Sociology 130a  
FAMILIES, KINSHIP, AND SEXUALITY  
Fall 2015

Brandeis University
M & W, 5:00 – 6:20
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Professor Karen V. Hansen
Pearlman 209
Office Hours: Wed. 3:30-5:00, Thur. 11-12 & by appointment

Course Description

Kinship systems organize the tensions between Eros, reproduction, and domesticity. How do we map those connections and contradictions over time? What economic and social conditions make possible particular family forms? This course explores how the historical transformation in the meanings of kinship, sexual practices, law, and demographics have shaped contemporary family possibilities. It grapples with complex structural forces that shape kinship and sexuality, the multitude of ways families are organized, and how they come to be socially and legally recognized. It pays particular attention to the different experiences of men and women in their relationships with each other in courtship, the division of household labor (including childrearing), intimate relations, and the economy. How do those experiences vary by class, race/ethnicity, migration status, sexual orientation, and generation?

This course is designated as an Experiential Learning course. This means that you will be engaged in active learning—through thoughtful interrogation of the course readings and collaboratively facilitating discussion on weekly topics. Students will also attend a public lecture or performance (on or off campus) about families, kinship, or sexuality and reflect on its connection to the class. The primary semester project will involve conducting original research (through interviews with live subjects) or mastering a literature review on a contemporary topic. Students will formally present their main findings to the class, soliciting feedback from fellow students in an effort to improve their papers.

Required Readings

Schalet, Amy, Not Under my Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex (University of Chicago Press, 2011)

Recommended:

Dreby, Joanna, Divided by Borders: Mexican Migrants and Their Children (University of California Press, 2010)
Edin, Kathryn and Timothy Nelson, Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City
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 Wed. September 30. An extended outline and short bibliography is due Wed. November 4. Students will make presentations on their work in progress, and the final paper is due in class, Mon. November 23.

Students will take an in-class, essay midterm on Monday, October 19. 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 **Mon. September 21**; and,
2) A summary and reflection of a LIVE (as opposed to on-line or streamed) lecture or performance related to the topic of families, caregiving, or kinship. Multiple opportunities abound throughout the semester on campus and in the Boston area. Due **Mon. November 16**.

The take-home final exam, consisting of two essays, will be distributed one week before it is due: **Monday, December 14 at 5:00**.

A reminder that each 4-credit class is expected to carry a minimum of 9 hours of workload outside of class. 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 yields certain kinds of data that are analyzed and organized conceptually;
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 an 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, broders@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/st-udentlife/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

Mon. August 31—Course Overview

Wed. September 2—Defining Families and Kinship
D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters. Xi-xx, 3-38

Week 2: “Functional” Families—Who Counts?

Mon. September 7—NO CLASS
Wed. September 9—Family as a Practice

D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 39-52

Thur. September 10—BRANDEIS MONDAY—Debating “Functional Families”


D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 55-84

Recommended:

Bernstein, Mary and Verta Taylor, The Marrying Kind? Debating Same Sex Marriage within the Lesbian and Gay Movement (University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

I. KINSHIP AND EXCHANGE

Week 3: Commodification and Kinship

Mon. September 14—NO CLASS

Wed. September 16—The Commodity Frontier


Guest speaker: Gina Bastone, Reference Librarian (invited)

Week 4: Sexuality and Exchange

Mon. September 21—Sexuality, Exchange, and the Market


D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 109-138

***Reflection Paper #1 due
**Wed. September 23—NO CLASS**

**Week 5: Slavery and Racial Hierarchies**

**Mon. September 28—NO CLASS**

**Tue. September 29 — Brandeis MONDAY—Black Families under Slavery**
*Jones, Jacqueline, "My Mother was Much of a Woman: Slavery," *Families*, 677-708

**Wed. September 30—Slavery and African American Kinship**
*Sudharkasa, Niara, “Interpreting the African Heritage in Afro-American Family Organization,”* *Families*, 91-104

***Research Prospectus due***

**Week 6: Framing Race and Ethnicity**

**Mon. October 5—NO CLASS**

**Wed. October 7—Framing Race-Ethnicity in Family Studies**
*Baca Zinn, Maxine, “Family, Feminism, and Race in America,” *Families*, 33-40

*Guest speaker: Professor Maxine Baca Zinn, Michigan State, emerita*

**II. STRUCTURES OF INEQUALITY**

**Week 7: The Division of Household Labor**

**Mon. October 12—Capitalism, the Family Wage and “Modern” families**
D’Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 139-221

**Wed. October 14—Gender Strategies & the Economy of Gratitude**
Hochschild, Arlie, *The Second Shift*, Chapters 8, 10, 12-15
Week 8: Midterm and Marriage-Divorce

Mon. October 19—MIDTERM
***In-Class Midterm

Wed. October 21—Greedy Marriages and Divorce Culture
D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 239-274, plus images following

*Discussion of Human Subjects Review

Week 9: Mothers, Fathers & the Package Deal

Mon. October 26—Motherhood

Wed. October 28—Fathering and Fatherhood
*Edin, Kathryn and Timothy Nelson, “Daddy, Baby; Momma, Maybe: Low-Income Urban Fathers and the ‘Package Deal’ of Family Life”

Week 10: Inter-Generational Transmission of Class and Culture

Mon. November 2—Conducing Research with Live Subjects—Interviewing and Ethnography
Lareau, Annette, Unequal Childhoods, Chapters 1–2, Appendix A: “Methodology: Enduring Dilemmas in Fieldwork,”

Wed. November 4—Reproducing Class
*Film: “From 7 to 28 Up”

*Student presentations on work-in-progress
Week 11: Reproducing Inequality

Mon. November 9—Parenting and Class
Lareau, Unequal Childhoods, Chapters 3-7

*Student presentations on work-in-progress

Wed. November 11—Unequal Childhoods

*Student presentations on work-in-progress

Week 12: Family Secrets

Mon. November 16--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/
*Film: “The Slap”

*Guest Speaker: Ted German, EMERGE (invited)

***Reflection Paper #2 due

Wed. November 18—Teen Sexualities—Netherlands and the U.S.
Schalet, Amy, Not Under my Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex, 1-76 & Methodological Appendix
D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 275-325

*Student presentations on work-in-progress
III. REIMAGINING KINSHIP AND CAREGIVING

Week 13: Comparative Sexualities

Mon. November 23
Schalet, Amy, Not Under my Roof, 77-180, 203-212

***Research Papers due in class

Wed. November 25—NO CLASS -- Thanksgiving

Week 14: Reciprocity and Transnational Families

Mon. November 30—Reciprocity
* Dreby, Joanna, Divided by Borders, Preface & Ch. 1-3

Wed. December 2—Revisiting Transnational Caregiving, Division of Labor, and the Market
* Kibria, Nazli, “The Globalization-Family Nexus: Families as Mediating Structures of Globalization,” At the Heart of Work and Family, Ch. 19

Week 15: Transnational Caregiving and Families of the Future

Mon. December 7—Networks, Migration, and Global Care Chains
* Lanc, 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.

*Hand out final exam essay questions

Wed. December 9—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 Mon. December 14 by 5:00***