

SC361 Fall 2009
Instructor: Natasha Sarkisian
Email: natasha@sarkisian.net
Webpage: <http://www.sarkisian.net/sc361/>

Office: McGuinn 417
Office phone: (617) 552-0495
Home phone: (617) 755-3178
Office hours: by appointment

WORK AND FAMILY

COURSE DESCRIPTION*

This course will explore the relationship between family and work from a sociological perspective. We will shatter common myths about our past and our present and examine how social forces shape the paid and unpaid work that families do. We will focus on the contemporary families but also attempt to situate them in a broader historical context. We will discuss how we define family and work, get a historical overview of the changes in the organization of work and family, and learn to recognize the links between our families and larger social forces.

While rarely placed in context, our contemporary debates about birth control, abortion, employed mothers, day care, health care, single parenthood, welfare reform, divorce and child support, the Social Security crisis, and men's responsibility for family caregiving all reflect the struggles regulate family and work in ways that would meet the societal needs for both productive and reproductive labor. You will probably be forced to grapple with work/family questions in both your private life and in your public role as citizen in a democracy. In fact, one of the central challenges in your life will be to participate in both the worlds of work and family despite conflicting pressures. This course is designed to give you the information and critical skills necessary to address the modern conundrum of work and family life.

Throughout the course, we will stay tuned to the issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality. We will also explore the relationship of work and family to social policies and social change. We will apply a gender/race/class lens to specific work/family policies, including welfare policy, comparable worth, parental leaves, child care policy, and working time policies, among others. We will investigate ways in which these policies create and address inequities, and think critically about mechanisms for change.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Weekly Blogs

20% of your grade will be based on the quality of your weekly blog entries. In the beginning of the semester, you should create a blog using a blog hosting service of your choice (e.g., <http://www.blogger.com/>) and let me know the URL for your blog. Your blog should be public so that other students in the course can read it and comment on it. Throughout the semester, you will post your blog entries each week by noon on Monday. The entries should be brief statements commenting on each of the assigned readings for that week. Be analytic and critical, but also let me know what you've learned. And, most importantly, ask questions! If something is unclear, bring that up in your blog and we will address the issue in class. You should make sure to accomplish the following two goals in each of your blog entries: (1) summarize the assigned readings, and (2) critically evaluate the reading and state your opinion. Each blog entry will be worth 2 points; if your blog entry is not meeting my standards and not receiving full credit, I will notify you by email. There are 12 weeks in the course; that means that if you get full credit for all of your blog entries, you can get two "freebies."

2. Topic Presentations and Discussion

15% of your grade will be based on the quality of your presentation, questions, and ability to help facilitate the in-class discussion on one of the topics. For one week (starting September 29), you (alone or in pairs) will be responsible for constructing a reading list (in consultation with me), reviewing the literature, and preparing a 15 minutes presentation to be delivered in class. You will also read other students' weekly blogs for that week, prepare questions for in-class discussion, and come prepared to co-lead the discussion with me. Your reading list will be due one week before the class meeting (although you are welcome to submit

* * This syllabus draws upon ideas presented in syllabi by a number of people, including Naomi Gerstel, Jennifer Glass, and Mindy Fried.

drafts of the list and consult with me earlier); you will send your discussion questions to me by 9 pm on Monday preceding your presentation.

3. Research Project Paper

35% of your grade will be based on your performance conducting a research project, either alone or in pairs (your choice). You will select a controversial work-family issue (e.g., welfare reform, child care, parental leave, etc.), conduct a small research project on this issue, and write a paper based on your research. Your final research paper will consist of 4 sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Interview Findings, and Conclusion. Your literature review should address the research on this controversy in the United States as well as examine how this issue is handled in at least one other country that offers a contrast to the U.S. You will critically review the research in this area and report what you have learned from the findings of these studies, emphasizing their strengths and limitations (e.g., their methods) and highlighting gaps in information. Next, you will identify 4 individuals (if working as a pair, 8 individuals) you will interview who have strong opinions about this issue, including strategies for change. Make sure that your interviewees reflect a range of perspectives and social locations (e.g., legislators, advocates, consumers, government officials, individuals affected by this issue). Some questions you might explore may include the following: What are their positions, and what rationale do they give for their opinions/beliefs? In what venues, if any, do they express these opinions (e.g., legislature, media)? What activities have they taken to create change (e.g., legislative, public education, individual action)? You will design a list of questions to be used to interview these individuals. After that, you will conduct and transcribe the interviews (30-60 minutes per individual), analyze the findings (organize the findings by themes), and write the Interview Findings section that will synthesize their views. The conclusion will summarize the findings of your literature review and your interviews, as well as include your perspective on the issue, and what you have learned overall from this process. You will submit three drafts of your research project paper; this way, you can use my feedback on earlier drafts to improve your paper. You are welcome to make an appointment with me to discuss this paper as well.

The first one will be a one-page draft of the Introduction that will describe your topic and the nature of the controversy (5% of your grade, due September 29), the second will include Introduction, Literature Review, and Research plan, including interview questions (5% of your grade, due October 27), and the third draft will be your final research paper (25% of your grade, due November 24).

4. Final Paper and Presentation

20% of your grade will be based on your final paper and presentation. This 8-10 page paper (due December 8) will present your suggestions for work/family change in the United States. You can either work alone or in pairs. For this paper, you will select one or more strategies for improving the work/family balance in the U.S. (e.g., government policies, private sector initiatives, labor as initiator of change, individuals as initiators of change). What is the most powerful strategy (or strategies) for improving the work and family lives of women and men? Should the government provide universal policies that create a floor of opportunity for all? Should the market (e.g., the private sector) be responsible for these policies? What should the role of workers be, either as individuals or via organized labor? In this paper, you will argue why this strategy (strategies) is necessary, drawing upon material covered throughout the semester (use examples). On the final day of class, we will have a debate in which the various perspectives will be presented.

5. Class Participation

10% of your final grade will be based on class attendance and participation. Please come to class ready to engage with the material and participate in class discussion.

YOUR GRADE

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

1. Weekly Blogs – 20%
2. Topic Presentations/Discussion – 15%
3. Research Paper – 35% (first draft 5%, second draft 5%, final draft 25%)
4. Final Paper – 20%
5. Class participation– 10%

COURSE POLICIES

The course is based on an interactive relationship between the instructor and students, as well as on collaboration among the students. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions in class, and to come and see me with additional questions. Email is the best way to get in touch with me outside of the classroom – I check my email very often. Email is the best way to get a quick question answered or to set up an appointment to discuss something at length.

Throughout the course, you are expected to do all your course work on time. Unless you have a valid (and documented) excuse, I will not give credit for late blog entries or paper submissions.

Remember that Boston College values the academic integrity of its students and faculty. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic integrity: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity>. If you have any questions, please ask me. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to your class dean and judged by the academic integrity committee in your school. If you are found responsible for violating the policy, penalties may include a failing grade as well as possible probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the violation.

Finally, a note on feedback. I would like to know how I could make this course experience as useful and interesting as possible. Therefore, in the end of each class, I will ask you to submit a sheet of paper with your name, the date, and at least one sentence of reaction to that class, indicating what you learned, or something you liked or did not like, found interesting or controversial, found clear or too simplistic, or found confusing and in need of further (or better) explanation. You may also submit comments on the course in general.

REQUIRED READINGS

The readings for this course will be placed on the electronic reserve in the library: <http://www.bc.edu/reserves>. You can easily access these readings by logging in (using your BC login and password) and searching by instructor name, course number, article author name, etc. Make sure to print out these readings and bring them to class. Most assigned readings in this class differ from the usual textbook readings in that they often reflect the position and opinions of their authors. I want you to approach them critically and analytically – pay attention to authors' arguments as well as the evidence they use to substantiate them.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

September 8. Introduction to the Course.

September 15. Historical Perspectives on Family and Work.

- Thistle, Susan. 2006. Chapters 2, 3 from: *From Marriage to the Market: The Transformation of Women's Lives and Work*. University of California Press.
- Davis, Kingsley. 1988. "Wives and Work: A Theory of the Sex-Role Revolution and Its Consequences." In S. Dornbusch and M. Strober (Eds.), *Feminism, Children and the New Families*. New York: Guilford.

September 22. Historical Perspectives on Family and Work.

- Joan Williams. 2000. "Introduction" and "Is Domesticity Dead? (Chapter 1)." Pp. 1-39 in *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sharon Hays. 1996. "From Rodeo to Reasoning." Pp. 19-50 in *The Cultural Contradictions of Mothering*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Joseph H. Pleck. 1987. "American Fathering in Historical Perspective." Pp. 83-97 in *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*. Edited by Michael S. Kimmel. Sage Publications.

September 29. Mothering.

*****Draft 1 of Research Project due*****

- Ann Crittenden. 2001. Introduction in *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Budig, Michelle and Paula England. 2001. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." *American Sociological Review*, 66(2): 204-226.
- Patricia Hill Collins. 2000. "Black Women and Motherhood." Pp. 173-200 in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.
- Rothman, Barbara Katz. 1989. "Women as Fathers: Motherhood and Child Care Under a Modified Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, 3: 1-24.

October 6. Fathering.

- Dorothy Roberts. 1998. "The Absent Black Father." Pp. 145-161 in *Lost Fathers: The Politics of Fatherlessness in America*. Edited by Cynthia R. Daniels. St. Martin's Press.
- Francine Deutsch. 2002. "Halving It All: The Mother and Mr. Mom." *Families at Work: Expanding the Boundaries*. Edited by Naomi Gerstel, Dan Clawson, and Robert Zussman. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Gerson, Kathleen. 1993. "Introduction" and "The Myth of Masculinity" *No Man's Land*, Ch 1 & 9.

October 13. Childhood.

- Frances K. Goldschneider and Linda J. Waite. 2001. "Children's Share in Household Tasks." In *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families, 2nd ed.* Edited by Susan J. Ferguson. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Galinsky, Ellen. 1999. *Ask the Children*. New York: Harper Collins. "Is it Quality Time or Quantity Time?" p. 58-95.
- Bianchi, Suzanne. 2000. "Maternal Employment and Time with Children: Dramatic Change or Surprising Continuity?" *Demography* 37: 401-414.
- Preston, Samuel. 1984. "Children and the Elderly: Divergent Paths for America's Dependents." *Demography* 21: 435-457.
- Zelizer, Viviana. 1994. Chapter 7 from: *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. Princeton University Press.

October 20. The Time Bind.

- Jacobs, Jerry and Kathleen Gerson. 2001. "Overworked Individuals or Overworked Families: Explaining Trends in Work, Leisure and Family Time." *Work and Occupations* 28: 40-63.
- Phyllis Moen and Patricia Roehling. 2004. Chapter 1 and 4 from *The Career Mystique: Cracks in the American Dream*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stone, Pamela. 2007. Introduction and Chapter 5 from *Opting Out?: Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*. University of California Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 2001. Chapters 14 and 15 from *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*. Holt Paperbacks.
- Gornick, Janet and Myers, Marcia. Chapter 2 from *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. Russell Sage.

October 27. Division of Unpaid Labor.

*****Draft 2 of Research Project due*****

- Arlie Russell Hochschild. 1990. "Joey's Problem: Nancy and Evan Holt." Pp. 33-58 (Chapter 4) in *The Second Shift*. Avon Books.

- Christopher Carrington. 2002. "Domesticity and the Political Economy of Lesbian and Gay Families." Pp. 82-107 in *Families at Work: Expanding the Boundaries*. Edited by Naomi Gerstel, Dan Clawson, and Robert Zussman. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Coltrane, Scott. 1996. "Why do Couples Share?" Chpt. 5 in *Family Man*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp.116-150

November 3. Extended Kin Ties.

- Hansen, Karen V. 2005. Chapter 1, pp. 1-24, in *Not-So-Nuclear Families: Class, Gender, and Networks of Care*. Rutgers University Press.
- Sarkisian, Natalia, and Naomi Gerstel. 2004. "Explaining the Gender Gap in Help to Parents: The Importance of Employment." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 2 (May), 431-451.
- Uttal, Lynet. 1999. "Using Kin for Childcare: Embedment in the Socioeconomic Networks of Extended Families." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61: 845-857.

November 10. Paid Carework.

- Bonnar, Deanna. 1991. "The Place of Caregiving Work in Industrial Societies." In J. Hyde and M. Essex (Eds.), *Parental Leave and Child Care*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. *Domestica*. Ch.1 & 2.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1992. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical continuities in the racial division of paid reproductive labor." *Signs* 18:1-43.
- Nancy Folbre. 1994. "Children as Public Goods." *American Economic Review*, 84 (2), pp. 86-90.
- Folbre, Nancy. 2002. Ch.1 from *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*. New Press.

November 17. Emotion Work and Sex Work.

- Hochschild, Arlie Russel. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 85 No. 3 (1979): 551-575.
- Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2007. Chapters 4, 5 from: *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*. University of Chicago Press.

November 24. Social Policy in the United States

*****Draft 3 of Research Project due*****

- Sharon Hays. 2003. "Money and Morality." Pp. 9-24 in *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dorothy Roberts. 1997. "The Welfare Debate: Who Pays for Procreation?" Ch. 5 in *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. NY: Pantheon Books.
- Gerstel, Naomi and Clawson, Dan. 2001. "Unions' Responses to Family Concerns," *Social Problems* 48(2):277-298.
- Glass, Jennifer. 2004. "Blessing or Curse? Work-Family Policies and Mothers' Wage Growth Over Time." *Work and Occupations* 31:367-394.

December 1. Social Policy: European Perspectives

- Dan Clawson and Naomi Gerstel. 2002. "Caring For Young Children: What the U.S. Can Learn from Some European Examples." *Contexts*, v. 4: pp. 28-35.
- Gornick, Janet and Myers, Marcia. Ch. 8 and 9 from *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. Russell Sage.
- Erin Kelly. 2006. "Work-Family Policies: The United States in International Perspective," in M. Pitt-Catsouphes, E.E. Kossek and S. Sweet (eds.), *The Work and Family Handbook*, Lawrence Erlbaum.

December 8. Presentations

*****Final Paper and Presentation due*****