

Sociology 169, Fall 2014
Changing Family Forms (GE)
Monday and Wednesday, 10:00am to 11:50am
Taper Hall (THH) 102

Professor

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Discussion Sections (Required)

- 1) Mondays 3:30pm to 4:20pm – KAP 164 (Lin) (61426)
- 2) Tuesdays 3:30pm to 4:20pm – VKC 160 (Wang) (61429)
- 3) Tuesdays 4:00pm to 4:50pm – KAP 145 (Lin) (61428)
- 4) Wednesdays 4:00pm to 4:50pm – KAP 165 (Wang) (61427)

Course Website

All course information and materials will be posted to our course website. The site is <http://blackboard.usc.edu> and can be accessed with your USC username and password.

INTRODUCTION

The family has changed throughout history. Recently, however, the changes seem to have intensified. So much has changed that fundamental assumptions about the character of the institution are being questioned. Some scholars and politicians are alarmed at the ways in which the family has changed, and believe that families are declining and we are headed for social disaster. Others believe that many of the changes in the family have been positive and the family is, by and large, an enduring institution, albeit in some new-looking forms. Here are a few examples of some recent changes in the family in the US, from a variety of domains of family life.

Headlines in the United States

Cohabitation. Today, 70% of women have cohabited by the time they reach age 30, compared to less than 30% in 1980. (Cohabitation is defined as two people in an intimate relationship who live together and share a common domestic life but are not joined by legal marriage).

Marriage. Today, just 51% of adults are married – a record low. For those who do marry, the average age at first marriage has increased to close to 30 years old.

Divorce. At current rates, about half of first marriages contracted in 2014 will end in divorce over the next 25 years. Compare this with 1900, when only about 5% of first marriages ended in divorce (though many more ended in the early death of a spouse!).

Single-Parent Families. About 50% of today's children will spend some portion of their childhood living in a single-parent family. 30% to 40% of children will live with a stepparent prior to reaching age 19.

Nonmarital Childbearing. In 2012, 72% of all births to African American women occurred outside of legal marriage. The numbers are 66% for American Indian and Alaskan native women, 53% for Hispanic/Latina women, 29% for white women, and 17% for Asian or Pacific Islander women.

Women's Labor Force Participation. In 2010, 71% of women with dependent children (including children under the age of 5) worked in the paid labor force. In 1950, only 20% of women with dependent children worked in the paid labor force.

Composition of Marriages. Since 1980, marriages in which women were better educated than their husbands have become as likely or more likely than marriages in which men were better educated than their wives.

Gay and Lesbian Families. Currently six million Americans have a gay parent (Gates 2013a). In recent movements to legalize same-sex marriage nationally, the U.S. follows bellwether countries like the Netherlands, Spain and seven other European nations along with Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, South Africa, Canada, Iceland, and New Zealand. In these same countries and a few others, full joint adoption by same-sex couples is also legal, as it is in almost half of the US states. In just the past nine years, 19 US states have legalized same-sex marriage, some by popular vote.

Surviving Parents and Grandparents. Comparing adult children aged 50 from 1900 to 2000, the chances of having both parents alive has increased from 4% to 40%; comparing adults aged 60, the chances of having at least one parent alive have increased sevenfold, from 7% to 48%. It is more likely that today's 20-year-olds have a grandmother still living (91%) than 20-year-olds in 1900 had a mother still living (83%). In 1900 only 23% of newborns had all grandparents still alive and by age 30, 80% had no grandparents alive. By 2000, 68% of children born will have four (or more) grandparents; and at age 30, 80% will have one or more grandparents still living.

Multigenerational Families. 4 million children today are being raised by their grandparents.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to begin to investigate answers to three important questions about the contemporary family in (mostly) Western capitalist societies:

1. How have families been changing over time? (The headlines above offer some clues!)
2. What are the causes of the changes in families offered by sociological, economic, psychological, legal, political, and evolutionary theories, and which explanations are most strongly supported by the empirical evidence?
3. What are the consequences of the changes in families for individuals and the larger society?

The Four “D’s” of Family Change

Diversity

Family life has become increasingly diverse, as some of the headlines above suggest. “Working-dad plus stay-at-home-mom plus children,” or “provider/homemaker,” today comprise a minority of all families (in fact, that kind of family was most popular really only for a nanosecond on the historical timeline), replaced by dual-career families, single-parent families, extended single-parent families, blended families, split-household families, multi-household families, stepfamilies, same-sex co-parenting families, binuclear families, childless (or “child-free”) families, transnational families, commuter families, elective co-parenting families, multigenerational families, and so on.

The uncoupling of marriage and reproduction, and weakening of gender as the axis on which to organize family life, are some of the important processes that have served to diversify family life. The main issues for us are, how has the family diversified, and what are the causes and consequences of that diversification? How and why these processes differ, and may be felt differently, depending on social class location, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation will be key parts of this investigation. For example, a stream of new studies has uncovered a trend toward bifurcation in family behavior by education, where a gap in how people perform family life is widening between those with college education and those without college.

Divorce and Decline of Marriage

What has caused the unprecedented increase in divorce rates and decline in marriage rates since the 1960s? Some researchers put forth economic explanations that target core changes in the trading relationship and rational calculus between partners in marriages. Others offer cultural explanations – that a shift in values away from family and community and toward individual self-fulfillment has caused the rise in divorce and decline of marriage. Still others argue that the dismantling of conventional gender and sexuality prescriptions and transformation of gender values are the root cause. Signaling the growing incorporation of same-sex marriages are cover stories (e.g., *Newsweek*, April 2010) that are already moving past gay marriage and onto gay divorce!

One of the main areas of heated debate regards the consequences of divorce, or being born outside of marriage, for children. For example, are children who experience their parents' divorce less

well off (in terms of educational attainment, psychological well-being, employment, their own likelihood of getting divorced, and so on) than children raised by two “natural” parents? Are the effects of divorce on children short-term or long-term? What happens to children's relationships with their residential and non-residential parents following divorce, and do these changes in relationships persist throughout the life course? What happens when their parent(s) remarry? Do these changes depend on gender? We will try to answer these questions through a careful examination of the theory and evidence produced by three decades of research on family structure and process conducted in sociology, psychology, and other disciplines.

Division of Labor

Among the most significant changes in the US family and society has been the dramatic rise in the educational attainment of women, the widespread (re)entry of women (and mothers) into the labor force in new occupations, and women’s emergence as economic breadwinners in families. One of our goals will be to examine the ideological, economic and sociological forces that can explain these changes.

Conventional research shows that in heterosexual unions, women have become co-breadwinners with men, but men have not responded by playing a substantially greater role in household and childcare work. Consequently, today’s women end up in a “time bind” with primary responsibility for a “second shift” in the domestic sphere that accompanies their work responsibilities in the public sphere, leading to “role overload.” The ways in which men’s roles have and have not changed, and the explanations for it, will be an important component of this investigation.

The framing of most of these issues reflect the predominance of heteronormativity. In same-sex unions, for example, family work and economic work aren’t divided by sex per se (because both partners are the same sex!). How then is labor divided in these families? What does “gender” look like? And for LGBTQ individuals, marriage and reproduction – the traditional heteronormative markers of adulthood and defining features of the family in heterocentric scholarship – are complicated in ways novel, discriminatory, and foretelling.

Dependents

From a demographer’s perspective, “dependents” refer to the two non-working-age populations: children (those under 18) and elders (those 65 to 70 and older). We will begin our investigation of young dependents by examining theories that attempt to explain the great fertility decline. Why are people choosing to have fewer children than ever before (or none at all), and what are the consequences of low fertility for society?

The major changes that have occurred in families from the late 1960s to the present were lived through *generations*. The societal context and childrearing practices and values of parents changed substantially over this period. All of this means that “growing up” was a very different experience for, say, you, who are just now reaching young adulthood, than it had been for your parents, who reached young adulthood in the 1970s and 1980s, and your grandparents, who reached adulthood in the 1940s and 1950s.

Regarding elders, more years of adults' lives after retirement are spent in active and healthy states, and fewer years are spent with chronic illnesses and limiting disabilities (these trends are reflected in the 173 percent rise in the number of people aged 65 and older injured taking part in roller-blading, aerobics, and weight training exercises!). A new view of retirement and old age has become dominant in the U.S. This view says that this period of life should be characterized by prosperity, activity, productivity, and self-reliance, rather than as the beginning of disengagement, inactivity, and disability.

Elders are increasingly providing influence – and resources – to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, well into the children's adulthood. Today it is not just parents, but grandparents and great-grandparents, helping younger adults with emotional support, college and other expenses, and childcare. Contrary to some popular images, when help flows across generations, it most often flows downward, from older parents to children, grandparents to grandchildren - not so much the reverse. At the same time, a substantial proportion of elders (particularly women and minorities) live in poverty, and the care of the oldest-old in particular is raising new questions for families and social policy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, our hope is that you are able to:

1. Understand and know how to use the language of the subfield – concepts like family structure, culture, and process, cohorts and generations, private and public families, demographic variables, macro and micro perspectives, correlation, etc.
2. Explain how social, economic, political, cultural and technological changes have diversified family life over historical time.
3. Analyze families from a life course theoretical perspective.
4. Explain how and why the experiences of contemporary family life differ by gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, immigration status, and social class.
5. Evaluate theory and critique research.
6. Communicate ideas clearly and persuasively in writing.
7. Analyze a problem and draw correct inferences using evidence and tools of social scientific inquiry.
8. Tell your friends and family exactly what sociology is.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

The reading material for this course is freely available at our Blackboard site (see reading schedule below). Most of the readings are journal articles and book chapters of original scholarship and research by leading figures in sociology, compiled by the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Midterm Exam and Final Exam

The midterm and final examinations are in-class, closed-book essay exams. These exams are intended to 1) facilitate your ability to analyze, integrate, apply, and criticize the materials from both lectures and readings; 2) develop your ability to write in a purposeful, logical, clear and organized way; and 3) encourage you to develop your own perspectives and arguments, and write with a sense of authorship. No makeup exams will be offered. Exceptions will only be made if you provide clear evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented your timely performance.

2. Two Papers

There will be two take-home paper assignments – a mid-term 3-5 page paper, and a final 7-10 page paper. Their main purpose is to have you engage with and critically analyze the readings, and connect them to concepts presented in lecture.

Some of the chapters/articles you will read are scholarly, generally attempting to describe or explain some social phenomenon. They can be evaluated in terms of the adequacy of their description, their reasoning, and their overt or covert biases. Other chapters/articles are personal statements about how reality appears to the particular author. They can be evaluated in terms of how much they show us, how clear and convincing they are, and what consequences are likely to follow – will we act differently because of what we have read? Still other chapters/articles are specifically intended to have particular consequences; that is, to persuade us to see things in a particular way. These can be evaluated in terms of how well they make their case, how much they change or reinforce what we think. We will talk more about the final paper, an oral history interview project, early in the course. A brief description is attached to the end of this syllabus.

No late papers will be accepted. Exceptions will only be made if you provide clear evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented your timely performance.

3. Participation and Engagement

Students are expected to arrive on time and participate in all class sessions. Participation means showing up to each meeting and actively engaging in discussion. Participation comprises 4% of your course grade. The allocation of these points will be based on our assessment of your record of showing up and participating in discussion sections. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

FINAL GRADING SCHEME

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT GRADES			FINAL COURSE GRADE		
Assignment	Points	Percent of final grade	Point total	Percentage	Letter grade
Paper 1	100	20%	500 to 465	$\geq 93\%$	A
Midterm Exam	120	24%	464 to 450	90-92.9	A-
Final Exam	120	24%	449 to 435	87-89.9	B+
Paper 2	140	28%	434 to 415	83-86.9	B
Participation	20	4%	414 to 400	80-82.9	B-
Total	500	100%	399 to 385	77-79.9	C+
			384 to 365	73-76.9	C
			364 to 350	70-72.9	C-
			349 to 300	60-69.9	D
			299 to 0	$< 60\%$	F

EXTRA CREDIT – JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROJECT (JEP)

Earn 15 extra credit points by participating in service learning supervised by the Youth and Family Agencies Program (YFA), or one of the school-based placements (e.g., mentoring or tutoring kids), at the Joint Educational Project (JEP). JEP is USC's signature service- and community-based learning program, and one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the US. Each year nearly 2,000 students enroll in one of several JEP programs that combine academic coursework with hands-on experience in neighborhoods surrounding the university. Students also participate as volunteers on a non-credit basis.

Your JEP participation would involve placement as a volunteer in a community setting where you will be able to view family life from the inside. YFA currently partners with several different sites which offer a variety of service-learning opportunities for USC volunteers, ranging from working with students in foster care, at-risk youth, and children in domestic violence shelters. You will be overseen by and provide reports of your activities to JEP and its staff. Evidence of the successful completion of your placement will be provided to me by JEP. Placements are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Details will be announced in class.

POLICIES

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me or one of the teaching assistants as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Use of Technology in the Classroom

Personal computers and wireless Internet are a key part of today's technological culture, but they also can distract you and others from the class discussion and dampen participation. Cell phones must be put away and on silent during class time. Laptops can be used only for class purposes. I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand, because most all of the recent data and research shows that, other things being equal, students who take notes by hand score better on exams than students who take notes by laptop. For example, <http://m.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/>

Grade appeals

If you feel you deserve more points than awarded you may appeal your grade. Your appeal, presenting a clear argument as to why more points are merited, must be typewritten and given to your TA no later than one week after you receive the grade. The TA will review your appeal and contact you to discuss the grade. Only errors in arithmetic or data entry (i.e., entry into Blackboard) may be discussed before/after class.

Email

We are in a professional setting, therefore it is important that you follow professional etiquette when emailing us. Send email from your university address and include a detailed subject line including the course number. Your email is also less likely to look like spam if you follow this protocol (e.g. "question" from cowboy90210@gmail looks like spam, "Soci 169 Wed: question about debate essay" from john95@usc looks like a real email).

CLASS TOPIC, ASSIGNMENT, AND READING SCHEDULE

Lecture	Date	Topic	Assignment	Readings
1	Mon, Aug. 25th	Cultural wars over families: Terms of the debate		Coontz (1997), "What We Really Miss about the 1950s," pp. 32-48
2	Wed, Aug. 27th	How have families changed over historical time?		Cherlin (2013), <i>Public and Private Families</i> Chapters 1-2, pp. 3-43 (includes short pieces by Casper & Bianchi, Beck-Gernsheim, Cott, and Mintz)
3	Mon, Sept. 1st	Labor Day Holiday		Coontz (2013), "What's Love Got to Do with It?" pp. 100-104
4	Wed, Sept. 3rd	Theoretical perspectives on families	Paper 1 prompt posted	Cherlin (2010), "Demographic Trends," pp. 403-419
5	Mon, Sept. 8th	Methods for collecting and analyzing family data		Donley (2012), <i>Research Methods</i> , pp. 1-52
6	Wed, Sept. 10th	Analyzing family trends using different kinds of data		Donley (2012), <i>Research Methods</i> , pp. 53-123
7	Mon, Sept. 15th	Social Class and families: The Origins --> Destinations model	Midterm Exam Study Guide Posted	Dickerson (2008), Social Mobility, pp. 208-211
8	Wed, Sept. 17th	Theories of the family's role in the reproduction of inequality		Kohn (1959), "Social Class and Parental Values," pp. 155-167
9	Mon, Sept. 22nd	The role of schools in the O --> D relationship		Lareau (2002), "Invisible Inequalities," pp. 747-776
10	Wed, Sept. 24th	Class, race, and children's summer slide	Paper 1 due by 2pm	Von Drehle (2010), "The Case Against Summer Vacation," <i>Time</i> , pp. 36-37
11	Mon, Sept. 29th	Race, ethnicity, and families		Jones (2009), <i>Labor of Love and Sorrow</i> Chapter 1, pp. 11-43 Chapter 5, pp. 131-163
12	Wed, Oct. 1st	Black families in America		Jones (2009), <i>Labor of Love and Sorrow</i> Chapter 7, pp. 195-229
13	Mon, Oct. 6th	The declining significance of race?		Sampson and Wilson (1995), "Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality," pp. 37-54
14	Wed, Oct. 8th	Midterm Exam	In-class 10am-11:50am	
15	Mon, Oct. 13th	Latino and Asian American Families		Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997), "Latina Transnational Motherhood," pp. 548-571
16	Wed, Oct. 15th	Guest Hyeyoung Kwon: Transnational families, immigration, and model minorities		Pyke (2000), "Family Life among Grown Children of Korean and Vietnamese Immigrants," pp. 240-255
17	Mon, Oct. 20th	Interracial relationships: Theory and data		Qian (2005), "Breaking the Last Taboo," pp. 33-37
18	Wed, Oct. 22nd	Cohabitation and the decline of marriage		Edin (2000), "Few Good Men," pp. 26-31 Conlin (2005), "Unmarried America," <i>Business Week</i> , pp. 106-116

19	Mon, Oct. 27th	The rise of divorce	Paper 2 prompt posted	Hays (2003), <i>Flat Broke with Children</i> Chapter 2, pp. 33-61 Chapter 7, pp. 179-214
20	Wed, Oct. 29th	Consequences of the decline of marriage and rise of divorce		McLanahan (2004), "Life Without Father," pp. 35-44 Randles (2013), "Promoting Marriage for Low Income Families," pp. 864-888
21	Mon, Nov. 3rd	The gender binary		Fausto-Sterling (1993), "The Five Sexes," pp. 20-24 Hays (1996) <i>The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood</i> , pp. 97-151 (Chapters 5-6)
22	Wed, Nov. 5th	Sex and gender socialization in families		Ryle (2012), "How Do We Learn Gender?" pp. 119-162
23	Mon, Nov. 10th	Gender, work, and families		Eagly and Carli (2007), "Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership," <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , pp. 1-8
24	Wed, Nov. 12th	LGBTQ Families		Biblarz and Savci (2010), "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Families," pp. 480-497
25	Mon, Nov. 17th	How does the sexual orientation of parents matter?		Stacey and Biblarz (2001), "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?," pp. 159-183
26	Wed, Nov. 19th	Gay youth in families		Chandler (2013), "The Best Little Boy in The World - That's Me," <i>New York Times</i> , pp. 1-2
27	Mon, Nov. 24th	Causes of the great fertility decline: The proximate determinants		Bumpass (1973), "Is Low Fertility Here to Stay?" pp. 67-69
28	Wed, Nov. 26th	Thanksgiving Holiday		
29	Mon, Dec. 1st	Consequences of the great fertility decline		Bengtson (2001), "Beyond the Nuclear Family," pp. 1-16
30	Wed, Dec. 3rd	Families and aging		George (2010), "Still Happy After All These Years," pp. 331-339 Editors, <i>New York Times</i> (2010), "How High Can the Retirement Age Go?" pp. 1-9
-----	Wed, Dec. 10th	Paper 2 due	Due by 5pm	-----
-----	Mon, Dec. 15h	Final Exam	In-Class 8am – 10am	-----

SOCIOLOGY 169

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FINAL PAPER: FAMILY CHANGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Students will conduct interviews with individuals in three generations of a particular family in order to examine some of the issues explored in this class. The paper should focus on one specific aspect of family life (e.g. attitudes and behavior regarding divorce, childbearing outside of marriage, the process of mate choice, courtship and dating vis-à-vis hooking up in relationship formation, the division of housework by gender, sexual identities in families, immigration and family life, parenting styles, aging in families, etc.), and whether, how, and why that feature of family life has changed in the experiences of members of three generations of one family unit.

The work process will unfold in stages: selecting a topic, selecting interviewees, designing interview questions, conducting the interviews (in person or by phone, e-mail, Skype, etc.), and preparing your report.

This could be your own family, but it does not have to be (if it is your own family, you could treat yourself as one of the “cases” to include—in effect, a self-interview). In writing up your paper, you should present basic facts about the backgrounds and personal histories of family members, describe the similarities and differences reported in your chosen aspect of family life within and across generations, compare generational contrasts with course materials dealing with changes underway in American family life in recent decades, and attempt to explain any divergent experiences of your interview subjects.

You are required to talk with your TA as you formulate your focus and plan for the research paper. The paper should be 7-10 pages in length, double-spaced, and accompanied by footnotes and/or References for the sources you cite, following the ASA Style Guide posted on Blackboard.