

Introduction to Marriage and Families

Prof. Tanya Koropecykj-Cox

SYG 2430 – class #13786 – Summer B 2023

**Class will meet in person on
Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays**
Period 3 (11:00 AM - 12:15 AM)
McCarty A – Room G186

The most current version of the syllabus will be available in Canvas. You are responsible for checking Canvas and your email each day (summer moves fast) for any announcements or updates.

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Office hours: Tuesdays 9:00 – 10:45 am and Wednesdays 12:30 – 2:00 pm.

In person – drop in (no appointment needed), or email for an appointment or zoom meeting.

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Office hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 pm

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

Welcome! This is a 6-week in-person course, and we will be meeting every day (except July 4). Class sessions will include lectures, discussion, and in-class assignments.

We will use E-Learning/Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>) extensively. Class material is organized on Canvas by week and module. Specific tasks and any additional readings are posted, as well as announcements, assignment instructions, discussion boards, grades, and other resources.

It is your responsibility to check E-Learning frequently to access these materials. All work (except in-class assignments) must be submitted electronically on E-Learning. Please contact Dr. Koropecykj-Cox or the TA early in the term if you have any questions about accessing or using E-Learning.

Course Description

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. The pandemic brought many of these issues into focus, highlighting the strength and resilience of families as well as the strains, difficulties, inequalities, and conflicts that may be part of people's family experiences.

Social issues in general – and family issues in particular – shape many aspects of our lives and work in profound ways. Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals deal with individual patients but also with the families they are embedded in; their health, illnesses, risks, and resources for care are tied to their social relationships and families. And social determinants are increasingly recognized

as a central component of health and well-being. Counselors, therapists, social workers, and the justice system also deal with family issues and their implications every day, as do religious, educational, and other community institutions. Attorneys and judges, lawmakers and voters, employers, teachers, journalists, artists, writers, and many others are faced with and need to understand the meanings and impacts of relationships and families.

A sociological imagination helps us to see and critically consider how our personal, individual biographies and family experiences are shaped by our social and historical contexts (public issues).

This course introduces students to some of the major issues related to families and relationships, with a focus on sociological perspectives and policy implications. We will begin with a discussion of how we define "family" and the diversity of families. We will examine the historical and contemporary contexts that have shaped the meanings and importance of families in society. We will review the important sociological frameworks and research methods for studying relationship and family issues. We will 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. We will also analyze "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.

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:

- Compare definitions of family and identify the key features emphasized in each. Evaluate how different definitions and perspectives influence public discussions and social policy, including the ethical perspectives that influence these processes.
- Review the history of family life as a context for understanding contemporary family issues and debates.
- Examine contemporary aspects of relationships and families including the prevalence of different family experiences, the range of social norms and attitudes and how they have changed over time, and the diversity of contemporary families.
- Review and assess the arguments and evidence used to support different interpretations and policy solutions with regard to family life.
- Define and apply major sociological approaches (at the macro-, meso-, and micro- levels) to family and relationship issues, including approaches that focus on a) the forms and functions of families in society; b) conflict and inequalities; c) interactions and exchange; d) ecological and developmental perspectives; and e) gender and sexuality. We will also discuss more recent perspectives 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

repartnering 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 how social class and economics, gender and gender identity, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and ability and care needs influence family lives within U.S. society.

General Education Objectives:

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) In Diversity courses, students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Students engage with diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the US population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understandings of themselves and an increasingly diverse US society.

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, step-families, 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.

Required Text:

- **Textbook: The Family: Diversity, Inequality, and Social Change, 3rd edition. (2021). Philip N. Cohen. Norton. (Available as an ebook through UF All Access)**



This textbook has been selected in part because of its affordability. This course is participating in UF All Access, which provides access to the ebook from the first day and is billed to your UF bill. See Canvas for more information on how to sign up. Alternatively, you may buy or rent a new or used hard copy - choose the option that works best for you. You should get

access to the book as early as possible to keep up with course material. I do not recommend buying the earlier edition – the content has changed, and all exams, reading assignments, and coursework will use the 3rd edition. You do not need to purchase online access.

- **Occasional online readings, audio or video materials** – links are available within the Modules on E-Learning: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>.

Course Requirements

Readings: Readings are assigned for nearly every class. You are strongly encouraged to do the readings before each class. **Be sure to keep up with the reading -- the summer term is intensive, and there is little time to make up missed readings later!** You are also encouraged to read a major newspaper (e.g., New York Times, Washington Post, available free online) and peruse online resources regularly. Please feel free to email links and comments to the Instructor or post them on Twitter using our course hashtag: #syg2430tkc.

Attendance and In-Class Work: The course combines material from lecture, discussion, and assigned readings as well as the internet. Class attendance is required. We will not be taking roll, but attendance and participation are important to your success in the course.

Short, in-class assignments will be given during class meetings (~2-3 per week) to help focus thoughts, stimulate discussion, or review important material. Please bring paper and something to write with. In-class assignments are submitted during class time and comprise the In-Class Activity grade (**~1.5-2 points each – 30 points total; 2 lowest/missed grades will be dropped**).

Note that class lectures and discussions may be different from the textbook and readings (and will be included on exams). Class meetings also provide an opportunity for students to share comments and insights, ask questions, and listen to others.

In-class assignments may be given at any time during the class session. If you miss an assignment because you arrived late or left early, come see me to make up the day's assignment for half credit.

Make-up (or excused) assignments will be allowed in the case of excused absences as defined by UF policy. You should inform the instructor via email if you will be absent; written documentation of excused absences should be submitted if available.

Acceptable reasons for excused absences according to UF policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) include illness, religious holidays, university activities, and military obligation. Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining any announcements and material that were covered in class.

You may miss up to two in-class assignments (unexcused) without penalty (the lowest 2 grades will be dropped); further unexcused missed assignments will be deducted from your grade.

Exams – Midterm and Final: There will be two required exams, a Midterm (on Monday, July 24), and a Final Exam on Friday, August 11. These exams will be given in class using scantrons (provided by the instructor – please bring pencils). Make-up exams can be arranged in case of a serious reason or emergency. Requests for a make-up exam must be arranged at least 24 hours PRIOR to the exam (except in emergency).

Week 1/Module 1 Assignments (online):

- **Syllabus quiz** -- due at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, July 6 (worth **5 points**).
- **Student questionnaire** -- due at 11:59 pm on Thursday, July 6 (worth **5 points**)

Weeks 2 and 5 -- Discussion Board Posts & Responses: There will be 2 required assignments on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Specific prompts and instructions (including the length of your post) will be described for each Discussion Board. For each discussion, you are required to submit an initial post as well as responses to two other posts. Your initial posts are worth 25 points each and are due by Thursday 11:59 pm in week 2 and week 5 (this is to allow enough time for responses). Responses to another student (x2) are worth 5 points each and are due by Sunday 11:59 pm in week 2 and week 5. The discussion board will open at the beginning of the prior module to give you time to review the instructions and complete the assigned work (**worth 35 points each; 70 points total**). Late work will be accepted only with the approval of the instructor if there are serious circumstances.

Week 4 -- Take-Home Assignment: There will be one take-home assignment (~4-6 pages). Instructions will be posted on E-Learning. This assignment is worth **60 points and is due by 9:30 am on Thursday, July 27**. You must turn in the completed assignment electronically on E-Learning, **and you should be prepared to discuss your work in class**. Late work will be accepted only with the approval of the instructor if there are serious circumstances. Completed assignments will be submitted to Turnitin.com, which reviews written work for plagiarism and appropriate citation.

Course Requirement	Points
In-class assignments (~2-3/week; drop 2 lowest)	30 points
Syllabus quiz + questionnaire	10 points
Take-home assignment – due week 4	60 points
Discussion Boards (2 x 35 pts) – due week 2 & week 5	70 points
Midterm (65 pts) + Final (65 pts)	130 points
TOTAL	300 points

There is no extra credit.

Grading Structure for SYG 2430:**Passing grades:**

Grade	Percent	Points
A	94-100	282-300 pts
A-	90-93.9	270-281.9 pts
B+	86-89.9	258-269.9 pts
B	82-85.9	246-257.9 pts
B-	79-81.9	237-245.9 pts
C+	76-78.9	228-236.9 pts
C	70-75.9	210-227.9 pts

Non-passing grades (no GE credit)

Grade	Percent	Points
D+	66-69.9	198-209.9 pts
D	60-65.9	180-197.9 pts
E	below 60	< 180 pts

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradestext>

All course work, including quizzes, must be your original and individual work. Any cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade and disciplinary action. Do not use ChatGPT or any other AI-based applications for coursework.

**** The schedule of exams and deadlines will not change. Please plan accordingly. The schedule for readings may change – any updates or changes will be posted on Canvas. You are responsible for checking Canvas regularly for any updates and current information.**

Course Policies

Cell Phones, Laptop Computers, and Tablets

Cell phones must be silenced. Use of electronic devices for taking notes or looking up information is allowed, but students are strongly encouraged to consider taking hand-written notes when possible. Laptops and tablets can be a source of distraction (for you and your classmates around you); please be mindful and respectful.

Academic Honesty

All students registered at the University of Florida have agreed to comply with the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

In addition, on all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied: "*On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.*"

All course work, including written assignments and exams, must be your original and individual work. Any cheating or plagiarism, including copying of online materials without clear attribution or use of AI-based applications, will result in a failing grade and disciplinary action. You are responsible for keeping back-up files of your written assignments. All written assignments must be submitted electronically on E-Learning and are checked using Turnitin.

University Policy on Classroom Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as

patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

COVID-19

You are encouraged to stay informed about current risk levels and the university’s and other health recommendations (including wearing masks and being current on vaccinations). If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated. Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office which provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

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 (<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 (<http://www.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.
- **GatorWell Health Promotion Services:** For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website (<https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/>) or call 352-273-4450.

Campus Resources – *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/>
- **Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu/>
- **Writing Studio:** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- **Student Complaints and Behavior 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/>

Additional policies and helpful hints to help you navigate through the course:

- Don't miss class, and be prompt. If you need to come late or leave early, please inform the Instructor and do not disrupt the rest of the class.
- If you need to miss any part or all of a class session, be sure to get the slides and notes. You are encouraged to get to know your classmates and to get missed notes and discussion content from your classmates. Feel free to contact the TA with any questions.
- Don't put off the readings – you should come prepared for each class, and keep up with the readings for each chapter and module.
- Do ask questions! You will have opportunities to ask questions in class, and the Instructor and TA each have designated office hours. Please feel free to drop in with questions, to discuss classwork or assignments, and get to know us.
- Don't wait till the end of the term to ask questions or resolve grades or excused absences. Questions about grades must be addressed in writing to the Instructor using your UF email account and must be resolved prior to the last day of class (except for the final exam).
- Do keep up with current events in the newspaper, online, cable news, etc. Look for connections to course material and feel free to share links with the instructor.
- Please be considerate in class and be mindful. Don't multitask during class time. You are expected to dress and behave appropriately and interact with respect.
- You are encouraged to engage in active learning both in and outside class – this includes writing notes (by hand if possible), preparing outlines, and taking notes while reading. Research has found that highlighting text while you read (without taking notes) is generally less effective for learning than writing and outlining by hand.
- “Don't just come to class – be present.”
- Do keep an open mind and listen to different viewpoints.

***** This course does not fulfill Writing Requirements. *****

Schedule of Topics and Deadlines

(see Canvas for details on assigned readings, assignments, quizzes, and instructions!!)

Week	TOPIC	
Week 1	Introduction and Historical Background	
July 3	Introduce course, syllabus, requirements Defining "Family" & Assessing Family Changes	Module 1
July 4	HOLIDAY – NO CLASS	
July 5	Family Change and Definitions	
July 6	History: Colonial era to Industrialization	Module 3
	*** Syllabus quiz and Student Questionnaire due (by Thursday, 11:59 p.m.)	
July 7	History: "Modern" Families and Beyond	
Week 2	Studying Relationships and Families; Introducing Family Diversity	
July 10	Conceptual frameworks	Module 2
July 11	Methods, Data, and Ethics, Evaluating Research	
July 12	Racial and Ethnic Diversity	Module 5
July 13	Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Immigration	
	*** Discussion Board – initial post due (11:59 p.m.) on Thursday; responses to 2 classmates' posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday.	
July 14	Social Class and Economic Constraints	Module 4
Week 3	Social Class, Gender, and Families	
July 17	Social Class and Families - continued	
July 18	Gender: Socialization, Norms, Identities, and Interactions	Module 6
July 19	Gender Perspectives, Work and Power, and Social change	
July 20	Sexuality and Sexual Expression	Module 8
July 21	Sexuality – continued; Review for Midterm	

Week 4 Love, Relationships and Dating, Singlehood, Cohabitation

July 24 MIDTERM

July 25 Wrap up Sexuality and midterm material

July 26 Love and Romantic Relationships Module 7

July 27 Dating, Relationships, Conflict

***** Take-Home Assignment due (10:00 a.m.) – come prepared to discuss in class**

July 28 Singlehood, Cohabitation, and Marriage Equality Module 9

Week 5 Marriage, Childbearing, and Parenthood

July 31 Marriage as a Social Institution Module 10

Aug 1 Marriage Relationships, Conflict

Aug. 2 Childbearing, Adoption, Childlessness Module 11

Aug. 3 Children and Parenthood Module 12

***** Discussion Board – initial post due (11:59 p.m.) on Thursday, July 28; responses to 2 classmates' posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, July 31.**

Aug. 4 Children and Parenthood, Grandparents, other Child Care

Week 6

Aug. 7 Work-Family Issues, Family Stress, Aging and Family Care

Aug. 8 Conflict, Separation, Divorce Module 13

Aug 9 Repartnering, Remarriage, Blended Families

Aug 10 Family Policies and the Future, Conclusions and Review

Aug 11 FINAL EXAM

** Schedule of topics and readings may change depending on the pace of the class. Deadlines and exam dates will not change.