

# SO 205A: Sociology of Family

Birmingham Southern College

Spring 2022 | TTH 9:30-10:50 AM

Class Meeting Location: Harbert 227

Instructor: Dr. Yingling Liu, Ph.D., J.D.

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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 8:30-10 AM or by appointment

## Course Description:

We are all part of families, for better and for worse. As the primary social institution, family gives us the beginning, walks through us the present, and takes us the future. This course is designed to explore the fundamental sociological concepts, theoretical approaches, and arguments of family. We will examine how individuals' personal family experiences are affected beyond their personal choices, by social, cultural, and economic structures. Throughout the course we will investigate many diversity issues of family, including marriage, partnering, parenting, grandparenting, childhood, divorce, domestic violence, and social policy. Although focus on family issues in American society, we will have the opportunity to inspect differences between western (American) and eastern (particularly Chinese) cultures through comparison and contrast. In this process we will see how individuals' family lives are shaped by broader social systems and better understand our own family experiences.

## Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Articulate key concepts and theories in sociology of family.
2. Illustrate how an individual's family lives is shaped by broader social systems.
3. Analyze the issues in sociology of family by leading class discussions.
4. Develop global perspective by comparing the different parenting styles between American and Chinese Families.
5. Reevaluate our own family experiences by participating in simulations.

## Reading Materials

1. Judith Treas, Jacqueline Scott, Martin Richards (Eds. 2014). *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to The Sociology of Families*. \* Referred as "Wiley" in the schedule.
2. Chua, Amy. (2011). *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. The Penguin Press, New York: NY. \*Referred as "Chua" in the schedule.
3. Other readings will be provided separately on Moodle and referred as their respective author's name in the schedule.

## Overview of Assessments

Assignments	Points	Percent
Check-ins	10	10%
Exams (3)	30	30%
Discussions	20	20%
Reflection Journals (5)	25	25%
Book Review	15	15%
Total	100	100%

### 1. Check-ins (10%)

Reading is essential for college level learning. You should keep a good habit of reading the required materials so that you are prepared to share your thoughts in class discussions. In order to hold your reading accountable, you will be tested on how well you read the assigned materials every week. You will take a quick check-in at the beginning of the class day when we start a new topic, typically every Tuesday. Each check-in will have 2 quiz-like questions (true -false, multiple choices, etc.) related to your readings, and you have 2 minutes to finish. Each check-in is worth 1 point and you can earn up to 10 points for this assessment. Although you will take 12 check-ins in total, 2 of your lowest grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. Keep in mind that you have to be physically present in class in order to take the check-ins. No late submission or will be accepted and there is no make-up. You will take the check-ins on Moodle.

### 2. Exams (30%)

You will take 3 close-book exams this semester. The exams will focus on the basic concepts and theories we covered in class. The lecture PPT will be provided AFTER we finish each topic to help you prepare for the exams. The exams are cumulative, and will include questions in various formats, such as short answers, multiple choices, true/false, etc. Although all exams will take place in person on regular class days, not all exams will take up the entire class time. Please plan to take the exams on Moodle using your own devices, unless otherwise noticed.

### 3. Discussions (20%)

Learning is most effective when we constantly exchange ideas with others. Thus, you will lead and participate in discussions on diverse topics throughout the semester. Although you are expected to be actively engaged in class discussions, some formats of the discussion will be graded. Discussions will take place on Moodle and in class. More details about this assessment will be provided separately on Moodle. Below is an overview.

(1) You will sign-up to lead the discussions on 1 topic. As a discussion lead, you are responsible to start a discussion thread and make comments on the responses on Moodle. Then, you will

collect all the responses and moderate a real-time discussion in class. You can earn a maximum of 10 points for being the discussion lead. The sign-up sheet will be posted in the first week of class.

(2) You will participate in discussions by responding to a discussion forum on Moodle AND engage in the real-time discussion in class. Each response (minimum 50 words) is worth 1 point, and you can earn up to 2 points for each topic regardless of the number of responses you make. And you can earn a maximum of 10 points by participating in discussions.

#### **4. Reflection Journals (25%)**

Almost everything we talk about in this course are common experiences we have in life. Thus, reflecting on how you relate what we learned in class to what you experience in life is essential. You will write 5 journals this semester. In every journal, you will reflect on the content we talked about in the past two weeks, including but not limited, the simulations, the reading discussions, and the lectures. You need to focus on 2-3 concepts / terms / theories / perspectives we talked about in class and relate them to your live experiences. How do you see our live experiences are explained by the concepts / terms / theories? Have you found anything new that you have never thought about before? Do you have disagreement with anything that we talked about in class? You should write about minimum 450 words for each journal, 12-point font and double spaced. Alternatively, you can do an audio / video submission for the same content. The audio /video recording needs to be at least 4 minutes long, and you will write down the 2-3 concepts in the comment box. You will submit your writing or recording to Moodle. Each journal worth 5 points (journal 1 worth 3 points plus 2 points for simulation prep) and you can earn a maximum of 25 points for this assessment. A detailed guideline of this assessment will be provided separately on Moodle.

#### **5. Book Review (15%)**

Having a global perspective is important to develop the capacity to be open-minded. Thus, you will have the opportunity to inspect a whole different parenting style from reading Amy Chua's biography *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. You will write a book review (minimum 800 words) analyzing how culture plays a role in parenting and family relationships. You can earn a maximum of 15 points from this assessment. A detailed guideline of this assessment will be provided separately on Moodle.

### **Grading Scales**

The grade scale is listed below. Rounding (for example, an 89.67% is viewed as a 90% or an A) has already been built into the grading scale. **Keep in mind that class participation and attendance may figure decisively in your final grade.** Thus, plan to be in class on time and participate actively. No extra credit will be offered at the end of the semester. Considerable grace has been built into the syllabus and course design, so do not plan on grade changes at the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your grade in the course, address it with me early in the semester and there will be a much better chance of you getting a good grade than if you wait until later on.

*As a reminder, I do not give grades, you earn them.*

Excellent	A	93-100%	Competent	C	73-77%
	A-	90-92%		C-	70-72%
	B+	88-89%		D+	68-69%
Superior	B	83-87%	Marginal	D	63-67%
	B-	80-82%		D-	60-62%
	C+	78-79%		F	0-59%

### **Course Policies & Procedures**

#### ***Face Masks***

In order to create the healthiest environment possible, BSC students and instructors MUST wear surgical grade masks or N95 masks over their mouths and noses while in class sessions. Please note that a cloth mask is NOT SUFFICIENT. Refusals to abide by these policies may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Code of Conduct.

#### ***Academic Integrity***

**BSC Honor Code** “As a member of the student body of Birmingham-Southern College, I realize my responsibility to the traditions of the institutions, to my fellow students and to myself, I recognize the significance of the Honor System, and I pledge that I will not lie, cheat, or steal as a member of the Birmingham-Southern College community.”

Any misconduct, unethical behavior, or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, lying, stealing, plagiarism, harassment, and the creation of an unsafe or threatening learning environment. The student must document all sources of information, including computer usage. Credit must be given when using the ideas of others using **ASA citation style**. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure work is original in nature and when unsure how to properly cite outside work, should contact the professor ASAP. All assignments in this course should be completed **independently** unless otherwise specified. Any suspected violation of the BSC Honor Code will be taken seriously and immediately reported.

#### ***Attendance and Participation***

College is expensive and time consuming. It is a great privilege to be able to participate in higher education because there are millions of people (mostly women) around the world who do not have the opportunity to do so. Thus, let’s make every penny and minute count! First thing first, you have to show up! Although attendance is not part of your grade, I will take attendance in every class meeting. And you are expected to be actively engaging in class discussions. Be prepared to contribute when called on.

### **Turn-It-In Assignment**

The book review will be submitted to Turn-It-In to test for originality. Based on the BSC Honor Code stated above, plagiarism will be reported, and the corresponding assignment will receive 0.

### ***Late Work***

All assignments (excluding discussions) are due at 11:59pm on the respective due dates. Late is defined as not submitted to Moodle by the due date and time. The due dates are listed on the course calendar as well as posted to Moodle. All assignments submitted late within 24 hours after the due date will receive 10% penalty. Assignments submitted after the 24 hours of the due date will receive a 0. Late work is not accepted with rare exceptions\*\*\*.

\*\*\*You may make up exams or submit late work with no penalty ONLY under the following circumstances:

- (1) You are isolating and experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms (proper documentation required),
- (2) You are having a medical emergency or have been directed by a physician not to attend class due to illness (medical documentation required),
- (3) You have a documented family emergency, or
- (4) You are absent due to a college sponsored event (proper documentation required).

### ***Communication***

I like talking to people and I love students! That means I always welcome students to interact with me. Email is the best way to reach me. And, please take advantage of my office hours or make an appointment.

I may have limited availability on nights and weekends. I do appreciate you writing a clear subject in every email you send to me. Please always start your subject with "SO 377 sociology of aging" followed by a short phrase of your questions. For example, if you are asking a question about quiz 1, please write your email subject like this: "SO 377- question about quiz 1". Doing so will expedite my response to you. For me, an email without a clear subject signals nonimportant and nonurgent.

Remember, if you have concerns about this class, let me know as soon as possible. If you don't let me know your concern, that concern may never exist to me. Contact me sooner rather than later. Emailing me about your concern of quiz 1 at the end of the semester is not going to help you at all.

### **Turning Point APP**

We will use Turning Point APP to conduct real-time polling in class. You will use your mobile phone to participate, NOT YOUR CLCKER.

### **Counseling Services**

BSC Counseling Services offers students of all backgrounds, races, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, ethnicities, and cultures a safe place to discuss and

resolve issues that interfere with personal and academic goals. The Counseling Services office recognizes and honors the complex intersectionality of all aspects of a person's identity and presenting concerns. All enrolled BSC students are eligible for counseling at no cost. Students can schedule an appointment by calling 205-226-4717, or in-person on the second floor of Norton Campus Center in the Counseling & Health Services suite next to Student Development. Visit the Counseling & Health Services website for more information.

### ***Accommodations***

If you have a documented disability and need academic accommodations in this course, please speak with me privately as soon as possible so I can be prepared to meet your needs. All disabilities must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Services which will provide an academic accommodations letter to me outlining your needs. If you have not already registered with the Office of Accessibility Services, please contact Dr. Sandra Foster, Assistant Director of Accessibility Services at BSC as soon as possible: (205) 226-7909 or Norton 228 or [smfoster@bsc.edu](mailto:smfoster@bsc.edu) or [accessibility@bsc.edu](mailto:accessibility@bsc.edu).

### **Title IX**

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported, or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct. See the BSC Title IX website ([www.bsc.edu/titleix](http://www.bsc.edu/titleix)) for more information, including an online report form. If you or a peer have experienced such misconduct, there are faculty and staff members who are trained in supporting students by answering questions and helping them navigate this process. The list of advocates can be found along with other helpful resources on the Title IX website.

### ***Safe Spaces and Trigger Warnings***

This class is a safe space for you to hold and share opinions and analyses without fear of discrimination. However, this is not a safe space for anyone to be shielded from controversial opinions. The heart of sociology is grappling with difficult ideas, opinions and realities. The current body of sociological research is a compilation of the thoughts of an ideologically diverse group of men and women writing over the course of several generations. Some of them wrote quite conventionally, while others had ideas that some of us might find shocking. As sociologists, we are tasked with understanding why people believe and behave as they do. Sometimes this involves understanding their worldviews, which could make us uncomfortable. Finally, as we engage and analyze the real world, we often find that reality is not always politically correct. When we are confronted with ugly realities and worldviews that offend us, we best conquer them when we understand them, not when we hide from them.

## International Students

If you identify yourself as an international student, I want to give you a special welcome to be in my class! Was an international student myself before being a professor, I understand the difficulties of being in a new place that is far away from family, friends and familiarities. I am happy to be a resource to you and provide any help I can to make your life easier at BSC.

## First Generation College Students

A first-generation college student is a student whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree. I am the first in my family to graduate with a four-year bachelor's degree (and a law degree, a master's degree, and a doctoral degree). I understand the struggles and challenges a first-generation college student has. Please don't hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can help with.

## Discussion Lead Schedule

Presenting Date	Topic	Discussion Lead
17-Feb	Courtship, Sexuality and Cohabitation	Eli & Gracie
24-Feb	Gender and Family	Emily & Sarah C
3-Mar	Race and Family	Tamrah & Benee
8-Mar	Social class and Family	Zachary & Michael
17-Mar	Domestic Violence	Colin & Audrey
31-Mar	Divorce, remarriage and stepfamily	Krislyn & Jennifer
7-Apr	Health and family	Hannah & Sarah VH
14-Apr	Children, Parenting and cultures (1)	Regan & Kevin
21-Apr	Children, Parenting and cultures (2)	Angelina & Masaki
28-Apr	Children, Parenting and cultures (3)	Joshua

## Course Calendar

The following is a tentative schedule of the topics that will be covered this semester. This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated orally in class and in writing on Moodle.

\*\*\* the schedule of discussion lead (takes place every week) will be added and posted after the sign-up is completed, approximately on the second week of class.

Dates:	Day	Topic to be Covered	Readings	Assignment Due
Feb 1 3	T TH	Introduction and Syllabus Overview & Theories & Discussion Lead Sign-up	Syllabus Chua 1, 2, 3, 4	Check-in
8 10	T TH	History and Trend in America Families in the world	Wiley 1 & 3	Check-in Simulation prep
15 17	T TH	Courtship, Sexuality and Cohabitation Simulation: The Pilot	Wiley 11 & 26	Check-in
22 24	T TH	Gender and Families	Wiley 6 & 22 & 24	Check-in Journal #1
Mar 1 3	T TH	Race, Ethnicity and Families Exam#1	Wiley 10 & Umberson	Check-in Exam#1
8 10	T TH	Social Class and Families	Wiley 7 & Fielding-Singh	Check-in Journal #2
15 17	T TH	Domestic Violence	Wiley 16 & Chua 5, 6, 7, 8	Check-in
22 24	T TH	<b>Spring Break!!! No classes!</b>		
29 31	T TH	Divorce, Remarriage and Stepfamilies	Wiley 15 & Chua 9, 10, 11, 12	Check-in Journal #3
Apr 5 7	T TH	Health and Family Exam #2	Wiley 13 & Chua 14, 15, 16	Check-in Exam#2
12 14	T TH	Children, Parenting and Cultures	Wiley 18 & Chua 17, 18, 19	Check-in Journal #4
19 21	T TH	Old People and Families	Wiley 19 & Chua 20, 21, 22,	Check-in
26 28	T TH	Work and Family	Chua 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32	Check-in Journal #5
May 3 5	T TH	Exam#3 <b>Honors Day. No class!</b>	Chua 33, 34, coda	Exam #3
13	Final day	9-noon		Book Review (due by noon)