

**Sociology 130a: Families, Kinship, And Sexuality  
Summer 2024  
Brandeis University**

Professor: Nancy Marshall  
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Class meets M/T/Th 11:10am-  
1:40pm  
Location: TBD

**DESCRIPTION**

This course investigates changes in the character of American families over the last two centuries. A central concern will be the dynamic interactions among economic, cultural, political, and social forces, and how they shape and are reshaped by families over time. Particular attention is paid to how experiences of men and women vary by class, race, and ethnicity.

**ACTIVE LEARNING.** To support student learning, this course uses “active learning” methods that engage students in actively constructing new knowledge and skills, through in-class discussions, activities and assignments. Active learning is student-centered, which means that students take an active role in making connections among facts and ideas from different sources, including their own experiences, in problem-solving, and in reflecting on their own learning.

**CLASS FORMAT.** Each class will begin with a discussion of the readings. After a break, we will engage in active-learning activities to promote student-centered learning. These activities may include discussion of representations of families in popular culture, participating in a mock community roundtable to discuss possible community supports for working families, or writing blog posts or letters to the editor on topics related to the readings for the day.

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**REQUIRED READINGS**

Required readings are in e-books available below or journal articles available on Latte. See individual classes for assigned readings.

Ferguson, Susan J., ed. *Shifting the center: Understanding contemporary families*. SAGE Publications, 2022. (Abbreviated as *Shifting the Center* in schedule).  
Read online through Brandeis Library <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/brandeis-ebooks/detail.action?docID=30400751>

Hertz, Rosanna, and Margaret K. Nelson. *Random families: Genetic strangers, sperm donor siblings, and the creation of new kin*. Oxford University Press, 2018. Read online through Brandeis Library [https://search.library.brandeis.edu/permalink/01BRAND\\_INST/nmaao4/alma9923676180201921](https://search.library.brandeis.edu/permalink/01BRAND_INST/nmaao4/alma9923676180201921)

Lareau, Annette. *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Univ of California Press, 2011. Read online through Brandeis Library [https://search.library.brandeis.edu/permalink/01BRAND\\_INST/nmaao4/alma9923644191901921](https://search.library.brandeis.edu/permalink/01BRAND_INST/nmaao4/alma9923644191901921)

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## ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are designed to meet the course learning goals using multiple modalities for learning, including reflecting on readings, making connections across class topics, discussing ideas with your peers, and practicing oral and written communication. **Your course grade** will be based on the following activities:

**Class Engagement.** Class engagement means doing the readings before class, participating in class activities and in discussions. *Class attendance* is mandatory; no absences are allowed for this intensive summer course.

Class Engagement is 10% of your course grade.

**Q-Cards.** In order to participate actively in discussion, everyone should prepare the assigned readings before class begins. **For each class**, you are required to prepare one Q-Card to help organize your participation in the discussion. At the beginning of every class session, I will collect the Q-Cards, which we will use to shape the discussion (I will call at random on people from the submitted questions and may ask you to elaborate on your question or suggest a tentative answer).

Specifics: Select one of the readings for the day. On an index card or sheet of lined paper, write your name and the class date on one side. On the back, **neatly** write a summary of a key point from the reading (3-4 sentences). Then write one question related to that reading that could be used in class discussion. Good questions might start with "The author stated that [quote]. What do you think about that claim?" You can also ask questions about how a specific idea in the reading is connected to other ideas we've discussed in this class or how a specific idea applies to the real world.

Your q-cards are worth 20% of your course grade.

**Weekly Papers.** For weeks 1 through 4, you will write a 3-page paper on the readings for the week, following the prompt provided in the syllabus. See syllabus for due dates.

Each of your Papers is worth 15% of your course grade.

**Zines Project.** At the end of the semester, you will create a Zine (short for fanzine or magazine) about the course. See the assignment for more details.

The Zines Project is worth 20% of your course grade.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Date - Topic	Readings and Assignments
<b>Week 1: What is Family?</b>	
<b>Monday July 9</b> <b>Introduction: What is Family?</b>	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garey, Anita Iltta, and Karen V. Hansen. "Introduction: Analyzing families with a feminist sociological imagination." <i>Families in the US: Kinship and domestic politics</i> (1998): pages xv-xxi.</li> <li>• Collier, Jane, Michelle Rosaldo, and Sylvia Yanagisako, "Is There a Family? New Anthropological Views," in <i>Family Patterns, Gender Relations</i>, 4th ed., edited by B. Fox.</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday July 10:</b> <b>What is Kinship?</b>	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coontz, Stephanie, "Historical Perspectives on Family Diversity," in <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 4</i>.</li> <li>• Baca Zinn, Maxine. "Feminist Rethinking from Racial-Ethnic Families." In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 1</i>.</li> <li>• Dill, Bonnie Thornton. "Fictive Kin, Paper Sons, and Compadrazgo." In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 5</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday July 12:</b> <b>Random Families?</b>	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hertz, Rosanna and Margaret Nelson, <i>Random Families</i>, Introduction, Chapters 1 &amp; 2 (pp. 1-48).</li> <li>• Hertz and Nelson, <i>Random Families</i>, Chapter 10 and Conclusion, pp. 217-223</li> </ul>
<b>Paper due Monday July 16</b>	3-page paper on readings for the week addressing the prompt, What is family?
<b>Week 2: 21st Century Families</b>	
<b>Monday July 16:</b> <b>Forming Families</b>	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gerstel, Naomi and Natalia Sarkisian, "Marriage: The Good, The Bad, and the Greedy," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 11</i>.</li> <li>• Megan M. Sweeney. "Remarriage and Stepfamilies," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 29</i>.</li> <li>• Nelson, Margaret K. "Single mothers "do" family." <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 68, no. 4 (2006): 781-795.</li> </ul>

Date - Topic	Readings and Assignments
<p><b>Tuesday July 17: Migration, families, kinship</b></p>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brettell, Caroline B. "Marriage and migration." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 46 (2017): 81-97.</li> <li>● Kibria, Nazli. "Household structure and family ideologies: The dynamics of immigrant economic adaptation among Vietnamese refugees." In <i>Asian American family life and community</i>, pp. 27-42. Routledge, 2014.</li> <li>● Pyke, Karen. "'The normal American family' as an interpretive structure of family life among grown children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants." <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 62, (2000): 240-255.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thursday July 19: Same-sex Families</b></p>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nancy J. Mezey. "LGBTQ Families," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 2</i>.</li> <li>● Averett, Kate Henley, "The Gendered Buffet: LGBTQ Parents Resisting Heteronormativity," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 25</i>.</li> <li>● Jenkins, David A.. "Boundary Ambiguity in Gay Stepfamilies: Perspectives of Gay Biological Fathers and Their Same-Sex Partners." In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 31</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 2 Paper due July 22</b></p>	<p>3-page paper on readings for the week addressing the prompt, How have families in the US. changed in the 21st century? Cite readings</p>
<p><b>Week 3: Parenthood and Working Families</b></p>	
<p><b>Monday July 22: Parenthood</b></p>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing About Motherhood," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 16</i>.</li> <li>● Taylor, Tiffany. "Re-examining cultural contradictions: Mothering ideology and the intersections of class, gender, and race." <i>Sociology Compass</i> 5, (2011): 898-907.</li> <li>● Scott Coltrane, "Fathering: Paradoxes, Contradictions, and Dilemmas," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 19</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tuesday July 23: Global Care Chain</b></p>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. "Migrant Filipina domestic workers and the international division of reproductive labor." <i>Gender &amp; society</i> 14, (2000): 560-580.</li> <li>● Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar. "The reproductive labour of migrant workers." <i>Global networks</i> 12, (2012): 269-275.</li> <li>● Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, "Mothering from a Distance: Emotions, Gender, and Intergenerational Relations in Filipino Transnational Families," In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 17</i>.</li> </ul>

Date - Topic	Readings and Assignments
<b>Thursday July 25: Working Families</b>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hertz, R &amp; Marshall, NL, Introduction to Hertz, Rosanna, and Nancy L. Marshall, eds. <i>Working families: The transformation of the American home</i>. Univ of California Press, 2001.</li> <li>• Gerson, K. "There's No Such Thing as Having it All: Gender, Work, and Care in an Age of Insecurity." In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 35</i>. Also on Latte.</li> <li>• Pedulla, David S., and Sarah Thébaud. "Can we finish the revolution? Gender, work-family ideals, and institutional constraint." <i>American sociological review</i> 80, (2015): 116-139.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3 paper due July 29</b>	<p>3-page paper on readings for the week addressing the prompt, How do gender norms and the demands of the workplace affect working families in the U.S.? What are some possible ways to improve the lives of working families?</p>
<b>Week 4: Inequalities</b>	
<b>Monday July 29: Family Work</b>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blair-Loy, Mary, Arlie Hochschild, Allison J. Pugh, Joan C. Williams, and Heidi Hartmann. "Stability and transformation in gender, work, and family: Insights from the second shift for the next quarter century." <i>Community, Work &amp; Family</i> 18, (2015): 435-454.</li> <li>• Miller, Claire. 5/16/18. "How Same-Sex Couples Divide Chores, and What It Means About Modern Parenting." <i>New York Times</i>.</li> <li>• Moore, Mignon, "Gendered Power Relations Among Women: A Study of Household Decision Making in Black, Lesbian Stepfamilies," <i>American Sociological Review</i> 73(2):335-56.</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday July 30: Changing it Up</b>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chesley, Noelle. "Stay-at-home fathers and breadwinning mothers: Gender, couple dynamics, and social change." <i>Gender &amp; society</i> 25, (2011): 642-664.</li> <li>• Gerson, Kathleen. "Changing Lives, Resistant Institutions: A New Generation Negotiates Gender, Work, and Family Change 1." In <i>Sociological Forum</i>, vol. 24, pp. 735-753. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009.</li> <li>• Miller, Amanda and Daniel Carlson. "Great Expectations? Working and Middle-Class Cohabitators' Expected and Actual Divisions of Housework." In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 38</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday August 1: Economic Inequality</b>	<p>Before class, read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooper, Marianne, and Allison J. Pugh. "Families across the income spectrum: A decade in review." <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 82, (2020): 272-299.</li> <li>• Edin, Kathryn, and Maria Kefalas. "Unmarried with children." In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 43</i>.</li> </ul>

Date - Topic	Readings and Assignments
<b>Week 4 Paper due August 5</b>	3-page paper on readings for the week addressing the prompt, How do gender norms, family structure and the economy affect family work and the daily lives of families?
<b>Week 5: Unequal Childhoods</b>	
<b>Monday August 5: Reproducing Inequality</b>	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lareau, Annette, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, Chapters 1–2.</li> <li>• Lareau, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, Chapters 3 &amp; 6, plus intros to Part1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday August 6: Networks of Care</b>	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lareau, <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, Chapters 11 &amp; 12</li> <li>• Hansen, Karen V, “Not-so-Nuclear Families: Class, Gender, and Networks of Care,” In <i>Shifting the Center, Reading 22</i>.</li> <li>• re-read Garey, Anita Iltta, and Karen V. Hansen. "Introduction: Analyzing families with a feminist sociological imagination." <i>Families in the US: Kinship and domestic politics</i> (1998): pages xv-xxi.</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday August 8: Wrap-Up</b>	To wrap up this course, during the last class you will create a Zine (short for fanzine or magazine) about the course. See Assignment on Latte for more details.

**COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE POLICY.** This class is discussion-based and depends on full participation of all the students. Class attendance is mandatory; no absences are allowed for this intensive summer course.

**DUE DATES.** All work is expected on time, the day it is due. Please talk with me in advance if you are having trouble meeting the deadlines.

**WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS.** This is an intensive summer course in which we cover the same content that is covered in a regular semester. You should expect to spend two-three hours outside of class for every hour in class, reading assigned readings, preparing Q-Cards and writing weekly papers.

**BRANDEIS POLICIES**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY.** You are expected to be familiar with, and to follow, the University’s policies on academic integrity. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to Student Rights and Community Standards. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found on the university library website. If you have any questions, please contact Alex Rosett (arossett@brandeis.edu), Assistant Dean, Student Rights and Community Standards.

**ACCOMMODATIONS.** Brandeis seeks to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students, and I want to support you in your learning. If you think you may require disability accommodations, you will need to work with Student Accessibility Support (SAS). You can contact them at 781-736-3470, email them at [access@brandeis.edu](mailto:access@brandeis.edu), or visit the Student Accessibility Support home page. You can find helpful student FAQs and other resources on the SAS website, including guidance on how to know whether you might be eligible for support from SAS.

If you already have an accommodation letter from SAS, please provide me with a copy as soon as you can so that I can ensure effective implementation of accommodations for this class.