## COURSE OUTLINE

### Course Number
SOC 201

### Course Title
Marriage and the Family

### Credits
3.0

### Hours:
lecture/Lab/Other
Lecture / 15 weeks

### Co- or Pre-requisite
SOC101 with a minimum grade of C
Or
SOC107 with a minimum grade of C

### Implementation
sem/year
Spring 2008

### Catalog description:

Analyzes and evaluates the family as an institution that reflects cultural values, norms and ideals. Topics include gendering, pre-marital sex norms, mate selection, family roles, child rearing, and family structures.

### Is course New, Revised, or Modified?
Revised

### Required texts/other materials:

Karen Seccombe - Families and their Social Worlds (2nd Edition)

**ISBN-10:** 0205797741  
**ISBN-13:** 978-0205797745

### Revision date:
Fall 2014

### Course coordinator:
Gianna Durso-Finley – 609-570-3301 finleyg@mccc.edu

### Information resources:

The MCCC library has some reference materials that support the course, including books, videos, journals, and electronic databases. Specific titles may be available upon request.

### Other learning resources:

No tutors or study groups at this time

### Course Competencies/Goals:
The student will be able to:

• Describe the family as a social institution within a cross-cultural perspective.

• Understand the relationship between the family and other social institutions in the U.S.

• Describe the historical origins of the modern family in Europe and America.

• Demonstrate the relationship between research theories and the scientific process as it relates to marital and family phenomena.

• Differentiate between social class determinants and consequences as they relate to the diversity of families in the U.S.

• Understand relationship formation processes and nonmarital relationships within a cross-cultural perspective.

• Evaluate changes in families throughout the life course within a cross-cultural perspective.

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals
Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
Goal 3. Science. Students will use the scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.
Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.
Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.
Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills
Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.
Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.
Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
Goal E. Computer Literacy. Students will use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.
Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.
Units of study in detail.

Unit I  [Understanding Marriages and Families across Time and Place]

*Learning Objectives*
*The student will be able to…*

- Define the family as a social institution and understand that descriptions of families are social constructions.
- To use ideal type constructions (e.g., patriarchal/matriarchal, arranged marriage/free choice marriage, rural/urban, and individual/familial) associated with marriage and the family to examine variations in marriage, family, and kinship systems around the world and across historical time periods.
- Differentiate characteristics of marriage, family, and kinship systems in a global context

Unit II  [The Family and other Social Institutions in the U.S.]

*Learning Objectives*
*The student will be able to…*

- Recognize the family as a social institution that operates within the context of other social institutions.
- Understand the relationship between contemporary U.S. families and the mass media, religion, politics, the economy, and the educational system.

Unit III  [The Historical Origins of the Modern Family in Europe and America]

*Learning Objectives*
*The student will be able to…*

- Understand how the movement from an agricultural mode of production to an industrial mode of production influenced new patterns of family life.
- Evaluate how the rise and decline of feudalism and the emergence of capitalism influenced new patterns of family life.
- Hypothesize how the emergence of a rational mode of production (action based on a logical means-ends relationship) influenced new patterns of family life.
- Access the shift in our perceptions of the family from the feudal period to views of family in modern capitalistic economies.
Unit IV  [Research Theories and the Scientific Process]

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...

- Understand a sociological approach to the family in general.
- Explain how families are organized, how families as a social system are sustained, and modified.
- Determine how family relationships are formed and changed.
- Diagram how families are interdependent on other social systems
- Understand that sociological research on marriage and families aims to produce knowledge for three distinct purposes: descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative.
- Infer the relationship between research and theory in the scientific process.
- Comprehend basic research methods and research designs used in marriage and family studies.
- Apply the macro level theories used to study marital and family phenomena (structural-functional analysis, & conflict theory)
- Apply the micro level theories used to study marital and family phenomena (symbolic interactionism, & social exchange theory).
- Justify why sociologists sometimes use a unified theory to study marital and family phenomena.

Unit V  [Social Class Determinants and Consequences in the U.S.]

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...

- Describe social class within the social stratification system of the U.S.
- Critique the U.S. social class system as a system of inequality.
- Use traditional ideas of social stratification and formulate new hypotheses of social class based on inequalities associated with wealth, income, age, gender, race, power, and prestige.
- Evaluate the consequences social class has on the family.
- Access the consequences of vertical social mobility.
- Differentiate the influence of social class on African American families, Hispanic American families, Asian American families, and Native American families.
Unit VI  
[Relationship Formation Processes and Nonmarital relationships in a cross-cultural perspective]

*Learning Objectives*

*The student will be able to…*

- Describe the social construction of love, as well as, individualistic and cultural factors in partner selection.
- Evaluate interactional processes (i.e., role theory, and exchange theory) in partner selection.
- Access patterns and outcomes of cohabitation.
- Understand the non-marital relationship status of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered couples, and any other subgroups recognized by the human rights campaign and contemporary social issues surrounded the status of marriage for members of these subgroups in the U.S.

Unit VII  
[Changes in Families throughout the Life Course within a cross-cultural perspective]

*Learning Objectives*

*The student will be able to…*

- Describe the transition into marriage and the division of labor in marriage.
- Understand power in conjugal and intimate relationships
- Diagram the issue of marital quality over the life course
- Evaluate factors related to marital sexual activity and changes in marital sexual activity
- Critique incidence of and attitudes toward extramarital sex
- Access factors related to same-sex relationships within the context of changes within the institution of the family.

Unit VIII  
[Family Crisis within a Cross-Cultural perspective]

*Learning Objectives*

*The student will be able to…*

- Explain how stress impacts the family in general.
- Evaluate causes of family violence and intimate partner abuse
- Formulate hypotheses of intimate partner abuse and family violence as social constructs.
- Outline patterns of abuse within the family (i.e., child abuse, parent abuse, elder abuse, etc…).
• Critique mutual abuse and violence in couples.

• Chart patterns of divorce and remarriage in a global context.

**Evaluation of student learning:**

**Reading Assignments:**

The textbook and additional readings as necessary.

**Exams and Quizzes:**

- At least two (2) one hour exams
- Final Exam

**Written Assignments:** (to assess specific knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills). Students are expected to exhibit the ability to formulate their own thesis based on solid evidence that has been thoroughly evaluated. Students are expected to demonstrate information literacy skills and to use scholarly, peer reviewed journals as references for their written assignments. All written assignment will follow the APA formatting and style guide.

- At least three (3) written assignments
- At least one assignment will require the use of the online databases through MCCC.
- At least one assignment will require students to pick a topic of interest related to marriage and the family and describe it within the context of any of the sociological theories discussed in the course.

**Academic Integrity Statement:**

Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic Integrity -- the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work, and that faculty and academic support services staff members will take reasonable precautions to prevent the opportunity for academic dishonesty.