

SO 302 The Study of the Family

John Jumara

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Vision Statement: Park University will be a renowned international leader in providing innovative educational opportunities for learners within the global society.

Course	SO 302 The Study of the Family
Semester	Portfolio
Faculty	John Jumara
Degrees/Certificates	Ph.D., Sociology and Economics
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Class Days	TBA
Class Time	TBA
Credit Hours	3

Textbook:

Skolnink, A. S. & Skolnick, J. H. (2007). Family in Transition, 14th ed. NY: Allyn & Bacon. (paper) ISBN: 0-205-48265-1

Textbooks can be purchased through the [MBS bookstore](#)

Textbooks can be purchased through the [Parkville Bookstore](#)

Additional Resources:

Society - The Basics, 9th edition, John J. Macionis, published: Prentice Hall

Social Problems - A Critical Power Conflict Perspective, 6th edition, Joe Feagin, published: Prentice Hall

Understanding Social Problems, 5th edition, Linda A. Mooney, published: Thomson Wadsworth

[McAfee Memorial Library](#) - Online information, links, electronic databases and the Online catalog. Contact the library for further assistance [via email](#) or at 800-270-4347.

[Career Counseling](#) - The Career Development Center (CDC) provides services for all stages of career development. The mission of the CDC is to provide the career planning tools to ensure a lifetime of career success.

[Park Helpdesk](#) - If you have forgotten your OPEN ID or Password, or need assistance with your PirateMail account, please email helpdesk@park.edu or call 800-927-3024

[Resources for Current Students](#) - A great place to look for all kinds of information <http://www.park.edu/Current/>.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

<http://www.park.edu/library/>

Course Description:

A study of the family as a social institution and a social group in terms of cross-cultural, historical, and contemporary perspectives. Current controversies concerning male-female roles, sexual morality, reproduction and other issues are considered. 3:0:3.

Learning Outcomes:**Core Learning Outcomes**

1. Analyze and evaluate forms of family as an institution and a social group, as well as marriage and child rearing, as they vary among times, places, and cultures.
2. Explain and critique major social and cultural differences in love and expectations for marriage and family life
3. Understand and assess the roles and structure of the traditional family and contrast those with alternative types of family, such as singlehood, child free couples, single parents, same sex domestic partners, blended families, and so forth; and analyze the causes and consequences of this variety for individuals and for societies.
4. Know the biological, mental, and social aspects of mate selection, reproduction, contraception, and other family planning issues, and explain the consequences of these decisions.
5. Describe and evaluate patterns of acquaintance, intimacy, communication, and the division of labor within domestic units.
6. Describe and evaluate the causes and consequences for family dissolution through divorce or death.
7. Describe and evaluate the causes and consequences of stress, crisis, violence, abuse, infidelity, money, illness, and other challenges for domestic partners and their children.
8. Explain how the family fits into the contexts of individual lives and societies, and assess how productive balance might be achieved.
9. Examine current controversies and trends concerning gender roles, sexual morality, reproduction, child rearing, divorce, and aging in the changing family context; and extrapolate those trends into the near future.

Core Assessment:

(New for July, 2006)

GENERAL NOTES

The Core Assessment assignment for this class will be a major essay that integrates, analyzes, applies, and critiques several sociological concepts and research findings from this course individually, together, and with additional sources from your own literature review and archival study.

You must incorporate the findings from at least five outside sources of original academic research in this essay. You may also include additional sources for examples or background information, but only reputable, peer-reviewed academic sources will count toward the reference requirements of your essays. This means that magazines, newspapers, professional periodicals, or internet sources are only appropriate for examples and

illustrations in this project — if you have any questions as to whether a specific source is acceptable for your essay, you should ask your instructor rather than guess. Also, focus on articles or books presenting original research or theories, not on those reviewing others' works or editorializing about opposing approaches. Reference works, textbooks, and literature reviews are all excellent places to begin your search, but you must find and read the original in order to develop your own reaction. Ask your instructor for source approval if in doubt.

You should also consider incorporating relevant and reputable statistical and other social scientific data collected by researchers, governments, and other agencies and organizations. A wealth of such archived data is publicly accessible through the Internet, and their use can help you better understand your issue and develop a stronger analysis and critique. Again, if in doubt, ask your instructor for approval of your data source.

If you do not properly cite those external sources that contributed to your work, then you are guilty of plagiarism. This will not be tolerated and may result in immediate and serious academic penalties. If you have any questions as to when and how to use citations and references in your essays, please contact your instructor. Your final essay will also be formatted according to the relevant portions of the American Psychological Association Style Guide. The main text of your essay will consist of no more than 3,500 words (or about fifteen pages). While it is possible to construct a successful essay in fewer words, this assignment is comprehensive and detailed enough that most students will find it a challenge to successfully address all of its points in the allotted space. Begin work on your essay early and leave plenty of time for revision to assure the best possible grade.

SO302 CORE ASSESSMENT

Pick one aspect of the modern family, its structure, function, or place in the larger society and culture. Some possible topics include: the importance of marriage, gender roles, the place of children in the family, sexuality and the bearing of children, single parent families, the employment of parents with children, differences between families of an ethnic minority and white families, the acceptance of gay and lesbian families or other alternative forms, or media representations of the family. You should feel free to choose another relevant focus for your essay, but no matter what your choice, you should have it approved by your instructor before you begin in earnest.

Find scholarly or official domestic data that identify the prevalence, variation, and trends in your focus issue over the past few decades. Is there a "cultural inconsistency" between what is actually happening and what we perceive? You should also find at least one contemporary international point of comparison. Again, is the actual similarity or difference accurately represented in our common perceptions? One good place to start is the US Federal statistics gateway site: www.fedstats.gov; the UN, www.un.org, and the World Bank, www.worldbank.org, are two additional good sources for international data; the largest clearinghouse for publicly available academic and organizational data is the ICPSR at the University of Michigan, www.icpsr.umich.edu; and the University of Chicago's NORC is one of the largest academic opinion research centers in the country, norc.uchicago.edu. Consider multiple sources of data, when possible, and compare and contrast the actual data with public perception of the issue. Pay particular attention to the trends in the data and use sociological concepts and findings from the course and your additional literature review to analyze your issue. Over time, what about these families has changed or remained the same? Why?

Evaluate the individual and social dynamics and consequences of your topic at the family and the social levels. Explain and analyze how larger social trends affect individual family lives. Try to understand and explain why some families, who share many characteristics with those of your focus, do not exhibit the same properties. Is this phenomenon having positive or negative (or both) effects on families and the society? Why? How? According to what standard? Analyze and critique examples of partisan positions on either side of the public debate over this issue, and identify and evaluate your own biases in the matter. How can the relevant facts, theories, and research help you determine who is more likely to be right?

Finally, what trend do you think we are likely to see in this issue over the next two decades, both domestically and in your international comparison location? Defend and justify your conclusions. What public policies and individual decisions would help guide this future trend in the most generally useful and beneficial direction? Defend and justify your conclusions.

[Link to Class Rubric](#)