MARRIAGE & THE FAMILY-SYLLABUS

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Number: SYO 3120-RVC (89600)
Term: Fall 2011
Place: Online
Instructor: Katherine Lineberger, PhD

Email: Email is the only appropriate means of contacting the instructor. Please email me only on the course website. I check my university email once daily on weekdays throughout the semester. My general policy for email is to respond only to emails which relate to the course content (e.g. questions/comments related to the sociology of marriage & the family) and questions which cannot be answered by any other available course-related resource (e.g. the FIU Help Desk, the Course Syllabus, Course Online Discussions, the Student Frequently Asked Questions Discussion Board, etc.). Students are required to check their course-related email daily during the semester and to keep apprised (and respond appropriately and immediately, if necessary), especially, of information emailed by Dr. Lineberger.

Phone: Should you need to speak with me by phone, please email me your phone number and some good times to call you and I will do so as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours).

Office Hours: I hold office hours by appointment only. Should you need to meet with me, please send an email and we will work out a time and place that is good for the both of us.

REQUIRED READINGS


Note: Additional readings may be required and available on the course website, within their associated lesson. These readings complement the topics discussed in the course.

There are also several films required which are on reserve at the FIU South Campus library. A list of these films, their call numbers (or URLs if they’re available online) is provided on the source website under “Handouts” in Course Content. Many of these films can also be found on Netflix and Blockbuster, or at other local and university libraries.
INSTRUCTOR'S PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING MEASUREMENT:

Learning theorists\(^1\) argue that learning and development are not like an assembly-line which can be broken down into discrete steps occurring with machine-time precision, but an organic process that unfolds in complex ways according to its own pace and rhythm. The teacher and student are actively searching for and documenting positive evidence of student development across at least five dimensions:

- **Confidence and independence**: We see growth and development when learners’ confidence and independence become *congruent* with their actual abilities and skills, content knowledge, use of experience, and reflectiveness about their own learning.

- **Knowledge and understanding**: Knowledge and understanding refers to the "content" knowledge gained in particular subject areas. Knowledge and understanding includes what students are learning about the topics; research methods; the theories, concepts, and practices of a discipline; the methods of organizing and presenting our ideas to others, and so on.

- **Skills and strategies**: Skills and strategies represent the "know-how" aspect of learning. When we speak of "performance" or "mastery," we generally mean that learners have developed skills and strategies to apply what they have learned.

- **Use of prior and emerging experience**: The use of prior and emerging experience involves learners’ abilities to draw on their own experience and connect it to their work. A crucial but often unrecognized dimension of learning is the capacity to make use of prior experience as well as emerging experience in new situations. In evaluating the use of prior and emerging experience, we ask what types of experiences the student has had and is having which can contribute to their understanding of the current topic.

- **Critical reflection/thinking**: Critical reflection/thinking refers to the developing awareness of the learner’s own learning process, as well as more analytical approaches to the subject being studied. It involves the development of the learner’s ability to step back and consider a situation critically and analytically, with growing insight into his or her own learning processes, a kind of metacognition.

These five dimensions cannot be "separated out" and treated individually; rather, they are dynamically interwoven.

Students are active in their own learning process, but are often treated by educational systems as if they are passive “receptacles” into which knowledge can be poured and measured. *The overarching goal of the assignments in this course is that students will be actively engaged in demonstrating that they are aware of their own learning process, have retained the course content, and are able to critically apply that content to situations and phenomena in the real world.*

In sum, it is the student’s responsibility to clearly demonstrate their learning (process and content) throughout every aspect of the course.

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\(^1\) Syverson, 2006.
## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Syllabus, Blackboard, and Component Quiz

Students are required to know every aspect of and requirement noted in the syllabus. Students are also required to review tutorials on Blackboard Learn 9 and its related components (e.g. Adobe Pro Connect, Journals, etc.). There will be a quiz on the syllabus, Blackboard, and its related components available to students on Monday, August 22 through Wednesday, August 31, 2011. Students must pass the quiz with 100% accuracy before gaining access to the remainder of the course materials. **Total possible points = 25.**

### 2. Weekly Online Discussions:

Each week, the instructor will conduct 1 one-hour online discussion related to the current topic.
- The first 5-10 minutes of these discussions will be spent addressing “course housework” (e.g. technical or syllabus issues students should be aware of) and the instructor will take questions from attending students about any aspect of the course of concern to them (within reason).
- **Students are required to attend and participate substantively in one discussion session every four weeks beginning August 22, 2011 for a total of at least four (4) discussions throughout the course of the semester.**
  - Substantive participation includes asking critical thinking questions, making pertinent observations, relating the discussion to something encountered in research outside class, etc. Simply attending discussions is not enough to merit points for this requirement. Students’ participation should reflect that they are current with the readings and assignments for the course.
- Days and times will be varied to accommodate a variety of schedules and the schedule of discussions is provided under the course content link (under “Adobe Connect Pro Online Discussions”) on the course website.
- Online discussion grades will be updated approximately once monthly (four times during the semester, 25 points possible each grading) throughout the semester. **Total possible points = 100.**

### 3. Review of Unattended Online Discussions:

Each online discussion will be recorded and the recordings will be made available by the end of the next business day for students to review.
- Students are required to review recordings of unattended discussions within one week of their occurrence (e.g. if a discussion takes place on Wednesday, students are responsible for reviewing it by the following Wednesday).
- Discussion recordings are available under the course content link on the course website.
- Blackboard records student access of recordings and students will be graded approximately once monthly (four times during the semester, 25 points possible each grading) according to how many recordings were reviewed in entirety. **Total possible points = 100.**

### 4. Exams:

Students are required to complete three (3) exams for the course. Exams are structured within the following parameters:
- Each exam is comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions. All exam questions relate to the readings, lectures, films, and all other class activities for that section of the course (exams are not cumulative).
- Study guides are not provided for exams. There are crosswords available on the course website and many students find these to be useful study tools, especially for material related to the readings. Students are strongly encouraged to form their own study groups.
- Exams will be made available Wednesday and again on Saturday (from 9 AM-11:30 PM each day) of the week that they are scheduled.
- One hour and fifteen minutes is allotted for each exam. Please note that it takes approximately 5 minutes of this time for a student’s completed exam to transmit electronically. Exams exceeding the one hour and fifteen minute deadline will be considered late.
- Students can login to exams only once and may not navigate away from the exam once logged on (this will result in automatic submission of the exam and it will be graded “as is.”).
- Students are encouraged to take their exams on a reliable computer and internet connection, to avoid crashes. If anyone questions the reliability of their computer or internet connection, it is highly recommended that they take the exams on one of the computers in a campus computer lab.
- Exams can be found under “Assessments” on the course website.
- If a student encounters a technical problem with an exam, the student must contact the FIU Online Help Desk (available by phone, email, and online chat Mon.-Fri. and by email and chat on Sat-Sun.) to seek technical assistance immediately and email the instructor with a description of the problem, the ticket number provided by FIU Online, and the name(s) of the individual(s) they contacted about the problem.
- Individual students will receive their score upon submission of their exam. On the Monday following each exam (once all students have completed the exam) all students will be able to access feedback about right/wrong questions and references to the course material from which each question emerged.
- Each exam is worth 100 points. Total possible points for this assignment = 300

### 5. Journal:

Students are required to maintain a journal which reflects their growing confidence and independence, knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies, use of prior and emerging experience, and critical reflection/thinking in and about Marriage and the Family. The journal must be updated at least weekly (minimum 15 entries total). Students can use a variety of strategies to reflect their growing understanding of the subject matter. Several suggestions are listed below:

- Create a portfolio of “cultural artifacts” (e.g. pictures of signs/billboards, Youtube videos, videos of commercials or links to TV shows, etc.) which relate to sociology of marriage and the family;
- Maintain an annotated bibliography of peer reviewed literature in sociology of marriage and the family;
- Explore popular/other literature as it relates to sociology of marriage and the family;
- Explore forms of art, music, poetry, etc. as they relate to sociology of marriage and the family;
- Describe your own thoughts, perceptions, and feelings related to the course literature, activities, lectures, and films;
- Write your own stories/music/poetry that have relevance to sociology of marriage and the family;
- Describe events in your life (or others' lives) as they relate to sociology of marriage and the family.

Address the following in each entry:

1. Summarize what it is. Describe it. What are you addressing, describing, etc.?
2. Why did you choose this (cultural artifact, song, video, story, article, etc.) as a reflection of your learning process?
3. How does this relate to what we already know about sociology of marriage and the family?
4. Is it telling us something new that can be related to sociology of marriage and the family? If so, what? If not, why is it important?

This assignment will be peer-reviewed twice during the semester, at midterm and the end of the semester (100 points each grading). Instructions for peer-review are included in the syllabus.

Total possible points for this assignment = 200.

### 6. Peer Reviewing:

Using rubrics and instructions provided by the instructor, students are required to assess the journals of fellow students through a peer review process. Students will be divided into groups of 5 and each group will assess 5 other students’ journal work twice during the course of the semester. Peer Review groups will work as follows:

- Students will be assigned to peer review groups by September 6th (after the
August 29th “last day to drop/add” a course date). They will remain with their group for the remainder of the semester.

- For practice, groups will be required to review and assess a file of “exemplars,” or examples of student work from past semesters which exemplify A-level work, B-level work, C-level work, and so forth. Groups are required to submit their practice review and assessments no later than Friday, September 16th (11:30 PM). Total points for this assignment = 20.
- Students will utilize rubrics and instructions provided by the instructor for review and assessment.
- Each student in the group is required to review all 5 assigned journals and assess them individually.
- Once each student in the group has completed their individual assessment, the group must share their individual assessments and negotiate one consensual, comprehensive assessment for each of the 5 assigned journals.
  - These comprehensive assessments will be submitted to the instructor for review.
  - Instructor review consists of assessing whether peer reviewers utilized instructions and rubrics accurately and appropriately to assess each student’s grade.
  - Student’s journals will be peer reviewed twice during the course of the semester. Peer reviewers will receive up to 40 points for each reviewing session.
- Total points possible for this assignment = 100.

**GRADING**

Grades have the following meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A-Level Work</strong>:</td>
<td>Represents outstanding (“above and beyond”) participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with very high quality in all work produced for the course. Evidence of highly significant development across the five dimensions of learning detailed above.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B-Level Work</strong>:</td>
<td>Represents excellent participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with consistently high quality in course work. Evidence of marked development across the five dimensions of learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C-Level Work</strong>:</td>
<td>Represents good participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with generally good quality overall in course work. Evidence of some development across the five dimensions of learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D-Level Work</strong>:</td>
<td>Represents uneven participation in course activities; some gaps in assigned work completed, with inconsistent quality in course work. Evidence of development across the five dimensions of learning is partial or unclear.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F-Level Work</strong>:</td>
<td>Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. Evidence of development is not available.</td>
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### Points and Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus/Blackboard Quiz = 25</td>
<td>A= 784-825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Live Discussions = 100</td>
<td>A-=743-783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded Discussions Review = 100</td>
<td>B+=718-742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal = 200</td>
<td>B=685-717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams = 300</td>
<td>B-=660-684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review = 100</td>
<td>C+=636-659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Possible Points = 825</td>
<td>C=603-635</td>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

A schedule of required films, readings, online live discussions, and due dates is provided with each lesson under “Course Content” on the course website in Blackboard.

**Additional Issues**

1. **Extra Credit:** *Individual extra credit assignments are not offered in this course.* However, students can take advantage of extra credit opportunities offered through the “Student FAQ/Water cooler” and “Ask Dr. Kathy” discussions.
   a. The *Student FAQ/Water cooler* discussion is a platform for students to find assistance from one another throughout the course. Students can post questions and answers about technical, syllabus, or assignment-related issues and pool their resources to help each other through the course. This discussion has been used in a variety of creative ways by former classes, including setting up study groups, discussing important issues with like-minded students, and so forth.
   b. The *Ask Dr. Kathy* discussion group is a platform for students to ask the instructor questions which are related to sociology of marriage and the family (e.g. questions about concepts found in the readings, films, activities, etc.). The instructor will check into the discussion at least once weekly and respond to the most pertinent questions asked.
   c. Students are encouraged utilize the 5 star rating system to rate questions and answers.
   d. Participation in extra credit discussions will be graded four times during the course of the semester (approximately once monthly). Students can earn up to 25 points each grading for participating a minimum of 10 times in one or both of the discussion forums.
   e. Extra credit is not required but will be added to students’ total points earned at the end of the course. *Total possible points = (25 pts. X 4) = 100.*

2. **Missed or Late Assignments:** Under no circumstances will missed or late assignments (including exams) be accepted.
3. **Students with Disabilities**: Students with disabilities should contact me in the first two weeks of class to make arrangements for any accommodations they may need. Please contact the Students with Disabilities Office on campus to get started with this process.

4. **Trouble Shooting Issues with the Course**: The tutorials and quizzes related to the syllabus and online learning environment are designed to enable students to answer most questions that might arise throughout the course of the semester. The following are minimum required guidelines for student questions that might arise:

   a. **THE GOLDEN RULE: Don't panic!** Students are responsible for doing their very best at all times to follow instructions in meeting the course requirements. However, if you encounter a systemic (e.g. computer/internet-related) problem which prevents you from doing this, simply follow these instructions. The FIU Online Help Desk, the instructor, and other technical support persons at FIU Online will work to resolve any technical or systemic issues which arise and prevent students from meeting course requirements. *Please simply follow the instructions and be patient with the process as the problem is resolved.*

   b. Questions related to the **content** of the course (*Marriage and Family theories, concepts, issues, etc.*) should be addressed to Dr. Lineberger, utilizing:
      
      i. the “Ask Dr. Kathy Discussion Board,”
      
      ii. The online discussion forum,
      
      iii. And email.

   c. Questions related to technical support (e.g. Blackboard, it’s components, problems you may be having with your own computer interfacing with these, etc.) should **immediately** be addressed to FIU Online, especially if these problems relate to your ability to meet course requirements in any way.
      
      i. The FIU Online Help Desk can be accessed through the help menu at the top of the course home page. The Help Desk can also be contacted by phone at 305-348-3630. Once contacted, the Help Desk will issue a ticket number related to your inquiry. Please make note of this ticket number and the names of anyone you contact and work with the Help Desk to resolve your problem.

      ii. If there is a problem with your being able to meet any of the requirements of the course due to technical issues, FIU Online will contact Dr. Lineberger, inform Dr. Lineberger of the problem, and ask for further instruction.

      1. In general, if FIU Online informs Dr. Lineberger that the problems are systemic in nature (e.g. relating to Blackboard, FIU’s server, etc.), exceptions will be made and the course requirements will be “tweeked” for that instance and student(s). If, however, FIU Online determines that the problems are user-generated, in general, the course requirements will not be “tweeked” and students will need to deal with the consequences of their mistakes.
iii. Another great resource for trouble shooting technical issues is the “Student Frequently Asked Questions” Discussion Board on the course website.
   1. This is recommended especially for issues which do not prevent you from meeting the course requirements (e.g. “I have a MAC and what’s the best way to view online discussions?”).
   2. Students who trouble shoot problems with the FIU Online Help Desk are encouraged to post on the Student FAQ/Water cooler what their problem was and how it was resolved. This may help other students encountering similar problems.

iv. Students who have technical problems which prevent them from meeting the course requirements and who fail to immediately seek and follow through with technical assistance from the FIU Online Help Desk will not be given special consideration for their problem.

d. Syllabus-related or course-related questions (that are unrelated to content) can be answered in a number of ways:
   i. By reviewing your syllabus and emails from Dr. Lineberger
   ii. By utilizing the “Student Frequently Asked Questions” Discussion Board
   iii. By raising them in an online discussion
   iv. If none of these avenues results in an answer to your question, please email Dr. Lineberger. In general, if an answer to your question exists nowhere else in the course, Dr. Lineberger will answer it in about 24 hours. If, however, your question can be answered utilizing one of the above avenues, your email may be given lesser or no priority.