

SOC 461: Sociology of the Family
Spring 2023, April 3-June 18, 2023

Carolyn Zook, PhD, MS
Email: zook@pdx.edu

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the Sociology of the Family which has traditionally focused on the nuclear family model. We will take an alternative approach, focusing on the different forms modern families take and the societal issues families face today. Issues covered include families and economics, families and work, love and sex, marriage and divorce, parenting and childhood, visual representations of the family, and family policies and the state. Students will engage with key theories, questions, and debates relating to the modern family through readings, online discussion prompts, online lectures, reflective writings, and films.

Course Goals

Upon completing the Sociology of the Family course, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe key issues and theories pertaining to the modern family.
- Synthesize, assess, and critique current debates and discussions of the modern family.
- Diagram your family history and evaluate the usefulness of illustrative tools for understanding family histories.
- Examine and evaluate key issues modern families face aside from those discussed in class.

Class policies

Respect in the Online Classroom

I see the online classroom as a safe environment to explore new or difficult ideas and expand on our existing knowledge. I learn from you as you learn from me. Thus, respect for opinions and ideas expressed in the online classroom is paramount. Keep in mind that everyone has a different background and comes from perspectives or experiences that may be different than yours. You do not have to always agree with one another, but you must always be respectful.

Attendance

Since this is an online course, attendance is not a factor. However, participation in activities is expected (see Assignments).

All information you need is in the syllabus and/or the lectures. I will also post weekly updates, on Sundays, in Canvas.

If you have a personal emergency or issue that will prevent you from meeting assignment deadlines, please email me as soon as possible.

Participation

Since this is an online class, it is very important you do the readings/videos and actively participate in discussion responses. It is important for your success in this class to be present, engaging, and participatory.

Student Code of Conduct

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the Portland State University's Student Code of Conduct. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious offense, and Portland State University considers it academic misconduct. It is your responsibility to ensure proper citations in your papers (I do not care which "method" of citation you use for this class – APA, MLA, ASA, etc. – as long as you are consistent).

Email Policy:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pdx.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications.

Special Accommodations

If you require special accommodations, you need to notify both the instructor and the [Disability Resource Center](#). You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. You can apply for accommodations at the [DRC website](#).

Additional resources you may find useful:

Writing Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>

Learning Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/tutoring/home>

The PSU Landing at FUMC is a collaborative community resource providing transitional safe-haven housing for PSU students navigating severe housing insecurity and homelessness. The PSU Landing is sponsored by a liberal, queer affirming church, and no religious activity occurs in the Landing. It offers assistance to students with hot showers, laundry, secured storage, stable WiFi and study space. The Landing has visually private sleeping pods reserved for each resident and other resources 7 nights/week with meals. Reach out to the PSU C.A.R.E. Team if you are in need of transitional housing or other assistance (askdos@pdx.edu, 503-725-4422). To learn more about our transitional housing program, including FAQ, please visit <https://fumcpdx.org/landing/>.

Course Materials

There are no required textbooks for this course. I rely on articles, videos, power point presentations with voice over and active participation on the discussion board.

Grading Scale

Assignments and participation add up to a total of **270 points**. Grades are not curved or rounded up or down. The grading scale is as follows:

A or A-	93-100%	250-270+ points	Excellent
B+ or B	87-92%	235-249 points	Excellent to Good
B-	84-86%	227-234 points	

C+ or C	77-83%	208-226 points	Good to Satisfactory
C-	73-76%	197-207 points	
D+ or D	66-72%	178-196 points	
D-	60-65%	161-177 points	Inferior
F	59% or below	160 points or below	Failure

Assignments and Descriptions

A week for this course runs from Monday-Sunday. Most assignments are due Sundays and Tuesdays by 11:59 pm.

This course relies on readings, reflections, films, and online discussions. Assignments are designed to help you think critically about what you are reading, watching, and class discussions.

Some helpful tips for this course:

- Contacting me: **The best way to get a hold of me is via my University email: zook@pdx.edu.** Please do not use the email function in Canvas as I do not check it. I try to respond to all emails within 24-48 hours.
- Struggling students: If you are struggling or falling behind, the best thing you can do is **contact** me right away. I am happy to work with students who are struggling, but I can't help if I don't know what's happening.
- Late assignment policy: I don't have a late assignment policy. I have designed this course so that students should have enough time to complete all assignments. Assignments will lock at the due date/time, and no late assignments will be permitted. That said, I understand that life sometimes happens, and that each student is dealing with a unique set of circumstances outside of the classroom. If you are struggling, make sure to contact me. I care about your academic success.
- Page/word length: Where I note a page or word length, use as a guideline. I am more interested in the content you are writing than meeting a certain page length.

Disclaimer: This syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, are subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for announcements or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcements.

Assignment Summary

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Group Introductions	5 points	Sunday, 4/9/23 by 11:59 pm
Discussion Posts (5 points each for 10 weeks) - Respond to instructor posted discussion question weekly	50 points	Due by 11:59 pm Sundays, see Discussion Post/Response Timetable, below, for exact dates.
Weekly Discussion Response (2 points each, max of 4 points per week for 10 weeks) - Respond to 2 group mates' posts weekly	40 points	Due by 11:59 pm Tuesdays, see Discussion Post/Response Timetable, below, for exact dates.

2 Personal Reflections (25 points each)	50 points	Reflection 1 due Sunday, 5/7/23 by 11:59 pm Reflection 2 due Sunday, 6/4/23 by 11:59 pm
Mid-Term Exam - 25 multiple choice questions, worth 1 point each - Exam will be open note/open book and timed	25 points	Exam will open Monday, 5/8/23 at 8:00 am and close Sunday, 5/14/23 at 11:59 pm.
Genogram and Ecomap	25 points	Sunday, 6/4/23 by 11:59 pm
Topic Paper	50 points	Sunday, 6/11/23 by 11:59 pm
Final Exam - 25 multiple choice questions, worth 1 point each - Not cumulative – questions will cover content from the mid-term exam forward - Exam will be open note/open book and timed	25 points	Exam will open Monday, 6/12/23 at 8:00 am and close Sunday, 6/18/23 at 11:59 pm.
<u>Total</u>	<u>270 points</u>	

Group Introductions – 5 points

Due: Sunday, 4/9/23 by 11:59 pm

The computer has randomly assigned you into a group to promote small group discussion throughout the term (see “Discussion Post” and “Discussion Response” assignments, below).

For this assignment, introduce yourself to your group. At a minimum, include:

- Your name
- Year in school
- What you hope to learn or gain from this course
- One fun or interesting fact about yourself

Discussion Post – 5 points each (50 points total)

Due: Sundays by 11:59 pm for 10 weeks of the course. See Discussion Post/Response Timetable, below, for exact dates.

Students have been randomly assigned into groups to promote small group discussion. **If your group has too few people posting, please notify me asap so I can assign you into another group.** You will get the most from this class if you are in an active and participatory group, and *your grade can be impacted if you remain in a quiet group.*

Discussion Posts should be relatively short – about 2-3 paragraphs (~250-350 words) and should respond to the discussion question(s). Use course readings, previous class discussions, or videos from class to help answer the question(s). Outside articles are also permitted but not required. If you are using outside resources, please cite your sources. The response should address all parts of the question posed, in a professional and academic manner.

In addition to answering the questions, you may want to critique elements you found troubling or disturbing, points where you disagree (be sure to include *why* you disagree), or questions you have regarding the material. These responses are intended to help you think critically about the material you encounter. You will be graded on writing style (typos, grammar, tone), as well as content.

Tip: Write your posts in Word and save on your computer, then copy into Canvas. If something disappears from Canvas (it does happen on occasion), you will still have a record of your work and can still earn credit.

Discussion Response – 2 points each (max 4 points per week, 40 points total)

Due: Tuesdays by 11:59 pm for 10 weeks of the course. See Discussion Post/Response Timetable, below, for exact dates.

This assignment is designed to promote interaction within your group and critical thinking skills. Post a response to **two** different members each week (you may post more than that but will not receive additional points).

Responses may be in agreement or disagreement (keep it professional), ask clarifying questions, “muse” about other options, etc. Have fun with engaging with your classmates and building relationships/rapport.

Discussion Post/Response Timetable (all due by 11:59 pm)		
Week	Discussion Post due (5 pts each):	Discussion Response due (2 pts each):
Week 1	Sunday, 4/9/23	Tuesday, 4/11/23
Week 2	Sunday, 4/16/23	Tuesday, 4/18/23
Week 3	Sunday, 4/23/23	Tuesday, 4/25/23
Week 4	Sunday, 4/30/23	Tuesday, 5/2/23
Week 5	Sunday, 5/7/23	Tuesday, 5/9/23
Week 6	Sunday, 5/14/23	Tuesday, 5/16/23
Week 7	Sunday, 5/21/23	Tuesday, 5/23/23
Week 8	Sunday, 5/28/23	Tuesday, 5/30/23
Week 9	Sunday, 6/4/23	Tuesday, 6/6/23
Week 10	Sunday, 6/11/23	Tuesday, 6/12/23

Personal Reflections – 25 points each (50 points total)

Due: Reflection 1 due by Sunday, 5/7/23 by 11:59 pm; Reflection 2 due by Sunday, 6/4/23 by 11:59 pm.

In 2 double-spaced typed pages, you will respond to a prompt, which will be posted the Sunday before they are due.

Guidelines for each reflection:

- The prompt will be rather vague intentionally. This is your opportunity to explore, in writing, an issue that is of interest to you, what the future of the topic or issues looks like, and/or what should be done about it.
- These are meant to be informal papers. Writing in the first person is ok, and outside resources are not required. If you do use resources, remember to properly cite.
- Though reflections are informal, I will still be looking for correct grammar usage/typos and professional language.

Tip: A good personal reflection may require some vulnerability on your part. What is your role in the topic/issue asked about? Do you have privilege, and if so, can you identify it? How can we use our positions of power or privilege to address the topic at hand? Note: These are not prompts that should be included in the reflection, just tips to help you get writing.

A good idea: Use these personal reflections to start brainstorming topics/ideas for your Topic Paper, due at the end of the term.

Midterm Exam – 25 points total

Midterm exam will open from Monday, 5/8/23 at 8:00 am and close Sunday, 5/14/23 at 11:59 pm

The midterm exam will be multiple choice, consisting of 25 questions worth 1 point each, plus 2 bonus questions, covering material from Weeks 1-5. You may use your notes on the exam but are required to work individually.

Genogram and Ecomap – 25 points total

Due: Sunday, 6/4/23 by 11:59 pm

Module 8 lecture will help you complete this assignment.

Using your family, a family from film, TV, or literature, or a made-up family, create a Genogram and Ecomap, going at least three generations back (see lecture on Visual Representations of Families). After creating a Genogram and Ecomap (about 1 page each), answer the following questions in 2-3 double-spaced typed pages:

- What insights did you gain about your family from this project?
- How are the Genogram and Ecomap helpful in understanding family problems or situations?
- How can researchers/family therapists use this technique to advance the field of sociology of the family or family therapy? In what ways are Genograms and Ecomaps useful for other careers?

Please note: This project requires **taking uploading a picture** of hand-drawn documents.

Topic Paper – 50 points

Due: Sunday, 6/11/23 by 11:59 pm

In 5-6 double-spaced typed pages, you will delve further into a topic of your choice on the sociology of family. Pick a topic that interests you – it may be something we've discussed in class that you go further in-depth on, or you may pick something not covered in class that falls under the general heading of sociology of family.

- Introduce your topic and tell why it is important to think about. Make sure you clearly state what the issue is.
- Briefly explain the key ideas/theories/beliefs surrounding this topic. Is it a new phenomenon or has the issue been around for a while? Where is it an issue and for whom?
- Is there disagreement over this topic/issue? What are these disagreements? Who says what?
- What does the future look like for this topic/issue? What are people doing about it now? What are your thoughts on it and what, should be done about it?

Three outside resources are required from academic sources (journal articles/books). You will be graded on writing style (typos, grammar, tone), as well as content. Make sure you cite properly (any style is acceptable, just be consistent), include a bibliography, and do not plagiarize (see plagiarism policy, above). You should make connections to class readings, lectures, and discussions throughout the paper to demonstrate your depth of knowledge of key issues in the sociology of family.

Tip: The best papers are those that pick a small piece of a larger topic.

Final Exam – 25 points total

Final exam will open Monday, 6/12/23 at 8:00 am and close Sunday, 6/18/23 at 11:59 pm

The final exam will be multiple choice, consisting of 25 questions worth 1 point each, plus 2 bonus questions, covering material from Weeks 6-10. You may use your notes on the exam but are required to work individually.

The final exam is not cumulative and will only cover material from the midterm forward.