Course Description:
The separation of productive work from the family household was the hallmark of 19th century industrialization. Ever since, advanced industrial economies have been struggling with the twin problems of how to insure that workers provide time and dedication to production while also birthing and raising adequate supplies of future workers. In other words, how can the stability and vitality of families be preserved when most adults labor away from the family household? The solutions to these problems have varied historically and cross-culturally in the United States and elsewhere, but have all been rooted in political and cultural ideologies, rather than economic ones. That is, capitalism as an economic ideology had little to say about the problem of reproducing an adequate labor force or about the role of families in the larger social order. A similar criticism can be made of communist ideologies as they were embodied in the policies of centrally planned economies. Much early socialist theorizing about the equitable treatment of reproductive labor and socialized responsibility for children was ignored in the emphasis on maximizing industrial productivity. Hence, both capitalist and planned economies find themselves struggling anew with the unanswered questions of the late nineteenth century:

1) How should the time consuming "labor" of producing and rearing children be compensated in an economic system based on market exchanges? Or, using less jargon, what is parenting worth in a market economy?

2) How can women's productive labor be integrated with society's need for their reproductive labor?

The answers to these questions inevitably involve cultural assumptions about dependency, the value of childbearing and family life, the primacy of individualism or collectivism, appropriate gender roles, and the basis of distributive justice. Competing cultural views on these issues end up being resolved in part through the political process, in which certain family forms and certain patterns of income distribution are implicitly favored through legislation.

While rarely placed in historical context, our contemporary debates about birth control and abortion, employed mothers, day care, spiraling health care needs, single parenthood, welfare reform, education cost and quality, divorce and child support, the Social Security crisis, men's responsibility for family caregiving are all echoes of these earlier unresolved questions. You will probably be forced to grapple with these questions in both your private life and in your public role as citizen in a democracy. In fact, the central challenge in your life will be learning to participate in both the worlds of work and family, despite pressure to neglect one for the other.
This course is designed to give you the information and critical skills necessary to address the modern conundrum of work and family life. We will read from a variety of disciplinary perspectives in the social sciences – sociology, economics, public health, law, and political science. Each, like the proverbial blind men and the elephant, reveal a different facet of the problem of how to reconcile childbearing and childrearing with production for a market economy. We will focus on three key themes: 1) how the historical separation of work and home created immediate social problems in Europe and the United States, and how the alternative strategies (political and cultural) emerging from that period culminated in separate spheres for mothers and fathers, 2) how this 19th century solution broke down in the 20th century and created the mishmash we are left with as a work-family system, bitterly contested politically and varying largely along the lines of class and race, and 3) what models for reform currently exist, based on the experiences of our European neighbors and new forms of work in the United States. We will outline the various coping strategies currently available to women and men in the American context, empirically examine their costs and benefits for women, men, and children, and then compare those strategies to the far more generous options available in European countries. The course will end with discussions of future possibilities for change, focusing on voluntary, legislative, and mixed public-private sector reforms.

Since the format of the course will rely heavily on classroom discussion of the readings, be sure to do the readings before classes begin each week. All students are encouraged to express their opinions, ask questions, and bring additional information to class. Class participation will affect your final grade, so you would be wise to take your responsibility for class preparation seriously.

**Requirements:**
The classroom format will be a combination of brief lectures and in-depth discussion. Each student will be responsible for reviewing discussion questions prior to classes each week, and should be prepared to write a short essay (2-4 pp.) on each. Three essays will be required over the course of the semester, with questions randomly assigned to each student by the instructor in the week they are due.

In addition to the short essays, each student will be evaluated on the basis of a midterm and final exam, which will combine objective and essay questions.

Grade composition: short essays 30 %
midterm exam 30 %
final exam 30 %
class participation 10 %

**Readings:**

**Week 1. Industrialization and the Family -- the Evolution and Demise of the Family Wage System**


supplemental:

**Week 2. How Does a Market System Treat Family Work?**


**supplemental:**


**Week 3. The Economics of Marriage and Family, pt. 1**


Williams, Joan. *Unbending Gender*, chpt. 4.


**supplemental:**

**Week 4. The Economics of Marriage and Family, pt. 2**

Williams, Joan. *Unbending Gender*, chpt. 3.


**Week 5. The Time Squeeze in the U. S. and the Rise of Employed Parenthood**

Gornick, Janet and Myers, Marcia. *Families That Work*, chpt. 2.


**supplemental:**


**Week 6. From Mammmies to Kindercare-- Race, Class , and Domestic Labor Substitutes**


Week 7. REVIEW AND MIDTERM EXAM (Thursday, March 3)

Week 8. Who is the Parent and How Can You Tell?


Week 9. How Are Children and the Elderly Faring?


supplemental:

Week 10. How Are Parents Faring?

Gornick Janet and Myers, Marcia. *Families That Work*, chpt. 3.


supplemental:


Week 11. The Welfare State We Have in the U.S.


supplemental:

Week 12. The Welfare State They Have: European Solutions


**Week 13. Do We Need a Stronger Welfare State or Free Market Solutions?**

Gornick, Janet and Myers, Marcia. *Families That Work*, chpt. 4


**Week 14. What Works ? Intended and Unintended Consequences of Family Policy**

Gornick, Janet and Myers, Marcia. *Families That Work*, chpt. 8.


**Week 15. Solutions, and Barriers to their Implementation**

Gornick, Janet and Myers, Marcia. *Families That Work*, chpt. 9.


*supplemental:*


**REVIEW AND FINAL EXAM** (Tuesday, December 14, 2:15 p.m.)