Sociology 440 U/G: SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

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In-person office hours (NWQ-B, Rm. 7424): Weds. 2 – 4, or by appointment.

This is a course about contemporary American families and changes in the family institution. We will study topics like changes in marriage, divorce, and living together; power in couples; balancing work and family; and fathers and child care—observing differences across classes and subcultures. The course focuses on changes in the family in relation to changes in the economy, culture, parents’ work and family roles, government policy, and gender inequality. To learn how family patterns change, we will read about families in former as well as present times.

Most people think a family course will be easier than other sociology courses because students can draw on personal experience. Though you may learn best by thinking about your personal experience when you read or write, all of the graded work in the course will require closely reading and understanding course materials. For this reason, the Sociology of the Family is usually more difficult and frustrating than students expect. On the other hand, by the time they complete the course, students are often surprised and pleased to have the tools to think analytically about their own families and about family change and policy.

Right away, you’ll need to know:

- All required reading is posted on the course D2L site.
- Expect to spend an average of 10 hours each week on this course.
- Something written will be due every week.
- SOCIOL 440 U/G IS FULLY ONLINE.

Every requirement of the course and all of its communication is done online (though I have office hours for optional visits and calls). In many respects, online courses are more demanding than in-person courses, because most of the learning involves reading. In this class, you will read published material as well as lengthy lectures and the written ideas of your peers. The opportunity to read and reread materials is a great advantage for students who learn best that way. But it can be very trying for students who learn best in the verbal exchange of the classroom. The course is also likely to be a problem for procrastinators, because you are required to submit and are graded on small weekly assignments and quizzes. If you can’t comply with the course’s weekly timetables, you’re sunk. In sum, the bad news is that you must be highly disciplined, well-organized, able to work every week of the course, willing to commit to online conversation, and happy to read a lot in your pajamas.
On the other hand, within the constraints described above, you will have great flexibility about scheduling your work and handling routine emergencies. In addition, the asynchrony of discussions means you have time to think about your ideas before you present them and to “listen” carefully to others and thoughtfully respond. This would have been an enormous advantage to me when I was an undergraduate because shyness made it difficult for me to volunteer my ideas and to express them clearly when I tried to. I hope you will find this aspect of the class both comforting and intellectually stimulating.

An Important Note to Students:

Lack of access to needed technology (see “Technology” below) will not be an acceptable excuse for late or incomplete work. You must be able to access to the needed hardware, software, and Internet. You must be willing to check your e-mail Monday through Friday and access the course site at least 3 times a week. If you are not willing or able to do these things, then you should drop this class and instead take it face-to-face.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Throughout the semester, students will develop increasingly sophisticated knowledge and skills in analytical reading, writing, and discussion of course materials in a way that shows they can:

• distinguish explanation and prescription in the arena of family life.

• distinguish sociological explanations of family patterns from other kinds of explanation.

• document changes in U.S. families in the 20th and 21st centuries, citing evidence of change.

• understand an array of sociological theories, concepts, and methods employed in family research.

• compare and assess sociological explanations of family patterns and change.

• examine the family as a “social institution,” and explore changes in the institutional characteristics of the family and the impact of those changes on family members and other social institutions.

• examine how social changes and institutional change outside the family, and the social positions occupied by family members, shape family patterns, meanings, and experiences.

• conduct two kinds of sociological research on families.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- You must keep up with weekly reading assignments.
- You must critically analyze and work with sociological perspectives on the family. Other frameworks, such as those of psychology or religious faith, are not acceptable substitutes for sociological frameworks in this course, though other frameworks can inspire sociological criticism of course materials.
- Please note that this is an upper-division sociology course with prerequisite requirements of 2 sociology courses at the 200-level or above. If you have not already practiced using a sociological perspective, this class will be difficult.
- Every written assignment will require working with course materials. You will be asked to examine the arguments in your readings; compare and contrast authors’ approaches; and analyze and criticize explanations you encounter in readings, lectures, and discussion.
- I reserve the right to substitute required readings occasionally or supplement them (by no more than 10 pages per week). Changes will be posted on D2L Announcements.

For **Undergraduates**, the course has the following components:

1) **Agendas**: These are posted on D2L “Content” on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Agendas include tasks, assignments, deadlines, and other information. Students should print copies of agendas to guide work and calendar entries.

2) **Lectures**: Nearly every unit contains lectures, posted as pdfs. They are formatted with room for note taking. They rarely summarize reading, but rather provide a theoretical or conceptual framework for understanding readings, as well as frameworks that are not related to readings. I strongly recommend using them in printed form.

The following are the **graded components**:

3) **6 Discussions**: Final grade weight = 16%. (4 points per Discussion) The best 4 scores will contribute to your final grade.

   Every other week, or so, you will participate in Discussions by posting answers to questions and responding to others’ posts. Though discussion in the first week of the class will not require you to draw on course materials, for the remainder of the semester, discussions will draw on the unit’s materials and your developing sociological perspective. You will frame a claim and support it with logic and evidence from the course. Then you will respond to others’ posts.

   Continued.
Discussions may be the most engaging, creative, and enjoyable part of the course. Even so, this is a formal class conversation, and your reasoning and writing are to be as clear as any other written assignment. I will allocate points based on quality of argument, use of course materials, and quality of writing.

4) 5 Quizzes and assignments: Final grade weight = 20%. 5 points each.
The best 4 scores will contribute to your final grade.

During many weeks when papers and exams are not assigned, students will complete either time-limited quizzes (multiple-choice and/or short essay) or assignments. All are open book, but the time limits will not allow searching unfamiliar materials for answers. They will require demonstration of comprehension of material in readings and lecture. Their focus will be authors’ or instructor’s claims and the evidence or logic that supports them. The highest scores will go to assignments that demonstrate thorough understanding of course materials. For written assignments, only clear writing, in complete sentences, will demonstrate thorough understanding.

5) 2 Exams/Essays: Final grade weight = 30%. Two exams or essays at 15 points each.

Each of these will be either a time-limited open-book examination, a pre-assigned essay, or both. Each will cover a specified range of units. The second exam may include a few previous (specified) materials. Exams may include multiple-choice, short-answer, or short essay questions. All are open book, but the time limits will not allow searching unfamiliar materials for answers. Their focus will be authors’ or instructor’s claims and the evidence or logic that supports them. Exams and essays will require comprehension of course materials, the ability to compare authors’ arguments, and the ability to apply ideas. Standards of grading will accompany each.

6) 2 Research reports: Final grade weight = 30%. Two 15-point papers will contribute to your final grade.

Qualitative Research Report (15%) – Each student will conduct an interview and post it in an online data set that includes all students' interviews. The report involves analyzing several interviews from the data collected.

Library Research Report (15%) - The work for the report on a topic you choose is due in stages for an assignment released early in the semester. It requires using the Sociological Abstracts online database (taught in an online workshop) and analysis of published research.

7) Miscellaneous: Final grade weight = 4%. This is an evolving category for 1-pt. tasks, like posting an otherwise ungraded assignment on time and sustaining high-quality contributions to Discussion.
→ * Undergraduates: Whatever your course grade average, you will fail the course if you do not participate in 3 Discussions, take 3 Quizzes, and pass both examinations.

No make-up exams or Incompletes will be provided, except in extremely disabling (documented) circumstances. Exams or deadlines that are scheduled for religious holidays will be rescheduled upon individual request.

For Graduate Students, course requirements are:

- 15% -- Participate in 5 Discussions @ 3 pts. each. If you participate in 6 Discussions, I will drop your lowest score.
- 40% -- Write 4-5 short (2-4-page) 10-point essays in response to essay questions every 2 or 3 weeks. The best 4 will contribute to your final grade.

The weights of the following two papers are individually negotiable:

- 15% -- Conduct one interview and analyze collective interview data in a short paper. If you prefer, you may choose to do more extensive interviewing and data analysis and a lengthier paper than the one assigned, and then write a more limited literature review.
- 30% -- Write one literature review on a topic of your choice. Early in the semester, you may discuss with me the possibility of taking undergraduate exams and writing a briefer review.

The remaining pages are for everyone:

Cost of Course Materials: You will rarely take a course this affordable, because all of the readings are online (posted on D2L) (the copyright costs of publishing a course reader would have been much higher). For this reason, I strongly urge you to print out Agendas, Lectures, readings, and any Discussions that will help you learn. If you do not have a printer, you can purchase a copy card at the Golda Meir Library, and copy materials double-sided for 6 cents per page (3 cents per side). You'll need a paper folder system for organizing printed materials.

WRITING ASSISTANCE: I encourage all students to seek help in writing and editing from the Writing Center, 127 Curtin. They offer in-person and synchronous online advice. Make an appointment by phone 229-4339, or online at www.writingcenter.uwm.edu. They maintain 2 centers: 127 Curtin and the East wing of the library. At the latter, you can drop in, but it’s best to schedule a lengthy appointment in order to benefit by reviewing your entire paper.
TECHNOLOGY:

**Access.** Familiarity and effective use of the Desire to Learn—D2L—program is essential. Students must learn immediately how to use these features: Course Home Page, Content, Discussions, Dropbox, Quizzes, and Grades. Link to instructions for these features (especially the excellent Student Help Files on the D2L home page: [http://d2l.uwm.edu](http://d2l.uwm.edu) (or access it from the UWM home page). If you need help learning the program, contact the **UWM Help Desk** (229-4040, help@uwm.edu, or in person 24/7 at EMS E173A). I'm sorry, but I will not be able to assist you with the technical side of this course. Since every place in Wisconsin is within a short distance of a public library, where computers are available, technical problems will not be an acceptable excuse for late assignments.

**Hardware.** To successfully participate in an online learning environment, you will need routine access to a computer that has a broadband connection. You should have access to a desktop or laptop computer at home that is capable of accessing the course site and course materials. Recommendations for computer specifications can be found at: [https://www4.uwm.edu/uits/purchasing/hardware/personal/recommendations/](https://www4.uwm.edu/uits/purchasing/hardware/personal/recommendations/)

**Software.** You will need to be able to view, edit, and create Word and PowerPoint files. You will also need to be able to read Adobe PDF files. *All of your postings will have to have .doc or .pdf extensions* (unless everyone in the class has .docx capacity). In addition to using D2L materials, students will use advanced techniques for searching the online database, *SociologicalAbstracts*. Instruction will be provided. [For online instruction in basic library skills, take the helpful library tutorials called Searchpath ([http://www.uwm.edu/Libraries/courses/searchpath/choice.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Libraries/courses/searchpath/choice.html))].

[For best use of D2L, the IMT people recommend that Mac users have Mac OS X and Netscape 7.1 or higher. PC users should have Internet Explorer 6 or higher. Also, you should make sure that your browser has “JavaScripts” enabled for Java version 1.3 or higher. If any of this paragraph is gobbledygook to you, call or stop by the UWM Help Desk (phone number, address, etc. listed above).]

**Internet.** You will need broadband Internet in order to efficiently and effectively download course materials. Among other sources you can use, UWM offers discounted broadband service through Time Warner Road Runner, which can be found at: [https://www4.uwm.edu/uits/services/campus/networking/connected/cable.cfm](https://www4.uwm.edu/uits/services/campus/networking/connected/cable.cfm).

**Email.** We will also communicate by email. Be sure to put me in your address book and on your “safe senders” list. If you do not use your UWM e-mail, you can find information on forwarding your e-mail at: [https://wwwssl.uwm.edu/IMT/ePanther/email/](https://wwwssl.uwm.edu/IMT/ePanther/email/). I will only use your UWM address, so please make sure you can receive email sent to this address. Please use SOC 440: followed by your topic in the email title.
**SUCCESS** in this course requires 5 routines.

1) Start out by quickly learning the class routines, using a calendar to track deadlines, and *reading all instructions carefully* (and there are tons of instructions in online courses!).

2) **Write down ideas** before you post them—even for Discussions. Read your written work like a peer would—as if s/he doesn’t already know what you mean to say. Edit for clarity, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation.

3) Keep on schedule. Late work or missed assignments will damage your final grade.

4) Learn to recognize *main arguments* in readings and in lectures—to identify main claims and how authors and instructor support them. This is also the first step toward criticizing what you hear and read. Read Content: Identifying an Argument and do Assignment 1 carefully.

5) Take notes on readings and lectures. Underlining texts is valuable, but you will not learn enough to succeed unless you write down ideas.

**CLASS POLICIES**  >  *Continued enrollment in this class after your first day signifies your agreement to these class policies*

[See p. 16 for University and Department Policies]

*Consult “Announcements” (course home page) and “Agendas” (Content) at least 3 times a week.*

Each Unit’s agenda will be posted at least a week ahead of time.

**Online classroom etiquette:** The study of the family evokes deeply personal feelings and touches deep beliefs. These feelings and beliefs often spark overheated debate in the online classroom. Nonetheless, a successful exchange of ideas depends on civility and respect for others, along with tolerance of ideas that are different from yours. Civil disagreement and debate are welcome and very much encouraged, but rudeness is not.

**Email and office visits:** I encourage you to ask for help and clarification. Your first stop for help should be the D2L Discussions, “Questions about the Course.” If you ask early in the semester about material you are struggling with or problems with essay questions, you are likely to improve throughout the semester. I am available to meet during office hours, either in person or by phone, or by appointment. I also answer email, though a conversation is sometimes a better way receive clarification. Please observe the following policies:

**Office visits:** I welcome office visits. It’s a good way to address problems with the course or just to talk about course content. Meet me or phone during posted hours when you can, and ask for appointments when you cannot make those hours. It’s best to ask a few days ahead of the time you want to meet outside of office hours.

Continued next page.
Email: In general, I will respond to emails within a day. Email exchanges are student-instructor conversations; please explain your query carefully, so I can know how to respond (“I don’t get this stuff” or “I don’t know what you want” are too general; explain the difficulty you want me to address, what you do and don’t understand about the material in question). I will not respond to unsigned emails. Please do not email more than a few times a day and do not repeat the same email in 24 hr. (I’ll answer each as soon as possible, but there are some periods when other work prevents checking email). I’ll keep you posted about when assignments will be returned, so please don’t email about that.

→ Plagiarism is using the ideas or words of others without proper citation.

You may not copy an author’s words or the words or ideas of another student or friend. Plagiarism is grave academic misconduct. Sanctions for plagiarism can include expulsion from the university. The best way to avoid unintentional plagiarism is to take notes on readings in your own words or to use quotation marks (followed by a page citation) around any phrases that you copy verbatim into your notes. Then your written assignments will be free of plagiarism.

OVERVIEW OF DUE DATES:
*DROP INFO: https://www4.uwm.edu/faculty_staff/instructional_support/registrars_add_drop_calendar.cfm

The first week includes both required Discussion and Assignment. After that, you will have discussions or quizzes virtually every week (usually alternating). Most of these are not listed here, but assume you will have one every week. Both require use of assigned readings.

Fill in the grid (?)s below as Agendas announce upcoming quizzes and discussions. There may be additional (very small) assignments.

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Last exam May 13 (to be confirmed)
COURSE OUTLINE:

The readings are categorized by segment, unit, and part.

Four segments organize the content of the course: an introduction to sociological perspectives and concepts, a segment on past change in families, one on family the work of families, and one on family policy.

“Units” and “parts” are topical clusters of readings and assignments. When a unit is too big to contain a set of readings and assignments, it is broken into parts.

See the posted “Agendas” for timetables and deadlines.

I. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FAMILY

Note that for some readings, only a page excerpt is assigned. If no page range is listed, read the entire piece.

Week of Jan. 22
Unit 1. Introduction: Sociological Perspectives

Introduction to Sociology of the Family – Lecture 1A

➢ SEE AGENDA, Unit 1 for assignment, discussion, etc. (all details about readings, quizzes, discussions, deadlines etc. are in Agendas).

Explanation and Prescription /Individualism and Commitment in Families -- Lecture 1B


Week of Jan. 28
Unit 2. Contemporary Family Patterns: Popular Beliefs and Demographic Evidence

➢ See AGENDA, Unit 2 (regarding Quiz, interview assignment, etc.)

Lynn Casper and Suzanne Bianchi, Continuity and Change in the American Family, 2002; Chapter 1, pp. 1-29. (Though this book rarely covers changes after 2000, today’s rates of patterns like divorce are similar. I will update the data in lectures.)

Continued next page.

Susan Brown, “Cohabitation,” in *Contexts*, Summer 2005, 33-35. (Download entire article.)


Short paper 1 (GP1) due, see Agenda.

**Unit 3. Diversifying Experiences: Class, Race-Ethnicity, Immigration, Sexual Orientation** (Parts 1-3, 3 weeks)

*Week of Feb. 4*

Part 1. *Social Class Differences in Marriage and Family*

- See AGENDA, Unit 3, Part 1


*Week of Feb. 11*

Part 2. *Race, Class, and "Marriage Markets"

> See AGENDA, Unit 3, Part 2

  Reread Casper and Bianchi (Feb. 2), pp. 13-17.


  Cherlin, “Blue-Collar. . . (see above) pp. 169-174

Week of Feb. 18  
Part 3. **Ethnicity, Immigration, Sexual Orientation**

- See AGENDA Unit 3, Part 3. Post “Labors of Love” Interview in Discussion.


Week of Feb. 25  
Unit 4: **Gender and Power: Why Are Egalitarian Marriages Hard to Do?**

- See AGENDA, Unit 4 (Exam/Essay next week) >> Post Paper Topic


  Gerson (see wk. 1), Re-read pp.8-22, Read 22-end.

  Terri L. Orbuch & Susan G. Timmer, “Differences in His Marriage and Her Marriage,” in *Gender Mosaics*, 2001, pp. 155-159 (you will read other excerpts later).


Week of March 4:  
Unit 5: **Constructing Family Problems** (no readings)

- See AGENDA, Unit 5 >>>>>>>> Undergrads--**Exam/Essay 1 due,** see agenda. Grads, GP3.
II. FAMILY CHANGE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Week of Mar. 11
Unit 6: American Industrialization and The Rise of “Separate Spheres”

➢ See AGENDA, Unit 6


Recommended, to get a clearer picture of family change in this period: Scott Coltrane and Michele Adams, Gender and Family, Ch. 5, “Mothers, Fathers and Family Care,” Pp. 137-145.

Graduate Students: Steven Mintz, “American Childhood as a Social and Cultural Construct,” in B. Risman, Families as They Really Are.

Week of Mar. 18 SPRING BREAK !

Week of Mar. 25 (Units 7 & 8)
Unit 7. The Rise and Fall of the American Dream

➢ See AGENDA, Unit 7,8 >> Post Sociol Abstracts database search documentation

Stephanie Coontz, “Evolution” (see above) pp. 41-47.

John D’Emilio (see Oct. 23), pp. 137-139.

Casper and Bianchi, Continuity and Change, Re-read pp. 1-7.

Hochschild, “The Working Wife as Urban Peasant,” FUS.

If this issue interests you, I recommend the article by Furstenberg assigned for grad students.


Wk. of March 25 continues next page.
III. LABORS OF LOVE

(_ctd, March 25)

Unit 8. A Sociology of Housework

➢ See Agenda (above)


*Graduate students:* ManYee Kan, Oriel Sullivan, Jonathan Gershuny, “Gender Convergence in Domestic Work: Discerning the Effects of Interactional and Institutional Barriers from Large-scale Data,” *Sociology* 45, 2, (2011)  GP5

Week of April 1

Unit 9. Balancing Work and Family in Two-Worker Families

➢ See AGENDA, Unit 9


Re-read Orbuch and Timmer (see Unit 4) and add pp. 160-162.


Week of April 8

Unit 10. Comparing Theories of Nurture and Care: Why Don’t Men “Mother?” (Or When Do They?)

➤ See Agenda, Unit 10


Francine Deutch, excerpt, Halving It All: How Equally Shared Parenting Works, 1999. Read Ch. 2, Ch. 3 to p. 50, and Ch. 4.


Week of April 15 (Units 11 & 12)

Unit 11. Family, Kin, and Community

➤ See Agenda, Units 11, 12.

Casper and Bianchi, Continuity and Change (posted for week 1), pp. 29-36.

Barry Wellman, “The Place of Kinfolk in Personal Community Networks,” FUS.

Orbuch and Timmer, add pp. 159-60.

IV. FAMILY POLITICS AND POLICY

(ctd, week of Ap.15)

Unit 12. Comparing Theories: The Family and the State

No reading

➤ (See AGENDA, above, units 11, 12) >>>>> Interview paper on “Labors of Love” due Mon.

Week of April 22, through Weds., May 1

Unit 13. Divorce, Single Parenthood, Cohabitation, and Policy

➤ See AGENDA, Unit 13


Thurs., May 2 – May 8 (Units 14 & 15)

Unit 14. Law, Policy: Institutionalization / Deinsitutionalization/ Reinstitutionalization

➢ See AGENDA, Units 14, 15


Go to: http://features.pewforum.org/same-sex-marriage-attitudes/slide7.php

A 1970s debate among gay rights activists about gay marriage and the institution of the family:

T.B. Stoddard, “Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry,” FUS.

P.L. Ettelbrick, “Since When is Marriage a Path to Liberation?” FUS.


Readings continue next pg.
(ctd., May 2-8)

Unit 15. Family Futures

- See AGENDA, above, Units 14, 15. >>>>> Undergrad Library Research Paper due.


  Read Panel presentations.


>>>>>> Mon., May 13 (possibly earlier or later, if all students agree) Exam/Essay 2,

  > Grad Literature Review due

See University and Department Policies, next page.
UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

**Students with Disabilities.** Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

**Incompletes.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/osl/dean/conduct.cfm

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/upload/grievance_procedure.pdf

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/policies/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology. Update 06/2012