Marriages and Families

Fall 2019

**PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS**

Five times during the course, you will be asked to come prepared to talk about a particular topic in class. Participating in class is a good way for you to learn the content and skills required for the courses you are taking. I believe people learn best by getting to know one another and by involving themselves with the subject matter-- active reading and discussing ideas with others. The success of the course depends upon your preparation for and involvement in classroom discussions and activities.

Each participation assignment is worth 15 points for a total of 75 points possible. To be considered for full credit, you must be present in class, have your printed assignment with you and participate in class discussion (these cannot be made up). The rubric for how I grade these assignments can be found on the last page.

**Participation Assignment #1; DUE: Tuesday, August 27th**

**Writing Your Own Script; Considering the information in Chapter 1:**

**Where do you and your family fit?**

Answer the questions below. First, type the question, then answer it. Your assignment should be no less than three double-spaced typed pages.

Write a brief sociological description of your family. Think about your own family and the individual members. Answer these questions.

1. How do you define family?
2. What or who constitutes family for you?
3. Does your idea of family include distant cousins (third and beyond) and great-great-aunts and uncles?
4. Does it include people not related to you by blood, adoption, or ancestry?
5. Is your definition of family consistent with that of other family members?
6. If not, how does it differ?
7. Do you make a distinction between the notion of “family” and that of “kinship”? If yes, how so? (For example, what does “family” mean to you compared to what “kinship” means to you? Do you use the word “kin” to describe family members? If so, in what context?)
8. What are the typical marriage types in your family? (Explore the concepts of monogamy and serial monogamy, both found in this chapter, and apply them to this question.)
9. Considering your answers to the questions above, can you think of how broader social forces and your personal values may interact to influence your choices?

**Participation Assignment #2; DUE: Thursday, September 26th**

**Writing Your Own Script; Considering the information in Chapter 5:**

**Personal Biography and Social Structure**

Answer the questions below. First, type the question, then answer it. For this assignment, there are eight questions. Your assignment should be no less than three double-spaced typed pages.

Consider your parents’ and/or friends’ opinions and reactions if you told them you wanted to date or marry individuals with the characteristics listed below.

Race:

If you brought home someone who was African American?

Someone who was White American?

Someone who was Native American?

Someone who was Mexican American?

1. Now write about the response you would get from family/friends with regard to EACH of these race/ethnic groups.

Age:

If you brought home someone who was 15?

If you brought home someone was 25?

If you brought home someone who was 35?

If you brought home someone who was 65?

1. Now write about the response you would get from family /friends with regard to EACH of these age groups.

Educational Level:

If you brought home someone with an eighth grade education?

If you brought home someone with a high school education?

If you brought home someone with a college education?

If you brought home someone with a graduate school education?

1. Now write about the response you would get from family /friends with regard to EACH of these educational levels.

Religion:

If you brought home someone who was Catholic?

If you brought home someone who was Muslim?

If you brought home someone who was Jewish?

If you brought home someone who was Mormon?

If you brought home someone who was Atheist?

1. Now write about the response you would get from family /friends with regard to EACH of these religious groups.

Blood relatives:

If you brought home someone who was your first cousin?

If you brought home someone who was your second cousin?

If you brought home someone who was a third or more distantly related cousin?

1. Now write about the response you would get from family /friends with regard to EACH of these blood relative groups.

Gender:

If you brought home someone who was your same gender?

1. Now write about the response you would get from family /friends with regard to this question about bringing someone home of the same gender as you.
2. Now consider your answers to questions #1 through #6. Do you see any patterns? Explain.
3. Now consider what this assignment tells you about patterns of dating and marriage in the U.S.

**Participation Assignment #3; DUE: Tuesday, October 15th**

**Writing Your Own Script; Considering the information in Chapter 8:**

**Preparing Your Relationship Contract**

If you are currently in a relationship, consider these questions as they relate to your relationship. You may discuss them with your partner, if you desire, and then come up with a version that represents your collective view and consensus. Or you may write the answers from your single perspective. If you are not in a relationship, consider these questions in terms of how you would expect you might deal with each of the topics. If your plan is to remain single, by reflecting on these items you can get in touch with yourself as well as build a more satisfying lifestyle.

Division of Labor & Responsibilities: Please type each question and answer it.

1. How will we divide household responsibilities? For example, who will cook, clean, make the shopping lists, shop, do laundry, make house and car repairs, do yard work, wash windows, plan entertainment, take out the trash, care for children, and perform all the other tasks of daily living?
2. How will decisions be made – individually or jointly? Will one member of the couple have more decision making power than the other? How will we resolve differences of opinion?

Sexual Exclusiveness: Write a paragraph about the four questions below. You do not need to type each question individually, but be sure to address the issues raised in the questions.

1. Will our relationship be sexually exclusive?
2. What is our understanding about sexual access to each other?
3. How will we communicate our personal desires?
4. What are our feelings about outside relationships, both sexual and nonsexual? Would we feel threated by outside relationships?

Money Matters: Write a paragraph about the seven questions below. You do not need to type each question individually, but be sure to address the issues raised in the questions.

How will we decide on the contribution of each person to the total family income and support?

1. Will it matter if one of us earns more than the other?
2. Should we have joint or separate checking and/or savings accounts? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
3. Who will manage the family finances?
4. How will we decide on a family budget?
5. How will we decide how family money will be spent?
6. Will each of us be able to manage if something happens to the other?

Family Surname: Write a paragraph about the three questions below. You do not need to type each question individually, but be sure to address the issues raised in the questions.

1. Will we both carry the same surname?
2. Will we hyphenate our name or use a new one?
3. If we have children, what surname will they have?

Selecting a Place to Live: Write a paragraph about the five questions below. You do not need to write each question individually, but be sure to address the issues raised in the questions.

1. What type of housing do we want?
2. How will we decide on our place of residence?
3. How important are each of these in our decision: proximity to family, schools, work, convenience to community service and public transportation, the overall well-being of the neighborhood
4. What can we afford?
5. Which is preferable for us, to buy or to rent?

Religion: Write a paragraph about the five questions below. You do not need to write each question individually, but be sure to address the issues raised in the questions.

1. What role will religion play in our relationship?
2. Are we religiously compatible?
3. Is this important to us?
4. Will we attend services together? Separately?
5. Will we raise our children in a specific religion?

Conflict Resolution: Write a paragraph about the four questions below. You do not need to write each question individually, but be sure to address the issues raised in the questions.

1. What will we do when things do not seem to be working out right?
2. What mechanisms can we create for resolving disagreements?
3. Will we be willing to get counseling if we are having problems?
4. What are our attitudes about divorce?

Conclusion: Please type the questions, and answer each one individually.

1. Now that you have considered all of these topics, do you think there is value in considering them as you plan your future life?
2. Are there other topics that you feel would be important to consider that are not listed on pages 275 to 277. If so, what are they?
3. Do you think there is value in couples discussing these topics? If so, why? If not, why not?

**Participation Assignment #4; DUE: Tuesday, October 29th**

**Writing Your Own Script; Considering the information in Chapter 9:**

**To Parent or Not?**

Please type each question and answer it individually.

To Parent or Not?

1. Do you want children? If so, for what reasons? If not, for what reasons?
2. What do you have to offer children?
3. What do you expect to receive from the children you may have?
4. How many children do you want?
5. If you or your partner are infertile, will you consider alternatives for having children? For example, would you consider adoption? Or, would you consider any of the new reproductive technologies?
6. What advantages and disadvantages are there to being child-free?
7. What are your options if you or your partner have an unwanted pregnancy?
8. Are there any conditions under which you would consider abortion?
9. Are there conditions under which you would consider putting a child up for adoption
10. If you do not want children now or in the future, will you use contraception? If so, what kind?
11. How will you reach agreement on this with your partner? Explain
12. What kind of parenting style did you experience in your childhood (see pages 304 through 306 for a discussion of parenting styles)?
13. Looking back, are you satisfied with this parenting style?
14. What parenting style do you think you would be most comfortable enacting with your own children, if you plan on having children? Why?

**Participation Assignment #5; DUE: Thursday, December 5th**

**Writing Your Own Script; Considering the information in Chapter 14:**

**Thinking About Later Life**

Please type each question and answer it.

1. How many generations are in your kinship structure?
2. Are your parents, grandparents, and/or great-grandparents still living?
3. How healthy are they?
4. How often do you see them?
5. Do family members live in close proximity to one another?
6. What kinds of services, if any, do family members exchange?
7. In which generational direction do they flow (consult top of page 466 for a discussion)?
8. Are the patterns in your family typical of those for later-life families?
9. How satisfied do you think the oldest members of your family are with the quality of their lives?
10. Are your parents or grandparents retired?
11. How well are they managing economically? Are their sources of income adequate?
12. Did they have a financial plan for their retirement in place before they retired?
13. What are your later-life goals?
14. What age do you see as a desirable age to retire?
15. What can you begin to do now that will contribute to you reaching your goals?

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**Rubric for Participation Assignments: 15 points possible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Points \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Written Component (2 points each)**

\_\_\_\_\_ You typed the questions and then provided answers to each one

\_\_\_\_\_ You demonstrated you took time with the assignment by providing thoughtful answers

\_\_\_\_\_ You provided clear, full sentences with proper grammar and spelling

**Presentation (2 points each)**

\_\_\_\_\_ You demonstrated that you were prepared by having your typed assignment with you.

\_\_\_\_\_ You were an effective participant by presenting your experience to the class

• Did you stay on topic?

• Could you be heard?

• Did you make eye contact with class members (not just with me or one person across the room from you)?

• Did you use others’ names when referring to what they said?

• Did you project enthusiasm about your and others’ ideas?

• Did you use and apply the concepts we’ve read about?

• Did you ask questions, and respond to others’ questions?

\_\_\_\_\_ You were an active listener.

• Did you give your full attention to others as they spoke?

• Did you look at the person speaking?

• Did you indicate by your responses you had listened for the information and themes?

• Did you made efforts to see the issues from the point of view of the person speaking?

\_\_\_\_\_ You demonstrated an awareness that your behavior has an impact on others.

• Did you arrive on time and refrain from side-talking or using electronic devices? Did you refrain from engaging in other distracting behavior when others were speaking?

• Did you act in ways that encouraged others to speak up, take chances, and engage in discussion?

\_\_\_\_\_ You met the page number requirement (1 point)