

Course Outline for: SOC 2114 Families in Crisis**A. Course Description:**

1. Number of credits: 3
2. Lecture hours per week: 3
3. Prerequisites: None
4. Corequisites: None
5. MnTC Goals: Goal #5 - History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences
Goal #7A - Human Diversity, Race, Power, and Justice in the United States

In the United States most people will experience a long-term relationship, marriage, parenthood, and caring for aging parents. Yet not all families look the same. Students explore diverse family forms including married couples with and without children, singles, cohabitators, interethnic relationships, blended families, LGBTQAI+ families, communal families, adoptive families, and couples without children. Students explore the connections between families and social institutions, including discrimination, oppression, and inequality (i.e., race and ethnicity, ability, social class, sexuality, and gender); the social construction of family; intimate partner violence, intersectionality, and the impact of social policies on family. Relying on sociological texts and concepts, active learning activities, collaboration, analysis, and reflection students explore the individual and institutional experiences of minority groups in the United States.

B. Date last reviewed/updated: March 2025**C. Outline of Major Content Areas:**

1. Sociological theories of family
2. Sociological research methods
3. History and life-course outcomes of majority and minority family groups in the United States (e.g., work, religion, economy, government, education, health, family, and sexuality)
4. Power relationships between majority and minority family groups (e.g., racism, sexism, sexuality, ability, age, and social class)
5. Social Structures and institutions, including statuses and roles
6. Family and social structures (e.g., gender, social class, work, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and ability)
7. Intimate partner violence
8. Family separation, new relationships, and blended families
9. Sociological imagination and social construction
10. Social policies to address inequality and inequity

D. Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Examine how structural factors influence family group outcomes from a sociological perspective. (Goal 2b, 2c, 2d, 5b, 5c)
2. Describe how family organization has been influenced by the changing meaning of identities (e.g., gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality) within U.S. history and culture. (Goal 2b, 2c, 2d, 5b, 7Aa)
3. Identify historical issues of power and contemporary systemic structures of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, transphobia, classism, heterosexism, ableism) impact families in the United States, with a focus identifying individual-level actions and structural-level policies which address inequality. (Goal 2b, 2c, 2d, 5d, 7Ab)
4. Describe the factors influencing intimate partner violence using both individual perspectives (values, risk factors, responses) and institutional facets, with a focus on how institutions maintain inequality (e.g., sex, gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality, law) and emphasis on intervention and prevention. (Goal 2b, 2c, 5b, 5c, 7Ab)
5. Differentiate sociological theories—including minority perspectives—that explain institutional power dynamics affecting U.S. families, with a focus on how institutions maintain inequality. (Goal 2b, 2c, 2d, 5c, 7Aa)
6. Critically analyze their own beliefs about family identities, power systems, and institutions, which maintain inequality (e.g. sex, gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality, law) impacting families in the U.S. (Goal 2b, 2c, 2d, 5d, 7Ac)

E. Methods for Assessing Student Learning:

Methods for assessment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Exams
2. Quizzes
3. Journals
4. Research papers
5. Oral presentations
6. Written assignments
7. Essays
8. Group work

F. Special Information:

This course meets the following 2021 Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss how family dynamics and communication methods, both verbal and nonverbal, vary between cultures and how recognition of these variances can benefit officers and communities.
2. Discuss Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and acute stress disorders and their symptoms.
3. 2.16.1. Explain what legally constitutes domestic abuse and assault.
4. 2.16.2. Discuss the dynamics of domestic violence including the phases of abusive behavior, the progression of violence, the use of power to attain control of a relationship, the effects of abuse, and the societal forces that may perpetuate an atmosphere conducive to abuse.