

SOCIOLOGY 2710
THE FAMILY
WINTER 2002

JAN 17 2002

Instructor: Oswald S. Warner
Time/Place: Tues & Thurs 1.00-2.20pm Room: J227
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 3-5pm Room: C404
Phone 539-2995
email: owarner@gprc.ab.ca

Description:

The objective of the course is to engage in a sociological and social-psychological analysis of marital and family relationships and organizations in Canadian, US, and other global societies. The course therefore focuses on both the diversity and commonality of families, and the issues and policies that many families face today. Topics covered include families, changing role as a social institution especially in relation to work, ethnicity, class, aging, family crisis and violence, divorce and remarriage, and public policy.

Overview of Course Objectives:

In addition to acquiring specific knowledge, learners should gain some specific skills in this course. All courses you have been exposed to so far have a built-in bias, as does this course. Having an alternative way to analyze events helps learners to build their critical thinking skills. In this course, we would therefore challenge common assumptions by formulating questions, identifying and weighing appropriate evidence, and reaching reasoned conclusions.

However, you do not have to believe everything you read or hear in this course. But, you do need to learn the perspectives and learn the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas. Disagreement is therefore welcomed, so long as it is educated disagreement. We all have opinions, but we need to find out how they stack up against social data. Feel free to debate points, but recognize that debates will ultimately be won based on empirical facts, rather than feelings.

Readings:

The required readings:

Eshleman, J. Ross and Sussannah J. Wilson. (3rd, ed.). 2001,
The Family. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Canada.

Occasional short handouts which learners are responsible for

reading and understanding.

Learners are expected to read assigned readings in advance of the dates they are listed for. Generally, readings are a very manageable amount for an upper-level course.

Lecture/Discussion Format:

Most lectures will supplement the readings. Learners are encouraged to bring questions about the readings, issues raised by the readings, etc. to the attention of the class for answer, discussion, and/or debate.

The lecture format presumes interruption by learners to discuss, question, demand clarification, etc. Likewise you should feel free to demand the instructor slow down, explain or do anything else you need to understand the lectures. Additionally, learners are responsible for knowing all material presented in class, as all are testable material.

Evaluation Format:

Exams:

Two (2) take-home exams and a final exam that will cover the basic themes in the lectures, readings, discussions, and video material will account for 70% of your final grade.

Group Legislative Research Reports:

Lately, there appears to have been a slew of legislation passed at both provincial and federal levels that have seriously impacted the institution of the family as well as the system of family relations. For example, at the provincial level, legislation have been passed in BC and more recently in Quebec that have given more rights to same sex couples. Then, at the federal level, legislation have been passed that have provided more leave away from work for parents of newly-born. At the federal level also, there has been the recently passed Family Violence Act.

In groups of equal size, learners are to be pick one area, from amongst those identified above that have been affected by recent legislative changes as well as from among others that will be provided, and research the various pieces of legislative changes. You are expected to identify what are the legislative changes, what is the rationale that underpin the changes, which category of individuals and/or groups are affected, how are they affected, what are the views that people hold of these changes, that is, are they seen by particular segments of the Canadian population as warranted, as overdue, as not necessary, etc. and what are your group's views of these legislative changes.

The findings of your group's research, as well as opinion, are to be presented to the class during the two (2) discussion periods that have been identified in the syllabus. At the end of the presentation, each group has to provide the instructor with a short, written report. Group members' evaluation of each others' contribution in the group legislative research project will account for 10% of your final grade while the instructor's evaluation of the submitted legislative research reports will account for 5% of the final grade.

TRRs: Thematic Reading Reports:

With each TRR valued at 2.5% of your grade, you are to submit four (4) TRRs based on the required chapter readings in the text. What is expected here is that you present the most important themes in each chapter commencing with Chapter 2 and ending with Chapter 12. This means that you have an opportunity to choose to write on four (4) out of eleven (11) chapters. These TRRs are to be submitted on or before the date on which the chapters are to be discussed in the course outline. Once the date has passed, even though the chapter may not have been discussed, TRRs will not be accepted. These TRRs are to encourage reading of the required chapters in advance of their lecture/discussion date on the syllabus and as such will provide you with an opportunity to be more informed of what is being discussed. TRRs are to be submitted on a ONE PAGE paper. This paper must be wordprocessed, single spaced or double spaced but MUST ONLY BE ON ONE SIDE OF A PAGE AND ARE NOT TO BE LESS THAN 400 WORDS.

TRRs due dates are fixed unless they are changed by me. NO exceptions will be granted unless in cases of crisis or emergency. Should a crisis or emergency arise that will prevent you from submitting your TRRs on time, said situation must be documented in writing to my satisfaction. Late work received without a verified excuse will have a 0.5 deducted for each day of lateness.

Note: It is vitally important that you take great care, not only with what you write but, with how you write. This necessitates that you pay attention to essay writing format/requirements of sentence construction, spelling, etc.

Individual Participation:

Individual participation grades will be calculated based upon attendance. Attendance is important not only to your final grade but also to your understanding of what is being discussed. Therefore, I will from time to time give simple quizzes (or curve busters) and these would also be used as a measure of attendance, participation, and understanding of course material and concepts. However, if an occasion arises that necessitates your absence from class for a day or a period of time let me know in advance. I will arrange with you to go over what you have missed during

one of our office hours.

Grade Breakdown:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	30%
Group Legislative Research Reports	
Learners' Self-Evaluation	10%
Instructor's Evaluation	05%
Four (4) SRRs	10%
Individual Participation	05%
Five (5) Attendance (1% each)	
Total	100%

Course Policies:

1: Reconsideration of grades:

Learners who are not satisfied with their grades have the option of having their papers re-evaluated. However, the following stipulations apply:

- a. Requests for reconsideration must be made within one week from the date that the graded paper was returned.
- b. Learners must present clear reasons why they disagree with my grade. This is to ensure that I fully grasp what you have presented.
- c. I will consider your arguments and re-evaluate your paper. The grade will remain the same or it may go up. It will never be reduced but more times than not it will remain the same.

2: Submission of assignments:

You will turn in all work on the due dates provided. Late work received without a verified excuse from your advisor will have a 0.5 deducted for each day of lateness. Late work will be accepted without penalty if it includes a note from your advisor that you have experienced some calamity earning you the privilege.

3: Academic behavior:

You will respect the rights of all members of the class (instructor included.)

This means no private gossip sessions during lecture/

discussion sessions that distract other learners or prevent them from hearing the main discussion going on.

This also means stating your opinions, ideas, and issues in class in a way that does not offend others.

This means being on time, ready to begin class on time, as well as staying through the period.

4: Academic dishonesty:

You will not present the work of others as your own. Any incident of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will lead to a failing grade.