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*** Please feel free to reach out to me by email or through the course website ***



Why Study Intimate Relationships and Family Life?

In sociology, “the family” is both a key institution and a location where social rules and practices are communicated, endorsed, and, sometimes, critiqued by members of society. It’s an important area of social studies for this reason. The course title alludes to the fact that the family, as a social institution, is defined by “blood,” as in blood ties or biological relationships, as well as “sex,” as a basis for sanctioning (or not) physical intimacy, and also as a basis for determining which sexual combinations (e.g., same or opposite sex) in families are accepted by society. Historically, families were primarily economic institutions, and we will explore the role that economic resources (“money”) play in the formation and maintenance of families. Families are also a site for the creation and maintenance of power relations, a topic we will explore further in this class.

We will discuss and think more about theories and data that describe the influence of family on society and individuals, as well as societal and individual influences on families and intimate relationships. Family forms, family functions, and the relationships between social institutions and family life are all things we will read and think more about this semester.

A critical component of our discussions will be grappling with defining and understanding the *concept* of family--intimate relationships, marriage, and family life--as a social phenomenon. Sociologists also emphasize the diversity or similarity of family experiences across social class, gender, race and age structures so that the potential for change can be critically examined.

The overall goal of this course is to provide you with a basis for understanding family life and relationships, including your own, so that rational, constructive, and comprehensive approaches to contemporary family problems can be developed. Becoming more familiar with family history and forms, learning to assess theories and apply explanations to data that describe families and intimate relationships, identifying patterns of inequality, and defining and evaluating diverse intimate relationships are all points of focus in this class.

As a practical matter, understanding more about the social forces that shape families, and vice versa, is important in a number of professional arenas. Many career professionals, such as teachers, social workers, health care providers, government employees at all levels, and managers across a range of industries, must understand the social barriers and opportunities that individuals embedded in different family forms face as well as how family diversity influences (and is influenced by) society. Social study of families, then, is part of a strong foundation for preparing for your role as engaged citizen and professional employee when you leave UWM.

University Course Description

Examines the social forces that shape inequality within, and the formation and maintenance of, marriage and other intimate relationships across diverse groups. This course meets the UWM General Education Requirements (GER) for Social Science. It also meets the requirements for a Women's Studies Cross-listed Course. Sociology 260 is cross-listed because sex and gender play essential roles in shaping experiences in intimate relationships and family life.

Course Prerequisite

Sophomore standing or a 100-level sociology course

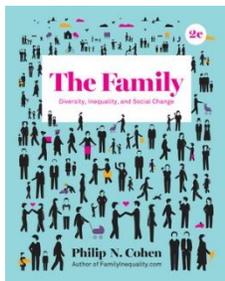
About Your Instructor



Family sociology is one of my areas of special training. Both my research and teaching interests are centered around social questions that intersect with contemporary family life. In particular, much of my research is focused on how paid employment influences family expectations, attitudes, and experiences and vice-versa. Prior to working as a professor, I worked in a private-sector consulting firm, where I applied social research methods to solve real-world problems. I also bring that experience to bear in all of my teaching. My central goal as your instructor is to excite you about the possibilities for

learning and growth that studying sociological topics can enhance and inspire you to do your very best work.

Required Books and Materials



Cohen, Philip N. 2018. *The Family: Diversity, Inequality, and Social Change, 2nd Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-63932-2.

The text should be available through the UWM online bookstore. You will need to have access to the InQuizitive resource for this class, which is an online tool for assessing your reading comprehension. This is bundled with the ebook.

All other required course materials will be available via the course website (Canvas).

Course Structure & Organization

The course is organized according to a **weekly schedule** (included at the end of this syllabus). Each week, I provide an overview of the material and outline what needs to be done. In a typical week, you will do some reading, watch a presentation video, complete an InQuizitive activity, and participate in discussion. Discussions will involve writing an initial post, a response post, and reading and replying to my summary comments. We will sometimes read articles or listen to podcasts outside the text. In those cases, I have created ways to access these materials through the website.

Learning Objectives*

Completing this course with sufficient effort will help you gain an understanding of:

- 1) the demographic, historical, and social factors that influence relationship and family formation, maintenance and dissolution;
- 2) how different social theories explain the need for families and their broader role in society;
- 3) how a variety of social contexts shape family experiences in ways that produce differences by sex, gender, race/ethnicity, and social class;
- 4) the interaction between individuals and society and its institutions;
- 5) the role that intimate relationships and families play in creating social change.

Skill Development*

This course will help you progress in your ability to:

- 1) **Think Critically:** evaluate/analyze social science research, discuss theories of intimate relationships and family life, distinguish evidence-based arguments from those based on values and personal experiences, debate whether the evidence to date supports one explanation of family life more fully than others, and appreciate the value of multidisciplinary approaches to the study of intimate relationships and family life;
- 2) **Create Relevant Information:** synthesize and integrate information from a variety of sources, pose questions that follow from existing research, link individual life experiences to course concepts, and formulate and communicate conclusions to others;
- 3) **Solve Problems Creatively:** think about problems and their solutions in multiple ways, seek information from a variety of sources;
- 4) **Communicate Effectively:** summarize and critique conclusions from family research through effective communication to classmates, engage with other learners through active listening and sharing ideas;
- 5) **Understand and Appreciate Diversity:** become more aware of values and experiences of different cultures, religions, ethnic traditions, and social arrangements. Develop a more nuanced understanding of the possibilities and challenges associated with diversity in all its forms.

* These learning objectives and skill development goals meet university-wide General Education Requirements 1, 2, 3, & 5 detailed in “Social Sciences Distribution GER learning outcomes” (Rev. 2012);

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Course Workload

The UW System notes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4). This means that a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. In this course, you will spend **about 9 hours each week** engaged in course activities, including the time you take to read through course materials, prepare for and engage in discussions, and complete assignments and exams.

Course Activities & Assessment

- 1) **Completion of InQuizitive Assignments.** The InQuizitive tool that comes with our text is designed to focus and improve your comprehension of important ideas and concepts from the reading. In InQuizitive, students must answer a minimum number of questions in each activity before receiving a grade and reach a target score to earn 100%. It is possible to earn 100% on each and every InQuizitive assignment. Due dates for the InQuizitive assignment associated with each week are documented in the weekly schedule at the end of this handout and are also embedded with each assignment link. Your completion of all InQuizitive assignments is worth 20% of your final course grade.

Rationale: Research on teaching and learning demonstrates that short, regular opportunities to apply what you are reading and learning are one of the best ways to build knowledge and skills (such as reading comprehension skills).

- 2) **Participation in Weekly Online Discussion.** High quality participation in online weekly discussions is a central element of the course and an important place to learn. These discussions will engage ideas in that week's reading and will include your analysis of course material and incorporate reactions to others' posts. More information about this activity is available in the "Creating Effective Posts for Online Discussion" handout. Your participation in all online discussions is worth 30% of your final course grade. Your two lowest-scoring posts (initial or response) are dropped from your final discussion grade.

Rationale: Research on teaching and learning demonstrates that short, regular opportunities to apply what you are reading and learning are one of the best ways to build knowledge and skills (such as writing and evidence-based argumentation skills).

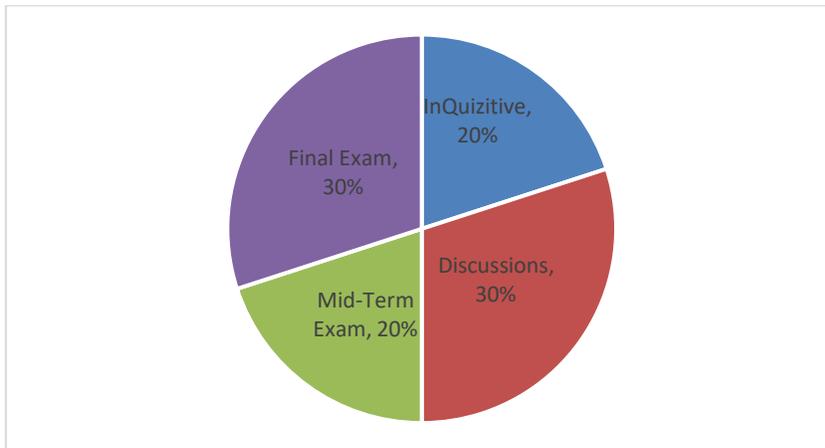
- 3) **Mid-Term and Final Exam.** We will have a mid-term and final exam (essay, short answer) designed to assess your ability to integrate and synthesize course material mid-way through and at the end of the semester. Your mid-term exam will contribute 20% to your final grade. The final exam will contribute 30% to your final grade. Exam weeks are documented in the weekly schedule at the end of this handout

Rationale: This is your chance to think more comprehensively about how some of the different topics we have covered so far work together. What is the bigger picture starting to look like, drawing upon concepts and ideas from multiple weeks of the course?

UW System Shared Learning Goals and These Assessments. Putting sufficient effort into this assignment should help you progress in your ability to: 1) think critically and creatively about intimate relationships and family life; 2) Further develop your written communication skills. Completion of this assignment may also help you: 3) progress in your ability to interact and work with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures as you analyze and evaluate intimate relationships and family life with respect to gender, racial/ethnic, and class differences in family outcomes; 4) empathize with and understand social differences as you study and analyze relationships and families that may differ from your own experience. Finally, since formulating critical thought and argument is a skill that is often utilized by an engaged citizenry, completion of this assignment can help prepare you for future civic involvement.

Policy on Late or Missing Assignments. The ability to make up missing work or turn in late work is at the discretion of the Instructor. In general, missing or late InQuizitive or discussion posts cannot be made up/will not be accepted. Please contact the instructor by email to discuss missing or late assignments.

Summary of Course Requirements



Requirement	Percentage
InQuizitive Assignments	20%
Discussions	30%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

Translating Final Percentage to a Letter Grade

Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
94-100	A	74 - 76	C
90 - 93	A-	70 - 73	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D
84 - 86	B	Below 67%	F
80 - 83	B-		
77 - 79	C+		

If you require special assistance for any reason, please contact the instructor immediately so that we can work together to support your success in this class.

COURSE FORMAT: FULLY ONLINE

This course, SOCIOL 260, is a fully online course. Many students have the misconception that an online course will be less work or will be less rigorous. This is not the case. An online course has the same rigor as a face-to-face course, except that you have more flexibility regarding when and where you complete your work. **So, the good news is that you can participate in class on your own schedule.**

The online class is always open, and you can read the course materials anytime. You can even talk about them anytime through threaded discussions. This gives you a chance to think about your response. Because of this, many online students come for the convenience and return for the quality. They find that they make more thoughtful contributions to these asynchronous conversations than they do in traditional in-person classrooms. This course format also obligates everyone to participate, bringing a variety of viewpoints to bear on complex issues.

The challenge is that you have to be self-disciplined and highly organized, learn how to communicate without meeting face-to-face and learn how to effectively use the technology to do well in the course. Writing clarity and quality are critical in an online learning environment because everything we do happens through text. You also have to remember to go online and complete the readings and lectures, to actively participate in the discussions on a timely basis and communicate online, to e-mail or call the professor, TA, or a classmate when you are lost or have a questions, and to learn how to effectively complete assignments online.

Even though we do not meet face-to-face a few times a week, it is still important that you schedule time for yourself to go online at least 3 times a week. For example, you may schedule yourself to go online on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays from 9:00p.m. - 10:30p.m. to review the agendas, review lectures, work on a project, or interact with your classmates in the discussions. Make sure to schedule at least 3 days a week for one to two hours that you can be online. Add it right into your calendar or date book. Further, you need to schedule time complete readings, assignments, and to study for exams.

The successful online learner:

- *communicates* effectively in writing.
- *enjoys* the challenge of learning independently.
- *is highly motivated and challenged* by being in charge of his/her own learning.
- *may need flexible scheduling* but understands that flexibility does not imply that completion of the course requirements will be easy.
- *demonstrates problem-solving skills* and the ability to work through difficulties.
- *manages time well* by prioritizing and establishing a personal schedule.
- *completes* assigned work by deadlines.
- *uses a personal computer and the Internet* to access information and to communicate.
- *possesses* above average reading skills.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Communication in an online environment can be more challenging than face-to-face communication. There are no physical cues to rely on (smiling, tone of voice, etc.). Moreover, in asynchronous communication, the need to clarify or follow-up with additional questions can slow down communication progress. It is essential that you focus on professionalism, clarity, and specificity in your online communications, whether through email, online discussions, or

other technologically-mediated forums.

Constructing Effective and Professional Emails

Because our communication this semester will happen over email or online, I would like to ask students to follow these guidelines when relying on online communication in this class:

- *Be professional and focused in your communication.* Please format your emails like you would a business letter. This means including a greeting, a body of the email that contains the clear purpose of your communication, and a closing.
- *Use the Subject Line.* In addition, please use the following format in the subject line of email: "Soc 260: [Put the topic of your email here]." Because we all receive many emails for a range of different activities and deadlines, this helps all of us stay organized and facilitates the use of email filters.
- *Watch your writing quality.* Use a professional writing style and avoid including "texting" acronyms (i.e. OMG, BTW, LOL etc.) in your emails and online questions. It is critical that we are as clear as possible in our written communication.

Response Times for Communication

One of the challenges of the online classroom is the possibility of 24/7 participation. All of us balance a number of different responsibilities and cannot be online all the time. I am committed to responsive communication. I check my email several times a day during traditional business hours (Monday – Friday, 9 – 5) unless I am in all-day meetings or sick. I do not generally check into our class on the weekends, however, and will respond to requests or questions made during those days/times on Mondays.

Discussion Forums for Course Questions. There is a discussion forum on D2L that is set up for you to ask questions regarding the course. Many times, you may have missed something in the syllabus or course documents that may have an answer to your questions. However, someone else may have read it or have your answer. The discussion forums are a great way for you to get help from a classmate or me. So, if you have any questions about the structure of the course, assignments, deadlines, or anything else please post them in the appropriate discussion forum. ***It is really important that we all get in the habit of regularly posting to and reading these forums, since many of you will have similar questions and concerns. Posting these in the discussion forum, and reading my (and others responses) allows for efficient communication in the class.***

TECHNOLOGY

Learning Management System. The Learning Management System (LMS) used in this class is [Canvas](#).

Need Help? For any problems with access to our digital learning environment, please contact help@uwm.edu or call (414) 229-4040. The Help Desk can help you with your technical issues with the class.

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 regular access to a desktop or laptop computer that is capable of accessing the course site and course materials.

Software. On your computer, you will need to be able to view, edit, and create .pdf files.

Email. One of our primary communication tools is email. Make sure your email program of

choice will recognize messages sent from me (rather than as SPAM). If you do not use your UWM email, you can find information on forwarding your UWM email to another address at: <https://kb.uwm.edu/page.php?id=17693>. I will routinely use your UWM address, so please make sure you can receive email sent to this address.

Internet. You will need convenient access to a broadband Internet connection in order to efficiently and effectively access course materials.

An Important Note to Students

Not having access to technology or the appropriate technology to complete course requirements is not a valid excuse for incomplete work in an online learning environment. You must be willing to obtain access to the needed hardware, software, and Internet. You must be willing to check your e-mail regularly and access the course site at least 3 times a week. If you are not willing or able to do these things, then an online learning environment may not be a good fit for you.

Weekly Schedule			
Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Reading
Week 1	<i>Getting Started: Introductions, Understanding the Course Structure, Navigating InQuizitive</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (9/4) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (9/8) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 9/8, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Course Syllabus; Instructions for Discussion Posts; Instructions for InQuizitive
Week 2	<i>A Sociological View of Families and Intimate Relationships</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (9/11) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (9/15) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 9/15, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 1
Week 3	<i>The Family in History</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (9/18) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (9/22) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 9/22, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 2
Week 4	<i>Race, Ethnicity, Immigration and Families</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (9/25) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (9/29) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 9/29, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 3; Coles Chapter & Podcast (website)
Week 5	<i>Social Class and Families</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (10/2) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (10/6) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 10/6, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 4
Week 6	<i>Gender & Sexuality</i>	<i>** No online discussion this week ** InQuizitive Completed By: 10/13, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 5 & 6; Podcast (website)
Week 7	<i>Love and Romantic Relationships</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (10/16) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (10/20) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 10/20, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 7
Week 8	Mid-Term Exam (See Instructions for Due Dates & Details)		
Week 9	<i>Marriage and Cohabitation</i>	<i>** No online discussion this week ** InQuizitive Completed By: 11/3, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 8; Podcast (website)
Week 10	<i>Families and Children</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (11/6) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (11/10) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 11/10, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 9;

Weekly Schedule			
Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Reading
Week 11	<i>Divorce, Remarriage, and Blended Families</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (11/13) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (11/17) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 11/17, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 10
Week 12	<i>Work and Families</i>	<i>Initial Post: Weds (11/20) by 11:59 PM CST Response Post: Sun (11/24) by 11:59 PM CST InQuizitive Completed By: 11/24, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 11
Week 13	<i>Thanksgiving Break: No Class or Assignments (11/25 – 12/1)</i>		
Week 14	<i>Family Violence and Abuse, The Future of Families</i>	<i>** No online discussion this week ** InQuizitive Completed By: 12/8, 11:59 PM CST</i>	Cohen, Ch. 12 & Ch. 13
Week 15	<i>Final Exam 12/9 – 12/15 (See Instructions for Due Dates & Details)</i>		

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 page is: <https://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf>

Students with Disabilities. In the pursuit of equal access and in compliance with state and federal laws, the University is required to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. To learn more, please visit: <http://uwm.edu/arc/>

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: <https://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>

Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

Discriminatory Conduct. 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:

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf

Title IX/Sexual Violence. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: <https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/>

Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University.

<http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>

Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf

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/School. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_28_Grade_Appe_by_Students.pdf

LGBT+ resources. Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment. <http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/>

Smoke and Tobacco-Free campus. UWM prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco on all campus property.

https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_49_Smoke_Toba_Free_Policy.pdf

Final Examinations. Information about the final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, and make-up examinations. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_22_Final_Examinations.pdf

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

Updated 08/2019