Sociology 130a
FAMILIES, CAREGIVING AND KINSHIP
Fall 2013

Brandeis University
Fall 2013
Tu-Th 2-3:30
khansen@brandeis.edu

Professor Karen V. Hansen
Pearlman 209
781-736-2651
Office Hours: Tue. 1-2, 3:30-4:30
and by appointment

Course Description

Changes in the culture and demographics of U.S. families—how children are raised, ideal family size, who can marry, how best to divide household labor, and how to sustain “families we choose”—have transformed our conceptions of kinship over the last two centuries. This course grapples with the complex structural forces that shape kinship and the variety of ways families are recognized and enacted in practice. It pays particular attention to the different experiences of men, women, and children within family units, and how those experiences vary by class, race/ethnicity, migration status, gender, and sexual orientation. A central concern is the dynamic interaction between economic, legal, political, and social forces and how they shape and are shaped by families over time. This is an experiential learning course.

Required Readings


Recommended:
Hochschild, Arlie with Anne Machung, The Second Shift.
Turabian, Kate, Manual for Writers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This course has a LATTE page: http://latte.brandeis.edu. Articles listed below with an asterisk (*) can be found there.
**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to do the reading for the week before class, attend lectures, and thoughtfully participate in class discussions. The course grades are based on:

- Class participation: 10%
- 10-12 page research paper: 35%
- In-class midterm: 20%
- 2 Reflection papers: 10%
- Take-home final exam: 25%

**Participation** grades are determined by class attendance, thoughtful contributions to discussion, active engagement in small group sections, and a presentation on work-in-progress.

The research paper can be on one of two topics: 1) an **oral history of your family** that includes an analytic dimension and locates the family in its historical context; or 2) a **contemporary issue** (for example, the political struggle for domestic partnership laws, parental rights in international adoption, the division of labor in same sex households, and the like). More detailed instructions will be distributed later in the semester. Feedback on the topic and the research itself is built into the process of writing the paper. The initial prospectus for the project is due **October 3**. An extended outline and short bibliography is due **Thursday, October 31**. Students will make presentations on their work in progress, and the final paper is due **in class, Tuesday, December 3**.

Students will take an in-class, essay midterm on **Thursday, October 10**. Study questions will be distributed one week in advance and will challenge students to synthesize the readings and lectures to date. Students will be allowed to bring one page of notes to the exam.

Students will be expected to submit **two reflection papers**. Each will consist of 1 ½ to 2 pages reflecting on the different ways that families are portrayed in the broader culture. A good reflection paper will briefly summarize the article/event, analyze underlying assumptions about families and kinship, link the topic to the class, and assess the persuasiveness and veracity of the article or presentation. The two papers include:

1) A summary and reflection on an article published in a major newspaper (e.g., *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or the *Boston Globe*) about families. The article should appear any time after August 29, and the student should attach a copy of it to the reflection paper. Due **Tuesday, September 24**; and,  
2) A summary and reflection of a live (as opposed to on-line or streamed) lecture related to the topic of families, caregiving, or kinship. Multiple opportunities abound throughout the semester on campus and in the Boston area. Due **Thursday, November 21**.

The take-home final exam, consisting of two essays, will be distributed one week before it is due: **Tuesday, December 10 at noon**.
All work is expected on time, the day it is due, in hard copy. Late papers and assignments will be graded down one-third of a grade per day. Please see me in advance if you are having trouble meeting the deadlines.

**Learning Goals for the Course:**

1. Critically read texts and distinguish between the author’s point of view, the theoretical and political debates in which he or she is engaging, and the evidence presented;
2. Read BOOKS as large research projects motivated by specific questions rooted within a theoretical framework, executed via a particular methodology that yielded certain kinds of data that are analyzed and organized by ideas;
3. Identify and analyze basic assumptions underlying contemporary debates about families;
4. Communicate (orally and through writing) the central argument and point of view of each author;
5. Identify and evaluate the theoretical claims, sources of evidence, and methodology used by the author;
6. Use analytic skills to identify and assess demographic and qualitative data about families;
7. Conduct bibliographic research using social science resources in the library and online, and write a cogent paper based on the research; and
8. Synthesize ideas and data concerning the social structural forces shaping the contours, dynamics, and challenges of families.

**Accommodations for Disabilities:**

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability you should contact me, and present your letter of accommodation, as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay at Undergraduate Academic Affairs (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu) or the appropriate person in the Graduate School office. Letters of accommodations should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

**A Note on Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of
that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. See Kate Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, for questions about proper citation.

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see [http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai)). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

**Course Outline**

**Week 1: Introduction**

**Thur. August 29 – Course Overview**


*Watch an episode (of your choice!) of “Modern Family”*

**Week 2: Defining Families and Kinship—Who Counts?**

**Tue. September 3**


*Stacey, Judith, “Toward Equal Regard for Marriages and Other Imperfect Intimate Affiliations,” *Hofstra Law Review* 32 (Fall 2003).*

**Recommended:**

*Baca Zinn, Maxine, “Family, Feminism, and Race in America,” *Families*, 33-40*

*Stoddard, Thomas, "Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry," *Families*, 475-479*

*Ettelbrick, Paula, "Since When is Marriage a Path to Liberation?" *Families*, 481-485*

**Thur. September 5 – No CLASS**
I. KINSHIP AS EXCHANGE

Week 3: Commodification and Kinship

Tue. September 10

Recommended:
*Uhlenberg, Peter, “Mortality Decline in the Twentieth Century and the Supply of Kin over the Life Course,” Families, 69-77

Thur. September 12—Sexuality, Exchange, and the Market
*Lovejoy, Meg, “Setting the Scene: Two Defining Sociological Features of the Hookup”

*Guest Speaker: Meg Lovejoy, Brandeis University Ph.D.

Week 4: Slavery and African American Kinship

Tue. September 17—Brandeis THURSDAY
*Jones, Jacqueline, "My Mother was Much of a Woman: Slavery," Families, 677-708
*Sudharkasa, Niara, “Interpreting the African Heritage in Afro-American Family Organization,” Families, 91-104

Recommended:

Thur. September 19—No Class

Week 5: Emerging Capitalism and Structures of Kinship

Tue. September 24—The Family Wage and the Emergence of Modern Families
*Coontz, Stephanie, “The Evolution of American Families,” Families as They Really Are,
30-47

***Reflection Paper #1 due

Thur. September 26—No CLASS

Week 6: Capitalism and the Family Wage

Tue. October 1—Wage Earning and Changing Sexual Possibilities
* D’Emilio, John, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” Families, 131-141

Thur. October 3-- Fathers & the Package Deal
Townsend, Nicholas, The Package Deal, Chapters 1-3

***Research Prospectus due

*Clip from “Mad Men”

Recommended:
Pleck, Joseph, “American Fathering in Historical Perspective,” Families, 351-361

Week 7: Fathers & the Package Deal (continued)

Tue. October 8
Townsend, The Package Deal, Chapters 4-7

Thur. October 10--MIDTERM

***In-Class Midterm

II. STRUCTURES OF INEQUALITY

Week 8: Marriage and the Second Shift

Tue. October 15
Recommended:

* Witherow, Judith, "Native American Mother," *Families*, 335-337
* Pardo, Mary, "Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: Mothers of East Los Angeles," *Families*, 251-262

**Thur. October 17**


**Week 9: Conflict in the Care Zone**

**Tue. October 22 —Family Violence and Working with Men Who Batter**

* Ptacek, James, Why do Men Batter their Wives? *Families*, 619-633
* Straus, Murray, “Ten Myths that Perpetuate Corporal Punishment,” *Families*, 641-650
  

* Guest Speaker: Ted German, EMERGE (invited)

**Thur. October 24—Poverty and Children**


**Week 10: Inter-Generational Transmission of Class and Culture**

**Tue. October 29**

* “56 Up”

**Thur. October 31**

* “56 Up”
  

***Research Paper Outline and Bibliography due***

**Week 11: Reproducing Inequality**

**Tue. November 5**

Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*, Chapters 3-5
Thur. November 7
Lareau, Unequal Childhoods, Chapters 6-7, 11, & 14: “Reflections on Longitudinal Ethnography and the Families’ Reactions to Unequal Childhoods”

Week 12: Networks, Childrearing, and Reciprocity

Tue. November 12
Hansen, Karen V., Not-So-Nuclear Families, Preface and Chapters 1-5

*Student presentations on work-in-progress

Thur. November 14
Hansen, Not-So-Nuclear Families, Chapters 6-8 & Conclusion

*Student presentations on work-in-progress

Week 13: Migration, Transnationalism, and Global Care Chains

Tue. November 19
Hochschild, Arlie, “Two-Way Global Traffic in Care” (SHF, chapter 10);
“Children Left Behind” (SHF, chapter 11)

*Student presentations on work-in-progress

Thur. November 21—
Dreby, Joanna, Divided by Borders, Preface & Ch. 1-3, and Appendix A: Research Design

***Reflection Paper #2 due

III. REIMAGINING KINSHIP AND CAREGIVING

Week 14: Caregiving and the Market

Mon. November 25—BRANDEIS THURSDAY
Dreby, Divided by Borders, Ch. 4-8

*Student presentations on work-in-progress
Tue. November 26
Hochschild, Arlie, “Rent-a-Mom” (SHF, chapter 9)
*Lan, Pei-Chia, “Remaking Family through Subcontracting Care: Elder Care in Taiwanese and Hong Kong Immigrant Families,” in At the Heart of Work and Family, Ch. 15.

*Student presentations on work-in-progress

Thur. November 28—THANKSGIVING

Week 15: The Future of Kinship, Reproduction, and Equal Regard Families

Tue. December 3
*Biblarz, Timothy and Judy Stacey, “Ideal Families and Social Science Ideals” Journal of Marriage and Family,” 72, no. 1 (Feb 2010): 41-44.
Hochschild, Arlie, “The Surrogate’s Womb” (SHF, chapter 12)

***Research Papers due in class

Thur. December 5—Twenty-Somethings Going Forward

***Take Home FINAL EXAM DUE @ NOON, DECEMBER 10***