Theoretical Foundations of Marriage and Family  
Spring 2012

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Texts


Recommended Texts


Electronic Course Reserve

Some articles and chapters will be found at BYU Library Electronic Course Reserve. There is a link to the course site in Learning Suite under Syllabus and Course Information (at the very bottom of the page).

Course Objectives

Course objectives center around the four primary aims of a BYU Education: a) spiritually strengthening, b) intellectually enlarging, c) character building, and d) lifelong learning and service (*Aims of a BYU Education, 1995*). Both teacher and students should expect to teach and learn with/by the Spirit throughout the course and while religion will not be discussed constantly in class both teacher and student should teach and study the “subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel.” Intellectual mastery of essential sociological knowledge about families is required and will be the result of both the teacher’s and the students’ “ambitious commitment ... to rigorously study academic subjects in the light of divine truth.” Both course instruction and student independent study should seek to produce students “capable of competing with the best students in their field.” Course materials, discussion, and assignments are also aimed at helping students develop strong academic skills, including sound reasoning abilities (including the ability to discriminate “things that matter most from things of lesser import” and “the ability to engage successfully in logical reasoning, critical analysis, moral discrimination, creative imagination, and independent thought”) and the ability to communicate effectively (including the ability to “articulate honestly and thoughtfully their commitments to Christ and to his Church”). Course instruction will also aim to build strong character and the desire to continue lifelong learning and service (*Aims of a BYU Education, 1995*).
**Sociology 361 Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will know the basic ideas and arguments surrounding some of the different ways to understand marriage or family common to social science, social and political theory, law, and other forms of cultural discourse on family.
2. Students will be able to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of diverse understandings of family.
3. Students will be able to see the strengths and weaknesses of their own understanding of family and be able to articulate how the life experience and understanding of family for others may differ from their own.

**Evaluation**

Final grades will be based on two exams (100 points each), a writing to learn portfolio (50 points), one critical analysis paper (50 pts.), and course participation (30 points). Final grade distribution will be based on percentage of total points earned (A= 93%; A- = 90%-92%; B+ = 87% - 89%; etc.).

**Exams**

Exams may consist of a variety of multiple choice, definitions, short answer, and essay questions. Essay answers will be evaluated in terms of the depth of analysis offered, the comprehensiveness of the answer, and the clarity of understanding shown. Standards will be such that without keeping up with the reading, regular attendance and participation, students will not receive high marks. The final exam will focus primarily on material since the last exam but will also include essay question(s) that will require a comprehensive view of the entire course. **Exams cannot be made up unless the student has discussed their situation with me before the exam is given.**

**Course Participation**

*Attendance and General Course Participation:* Course instruction is organized on a lecture/discussion base with questions, comments, and discussions encouraged at all class meetings. Attendance is required and is part of your course participation score. Without regular attendance it will prove impossible to receive an A. **Familiarity with the assigned reading for the day is required.** Each student is responsible for keeping up to date on the assigned reading for each class meeting. Class participation will also be a part of your formal evaluation for the course grade. The most important way for students to participate is through reading the material beforehand and asking questions about it. Other ways to participate will include providing additional examples of concepts or ideas discussed in class, discussing ways in which the ideas either do or do not make sense to you, participating in group learning activities, etc. Students should be prepared to address the following questions during class discussion of the reading: What are the key ideas presented by the author? What evidence or illustrations are given to support the argument of the author? What are some things that are difficult to understand in this section? How might one apply these ideas into their own lives or other “real-life” situations? How do the ideas relate to the gospel?

*Study Group Participation:* Each student will be required to be an active member of a study group. “Active” means meeting at least twice each exam period, coming to each meeting having read the material, and preparing handouts to assist other members of the study group. Handouts may consist of summary answers to questions from the study guide, outlines of
chapters, definitions and examples of key concepts in a chapter, etc. I encourage cooperative work and dividing up responsibilities amongst the members of the group. Evaluation of study group participation will be made after each exam period with each individual reporting what they and other members of their group did.

**Writing Assignments**

1) Writing-to-Learn Portfolios: Learning to think critically requires writing about ideas. Informal writing is an important element in the development of good critical thinking and analytical skills. For each week of the semester students will be required to write at least one entry of at least two pages (double-spaced) minimum. The portfolio writing assignments are aimed to assist students to learn the course material and to think critically about it.

Evaluation: Formal evaluation will take place prior to an exam on Blackboard. Portfolios will be posted on Blackboard and each student will read, evaluate and give suggestions for improvement on two portfolios. Evaluating two portfolios is required to earn full credit. The portfolio will be worth 25 pts. for each section of the course.

Criteria for Evaluation: 1) Consistency of writing (One entry each week=A); 2) Total length of entries (2+ pages per entry/week=A); and 3) Quality of entries.

Format: Each entry must include a title and begin on a new page. Each entry must include the day of week and full date the entry was written. Again, the date indicates the day the entry was completed (not started, not mostly written, but actually finished). Each entry must be a minimum of at least two pages double-spaced, normal 12 point font with normal headings and margins.

Quality of Writing: Quality will be determined based on an assessment of the effort put into the entries, the extent of critical thinking exemplified, originality and creativeness, and basic features of good writing. High marks are reserved for those portfolios showing evidence of thinking. Entries that are nothing more than summaries of class lectures or course readings are not acceptable! You must show your own thinking about the ideas in your writing. Finally, portfolio entries should demonstrate critical thinking about the ideas and not your personal feelings or reaction to course material. Avoid subjectivizing your writing. In other words, your writing should be less about you and more about the ideas. They should be written in such a way that you could imagine someone disagreeing with you. For example, if I write something like, “I really like how Marx characterizes the alienation of modern life.” Then, someone can’t come along and say, “I disagree. I don’t think you like Marx.” If your entry is about you, then it is not demonstrating critical thinking. If, however, you were to say, “I think Marx’s description of alienation in modern life is very insightful because…” and then proceed to give reasons for why you think Marx is on to something, then someone could disagree with you.

Style: Normally the audience should be another student in the class, but the audience may also be yourself, the instructor, a friend or parent, the general public, etc. Writing style should be informal but not sloppy. This means that you should not spend an inordinate amount of time preparing a perfect essay with a thesis statement, introduction, body and conclusion. The entries are working drafts of your ideas on paper, not finished essays. Your entries should, however, be easily accessible to the reader (generally another student) with a clear presentation of your train of thought. Spelling, grammar, and clarity of writing are important but not as important as they would be for a formal writing assignment. (I recommend sitting down at a computer and just writing without worrying about writing style, format, and so forth. After you’ve finished
writing, reread with the idea of assessing how clear your writing has been. Make any necessary changes and move on.)

I**deas for Portfolio Entries**

1) Take a key concept presented in the course material and write about how it relates to the gospel. In what ways do the gospel and the sociological ideas relate? Does the gospel and sociology converge into similar ideas? Or are they divergent in key places? What does the gospel have to offer sociologists on this issue? What does sociology have to offer disciples of Christ on this issue?

2) Take issue with some idea in the reading or course discussion. Show understanding of the idea and then show how you disagree.

3) Take an idea or set of ideas presented in the course material and apply it to society, the family, your own personal life, or something else. How does this idea help to make sense of the world around us? How does it increase our understanding?

4) Take an idea or set of ideas presented in the course material and apply it to society, the family, your own personal life, or something else. What are the implications of this idea for how we live our lives? For how we organize our society, social institutions, family relations, etc.?

5) Write about what you don’t understand from the material. What ideas from the course material aren’t making sense? Write this entry in such a way that another student would know where you are coming from and might be able to offer some help. What questions might you ask that would help facilitate dialogue and increase understanding?

6) Reflect on the course lectures and reading and what you are learning from the course. What did you already know about this material (i.e., chapter or lecture)? Does anything contradict what you already knew? Does anything support what you already knew? Does anything expand upon or open up new insights on what you knew?

7) Take a key concept and write to a fellow student that is having trouble understanding it. Try to define and explain the concept to them. Provide an example that they might relate to that will help to facilitate their understanding of the concept.

8) Write a letter to a parent or friend describing an idea from the course and its importance. (You don’t have to actually mail the letter!). Describe the idea in a way that will enable them to understand it. Give examples and show why this idea is important, why it makes a difference, how it can help them in their lives, etc.

9) Take some current event in the news and discuss how it relates to some feature of the course. How does what you are learning shed light on this issue? What do you think?

10) Compare and/or contrast the ideas from the course material with ideas learned in other classes. Do they agree with one another? How are they different? Do the other courses provide examples of the ideas learned in the course material? Do the ideas learned in this course contradict or challenge ideas learned in other courses?

11) Describe how the various ideas of the course relate to one another. Connect ideas presented in one part of the course with ideas presented in another part.
13) Consolidate the ideas presented in the course (or section of the course) into one or two main ideas. How are these ideas central to understanding families?

14) Any other ideas you can think of that show some creativity, taking the ideas and issues seriously (although you could also write something that pokes fun at sociology and tries to be humorous), critical thinking, and so forth.
Theoretical Foundations of Marriage and Family

Critical Analysis Writing Assignment

Purpose
Constructing an argument is at the heart of theoretical work. In this assignment you will practice constructing an argument by focusing on improving both the substantive and rhetorical dimensions of a paper. Learning to think critically and organizing your thoughts into a coherent and structured presentation are essential to producing theoretical contributions to the field. Your focus will be to critically examine an issue we have discussed in the course.

Audience
Your audience is other social science undergraduates who have a basic understanding of the issue but are not experts in the area you are analyzing. Try not to write to the instructor as you may tend to assume of your reader a greater knowledge of theory and write less clearly. I suggest you imagine yourself writing to a fellow undergraduate student who is interested in learning more about the issue you are focusing on.

Scope
The analysis paper must not exceed 4-5 double-spaced pages of 12 point font. This means that narrowing and focusing your issue is vital to a successful paper. You should consult and reference at least 5 resources outside those used in the course. I do not expect, however, that this paper will be a thorough review of the literature on your topic. Your aim is to construct an argument, not write a comprehensive analysis of the literature in the field on your issue.

Style
Your style should be formal, concise, clear, and to the point. You should make it clear to your reader that you are making an argument and that your aim is to articulate reasons for why your reader should agree with you. Class readings and discussion should be primary resources, but I also expect you to incorporate outside readings that contribute to your argument.

Format
You should follow a reference guide for references, headings, etc. Be consistent. I would prefer the ASA format. The following website gives an overview of the ASA style:
http://www.asanet.org/Quick%20Style%20Guide.pdf

Procedure
The critical analysis papers will be due the last day of class.
Critical Analysis Evaluation Criteria

**Understanding:** Does the author show a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the theory or issues being examined?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Content:** Does the paper focus on the most important elements of the issues being discussed? Are the decisions regarding what to include and what to exclude appropriate and justifiable?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Analysis:** Does the author demonstrate an ability to analyze the issues and arguments of different theorists? Does the author show insight and intelligence in their analysis of the issues?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Research:** Is the argument clearly grounded in the texts under examination and/or the theoretical literature in the field related to the topic being discussed?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Focus:** Is there a clear thesis? A clear focus that ties the elements of the paper together?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Introduction:** Does the introduction prepare the reader for what is to follow? Is the thesis clearly presented?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Structure:** Does the sequence of paragraphs and the presentation of concepts and ideas follow a careful, logical development? Is the paper more than a collection of disparate ideas and concepts loosely associated with one another?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Paragraphing:** Does each paragraph represent a clear subset in the development of the thesis? Are the paragraphs unified in their presentation of a key piece to the larger structure of the paper?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Transitions:** Is each sentence, idea, and paragraph connected to the one preceding and following it?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Syntax:** Is the writing style appropriate for the intended audience? Is the language lean, precise, and focused? Is the appropriate voice used? Is the writing clear and easy to follow?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement

**Mechanics:** Are punctuation, spelling, grammar, referencing, and other writing conventions used correctly?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Adequate
- Needs Improvement
Statement on Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, Sexual Discrimination, and Disabilities

Academic Honesty
BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are responsible not only to adhere to the Honor Code requirement to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest. See complete statement on academic honesty at http://honorcode.byu.edu/content/academic-honesty-details

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See http://www.byu.edu/honorcode for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication, falsification.

Preventing Sexual Harassment
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the University but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Students with Disabilities
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You may contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.
Theoretical Foundations Course Outline

**Week 1 April 25**
Topics: Intro to Course; The New & Everlasting Covenant of Marriage
Assigned Reading:
   - D&C 132
   - Yenor, Chap. 1

**Week 2 April 30**
Topics: The Liberal Family: Locke; The Romantic Family: Rousseau
Assigned Reading:
   - Yenor, Chap. 2, 3

**May 2**
Topics: The Social Family: Hegel & Durkheim
Assigned Reading:
   - Yenor, Chap 4, 5

**Week 3 May 7**
Topics: The Contemporary Liberal Family: Mill & Feminism
Assigned Reading:
   - Yenor, Chap. 6, 9

**May 9**
Topics: Modernity, Social Science, & Family
Assigned Reading:
   - Yenor, Chap. 10
   - Knapp & Lott, “Forming the Central Framework for a Science of Marital Quality”

**Week 4 May 14**
Topics: Responses to Modernity: Natural Law & Family; Covenantal Marriage: JPII
Assigned Reading:  
   - George, “Marriage, Morality, and Rationality” (Course Electronic Reserve)
   - Yenor, Chap. 11

**May 16**
Topics: Contemporary Family Politics; Catch-up/Review
Assigned Reading:
   - Yenor, Chap. 12

**May 17 (midnight)**
Portfolios Due (4 entries; 8 pages total)

EXAM # 1 (May 17-19: Testing Center)

**Week 5 May 21**
Topics: Culture, Romantic Love, & Marriage
Assigned Reading:
   - Swidler, “Love and Marriage” (Course Electronic Reserve)

**May 23**
Topics: Phenomenology & the Moral Dimension of Marital and Family Relations
Assigned Reading:
   - Warner, “Honest, Simple, Solid, & True.” (Learning Suite)
   - Marion, “Evil in Person” (Course Electronic Reserve)
   - Knapp, “A Phenomenology of Suffering as Evil” (Learning Suite)

**Week 6 May 28**
Memorial Day Holiday
May 30
Topics: Tolstoy & Marriage
Assigned Reading:
   Anna Karenina, Part I-II
   Morson, “Marriage, Love, and Time in Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina”

Week 7 June 4
Topics: Prosaics and Family Life
Assigned Reading:
   Anna Karenina, Part III-V

June 6
Topics: Prosaics and Family Life
Assigned Reading:
   Anna Karenina, Part VI-VII

Week 8 June 11
Topics: Prosaics and Family Life
Assigned Reading:
   Anna Karenina, Part VIII

June 12 (midnight)
Portfolios Due (4 entries; 8 pages total)
Analysis Paper Due

FINAL EXAM, June 13-14 (Testing Center)