

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
University of Pennsylvania

Soci 306: BFS Seminar on Families and Capitalism
Spring 2021

Professor: Pilar Gonalons-Pons

Office: 217 McNeil Building

Office Hours: M 2-3:30pm, by appointment <https://calendly.com/gonalonspons/10min>

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Official class schedule: Monday and Wednesday, 3:30pm – 5pm.

COVID-19 adaptation: Monday classes will be synchronous discussions covering class readings. Wednesday classes will be asynchronous; you will watch short lecture videos that will introduce the topic for each week. Videos will be posted on Canvas.

Overview: Despite highly romanticized and idealized views about family life, families deeply implicated in sustaining and organizing capitalist societies and inequalities by race, gender, and social class. This course reviews classic and contemporary texts that analyze how family ideas and behaviors shape and are shaped by larger political-economic structures. Students will learn about capitalism, racism, heteronormativity, and patriarchy, and engage with questions that connect these concepts to family life. This includes questions like: how do queer identities relate to capitalism? How does racism shape love and family life? In what ways does gender and sexism organize work and power within families? Through engaging with the class material students will learn to sociologically and critically rethink current family issues and the future of family life.

Evaluation: The grade scale for this course is: A+ (100), A (98-95), A- (94-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-84), B – (83-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-74), C – (73-70), D+ (69-67), D (66-64), D – (63-60), F (<60). Course grades are determined by four criteria:

- 1. In-class presentations (25%):** Students will prepare **one** 10-minute presentations about the required readings and **one** final presentation about their final Whitepaper Project (see below). Presentations about class readings will summarize the topic and key arguments covered in the readings and will include discussion questions. The final presentation will summarize your key findings from the Whitepaper Project. You will also be asked to provide feedback on your peer's presentations. Guidelines will be provided.
- 2. Applied assignments (25%):** Students will write reflection essays about hands-on assignments given in class. These assignments seek to apply concepts, theories, and research discussed in class to real-world situations and problems. After completing these assignments, students will submit a reflection essay that will discuss how the hands-on

assignment relates to class content. There will be 3 to 4 such assignments and each will be 1 to 2 pages, single spaced. Submission on Canvas.

- 3. Whitepaper Project (35%):** Students will write a 1,500-2,000-word whitepaper on a social policy area of their choosing. A list of social policy areas will be provided. A whitepaper is an essay that provides a succinct summary about a social problem and provides guidance on how to solve it. Students will do research on the social policy area, summarize the problem it seeks to address and critically analyze alternate solutions.

DATES: **Choose topic** **2/8, midnight**
 FINAL PROJECT **TBD, final exam date**

- 4. Attendance and participation (15%):** Attendance and participation are required; repeated absences may affect your final grade. We all learn more when we actively engage with the course material. I will grade class participation based on the quality of your class contributions. This may include participating in class discussions via video and voice as well as using the chat.

Policies:

Cheating: Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F in the class and will be reported to the committee on academic misconduct.

Make-ups: There are no make-ups for assignments, unless otherwise noted. Late or incomplete work is disrespectful, and may not be accepted. Extensions may only be granted for well-justified circumstances.

Class Schedule and Readings

**The class schedule lists Monday sessions only because this is when readings will be discussed. Materials in lieu of Wednesday sessions will be available on Canvas.

**This reading list is subject to changes. You will read about 80-to-125 pages each week.

W 1/20 Syllabus and Class Introduction

M 1/25 Capitalism, Patriarchy, Private Property

Fulcher, Capitalism
Engels, The Origin of the Family
Rubin, Traffic in Women

Supplementary Readings:

Fulcher, Capitalism. Chapters 2 and 6
Perry, Vexing Thing

Coontz, Marriage: A History
Parsons & Bales, The American Family
Ruggles, Patriarchy, Power and Pay
Goode, World Revolution and Family Patterns
Seccombe, Weathering the Storm

M 2/1 Social Reproduction Theory

Federici, Primitive Accumulation
James and Dalla Costa, Wages for Housework
Folbre, The Unproductive Wife

Supplementary Readings:

Bhattacharya, Social Reproduction Theory
Glenn, From Servitude to Service
Brenner and Laslett, Gender, Social Reproduction.

M 2/8 Families under Settler Colonialism

Fields & Fields, Racecraft
Hunter, Bound in Wedlock
Davis, Women, Race & Class

Supplementary Readings:

Perry, Vexing Thing
Glenn, Settler Colonialism as a Structure

M 2/15 Families under Racial Capitalism

Collins, The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood
Roberts, Shattered Bonds

Supplementary Readings:

Moynihan, The Moynihan Report
Roberts, Killing the Black Body
Brown, Who Is an Indian Child?
Hagerman, White kids
Fong, Changes in interracial marriage

M 2/22 Compulsory Heterosexuality

D'Emilio, Capitalism and Gay Identity
Willse and Spade, Freedom in a Regulatory State?

Supplementary Readings:

Rich, Compulsory Heterosexuality
Robinson, Coming Out to the Streets
Foucault, Biopolitics

M 3/1 The Queer Families

Moore, Invisible Families
Baumle & Compton, Legalizing LGBT Families

Supplementary Readings:

Lamont, We Can Write the Scripts Ourselves
Weston, Families We Choose

M 3/8 Reproductive Technologies

Firestone, Dialectic of Sex, The Case for Feminist Revolution
Hertz and Mattes, Donor-Shared Siblings or Genetic Strangers
Zhang, The Last Children of Down Syndrome

Supplementary Readings:

Thompson (2001) Strategic Naturalizing Kinship in an Infertility Clinic
Martin (2010) Anticipating Infertility

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 10,11 **

M 3/15 Welfare State and Family Policies

Kollontai, Selected Excerpts
Ghodsee, Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism
Collins, Making Motherhood Work

Supplementary Readings:

Fraser, Contradictions of Care and Capital

Cooke, Gender-Class Equality in Political Economies

M 3/22 The Neoliberal Carceral State

Cooper, Family Values

Roberts, Gendered States of Punishment

Flavin, Our Bodies Our Crimes

Kaba, Missing Daddy

Supplementary Readings:

Mink, Welfare's End

Roberts, Prison, Foster Care, Systematic Punishment of Black Mothers

Braman, Doing Time on the Outside

Comfort, Doing Time Together

Story, Prison Land

M 3/29 Heterosexual Romance

Illouz, Why Love Hurts

Wade, The Tragedy of Heterosexuality

Adeyinka-Skold, Race, Place, and Relationship Formation in the Digital Age

Supplementary Readings:

Sanday, Fraternity Gang Rape

Regenerus, Cheap Sex

Lamont, The Mating Game

M 4/5 Sex Cultures in College Campuses

Armstrong et al, Sexual Assault on Campus

Sanday, Fraternity Gang Rape

Supplementary Readings:

Sanday, Fraternity Gang Rape

Wade, American Hookup

Hirsch and Khan, Sexual Citizens

M 4/12 ***No class – engagement day***

M 4/19 **Families and Globalization**

Hochschild, Global Care Chains

Abrego, Sacrificing Families

Supplementary Readings:

Parreñas, Children of Global Migration

Longo, Keeping it in “the Family”

Hirsch, A Courtship After Marriage

Carrillo, Pathways of Desire

M 4/26 **Family abolition**

Lewis, Full Surrogacy Now