



# WELCOME TO SOC 311!

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will help students understand how social forces influence American family life and their own family experiences. Students will learn about the diversity of family arrangements in American society, and current/historical trends in romantic relationships, marriage, and childbearing.

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course you will:

- Discover trends and misconceptions about romantic relationships and family life in the U.S.
  - Comprehend causes and implications of trends in romantic relationships & family life.
  - Analyze your own family/relationship using the sociological perspective.
  - Use gospel perspectives to understand and empathize with relationships & families of all types.
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## COURSE ARCHITECTURE

In an online course, regular and sustained attention to the course is critical. You will not be successful if you try to cram all your learning into short, intensive bursts of study. Instead, set a schedule at the beginning that will allow you to move through the week, completing all activities on time. Be attentive to the reading assignments, course activities, and deadlines. Lessons are generally one week long. The first lesson (Introductory Lesson, a shortened lesson) will help orient you to the course and give you time to practice using the online tools. You will wrap up the course in the Conclusion Lesson by submitting your final assignments and assessments.

Even though this course is online, it is **not** an independent study course. In fact, discussion with classmates is a key component of this course. You will be expected to form opinions that can be supported with textual evidence. Let your classmates help you understand the course content and learn to think critically about it.

In order to do well, you should expect to spend 3-4 hours weekly for every credit earned. Therefore, *you will need to be able to **commit 9-12 hours each week** to this course.* If you are unable to commit to the time demands this semester, please consider taking the class some other time when you can devote the necessary time to completing the workload.

### **Each Lesson:**

- Will open 4 days early in order to accommodate students who need more flexibility in their schedule.
  - New Lessons will open Friday at 8:00 AM for the preceding week, and
  - Will remain open for 10 days ending on the following Monday morning at 8:00 am.
- Has three main due dates:
  - **Wednesday** (8:00 AM, local time). By Wednesday, you will need to complete the following assignments:
    - Prep Materials
    - Reading Outline
    - Reading Quiz
  - **Friday** (8:00 AM)
    - Weekly Assignment Part One
  - **Monday** (8:00 AM)
    - Weekly Assignment Part Two
    - Project
      - Either Family Research or Interview Project
    - Weekly Report

It is important to be prepared both intellectually and emotionally each week. As you interact with others in various assignments, please remember to be kind, considerate, and respectful of differing viewpoints. You can differ in opinions (sometimes the best learning comes when others challenge your thinking) but still be civil. *Any violation of basic common courtesy - including interaction with the instructor - will negatively impact your grade.*

Read the following article as a reminder of the promises and warnings [Elder Bednar addressed concerning entitlement](#).

**Note:** *The due dates of the Introduction lesson activities have been relaxed and are not due until **Wednesday** of Lesson 01. This extra time is given to help students who add late to have time to complete the assignments. Be sure not to procrastinate these assignments until Lesson 01 as that will make completing all of the assignments in Lesson 01 more difficult and time consuming.*

**Note:** *You may experience an issue with loading pages in Firefox and Chrome where the content is determined as "insecure." As a default, these browsers will not load those pages. If any of your pages are not loading correctly or come up as a blank page, read [How to View Insecure Content](#) and [Help! My Page Isn't Loading](#).*

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## COURSE ACTIVITIES

### Preparation Materials

The preparation materials page contains:

- Assigned readings from the textbook
- Other relevant articles

### Reading Outline

Create an outline of the main concepts covered in the Preparation Materials

### Reading Quiz

The Reading Quiz is a short quiz that asks a few analysis questions for students to answer before joining the class discussion as part of the Weekly Assignment.

### Weekly Assignment

The Weekly Assignment has two parts:

- A discussion component, where students discuss a question or topic within the context of the material studied in that lesson.

- A reflection component, in the format of an assessment, where students encapsulate their experience in the lesson and discussion.

## Course Projects

This course will have two major projects for you to complete. The first is an **individual** project:

### FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

- You will have the opportunity to choose one family project among three existing options (or design your own with the instructor's approval). The three projects include:
  - Family Change,
  - Pathways to Marriage, and
  - Visiting and Hosting Friends.
- More information will be provided later about each option. You will conduct research about your own family/relationship, (or sometimes include other relationships). The project will be submitted in two portions:
  - 1) the data (forms) that you collect, and
  - 2) a 10-20 page paper that includes your sociological analysis of the data.

### INTERVIEW PROJECT

- The second project in this course will be completed in *small groups*. It is an opportunity for you to learn from and empathize with people who have had family experiences you might not know much about. Students will form groups based on non-traditional family types that they would like to learn more about by conducting in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced those non-traditional settings.
- Some potential types include:
  - working mothers/single parents,
  - or adopted children/adoptive parents.
- Each group will create an **interview guide** (a series of potential interview questions) and submit them for feedback BEFORE conducting their interviews. After each group member has interviewed *at least one person* who fits their group's family type, each group member will submit a **conceptual summary** of the interview she/he conducted. Lastly, the group members will identify common themes among their interview summaries and present their findings to the class.

- Presentations can be done in PowerPoint, Prezi, Video, etc. Group members will create the presentation and some questions for the class to discuss. After submitting them early and getting approval from the instructor, each presentation group will monitor the class discussion of their questions and help deepen their classmates' understanding of their chosen subject.

## Exams

There will be 2 exams throughout the semester as indicated on the schedule. Each exam will cover the topics discussed for that half of the course. The midterm exam will include topics from the beginning of the course until the time of the midterm, and the final exam will cover the topics presented after the midterm (thus, not comprehensive).

## Weekly Report

The Weekly Report allows you to report on your activities each week and assess what has gone well and what might be improved. This is the only way to get credit for some of the activities that you do so be sure to complete it every week.

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Course Text:

Most of the materials necessary to successfully complete the course, are available online. However, you need to purchase the following textbook for this class. The textbook is essential to your success in the class and many activities are based around the reading. This book is not technically a "textbook" and is, therefore, relatively inexpensive. If you look around for the least expensive option you can find, be sure you get the correct version by verifying the ISBN number below:

- Cherlin, Andrew J. "**The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today.**" 2010. ISBN: 978-0307386380

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## GRADING POLICIES

### Grade Breakdown

A=93-100%; A-=90-92%; B+=87-89%; B=84-86%; B-=80-83%; C+=77-79%;  
C=74-76%; C-=70-73%; D+=67-69%; D=64-66%; D-=60-63%; F=below 60%

A - Work is professional in appearance and content. Assignments and class participation represent outstanding understanding, application, and integration of subject material and extensive evidence of original thinking, skillful use of concepts, and ability to analyze and solve complex problems. Demonstrates diligent application of Learning Model principles, including initiative in serving other students

B - Work is professional in appearance and content but with some spelling and grammar concerns. Assignments and class participation represent considerable/significant understanding, application and incorporation of the material which would prepare a student to be successful in next level courses, graduate school, or employment. The student participates in the Learning Model as applied in the course.

C - Work is professional in appearance but has multiple spelling and grammatical errors. Assignments and class participation represent sufficient understanding of the subject matter. The student demonstrates minimal initiative to be prepared for and participate in class discussions and assignments. The student participates only marginally in the Learning Model.

D - Work is unprofessional in appearance and/or has multiple spelling and grammatical errors. Assignments and class participation represent poor performance and initiative to learn and understand and apply course materials. Retaking a course or remediation may be necessary to prepare for additional instruction in this subject matter.

F - Represents failure in the assignment and/or course due to un-professionalism and/or incompleteness of assignments and/or non-participation in class and the Learning Model.

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## CLASS POLICIES

### Course Questions/Problems/Concerns

This course has a Notes from Instructor board in each lesson where you can post general questions/problems/concerns/etc. Using these boards will inform the instructor, class members, and others monitoring the course

of the issues you find and will allow the proper people to correct them for everyone. *This is the fastest and most efficient way to report a problem and get it fixed.* If you are experiencing the same problem as another student who has posted, you can post as well so others know the seriousness of the problem. If you know the answer to a problem, please post solutions. Helping to solve your classmates' problems is another way to teach one another. Additionally, your instructor will use the board to communicate with you including informing you of fixes and solutions. So check back often to learn of any changes to the course.

**Please note:** *You should only email your instructor directly if the problem is of a personal nature OR your instructor informs you that is the way he/she would like to be made aware of questions/ problems/ concerns.*

### **Free Software for BYU - Idaho Students**

All BYU-Idaho students can get free or discounted software to help in your education. If you don't already have access to these software programs, you can use the link provided to [download a copy](#).

### **Late Work Policy**

Assignments are *due on the day indicated*. Each lesson opens early in order to allow students some flexibility in determining their schedule. Work that is late hampers not only your own learning, but also your classmates' ability to fully participate in the course. *Late work will be accepted only at your instructor's discretion.* (You are more likely to be granted an extension if you do not place your instructor in an awkward situation by asking for special accommodations *after* the fact.) If you feel your situation warrants personal consideration, **inform your instructor before the assignment is due** so that he/she has time to work with you. Any late work that *is* accepted is subject to a penalty as determined by your instructor.

### **University Policies:**

The University has established and posted policies concerning Sexual Harassment, Plagiarism, and Disabilities Services. Please review the following so you are familiar with them:

- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Plagiarism](#)
- [Disabilities Services](#)

### **Disclaimers**

Your instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus and/or

schedule any time during the semester in order to adapt to changing course needs. You will be notified prior to any changes that may take place, so pay attention to communication from your instructor.

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Once you have read through and understood the course requirements, take the [Syllabus Quiz](#) to complete the activity.