Course Description

Changes in the culture and demographics of U.S. families—how children are raised, ideal family size, who can marry, how best to divide household labor, and how to sustain “families we choose”—have transformed our conceptions of kinship over the last two centuries. This course grapples with the complex structural forces that shape kinship and the variety of ways families are recognized and enacted in practice. It pays particular attention to the different experiences of men, women, and children within family units, and how those experiences vary by class, race/ethnicity, migration status, gender, and sexual orientation. A central concern is the dynamic interaction between economic, legal, political, and social forces and how they shape and are shaped by families over time. This is an experiential learning course.

Required Readings


Recommended:


This course has a LATTE page: http://latte.brandeis.edu. Articles listed below with an asterisk (*) can be found there.
Course Requirements

Students are expected to do the reading for the week before class, attend lectures, and thoughtfully participate in class discussions. The course grades are based on:

- Class participation: 10%
- 10-12 page research paper: 35%
- In-class midterm: 20%
- 2 Reflection papers: 10%
- Take-home final exam: 25%

Participation grades are determined by class attendance, thoughtful contributions to discussion, active engagement in small group sections, and a presentation on work-in-progress.

The research paper can be on one of two topics: 1) an oral history of your family that includes an analytic dimension and locates the family in its historical context; or 2) a contemporary issue (for example, the political struggle for domestic partnership laws, parental rights in international adoption, the division of labor in same sex households, and the like). More detailed instructions will be distributed later in the semester. Feedback on the topic and the research itself is built into the process of writing the paper. The initial prospectus for the project is due Friday, October 3. An extended outline and short bibliography is due Tuesday, November 4. Students will make presentations on their work in progress, and the final paper is due in class, Tuesday, December 2.

Students will take an in-class, essay midterm on Friday, October 17. Study questions will be distributed one week in advance and will challenge students to synthesize the readings and lectures to date. Students will be allowed to bring one page of notes to the exam.

Students will be expected to submit two reflection papers. Each will consist of 1 ½ to 2 pages reflecting on the different ways that families are portrayed in the broader culture. A good reflection paper will briefly summarize the article/event, analyze underlying assumptions about families and kinship, link the topic to the class, and assess the persuasiveness and veracity of the article or presentation. The two papers include:

1) A summary and reflection on an article published in a major newspaper (e.g., New York Times, the Washington Post, or the Boston Globe) about families. The article should appear any time after August 29, and the student should attach a copy of it to the reflection paper. Due Friday, September 19; and,
2) A summary and reflection of a LIVE (as opposed to on-line or streamed) lecture related to the topic of families, caregiving, or kinship. Multiple opportunities abound throughout the semester on campus and in the Boston area. Due Friday, November 21.

The take-home final exam, consisting of two essays, will be distributed one week before it is due: Tuesday, December 9 at NOON.
All work is expected on time, the day it is due, in hard copy. Late papers and assignments will be graded down one-third of a grade per day. Please see me in advance if you are having trouble meeting the deadlines.

**Learning Goals for the Course:**

1. Critically read texts and distinguish between the author’s point of view, the theoretical and political debates in which he or she is engaging, and the evidence presented;
2. Read BOOKS as large research projects motivated by specific questions rooted within a theoretical framework, executed via a particular methodology that yielded certain kinds of data that are analyzed and organized by ideas;
3. Identify and analyze basic assumptions underlying contemporary debates about families;
4. Communicate (orally and through writing) the central argument and point of view of each author;
5. Identify and evaluate the theoretical claims, sources of evidence, and methodology used by the author;
6. Use analytic skills to identify and assess demographic and qualitative data about families;
7. Conduct bibliographic research using social science resources in the library and online, and write a cogent paper based on the research; and
8. Synthesize ideas and data concerning the social structural forces shaping the contours, dynamics, and challenges of families.

**Accommodations for Disabilities:**

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 Beth Rodgers-Kay at Undergraduate Academic Affairs (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu) or the appropriate person in the Graduate School office. 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. See Kate Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, for questions about proper citation.

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see [http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai)). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

**Course Outline**

**Week 1: Introduction**

*Fri. August 29 – Course Overview*


**Week 2: Defining Families and Kinship – Who Counts?**

*Tue. September 2*


**Fri. September 5**


Recommended:

I. KINSHIP AS EXCHANGE

Week 3: Commodification and Kinship

**Tue. September 9**

**Fri. September 12—Sexuality, Exchange, and the Market**

Week 4: Emerging Capitalism and Racial Hierarchies

**Tue. September 16—Framing Race**
*Baca Zinn, Maxine, “Family, Feminism, and Race in America,” Families, 33-40

**Fri. September 19—Slavery and African American Kinship**
*Jones, Jacqueline, "My Mother was Much of a Woman: Slavery," Families, 677-708
*Sudharkasa, Niara, “Interpreting the African Heritage in Afro-American Family Organization,” Families, 91-104

***Reflection Paper #1 due***

Week 5: NO CLASS

**Tue. September 23—Brandeis THURSDAY—No Class**

**Fri. September 26—Brandeis HOLIDAY—No Class**
Week 6: Capitalism, Wage Earning, and Sexuality

**Tue. September 30—The Family Wage and the Emergence of Modern Families**
*Coontz, Stephanie, “The Evolution of American Families,” *Families as They Really Are*, 30-47

**Fri. October 3—Economic Autonomy and Sexual Possibility**
*D’Emilio, John, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” *Families*, 131-141

Week 7: The Division of Household Labor

**Tue. October 7—Gender Strategies**
Hochschild, Arlie, *The Second Shift*, Chapters 3-5, & 8
***Research Prospectus due

**Fri. October 10—Economy of Gratitude**
Hochschild, Arlie, *The Second Shift*, Chapters 10, 12-15
Discussion of Human Subjects Review

II. STRUCTURES OF INEQUALITY

Week 8: Marriage and Divorce

**Tue. October 14 – Motherhood and Greedy Marriages**

**Fri. October 17—MIDTERM**
***In-Class Midterm***
Week 9: Fathers & the Package Deal

**Tue. October 21—Fatherhood**
Townsend, Nicholas, *The Package Deal*, Chapters 1-3

Recommended:
Pleck, Joseph, “American Fathering in Historical Perspective,” *Families*, 351-361

**Fri. October 24—Fathering**
Townsend, *The Package Deal*, Chapters 4-7

Week 10: Inter-Generational Transmission of Class and Culture

**Tue. October 28 –Conducing Research with Live Subjects— Interviewing and Ethnography**

**Fri. October 31 – Family Violence and Working with Men Who Batter**
*Ptacek, James, Why do Men Batter their Wives? Families*, 619-633
*Straus, Murray, “Ten Myths that Perpetuate Corporal Punishment,” Families*, 641-650
http://www.emergedv.com/

*Guest Speaker: Ted German, EMERGE

***Research Paper Outline and Bibliography due

Sign up for *Unequal Childhoods* STUDENT GROUPS

Week 11: Reproducing Inequality

**Tue. November 4—Conceptualizing Class**
Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*, Chapters 3-7

**Fri. November 7**
*Film: “From 7 to 28 Up”

Sign up for *Not-So-Nuclear Families* STUDENT GROUPS
Week 12: Inequality and Networks of Care

**Tue. November 11**

*Student presentations on work-in-progress*

**Fri. Nov. 14**
Hansen, Karen V., *Not-So-Nuclear Families*, “Preface” and Chapters 2-5

*Student presentations on work-in-progress*

Week 13: Networks, Migration, and Global Care Chains

**Tue. November 18—Reciprocity**
Hansen, *Not So Nuclear Families*, Ch. 6-8, and conclusion

*Student presentations on work-in-progress*

**Fri. November 21—Caregiving and the Market**
Dreby, Joanna, *Divided by Borders*, Preface & Ch. 1-3, and Appendix A: Research Design

*Student presentations on work-in-progress*

***Reflection Paper #2 due***

Week 14: Transnational Families

**Tue. November 25—**
Dreby, *Divided by Borders*, Ch. 4-8

*Student presentations on work-in-progress*

**Fri. November 28—THANKSGIVING BREAK**
III. REIMAGINING KINSHIP AND CAREGIVING

Week 15: Caregiving and the Market

_Tue. December 2—Subcontracting Filial Piety_
* Lan, Pei-Chia, “Remaking Family through Subcontracting Care: Elder Care in Taiwanese and Hong Kong Immigrant Families,” in _At the Heart of Work and Family_, Ch. 15.
* Hochschild, Arlie, “Two-Way Global Traffic in Care” (SHF, chapter 10);
  “Children Left Behind” (SHF, chapter 11)

***Research Papers due in class

* Hand out final exam essay questions

_Fri. December 5—Twenty-Somethings Going Forward_
* Biblarz, Timothy and Judy Stacey, “Ideal Families and Social Science Ideals” _Journal of Marriage and Family_, 72, no. 1 (Feb 2010): 41-44.

***Take Home FINAL EXAM DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 @ NOON***