

# College of DuPage

## Adult Fast Track

### Sociology 220 – Sexual Relationships, Marriage & Family (IAI S7 901)

**Spring 2002**

**Instructor:** Christine Monnier, Ph.D

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**Office Hours :** before or after class time

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**Meeting Day:** Tuesdays (8 weeks starting 03/05/2002)

**Times:** 6:00 – 10:00PM

**Room:** WC 23

**Course Description:** A cross-societal focus on sex roles, dating, mate selection and sexuality. Traditional and emerging marriage, family and child-rearing patterns are explored from a multinational perspective. Marital dynamics, including expressiveness, marital power, conflict, family violence, divorce and the later years of marriage are featured. (5 lecture hours)

#### Course Objectives

The main point of this course will be to dispel the most common myths about the family and family life. We may think we know a great deal about the family; after all, we all have one. We will see that many of the commonsense ideas we have about the family are erroneous and misleading. To achieve this general objective, we will examine the following aspects of sexuality, marriages and families:

- We will first examine recent trends in marriages and family life, in terms of its increasing diversity. We will also take a look back in history to identify what family life was really like in different era rather than relying on the commonplace nostalgia, “things were better in the good old days”.

- After reviewing the main theories and research methodologies in marriages and family studies, we will examine the social aspects of gender-identity construction. We may think of our sex or gender as an exclusively biological matter, this is not the case. Much of our gender identity and the gender roles we play are shaped and influenced by our culture and social-structural constraints. Conversely, our gender identity shapes our structure of opportunities and how we interpret our different experiences. Gender is a central aspect of our relationships.
- We will then examine the different aspects of relationships: love, mate selection and dating, sexuality, nonmarital lifestyles, marriage, reproduction and parenting. We may think that such topics as love, sexuality and reproduction are personal matters, we will see that a sociological analysis is essential to understand the structural logic of these phenomena. There is an integral connection between our personal experiences and the social structure of love, sexuality, etc.
- Following this line of argument, we will analyze how the changes in the economy and the social structure of work have affected family structure and family life.
- And finally, we will examine the negative aspects of family life: violence and abuse. We will also sociologically the process of uncoupling and divorce, as well as the trends in remarriage and their impact on family life.
- The overall objective of this course will be to show you that not all problems of society can be blamed on a supposed family breakdown and alleged loss of family values. A sociological understanding of the intricacies of family and social structure helps us understand that some of the trends in family life are here to stay, others could be remedied through sensible social policies.

### **Textbooks Used**

1) Mary Ann Lamanna, Agnes Riedmann (2000), *Marriages and Families. Making Choices in a Diverse Society*, 7th Edition, Wadsworth.

(2) Kevin Demmit (1999), *Marriage and Family, An Introduction Using ExplorIt*, 2nd Edition, Wadsworth.

### **Grades and Course Assignments:**

#### ***Attendance and Participation / Discussions***

The class will be organized around an interactive format. We will discuss the different topics developed in the textbook and interactive materials will be presented in class. The more you will be involved with the class discussions, the more you will learn. The materials presented in class will be challenging, provocative, and maybe controversial; they will stimulate discussions and get you to reflect on your personal experience.

### ***Readings from the textbook / Completion of Response Forms***

For each session, you will be assigned 2 chapters to read from the textbook (Lamanna/Riedmann). Based on your reading, you will have to complete a response form. Class discussions will be based on the different questions written down on these response forms. This is an opportunity for you to suggest discussion topics and deepen your understanding of the readings.

### ***Exercises from the Demmitt workbook***

You will have to complete 2 exercises for each session. These will be graded in class, so that you'll have the opportunity to ask questions if you have any difficulty.

### ***Internet Research Project*** (see attachment/handout)

### ***Reaction Journals***

You are required to keep a journal in which you will record your reactions, thoughts, feelings, ponderings, etc. regarding the class discussions, readings, videos, and current events pertinent to the course. You may also include reactions/feelings regarding personal experiences; events in your life from childhood to present, popular culture, etc. – as long as it relates to what we are covering in the course. You will hand your journal each class period and I will grade the journal according to the amount of reflection that you are engaged in and to what degree you are able to utilize sociological concepts to explain your perspective, how deeply you are analyzing what you are reading/what we discussed in class and then taking that information and re-examining your social interactions, your experiences, the society in which you live, etc.. The idea is to take what you are learning in the classroom and to spend some time using “the sociological imagination” on your own.

Use loose-leaf paper and a folder/binder for your journal. Journal entries must be typed. Please type on one side of the paper only. Make sure that you write your first and last initial and date on each page. You must write in your journal one time per week – at least 2 pages per entry. You must bring your journal with you to each class period, as you may want. You are not required or expected to share from your journal, but feel free to do so if you wish. Only the instructors will read your journal, and the information contained within it will be kept completely confidential.

### **Course Grade**

Attendance/Participation/Discussion: 10 points per session = 80 points

Response Forms Completion: 10 points each = 80 points

Workbook Exercises: 10 points each = 160 points

Internet Research Project = 160 points

Journal Entries: 10 points per entry = 80 points

Total = 560 points

## Grade Scale

<i>Points</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>
504 – 560	A
448 – 503	B
392 – 447	C
336 – 391	D
Less than 335	F

## Assignments Summary

Sessions	Readings	Exercises	Reaction Journal	Internet Project
Session 1	Chapters 1 & 2	1 & 2	Entry 1	Topic
Session 2	Chapters 3 & 4	3 & 4	Entry 2	
Session 3	Chapters 5 & 6	5 & 6	Entry 3	Articles
Session 4	Chapters 7 & 8	7 & 8	Entry 4	
Session 5	Chapters 9 & 10	9 & 10	Entry 5	Web sites
Session 6	Chapters 11 & 12	11 & 12	Entry 6	Draft
Session 7	Chapters 13 & 14	13 & 14	Entry 7	Project Due
Session 8	Chapters 15 & 16	15 & 16	Entry 8	

**ADA/Americans With Disabilities:** If you have a diagnosed and documented disability which may cause you to have difficulty with any portion of the requirements of this course, please contact me immediately so that reasonable arrangements can be made.

**Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism/Cheating:** The college academic dishonesty policy is enforced in this course. Any violation of the policy will result in disciplinary action. The college policy is in the college catalogue and student handbook.

**Discussion Guidelines:** I will maintain an environment in the classroom in which people are free to express themselves and foster a place where ideas can and should be challenged. However, there will be times where each of us, myself included, may feel uncomfortable or disagree with things being said. I want each of you to feel free to express your ideas/feelings – but respect for others is a top priority. This said, I suggest you think about what you want to say (check for stereotypes, misperceptions, generalizations about entire groups of people) before you say it. No put-downs or making fun of someone else's ideas, beliefs, etc.

**Confidentiality:** If you discuss the course with others, you will NOT use names or any identifying information regarding your classmates. I expect you each to maintain complete confidentiality of the information shared within the classroom.