

Introduction to Marriage and Families

SYG 2430

University of Florida
Spring 2025

Class is scheduled to meet fully online as it is an asynchronous course. There are no class meetings, and all work is to be completed in Canvas.

Instructor: Reha Atakan Cetin

e-mail: rcetin@ufl.edu

Online Office Hours: Tuesdays 11 AM-1 PM or by appointment via Zoom

Course Website: <http://elearning.ufl.edu> (Canvas)

Course Description & Instructional Methods

Families and primary relationships represent our first and most important connections, and they are a central part of our life experiences. They define our identities and shape our socialization, opportunities, and constraints in fundamental ways.

This online course is designed to introduce students to some of the major issues related to families and relationships, with a focus on sociological perspectives, policy implications, and an emphasis on diversity and equity. This course will introduce you to the historical and contemporary contexts that have shaped the meanings and importance of families in society. We emphasize the diversity of people and families in the United States and other highly industrialized societies, while drawing insights from cross-cultural and historical comparisons. This section of SYG 2430 fulfills General Education requirements (S, D), but does NOT fulfill the Writing Requirement. As a general education course, this course provides an overview of social perspectives and processes and an introduction to Diversity. Specific course objectives are listed below, followed by information about General Education (S, D).

Course Objectives

- Review the history of family life as a context for understanding contemporary family issues and debates.
- Examine important contemporary aspects of relationships and families including the prevalence of different family experiences, the range of social norms and attitudes concerning families and relationships and how they have changed over time, the diversity of contemporary families, and the arguments and evidence used to support different interpretations, concerns, and policy solutions regarding family life.
- Define and apply major sociological approaches (at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels) to issues related to families and relationships, including approaches that focus on a) the forms and functions of families in society; b) conflict and inequalities; c) ecological and developmental perspectives; d) interaction, negotiation, and exchange; and e) gender. We

will also discuss intersectional, critical race theory, and queer theory as they inform our understanding of relationships and families in society.

- Examine and evaluate how sociologists study families and relationships, the ethical concerns that guide family research and policy, and how to evaluate and interpret sociological evidence to contribute to policy debates and decisions.
- Evaluate and discuss common aspects of families and relationships, including love, dating, cohabitation, marriage, and childbearing, as well as conflict, family violence, divorce, and re-partnering and blended families. We will also assess some of the critical implications of family change, especially as they relate to social policy and legal issues.
- Develop an awareness of the diversity among contemporary families in the United States as well as the ways that social class and economics, gender and gender identity, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and ability influence family lives within U.S. society. The course begins with a discussion of how we define "the family" and the diversity of families. We will review historical background for understanding families and relationships as well as important sociological frameworks for studying relationship and family issues. We will distinguish between "public" and "private" aspects of families as they relate to the privacy of intimate relationships and the public concerns about the roles of families in society.

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General Education Objectives

This section of SYG 2430 fulfills General Education requirements (S, D), but does not fulfill the Writing Requirement. A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (S): Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain social institutions, structures, or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Diversity (D): Diversity courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that create cultural differences within the United States. These courses encourage students to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups in the United States. Students are expected to analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups.

As a General Education Course, SYG2430 is designed to address each of the following General Education Student Learning Outcomes regarding Content, Communication, and Critical Thinking.

- **Content** is knowledge of the concepts, principles, terminology, and methodologies used within the discipline. Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies, and theories used within the discipline. The Content SLO is assessed through the quizzes, written weekly memo assignments that involves group discussion, and final take home essay.
- **Communication** is the development and expression of ideas in written and oral forms. Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written or oral forms appropriate to the discipline. The Communication SLO is assessed through the weekly memos and final take home essay.
- **Critical Thinking** is characterized by the comprehensive analysis of issues, ideas, and evidence before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems. The Critical Thinking SLO is assessed through specific questions on the biweekly quizzes, weekly memos, and final take home essay.

Topics include:

- Diversity and Inequality, social class, race-ethnicity, gender, and sexuality
- Love, Sexuality, Partnership, and Marriage; Parents and children
- Conflicts and Crises: Economic strains, family violence, and divorce
- Changes and Transitions: Remarriage, stepfamilies, and aging and caregiving.

Our discussions will analyze the different sides of contemporary debates about social change and public policy, drawing on current media and press coverage and policy discussions.

Course Materials

Required Text: **The Family: Diversity, Inequality, and Social Change, 4th edition. (2024). Philip N. Cohen. Norton.**

- The textbook is available online as an e-book through UF All Access, which provides affordable access from the first day of class and for the duration of the term. If you choose to get the e-book, you will need to log into the bookstore's All Access Page to Opt-In to the textbook; the cost will be billed to your UF account. Specific instructions will be provided in Canvas in the first week of class.
- You may also choose to buy or rent a physical book through the UF bookstore (or any vendor, like chegg, amazon, etc.). If you buy or rent a hard copy, you do not need to purchase access to the publisher's materials online (InQuizitive). Explore your options and choose the format that works best for you. Feel free to email me with questions.
- I do not recommend buying the earlier edition—the material has changed, and all quizzes, reading assignments, and coursework will use the current edition.
- Occasional online readings, audio, or video materials –links are included in the schedule below. Links for the readings are available within the Modules on E-Learning: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>.

Canvas will be used extensively for all aspects of this online course. The modules provide free access to additional course materials, including readings and videos. Unless otherwise noted, these are required for the course. You will also use Canvas to watch weekly lectures, take quizzes,

submit assignments, view your grades, and receive course announcements. Weekly materials including lecture videos, materials, and assignments will be published every Monday by 1 pm.

A computer with a reliable internet connection is required for this course. If you experience issues with Canvas, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk by phone (352)392-HELP or online (<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) or visit their physical location in the HUB at UF campus.

Course Requirements

1. **Quizzes (5 x 30 pts / 40% of the final grade):** Students are required to complete the assigned online quizzes usually including multiple-choice questions. With the bi-weekly assignments, the aim is to evaluate students' comprehension of the related terminology and perspectives explained in the course materials. Quizzes are to be submitted at the assigned date and time frame. Therefore, please carefully note the day and time that the assignments are due.
2. **Weekly Online Memos and Peer Responses (14 x 5 pts / 20% of the final grade):** Throughout this course, you will engage in thoughtful exploration of key themes in marriage and family dynamics through the medium of weekly online memos. These memos serve as your platform for personal reflection on the topics discussed during the week, providing an opportunity for deeper understanding and critical thinking. Each memo should be succinct yet comprehensive, with a word length ranging between 500 to 750 words. Additionally, you are expected respond to two of your classmates' memos each week. Your responses should be concise, comprising one paragraph each, where you offer constructive insights, share diverse perspectives, or ask meaningful questions.
3. **Take Home Assignment (40% of the final grade):** There will be one take-home assignment (~5 pages). Instructions will be posted on Canvas. This assignment is worth 120 points. You must turn in the completed assignment electronically on Canvas, and you should be prepared to discuss your work in class. Late work will only be accepted with the approval of the instructor if there are serious circumstances. Completed assignments will be submitted to turnitin.com, which reviews the written work for plagiarism and appropriate citation.

Assignment	Points	Total Points	%
14 x Weekly Memos	5 (each)	70	20
5 x Quizzes	30 (each)	150	40
1 x Take Home Assignment	120	120	40
Total grade		340	100

Course Policies

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to review weekly course materials regularly and thoroughly since they are required to complete the required assignments. Regular attendance and active participation are vital components of the learning process and are expected in this course. The University of Florida has a specific policy regarding attendance, which all students are required to adhere to. Please review the [UF Attendance Policy](#) to familiarize yourself with the expectations and requirements. Absences can impact your grade and understanding of the course material. If you anticipate any absences, please inform me as soon as possible.

Grading Policy: The grading in this course will be conducted in accordance with the University of Florida's grading policies. These policies outline the criteria for assessment, grade calculation, and the standards for academic performance. It is important for students to understand how their work and participation in this course will be evaluated. Please review the [UF Grading Policy](#) for comprehensive information on grading standards and procedures at the University of Florida.

Quiz/Assignment Policy: Without exceptions, all students are equally required to complete the assignments and the requirements of the course.

Make-up Policy:

- **The weekly memos and quizzes** will be open for the duration of their respective Module.
- **Late quizzes** (within one week of the posted deadline only) will count for no more than half credit.
- **Any written assignment (weekly memos and take-home essay)** submitted late will have points deducted (10% per day, up to 5 days or 50%) unless you have made specific prior arrangements with the instructor. Any written assignments submitted **more than 5 days late will not count for a credit.**
- The course is designed with a **specific schedule of deadlines, not at your own,** individualized pace. I am committed to providing the materials and opportunity for each

student to succeed. As a student, you are expected to be familiar with the course policies and expectations, engage with the course material, and complete the required work.

Assignment Policy: Students are required to complete the course requirements including assignments in time. Late assignments without any prior notice will be considered following the conditions of make-up assignments. Students may ask for extensions prior to the due dates of the assignments if they have legit excuses.

Use of Language Learning Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT: Students are permitted to use language learning models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT to assist in their coursework. However, it is crucial to recognize that while these tools can be helpful, they may not always provide accurate or reliable information.

The objective is to encourage students to produce original work with honesty and integrity. Therefore, any use of LLMs should be clearly stated in all written work. This includes explaining the level of usage, what the tool was used for, and how it contributed to the final submission. For instance, if ChatGPT was used to generate initial ideas or provide explanations, this should be explicitly mentioned in your work, either within the submitted text or as a reference.

Important: Failure to disclose the use of such tools will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Please see the following link on further guidelines on the applications of AI tools:

<https://guides.lib.purdue.edu/c.php?g=1371380&p=10135074>

Legislative Compliance Statement

In SYG2430, course content covers historical background and sociological concepts about marriage and families. The course incorporates multiple sources, evidence types, and interpretations of historical events, emphasizing diverse theoretical perspectives without favoring any particular view. The class maintains accuracy and objectivity, helping students develop skills to evaluate evidence and claims through case-driven and data-driven discussions rather than ideological advocacy.

The course may address topics related to identity as subjects of study rather than advocacy, examining various perspectives through factual analysis. When discussing systemic theories in sociology, the course considers them alongside other theoretical approaches and includes critiques of different perspectives. While exploring concepts like systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege, the course doesn't endorse specific viewpoints but rather examines how social structures may influence inequalities. These processes are presented as contingent and negotiated rather than predetermined, with research-based evidence showing how institutions shape inequalities both domestically and globally. Throughout the course, grading focuses on understanding content rather than adopting particular opinions.

University of Florida Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617//advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website (<https://umatter.ufl.edu/>) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website (<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the Student Health Care Center website (<https://shcc.ufl.edu/>).

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website (<https://police.ufl.edu/>) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website (<https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>).

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk (<https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services (<https://career.ufl.edu/>).

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources (<https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>).

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.
General study skills and tutoring (<https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>).

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers (<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>).

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-%20code-student-conduct-code/>).

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process (<https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process/>).

Furthermore, this course is designed to be a safe space for each individual where all students are welcome to share their own ideas while being respectful for others. As every other topic in academia, sociology includes sensitive subjects through which people share their personal experiences. which may make them feel vulnerable. In that case, I expect all students to show utmost courtesy to each other, and utmost care not to perform any kind of aggression or interrupting behavior.

Online Course Evaluation Policy: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>.

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email, they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP-select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Important Note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. Students MUST email the instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if they wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <https://distance.ufl.edu/>

Grading scale:

Grade	Grade Points	Percent
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.67	90-92
B+	3.33	88-89
B	3.0	83-87
B-	2.67	80-82
C+	2.33	78-79
C	2.0	73-77
C-	1.67	70-72
D+	1.33	68-69
D	1.0	63-67
D-	.67	60-62
E	0	59-Below

***A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.**

Disclaimer: All readings, assignments, and assessment tools are subject to change. Some readings or assignments may be added or deleted with prior notice from the instructor. All times shown in the following course schedule are in EST.

Course Schedule

Modules	Topics	Date	Deadlines
Module 1	Defining and Studying Families	January 13-17, 2025	Module 1 Memo & Group Responses: January 17, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 2	Sociology of Families	January 21-24, 2025	Module 2 Memo & Group Responses: January 24, 2025, 11:59 PM Quiz 1: January 26, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 3	History of Families	January 27-31, 2025	Module 3 Memo & Group Responses: January 31, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 4	Race and Ethnicity, and Immigration	February 3-7, 2025	Module 4 Memo & Group Responses: February 7, 2025, 11:59 PM Quiz 2: February 9, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 5	Social Class	February 10-14, 2025	Module 5 Memo & Group Responses: February 14, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 6	Gender	February 17-21, 2025	Module 6 Memo & Group Responses: February 21, 2025, 11:59 PM Quiz 3: February 23, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 7	Sexuality	February 24-28, 2025	Module 7 Memo & Group Responses: February 28, 2025, 11:59 PM

Module 8	Love and Romantic Relationships	March 3-7, 2025	Module 8 Memo & Group Responses: March 7, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 9	Marriage and Cohabitation	March 10-14, 2025	Module 9 Memo & Group Responses: March 14, 2025, 11:59 PM Quiz 4: March 16, 2025, 11:59 PM
SPRING BREAK	NO CLASSES	March 17-21, 2025	
Module 10	Families and Children	March 24-28, 2025	Module 10 Memo & Group Responses: March 28, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 11	Divorce, Remarriage, and Blended Families	March 31-April 4, 2025	Module 11 Memo & Group Responses: April 4, 2025, 11:59 PM Quiz 5: April 6, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 12	Work and Families	April 7-11, 2025	Module 12 Memo & Group Responses: April 11, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 13	Family Violence and Abuse	April 14-18, 2025	Module 13 Memo & Group Responses: April 18, 2025, 11:59 PM
Module 14	The Future of the Family	April 21-23, 2025	Module 14 Memo & Group Responses: April 23, 2025, 11:59 PM

TAKE HOME FINAL ESSAY:

Due by April 26, 2025, 5 PM