
FAMILY and SOCIETY ◇ *Sociology 111* ◇ *Fall 2014*

Tues. and Thurs. 2:00–3:45 p.m. ◇ *Porter 148*

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This course places the contemporary American family in sociological perspective, focusing on the interaction between family and society. Beliefs about “the family” will be subjected to critical analysis; myths and stereotypes will be examined in relation to changing demographics, social practices, political climates, and cultural contexts. Historical and cross-cultural comparisons will be explored, as well as the impact of such social psychological factors as gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and age. Some of the key questions we will probe:

How are changing notions of “the family” related to institutional practice as well as to individual experience?

How closely do contemporary beliefs about family and society reflect our actual lives in their great variety as well as in their commonality?

What are some of the key power relations within the family?

What is the nature and extent of the impact of media on contemporary family life?

What are the particular challenges facing children and youth in families today, and what are the key social issues connected to the status of all family members – from infants to elders?

We will endeavor to phrase significant questions and to arrive at relevant answers; we will also place emphasis on critical questioning that may lead to ongoing exploration rather than definitive answers. Our work will be animated and illuminated by works of fiction as well as by sociological and interdisciplinary studies.

The highest function of education is to help people understand the meaning of their lives,
and become more sensitive to the meaning of other people’s lives
and relate to them more fully.

Education increases the range and complexity of relationships that make sense to us...

REQUIRED READINGS

Three of the required books are available at **The Literary Guillotine**, 204 Locust St. (downtown Santa Cruz, 457-1195).

- Stephanie Coontz. *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families*. Basic Books, 1997.
- Marie Winn. *The Plug-In Drug: Television, computers, and family life*. Penguin, 2002 (the 25th anniversary revised edition).
- Richard Weissbourd. *The Vulnerable Child: What really hurts America's children and what we can do about it*. Perseus Books, 1996.

The other five required books are available at **Bookshop Santa Cruz** (1520 Pacific Ave., 423-0900). They are located in the back of the store on a table marked "UCSC Sociology" – be sure to buy the ones assigned for Soc. 111.

- Joan Bauer. *Hope Was Here*. Penguin/Puffin, 2000.
- James Howe. *Totally Joe*. Simon & Schuster, 2005.
- Virginia Euwer Wolff. *Make Lemonade*. Henry Holt/Scholastic, 1993.
- Patricia Reilly Giff, *Pictures of Hollis Woods*. Dell Yearling, 2002.
- E. R. Frank. *America*. Simon & Schuster, 2002.

ESSAYS and FINAL PROJECT PAPER

Three essays (of three full pages each) are assigned; a set of topics from which to choose, along with more detailed instructions, will be distributed well in advance of the due dates. These are to be focused essays that reflect a thoughtful engagement with the readings and lectures. A final project paper (of three to five pages) will also be assigned, with detailed instructions distributed ahead of time. These assignments will allow you to further develop your critical writing skills as well as to demonstrate your active engagement in the learning process. Writing is taken seriously in this class, and your work will be corrected for spelling, grammar, etc. Make sure to proofread carefully, and seek editing assistance from others if needed.

MIDTERM and FINAL EXAMS

Each of these will be an in-class exam related to material covered in readings and lectures. You will be given a study guide a week ahead of time, and are allowed to bring

one page of notes with you to the exam (the page may be printed on both sides, and may be handwritten or printed in any size font; it must be wholly your own work). The final exam is not cumulative; it covers only the readings and lectures presented after the midterm exam.

ATTENDANCE and CLASS GUIDELINES

- Attendance is essential; lectures are designed to complement and supplement the required reading rather than to reiterate it. Active participation is encouraged, and completing the readings contributes to an informed and shared context for work in class. If you have to miss class, you are still responsible for all of the material presented (in that case, it's good to find someone from whom you can get notes; it's also a good idea to come to office hours).
- There is no eating allowed in the classroom (even before class begins -- food odors have a way of overstaying their welcome). You may bring in drinks, but only if you guard them from spilling.
- Those using laptop computers must sit in the seats alongside the windows, or in the last row of class, and are expected to use the laptop only to take notes. Do not use cell phones to send or receive texts (what might seem a private screen moment to one person is in fact a disruption to those nearby, as well as a sign of disrespect to the classroom context).

GRADING and EVALUATIONS

For every assignment you will receive from 0 to 100 points. Your final course grade will be determined based on the following weighting system: Midterm -- 30%; Final -- 30%; Final project paper -- 10%; Three essays -- 10% each.

PLAGIARISM and ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All students are responsible for maintaining accepted standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are contrary to the ideals and purposes of a university, and carry serious consequences (among the possibilities: receiving a lower grade, failing a class, being placed on suspension or expelled). Make sure that you have read the full text of UCSC's policy on academic dishonesty – it is available online at www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity

DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to the instructor in person within the first two weeks of the quarter.

Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu> for more information on the requirements and/or process.

...the things we learn because, for our own reasons,
we really need to know them, we don't forget.

John Holt, *How Children Learn*

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS

Complete each of the readings and assignments by class time on the dates listed below. In order to do this, you will need to pace your work so that you begin well before the due date. Be sure to allow enough time to produce work that has been drafted, revised, edited, printed (and stapled) before class time on the day it is due. Assignments are due at the start of class, so do not miss class in order to complete a paper -- it will still be considered late if you come in at the end and place it on the table. Late papers are accepted for reduced credit, but try to avoid this eventuality.

Thurs. Oct. 2 • Introduction to course

Tues. Oct. 7 • *The Way We Really Are* – Introduction, Ch. 1 - 2

Thurs. Oct. 9 • *The Way We Really Are* – Ch. 3 - 4

Tues. Oct. 14 • *The Way We Really Are* – Ch. 5 - 6

Thurs. Oct. 16 • **No Class** (online film assignment will be given as instructor will be out of town)

• *The Way We Really Are* – Ch. 7 - 9

Tues. Oct. 21 • **Essay #1 Due at start of class**

• *Hope Was Here* – Joan Bauer

Thurs. Oct. 23 • *Totally Joe* - James Howe

Tues. Oct. 28 • *The Plug-In Drug* – Preface, Ch. 1 – 5

Thurs. Oct. 30 • *The Plug-In Drug* -- Ch. 6 - 10

Tues. Nov. 4 • *The Plug-In Drug* – Ch. 11 – 15

Thurs. Nov. 6 • *The Plug-In Drug* – Ch. 16 – 19; Coda; Final Sections
• **Distribute Study Guide for Midterm Exam**

Tues. Nov. 11 • **No Class – Veterans Day**

Thurs. Nov. 13 • **Midterm Exam**

Tues. Nov. 18 • *The Vulnerable Child* – Note on Methodology, Acknowledgments, Ch. 1 – 3

• **Essay #2 Due at start of class**

Thurs. Nov. 20 • *The Vulnerable Child* – Ch. 4 – 6

Tues. Nov. 25 • *The Vulnerable Child* – Ch. 7 – 13

Thurs. Nov. 27 • **No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday**

Tues. Dec. 2 • *Make Lemonade* – Virginia Euwer Wolff

Thurs. Dec. 4 • *Pictures of Hollis Woods* – Patricia Reilly Giff
