

**Cedar Crest College**  
**The Family as a Social Institution**  
**Summer Term 2009**

SOC 321 90

Credits 3

June 5: 6:00-9:00    June 19: 6:00-9:00

June 6: 9:00-5:00    June 20: 9:00-5:00

June 7: 9:00-5:00    June 21: 9:00-5:00

Room – Curtis 354

Instructor: Suzanne Weaver

610-606-4666, Ext. 3500

Room - Curtis Hall 233

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**Course Domain:**

This course encompasses a detailed examination of the family as a major social institution in every society and in its role as a critical agent of socialization. Various aspects of marriage will also be considered as historically the socially approved relationship upon which the family has been based. While the primary focus will be on marriage and the family in U.S. society there will also be course content on the family from a cross-cultural perspective.

Marriage and the family will be investigated in terms of their forms, functions, stages and varieties. Topics will include alternative family forms, sexuality, gender issues, parenting concerns, financial and emotional stresses on the family, divorce and remarriage, and the personal relationships connected with marriage and the family.

Theoretical/conceptual material developed in this course will be applied to contemporary issues and policies regarding marriage, the family, and personal relationships.

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to assist the student to:

1. Understand marriage and the family from sociology's theoretical and conceptual perspective.
2. Understand the dynamics underpinning the changing nature of the family in the U.S.
3. Understand U.S. marriage and the family patterns, practices and forms through critical comparisons with other cultures.
4. Use knowledge developed through this course in making conscious personal choices throughout one's life and in understanding the societal influences that affect those decisions.
5. Better understand oneself and one's family.
6. Analyze and discuss effectively and informatively controversial social issues regarding marriage and the family and, as a result, to make informed policy choices on those issues.
7. Work effectively in groups to accomplish task assignments.

## **Textbooks:**

Lamanna, M., & Riedman, A. (2009). *Marriages and families: Making choices in a diverse society*. (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Schroeder, E. (2008). *Taking sides: Family and personal relationships*. Dubuque, IA: McGraw Hill.

## **Course Outcomes:**

Students will demonstrate understanding of the family as a social institution and the role the family plays as an agent of socialization.

Assessment:

Students will successfully complete two examinations.

Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in understanding marriage and the family in terms of their forms, functions, stages and varieties.

Assessment:

Students will give an oral and written presentation on a topical contemporary issue regarding marriage, the family and personal relationships.

Students will apply the theoretical/conceptual material to understanding oneself and one's family.

Assessment:

Students will complete a personal journal integrating course work with an understanding of his/her own family.

## **Student Assignments:**

Each student is responsible for:

1. Regular attendance at all class sessions. Attendance will be kept and graded.
2. Read all text assignments in advance of each class session to facilitate conceptual knowledge development and active, meaningful participation in class discussions.
3. Write a 350-400 informed personal opinion statement on each of the *Taking Sides* issues discussed each week in class. Each of the opinion papers must include:
  - reflection of your understanding of the yes/no position in the article
  - direct quotes and page citations from the author
  - your opinions and ideas related to the issue as well as any ideas the author did not adequately consider

The personal opinion statement is due on the day the issue is scheduled for discussion according to the daily class plan. Any written inadequately or handed in late will receive only half credit.

4. Each student will be responsible for facilitating class discussion on ONE of the *Taking Sides* issues. As facilitation, the student is responsible for:
  - providing a lively and informed discussion
  - include all students in the discussion
  - facilitate discussion for no less than 30 minutes
5. Compiling a personal journal reflecting each week's textbook reading assignment. This journal assignment will attempt to integrate the course work with a student's understanding of his/her own family circumstances and dynamics.

Each student will record each week one entry that integrates course content and applications to their own family and/or marital situation.

The journals will be collected two times by the instructor. Grading will be based on the integration of coursework to life experiences. Subjective reactions of a student will not enter the grading process. Confidentiality will be maintained by the instructor.

Due: June 7  
June 20

7. Successfully complete two multiple-choice tests – designed to test the student's understanding and mastery of the material in the *Marriages and Families* text.

June 19  
June 21

8. Note: All assignments are due on the dates indicated on the class schedule. Assignments turned in later than these due dates will be reduced by 1 grade for each day late including weekends. All assigned work must be submitted no later than the last day the class is scheduled to meet.

### **Cedar Crest College Classroom Protocol**

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

Furthermore:

Students are expected to have prompt and regular classroom attendance in accordance with the policy stated on the syllabus.

Faculty are expected to make clear on the first day of class reasons for specific classroom decorum and repercussions for noncompliance. Faculty should be aware of setting boundaries and procedures for exceptions to expectation stated in the syllabus.

### **Honor Policy**

The Cedar Crest College Honor Philosophy is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

### **Grading:**

Class Attendance	10%
Facilitation of Class Discussions	20%
Informed Opinion Statements	20%
Personal Journal	20%
Tests (15% each)	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

### **Course Outline:**

- June 5            Course Overview  
                     Chapter 1: Family Commitments  
                     Chapter 2: American Families in a Social Context  
                     Videos – *Multigenerational Influences: Family of Origin Patterns* and *Family Communication: #108 Family Stories, Messages & Meaning*  
                     Chapter 3: Exploring the Family
  
- June 6            Chapter 4: Our Gendered Identities  
                     Chapter 5: Loving Ourselves and Others  
                     Videos – *Gender and Relationships, Trans America, Falling Angels* and *But Words Do Hurt*  
                     Chapter 6: Our Sexual Selves  
                     Videos – *Being Gay, Bisexual Experience, Tying the Knot, and He Said, She Said*
  
- June 7            Chapter 7: Choosing a Marriage Partner  
                     Chapter 8: Marriage  
                     **Journal Due**
  
- June 19          Chapter 9: Alternatives to Marriage  
                     Issue #1, Is It Ever Appropriate to Spank a Child?  
                     Issue #11, Should Same Sex Couples Be Allowed to Legally Marry?  
                     Videos – *Making Marriages Work, Men Are From Mars Women Are From Venus* and *We are Dad*
  
- Chapter 10: To Parent or Not to Parent  
                     **Exam #1**

June 20 Chapter 11: Raising Children in a Diverse Society  
Issue #14, Is Cybersex “Cheating”?  
Issue #9, Should Parents Surgically Alter Their Intersex Infants?  
Issue #2, Should Adoptive Parents Adopt Only Within Their Own Racial/Ethnic Group?  
Chapter 12: Work and Family  
Videos – *Angela Shelton, Double Shift* and *Staying at Home*  
Chapter 13: Communication  
Chapter 14: Power & Violence  
Issue #12, Should the U.S. Constitution Be Amended to Protect the “Sanctity of Marriage”?  
Issue #10, Should Minors Be Required to Get Their Parents’ Permission in Order to Obtain an Abortion?  
Issue #3, Does Divorce Create Long-Term Negative Effects for Children?  
Videos – *Kids & Divorce, Women a True Story, Addiction* and *Living with Alzheimers*  
**Journal Due**

June 21 Chapter 15: Family Stress  
Chapter 16: Divorce  
**Exam #2**

## Sign-Up Sheet: Taking Sides

_____	June 19	Issue #1, Is it Ever Appropriate to Spank a Child?
_____		
_____	June 19	Issue #11, Should Same-Sex Couples Be Allowed to Legally Marry?
_____		
_____	June 20	Issue #14, Is Cybersex “Cheating”
_____		
_____	June 20	Issue #9, Should Parents Surgically Alter Their Intersex Infants?
_____		
_____	June 20	Issue #2, Should Adoptive Parents Adopt Only Within Their Own Racial/Ethnic Group?
_____		
_____	June 21	Issue #12, Should the U.S. Constitution Be Amended to Protect the “Sanctity of Marriage?”
_____		
_____	June 21	Issue #10, Should Minors Be Required to Get Their Parents’ Permission in Order to Obtain an Abortion?
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_____	June 21	Issue #3, Does Divorce Create Long-Term Negative Effects for Children?
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