SOC 219. Families and Intimate Relationships  
Fall, 2023  
Time: 8:50 to 9:40 MWF  
Class Location: 0308 Curtiss  

Instructor: Dr. Susan D. Stewart  
Office location: 102 East Hall  
E-mail: stewarts@iastate.edu  
Office hours: 12-1 pm MW, and by appointment  

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:  
SOC 219: Families and Intimate Relationships  
Prereq: SOC 134 (see me if don’t have)  
Exploration of families and intimate relationships using a sociological perspective, with the goal to help students make informed and intentional choices in their relationships across the lifecourse. Topics covered include family definitions and theories, sexuality, singlehood, dating, cohabitation, marriage, parenting, divorce, stepfamilies, and aging. Relationship quality, communication, conflict, and work-life balance will also be examined, as well differences in family dynamics by gender, race and ethnicity, and class. Some sensitive family and intimacy-related issues our society is currently grappling with include LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, sex education, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence.  

COURSE RATIONALE: Given its title, it may not be clear to you what this course is going to be about. Dating? Sex? Relationships with parents? This course is about all these things. Nonetheless, it is important to define what is meant by intimate relationships. Intimate relationships are relationships that involve emotional, psychological, or physical closeness or are otherwise meaningful for individuals. Intimacy can occur within friendships, romantic relationships, between parents and children and other family members, and they are vital for all human beings to be happy and thrive. Intimate relationships, balanced with fulfilling work, hobbies, exercise, etc., are the most important aspects of our lives.  

Developing a sociologically informed understanding of human intimacy will help you clarify your own personal attitudes, goals, and values, it will help you seek positive relationships with others, improve the quality of your relationships, and make better choices leading toward a more fulfilling life. Being educated on these issues will increase your understanding of people whose decisions and lifestyles are different from your own. Issues around intimacy are sensitive and complex and our opinions will vary. However, in the end, this class is science-based and you will expect to know and will be tested on the results and conclusions generated by trained social scientists who work at academic institutions, government agencies, and policy centers.  

This class supports the principles of student-centered learning and inclusivity:  
https://www.celt.iastate.edu/instructional-strategies/creating-an-inclusive-classroom/  

COURSE OBJECTIVES:  
After completing this course, students will be able to do the following:
(a) understand and articulate the core concepts, theories and methods of intimate relationships
(b) within the study of relationships, understand and articulate racial/ethnic, class, and gender
differences in relationship dynamics and how social forces affect relationship dynamics within
these groups
(c) understand and articulate how (a) and (b) influence their own personal relationships and family
lives (i.e., C. Wright Mills’ concept of the Sociological Imagination).

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

Access through ISU.

COMPOSITION OF COURSE GRADE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Skills Exercises (RSEs)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Quizzes (Mindtap)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore Activity (Mindtap)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm and Final Exam (20% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Refer to the grading rubric on Canvas.

1. **Relationship Skills Exercises (RSEs):** Six short assignments are designed to help you develop your
own relationship and life skills. *All information on RSEs is for your own personal growth and will be
kept confidential and will be destroyed at the end of the term.*

   **Format:** Assignments are expected to be *roughly 3-5 pages* but will depend on the nature of the
assignment. All papers must be typed. You may use the Word document of the assignment to record
your answers. Papers will be submitted through Canvas.

2. **Chapter Quizzes:** There is a quiz for each chapter in Mindtap (multiple choice and T/F). Each quiz
will have 35 questions and you will have one attempt and one hour to complete each quiz. There is
no proctor and students may use their book and notes from class. *Students must complete 10 of 16
quizzes.*

3. **Explore Activity:** For each chapter in Mindtap, there is a “lived experience” simulation. These
include open-ended questions and answers should be roughly 250 words. **Directions:** (1) Read the
questions *ahead* of doing the simulation; (2) Go through each simulation **TWICE,** making different
choices with each; (3) Take notes and **provide the details of your two experiences** so I can assess
your response. (4) **Answer the questions** provided, incorporating your experiences. No proctor
required. You have **one attempt** but have **unlimited time. Students must answer any 10 of 16
Explores.**
4. **Midterm and Final Exam**: There will be 2 exams: a midterm and final exam. They will primarily cover material from lectures and will contain a combination of objective and essay questions. Links in PowerPoints to newspaper clippings, websites, and videos will be covered on the exam. There is no proctor and students may use their book and notes from class. Students will have one attempt and 2 hours to complete the exam.

5. **Attendance**: This is an in-person class. Attendance will be taken every day. A death or serious illness in the family, personal illness, religious holiday, university field trip, or participation in officially sanctioned university event is considered a valid, excused absence. It is your responsibility to keep me informed in these instances. Do not come to class if you are ill and make arrangements with me to complete your work.

6. **Student Engagement**: Student engagement is measured through being involved in the class and contributing to the class learning environment. Engagement includes listening, participating in large and small group discussions, taking notes, asking questions, and participating in on-line discussions (when assigned). You will give yourself an engagement grade based on these items at the midterm and end of the semester that will be graded in relation to my assessment. Your self-assessment should include a justification including examples of your participation in about 250 words.

   **Note on Discussion Posts**: Sometimes students will engage in a discussion post activity on Canvas. I will post an item for discussion based on the reading, a video, or other family and intimacy related issues and current events. You are expected to provide a response of one robust paragraph of 3-5 sentences. You can either submit an original post, or expand upon another student’s post. If you choose the latter, make sure to add new information to the discussion and be respectful of others’ point of view. You can post more than once if you’d like to add or clarify your post or again respond to something brought up in the discussion. Please do not direct your posts to specific students (i.e., “call out”) or “reply” to individual students. Should you want to mention the experiences of friends, family members, or others, do not refer to them by name—use a pseudonym or say, “my friend” “a person I know,” etc.)

   *Refer to the grading rubric on Canvas.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DUE DATES**: Late work is not accepted. However, there will be some flexibility in due dates due to the pandemic (such as illness or technical issues). I will work with students on an individual basis. Tests must be taken at the date and time scheduled unless I have given you permission to do otherwise. A death or serious illness in the family, personal illness, religious holiday, university field trip, or participation in officially sanctioned university event is considered a valid, excused absence. It is your responsibility to keep me informed in these instances.
POLICY ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Computers, tablets, and cell phones may be used in class for coursework only. They are not to be used for texting and social media.

POLICY ON BAD WEATHER: On stormy days, check your email to see whether or not we have class. If you don’t see an email, then assume class is on.

OTHER POLICIES: We will follow ISU Policies and Recommendations on Free Expression, Academic Dishonesty, Accessibility, Discrimination and Harassment, Prep Week, Religious Accommodations, Academic Issues, located on the left-hand column of your Canvas Course.

NOTE: By choosing to remain in this class you have agreed to follow the expectations of the syllabus to the best of your ability. See me immediately if for some reason you feel this is not possible.

Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.