The Sociology of Work and Family  
Leslie Cintron, Harvard University, Sociology, Fall 2003

Course Overview:

This course examines selected topics and research in the growing area of work-family studies. During the term we will explore how work and family life interconnect and influence each other and the implications of these linkages for women, men, children, employers, the community and society. Of particular interest will be how gender, social class, family structure and race and ethnicity affect the ability to manage work and family.

Topics will include the history of the work-family field; changing attitudes towards work-life balance; working families and the time squeeze; gender and the household division of labor; dual-career and single parent families; low-income families; work and the care-giving conflict; mothers, work, and family; fathers, work and family; work-family integration from the perspective of children; strategies for resolving work-family conflict; international perspectives on work and family; and corporate and government responses and their effects.

Required Texts:

The readings below are the required texts for the course:

- Course Reading Packet for Sociology 108. Available at Gnomon Copy, 617-491-1111.
- Please Note: Readings not included in the books or coursepack will be either distributed in class or available online, as indicated on the syllabus. Links to online readings will be available on the course website.

Explanation of Course Requirements:

The course consists of one weekly lecture and one weekly class discussion. The lectures are meant to supplement rather than supplant the readings. As a result, students are expected to attend the lectures, read assigned texts prior to our class discussions, and attend and actively participate in class discussions.

Mid-term Examination: There will be one mid-term exam given in class on Tuesday, October 28th, 2003. The exam will consist of short answer and short essay questions covering the lectures, assigned readings, discussions and documentaries for the first half of the term.
Final Examination: The final exam is not cumulative. It will cover the lectures, assigned readings, discussions and documentaries from the second half of the semester. Similar in format to the mid-term, it will consist of a mix of short essays and short answers. The final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21st, 2004.

Term paper: Students are required to write a term paper on a topic of particular interest to them and of relevance to the material covered in the course. Papers should be approximately 15 pages in length. More information about term papers will be provided as the term progresses.

Paper proposals are due in class on Tuesday, November 18th, 2003.

Term papers due in the Sociology main office, 6th Floor William James Hall, by 5pm, Friday, January 9th, 2004. Please be mindful of the due date, as papers will be graded down one third of a grade (B becomes B-) for each day late (this includes papers turned in after 5pm on the due date.) Electronic submissions will not be accepted.

Class Discussions: Students are required to attend and actively participate in the weekly class discussions. These are an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the themes in both the readings and lectures. It is imperative that you complete the weekly reading prior to attending the class discussion.

Class Presentation and discussion co-leading: Each student will be asked to do one short (5-10 minutes) presentation introducing the key themes, findings, and concepts for one week’s readings. Presenters will also be asked to prepare 3-5 questions that will help generate class discussion and they will assist in the discussion-leading. Sign-ups for the presentation and discussion leading will take place in class on September 18th.

Final grades are determined as follows:
- Mid-term exam 25%
- Final exam 25%
- Term paper 25%
- Class participation 20%
- Class presentation 5%

Lecture, Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Week 1  Course Overview; Introduction to Work and Family

- September 16: Introduction
- September 18: Lecture and Class Discussion of Life’s Work

Reading:
- Radcliffe Public Policy Center, Life’s Work: Generational Attitudes Toward Work-Life Integration, 2001. [Hand Out]

Week 2  Working Families and The Time Squeeze

- September 23: Lecture
- September 25: Class Discussion of The Overworked American
Reading:

- Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American*

**Week 3**  
**Juggling Work and Family**

- September 30: Documentary: “Juggling Work and Family” – Part 1
- October 2: Documentary: “Juggling Work and Family” – Part 2; Class discussion of “Juggling Work and Family”

Reading:

- Arlie Hochschild, *The Time Bind*

**Week 4**  
**Dual-Earner Families**

- October 7: Lecture
- October 9: Class Discussion, *The Time Bind & She Works/He Works*

Reading:

- Rosalind Barnett, Caryl Rivers, *She Works, He Works: How Two Income Families are Happy, Healthy and Thriving*

**Week 5**  
**Gender and the Household Division of Labor**

- October 14: Lecture
- October 16: Class Discussion of Week 5 Readings

Reading:


**Week 6**  
**Single Parent Families; Low-Income Families**

- October 21: Lecture
- October 23: Class Discussion of Week 6 Readings

Reading:

- Lisa Dodson, Ellen Bravo and Tiffany Manuel, *Keeping Jobs and Raising Children in Low-Income America*. [Hand Out]

**Week 7**  
**Mid-term Exam; Race, Work and Family**

- October 28: In-class Mid-term Exam
October 30: Lecture

Reading:


Week 8  Mothers, Work and Family

November 4: Lecture
November 6: Class Discussion of Black Working Wives & Week 8 Readings

Reading:

• Carol S. Wharton, Finding Time for the “Second Shift”: The Impact of Flexible Work Schedules on Women’s Double Days, Gender and Society, Vol. 8, No. 2. (Jun., 1994), pp. 189-205

Week 9  Fathers, Work and Family

November 11: Veteran’s Day Holiday. No Class Meeting.
November 13: Lecture and Class Discussion of Week 9 Readings

Reading:

• Hertz and Marshall, Chapter 4. Men’s Family Work

Week 10  Children, Work and Family

November 18: Lecture; Term Paper Proposals Due in Class Today
November 20: Class Discussion of Week 10 Readings

Reading:

• Hertz and Marshall, Chapter 15. The Kinderdult
• Hertz and Marshall, Chapter 18. Pick-up Time at Oakdale Elementary School

Week 11  Employers, Work and Family

November 25: Lecture and Class Discussion of Week 11 Readings
November 27: Thanksgiving Holiday. No Class, Have a great Thanksgiving!

Reading:

• Hertz and Marshall, Chapter 6. How are Small Businesses Responding to Work and Family Issues?
- Hertz and Marshall, Chapter 8. Toward a New View of Work and Family Life
- Hertz and Marshall, Chapter 10. Changing the Structure and Culture of Work

**Week 12**  
*Public Policy, Work and Family*  
December 2: Lecture  
December 4: Class Discussion of Week 12 Readings

**Reading:**
- Review the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Law and Regulations [Online]  
- A Workable Balance: Report to Congress on Family and Medical Leave Policies Executive Summary Extract [Online]  

**Week 13**  
*International Perspectives on Work and Family*  
December 9: Lecture  
December 11: Class Discussion of Week 13 Readings

**Reading:**
- Other reading TBA

**Week 14**  
*Course Review and Wrap-up*  
December 16: Lecture

**January 9: Term Paper Due**

**January 21: Final Exam**