to post your initial comments by that Wednesday (9 a.m.) and comment on someone else's posting by that Friday (9 a.m.). Each initial weekly post is worth a total of five points and each reaction post is worth up to five points for a possible weekly total of ten points. There are fourteen weeks of discussion posting possible and I will drop your two lowest weekly grades. Please see my handout Posting to the Discussion Forum for further guidance on postings and assessment criteria.

2) Scavenger Hunt Exercise. This exercise is intended to familiarize you with the course website. Students can earn up to 10 points for successful completion of the scavenger hunt.

3) Individual Assignments. A total of three short assignments will be distributed throughout the term. Due dates for these assignments are listed on the course schedule. Each will come with its own set of detailed instructions and assessment criteria.

4) Group Paper & Presentation. Many of you will have to complete work in a team-based environment once you begin your professional careers. Increasingly, employers rely on virtual teams to meet workplace objectives. Thus, I believe it is very important that students learn how to work effectively in teams in an on-line educational environment. The group project will require you to research, analyze, and provide a recommendation about a complex work-family issue. It will require producing both a written report and a power point presentation. I will be providing you with your group assignments and detailed instructions about the group project mid-way through the semester.
Summary of Grading Structure for Undergraduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-line Forum Postings</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavenger Hunt Exercise</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments (25 pts each)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Paper &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>330</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Structure for Final Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>% of Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B -</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 63</td>
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**Graduate Students**

1) **Reaction Papers.** These are 1-2 page papers that discuss *and* attempt to integrate the week’s readings. Papers begin in week 3 and continue through week 15 and are posted to the graduate student on-line forum on the Wednesday of the week they are due, for a total of 12 posting opportunities (no posting over Thanksgiving). You must submit 10 papers through the course of the semester. On-line commentary on other’s papers is required in all weeks and must be posted by Friday at 9 a.m. each week. Please see my handout entitled *Response Papers and Posting Comments to Discussion Forum* on the course website for more detailed information about the objectives and content of these papers.

2) **Scavenger Hunt Exercise.** This exercise is intended to familiarize you with the course website. Students can earn up to 10 points for successful completion of the scavenger hunt.

3) **Semester Project.** This should be negotiated with the instructor early in the semester but can include: 1) A literature review paper; 2) an empirical paper; 3) a research proposal. A q-page prospectus for the paper/proposal is due in week 6. Final papers are to be 12 – 15 pages in length, not including references or tables.

**Summary of Grading Structure for Graduate Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavenger Hunt Exercise</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers (20 points each)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Commentary (10 points each)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper/Proposal</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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**NOTE:** I use the same structure for the creation of graduate student final grades that I use for undergraduate final grades. See previous page.
COMMUNICATING IN AN ON-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Communication in an on-line environment can be more challenging than face-to-face communication. There are no physical cues to rely on (smiling, tone of voice, etc.). Moreover, in asynchronous communication, the need to clarify or follow-up with additional questions can slow down communication progress. Therefore it is essential that you focus on professionalism, clarity, and specificity in your on-line communications, whether through email, on-line discussions, or other technologically-mediated forums.

Using Email to Communicate with Me and Other Students in the Course:

Most, if not all, of our communication this semester will happen on-line. I would like to ask students to follow these guidelines in relying on email or other forms of on-line communication in this class:

- Be professional and focused in your communication. Please format your emails like you would a business letter. This means including a greeting, a body of the email that contains the clear purpose of your communication, and a closing.
- In addition, please use the following format in the subject line of the email: “Soc 495: [Put the topic of your email here]”
- Use proper English and avoid “texting” acronyms (i.e. OMG, BTW, LOL etc.). Since we will not meet face-to-face it is critical that we are as clear as possible in our written communication.
- Please give me up to 24 hours to respond to your email Monday through Friday. In many cases, I will be able to get back to you more quickly than that. As a general rule, I do not answer work-related email over the weekend. Email sent to me after 4 p.m. on a Friday will be addressed by the end of the day on the following Monday.
UNIVERSITY & COURSE POLICIES AND REMINDERS

Complete descriptions of UWM’s policies on necessary accommodations, incomplete coursework, and academic misconduct can be located here: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf. I provide summaries of a few key university policies, as well as explicate my own course policies, below.

Academic Misconduct and Other Matters

- By becoming a student at UWM, you have agreed to abide by the University’s code of conduct, including its provisions on academic misconduct. I take this obligation very seriously. **In cases of academic misconduct, I will award a grade of F (zero points) for the entire assignment AND usually for the entire course, as well as pursuing disciplinary action.**
- The University defines academic misconduct as “an act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation, uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise, forges or falsifies academic documents or records, intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others, engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance, or assists other students in any of these acts.” If you are not familiar with UWM’s policies on academic misconduct, I encourage you to review them: http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

Late Assignments, Make-ups, and Incompletes

- Assignments must be turned in by the date and time noted on the course calendar in order to receive full credit. **Penalties for late assignments are assignment specific and are described in the course handout for that activity.**
- Incomplete coursework is a major inconvenience for both students and instructors. I expect you to do everything in your power to complete all coursework by the time it is due. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has routinely completed course requirements but who is unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work because of circumstances beyond the student’s control. An incomplete is not given unless the student can document an illness or other emergency beyond the student’s control.
- It is possible that we will experience an H1N1 flu pandemic during the course of the semester that results in an unusual number of student illnesses. If that happens, I will make necessary accommodations for ill students and may require similar accommodations from you. Let’s hope for the best on that front.

Feedback, Getting Help, and Course Recommendations

- You will have an opportunity to evaluate the course mid-way through the semester and at the end of the semester. In the meantime, I am eager to hear from you. Feel free to contact me with questions, worries, or other constructive feedback.
I have high standards for my students. Grades of “A” are reserved for work that illustrates mastery of course concepts and also engages course materials with creativity and care. At the same time, I do not want students to feel overwhelmed or lost in the course. Please contact me if you want to discuss your class performance.

It is University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

Many of you will require recommendations for graduate programs & scholarships, or references for a résumé. As an added incentive for doing well in this class, I will write graduate school recommendation letters for any undergraduate student who receives an A- or better in the course. I will not write recommendation letters for students with a course grade of B+ or below, but I will serve as a reference on a résumé for undergraduate students who earn a B or better in the course.

Grading Grievance Process
It is always possible for me to miss a point you are trying to make in an essay or paper. If you believe that an assignment or paper was incorrectly graded, please follow this procedure:

Within one week of receiving a graded assignment, submit a written "appeal" describing the basis for your opinion (e.g., citing a passage from the reading that supports your argument) to Professor Chesley. This appeal need not be lengthy - a short paragraph will often do. In appealing a grade, it is not sufficient to argue that your answer or argument was reasonable given your implicit assumptions. You must convince Professor Chesley that the answer or argument you chose was as good as or superior to the one identified as correct.
PART 1
SETTING THE STAGE: WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT THE WORK-FAMILY INTERSECTION?

WEEK 1: Different Depictions of the Problem

Allison Pearson. (2002). *I Don't' Know How She Does It*, ch. 1 – 2, p. 4 – 32. (web)


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


WEEK 2: Social Trends in Work and Family


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


WEEK 3: Relevant Economic Trends


Graduate Students Also Read:


PART 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

WEEK 4: Gender, Race, & Class


Barns, Reche Jeneen Daniel. (2008). Black women have always worked: Is there a work-family conflict among the black middle class? Pp. 189-210 in *The Changing Landscape of work and family in the American middle class: Reports from the field* (Rudd, Elizabeth and Laura Descartes, eds.) (web)


Graduate Students Also Read:


WEEK 5: The Industrial/Organizational Psychology & Social Role Perspectives


Graduate Students Also Read:


WEEK 6: Ecological and Life Course Perspectives


Graduate Students Also Read:


PART 3
DEPICTIONS OF THE WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE,
KEY CONCEPTS, & OUTCOMES

WEEK 7: Work-Family Conflict & Spillover


Graduate Students Also Read:


WEEK 8: Time


Graduate Students Also Read:

Daly, Kerry. (1996). *Families & time: Keeping pace in a hurried culture*, chp. 1 & 2, pp. 1-40. (web)


WEEK 9: Family & Community Outcomes


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


**WEEK 10: Employer & Employee Outcomes**


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


**PART 4**  
**POLICY & INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS**

**WEEK 11: Employer-Based Policies**


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


**WEEK 12: Government Policies**


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


**WEEK 13: A Case Study: Welfare Reform Meets the Work/Family Interface**


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


**WEEK 14: The Global Context**


**Graduate Students Also Read:**


**WEEK 15: Contrasting Visions of the Future**


**Graduate Students Also Read:**
