Sociology 130a

NORTH AMERICAN FAMILIES

Brandeis University
Spring 2005
MWTh 9-10

Teaching Fellow:
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Course Description

How are we to understand the changes in the character of American families over the last two centuries? This course grapples with the complex issues involved in contemporary American family life by analyzing the historical variation in family forms and practices. It pays particular attention to the different experiences of men and women and how those experiences vary by class, race, and ethnicity. A central concern is the dynamic interactions between economic, cultural, political, and social forces and how they shape and are shaped by families over time.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to do the reading for the week before class, attend lectures, and participate in a weekly discussion group. The course grades are based on class participation (10%), a 10-12 page research paper (30%), an in-class midterm (20%), two reaction papers (5% each), and a take-home final exam (30%). Participation grades are determined by section attendance, discussion, and a presentation on work-in-progress.

The research paper can be on one of two topics: 1) a contemporary issue (such as gay and lesbian marriage, domestic partnership laws, parental rights in international adoption, the gendered division of parenting, etc.); or 2) an oral history of your family that includes an analytic dimension and locates the family in its historical context.

One reaction paper will consist of a 2-3 page thoughtful reflection and analysis of one of the movies shown in class: “People Like Us: Social Class in America,” or “35 Up.”

The second reaction paper will be a 2-3 page reflection and analysis of the Professor Sharon Hays colloquium (April 14) or an alternative lecture on campus relevant to family issues (to be approved by your TF or TA).

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability you should contact me, and present your letter of accommodation, as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting...
academic accommodations you should contact Assistant Dean Laura Lyndon in Undergraduate Academic Affairs at 63470. Letters of accommodations should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

A Note on Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Required Readings

Hansen, Karen V., Not-So-Nuclear Families: Class, Gender, and Networks of Care
Hansen, Karen V. and Anita Ilta Garey (eds.), Families in the U.S.: Kinship and Domestic Politics
Lareau, Annette, Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life

Recommended Readings:
Kate Turabian, Manual for Writers
Nicholas Townsend, The Package Deal

This course has a WebCT page: http://webct.brandeis.edu. Articles listed below with an asterisk (*) can be found on the WebCT.

Course Outline

Week 1: January 13 -- The Politics of Family Values

Week 2: January 17, 19, & 20 -- Defining Families and Debating Marriage

No Class Monday, January 17th – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Minow, Martha, "Redefining Families: Who's In and Who's Out" (Families, pp. 7-19)
Bernard, Jessie, “The Two Marriages” (Families, pp. 449-457)
Stoddard, Thomas, "Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry" (Families, pp. 475-479)
Ettelbrick, Paula, "Since When is Marriage a Path to Liberation?" (Families, pp. 481-485)

Week 3: January 24, 26, & 27 -- Industrial Capitalism, Slavery, and Family Life in the 19th Century U.S.

Sudarkasa, Niara, “Interpreting the African Heritage in Afro-American Family Organization” (Families, pp. 91-104)
Jones, Jacqueline, "My Mother was Much of a Woman: Slavery" (Families, pp. 677-708)

Week 4: January 31, February 2, & 3 -- Economic Stratification and Immigration

Thursday, February 3rd – Library Intensive Session with Leslie Stebbins, Goldfarb Library, Gardner-Jackson Room

*Zweig, Michael, The Working Class Majority, Chapters 1& 2
Baca Zinn, Maxine, “Family, Feminism, and Race in America” (Families, pp. 33-40)
Kibria, Nazli, “Household Structure and Family Ideologies: The Case of Vietnamese Refugees” (Families, pp. 55-68)

*Movie: "People Like Us: Social Class in America"

Week 5: February 7, 9, & 10 -- The Emergence of "Modern" Families: Breadwinning Fathers

***Research Prospectus due Thursday, February 10th

Uhlenberg, Peter, “Mortality Decline in the Twentieth Century and the Supply of Kin over the Life
Week 6: February 14, 16, & 17 -- Class, Race/Ethnicity, and the Construction of Motherhood

***In-Class Midterm: Wednesday, February 16

Garey, Anita, “Constructing Motherhood on the Night Shift: “Working Mothers” as “Stay at Home Moms”” (Families, pp. 709-726)
Witherow, Judith, "Native American Mother" (Families, pp. 335-337)
Pardo, Mary, "Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: Mothers of East Los Angeles" (Families, pp. 251-262)

Week 7: February 21, 23, & 24 -- Winter BREAK – no classes

Week 8: February 28, March 2, & 3 – The Stalled Revolution in Family Work

Hochschild, Arlie, The Second Shift, Chapters 1-6, 8-9

Student presentations on work-in-progress begin in section

Week 9: March 7, 9, & 10 – Conflict over the Second Shift

Hochschild, Arlie, The Second Shift, Chapters 12-17
Segura, Denise, “Working at Motherhood: Chicana and Mexican Immigrant Mothers and Employment” (Families, pp.727-744)
Hackstaff, Karla, “Wives Marital Work in a Culture of Divorce” (Families, pp. 459-473)
Coltrane, Scott, “Household Labor and the Routine Production of Gender” (Families, pp.791-808)

Student presentations on work-in-progress continue
Week 10: March 14, 16, & 17 – Reproducing Class over Generations

Malveaux, Julianne, “Race, Poverty, and Women’s Aging” (*Families*, pp. 157-169)

*Movie: “35 Up”*

Student presentations on work-in-progress continue

Week 11: March 21, 23, & 24 -- The Power of Race vs. Class in Creating Inequality

Thursday, March 24th is a Brandeis Monday

Lareau, Annette, *Unequal Childhoods*, Chapters 5-12
Carothers, Suzanne, “Catching Sense: Learning from our Mothers to be Black and Female” (*Families*, pp. 315-327)

Week 12: March 28, 30 & 31 – Creatively Managing the “Stalled Revolution”: White Working- & Upper-Class Families

***Research Papers due Thursday, March 31st***

DeVault, Marjorie, “Affluence and Poverty and Feeding the Family” (*Families*, pp. 171-187)

Recommended:
Wellman, Barry, “The Place of Kinfolk in Personal Community Networks” (*Families*, pp.231-239)
Stack, Carol and Linda Burton, “Kinscripts” (*Families*, pp. 405-417)

Week 13: April 4, 6, & 7 – White Middle-Class Families, Gender, & Reciprocity


Week 14: April 11, 13, & 14 -- Domestic Violence

*Guest Speakers from Casa Myrna Vasquez*
Demos, John, “Child Abuse in Historical Perspective” (Families, pp. 651-667)
Straus, Murray, “Ten Myths that Perpetuate Corporal Punishment” (Families, pp. 641-650)
Yllo, Kersti, "Through A Feminist Lens: Gender, Power, and Violence" (Families, pp. 609-618)
Ptacek, James "Why Men Batter Their Wives" (Families, pp. 619-633)
Zimmer, Bonnie, “Felicia: Working with a Teen Mother in an Abusive Relationship” (Families, pp. 635-640)

*Sociology Department colloquium: Professor Sharon Hays, University of Virginia

Week 15: April 18, 20, & 21 -- Families & the “Needs” of Children

***Research Paper rewrites due Thursday, April 21st

hooks, bell, "Revolutionary Parenting" (Families, pp. 587-596)
Folbre, Nancy, “Children as Public Goods” (Families, pp.831-836)

Week 16: April 25, 27, & 28 – No University Exercises

***Take Home FINAL EXAM DUE Tuesday, May 3rd