

Re-thinking the American Family

Instructor: Kimberly McKee

Course Hours: Weds. & Fri., 12:45pm – 2:05pm * Course Location: Central Classroom 222

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30pm – 4:30pm * Office Location: University Hall 37

Skype ID: mckeekee * E-Mail: mckee.517@osu.edu

Accommodation of students with Disabilities:

Students who have verification from Disability Services are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 614-292-3307) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

Course Description:

This course explores how concepts of parenthood and family remain intertwined with understandings of sexuality, race and class. This course is based on the premise that the concept of the “family” is not a monolithic, homogeneous construct. We will study a variety of feminist critiques of the traditional, heterosexual, nuclear family. Overarching course themes include: 1) critiquing motherhood; 2) examining the American family and kinship; 3) child welfare, fostering, and adoption; and 4) new reproductive technologies.

The objectives and goals of this course are to help students:

- Strengthen ability to critique standards of parenting “fitness”;
- Increase knowledge of various types of family formations in relation to understandings of gender, class, sexuality and race;
- Gain competence in how the intersectionality of race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and ability shapes the institutions and cultures of the United States;
- Understand the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values;
- Develop skills in research, critical thinking and communication; and
- Foster an understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States

Required Texts:

- Raymond, Janice G. (1993) *Women as Wombs: Reproductive Technologies and the Battle Over Women’s Freedom*. North Melbourne, Australia: Spinfex.
- Stacey, Judith. (1996) *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Trenka, Jane Jeong, Julia Chinyere Oparah and Sun Ying Shin. (Eds.) (2006) *Outsiders Within: Writings on Transracial Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Additional readings will be posted online in Carmen

Course readings will be complemented by in-class screening of the following documentaries: *Ask Us Who We Are* (2010); *Daddy and Papa* (2002); *One Big Hapa Family* (2010); and *Adopted: For the Life of Me* (2010).

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend every class session. *The attendance policy begins Week 2.* Students are allowed two excused absences. Please use these absences wisely. For every additional unexcused absence you will lose three points per absence from your overall course grade. For example, if you miss an additional three classes outside of your two excused absences your final grade will be docked 9 points.

Class begins on time. If you are more than ten minutes late, you will be marked absent for the course unless of an emergency and/or previous arrangements were made with the instructor.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation (15%)

Please engage only in respectful discussion. We represent a multitude of different personalities, and diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and opinions. Please do not attack your fellow students for voicing their opinions. **This course is dialogue-intensive.** It is crucial that students come to class having read all assignments and prepared to participate meaningfully in class discussions. Class discussions are meant to encourage us to think critically about both the content of this course and the world around us. Together, we will be producing knowledge rather than merely consuming it. The inclusion of multiple, and even contrasting, viewpoints will help us with this, and participation is required from everyone.

2. Reflection on Family (15%)

This short written assignment should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length. Reflecting on your own family structure and the readings from the course, this paper should discuss your understanding of family. This short response should address the following questions:

- How did you initially conceive/define the term “family”? Does your own family formation reflect this definition?
- Have the initial course readings from Part One of the syllabus impacted your understanding of “family”?
- Why do you think society has strong definitions of family?
- Is your definition or understanding of family different than your peers or family?

DUE: Week 5, Lecture 10 (February 8, 2013) in class

3. Reflection on “Family Values” (15%)

This short written assignment should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length. Reflecting on in-class discussions and lectures, how do you define the term “family values”? This short response should address the following questions:

- How do you define the term “family values”?
- Who influenced your understanding of “values”?
- Why do you think mainstream society defines “family values”?
- Do you think your personal family values should reflect mainstream society’s understanding of “family values”?

DUE: Week 7, Lecture 13 (February 20, 2013) in class

4. **Research Paper (35%)**

In addition to the information provided in 3a – 3c, the instructor will provide further information in class to the students.

a. **Research Proposal (10%)**

Your final paper research proposal can be on any topic of your choosing as long as it relates to the core theme of the class: “Rethinking the American Family.” Topics may include aspects of what is discussed throughout the course. You may also propose to write a topic not directly mentioned within the course syllabus. The instructor is available for meetings to discuss your preliminary thoughts concerning your research proposal and subsequent paper.

The proposal should be 2-3 pages in length. Your research proposal should include:

- An **introduction** to your topic;
- The **central concepts** that, at this point in your thinking, will support your argument;
- A **tentative hypothesis** as to what you think you’ll discover or argue;
- An introduction to the relevant bodies/fields of **literature**; and
- A **annotated bibliography** of at least **four** sources

DUE: Week 4, Lecture 7 (January 30, 2013) in class

b. **Research Paper Draft (10%)**

This draft should be at least 5 – 6 pages in length. The paper should have a clear introduction stating the central argument and the direction you plan to go in your paper. You should situate your argument within any relevant bodies of literature. At least six sources should be included.

We will **review the rubric in class on February 20, 2013** (Week 7, Lecture 13). However, the **rubric will be available via Carmen prior to the in class review.**

DUE: Week 9, Lecture 18 (March 8, 2013) by 5pm via Carmen Dropbox Folder

c. **Research Paper – Final Version (15%)**

This paper should be between 10-12 pages in length. This final version should take into account feedback provided by the instructor on your paper draft as well as any comments provided during the mini-conference presentation. At least ten sources should be included.

DUE: April 24, 2013 by 2pm EST via the correct Carmen Dropbox folder

5. **Mini Conference Presentation (15%) – Weeks 12, 13, 14**

Each student will present their papers orally to the class (Lectures 21-25). Following the receipt of your research paper proposals, the instructor will divide this mini-conference up into themes. These presentations will serve as an opportunity to share your work with the class and receive feedback prior to submitting your final paper. You will have 10-15 minutes to present your work (4-5 double spaced pages).

As you craft this presentation, please keep the following information in mind:

- The **conceptual problem**: what is your core argument?
 - What is the broader field you're engaging with?
- The **materials** you use as evidence for your argument

Students should be prepared to address questions from their peers and instructor.

6. **Instructor Meeting (5%)**

This meeting will occur in **Week 15** in lieu of our meetings. You **will schedule** your meeting with me **in class** on March 1, 2013.

Paper and Late Assignment Policy

All papers are expected to be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. All papers must adhere to the standard MLA research paper format and should include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page. Your thesis statement must be underlined. Your papers should not merely repeat class discussion or consist of plot summaries or descriptions; your papers should argue a thesis from a definite position about a pop cultural text.

Please note that **assignments are due on the dates designated in the syllabus at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted.** If an emergency arises and you make arrangements with me ahead of time, I may agree to accept a late assignment. **A computer malfunction is not an acceptable excuse for not turning a paper in on time. NOTE: Carmen will send you a receipt acknowledging your submission. Please make sure you receive this receipt following your submission.**

Academic Misconduct:

All students are responsible for doing their own work and plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is *“the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.”*

Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university.

Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple.

Always cite your sources (I can help with this) and ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism.

To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, **do not plagiarize!**

Resources

- **Your instructor:** Please feel free to contact me at any time over the course of the quarter if you are struggling with papers, course work, etc. I am willing to work with you. ***Email is the best way to contact me.*** I will respond to your email within 24-hours on weekdays, and by Sunday evening at the latest on weekends (beginning Friday evening). Also, I encourage you to use my office hours. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time.
- **The OSU Writing Center:** OSU Writing Center consultants are an excellent resource for writers at any level or stage in the writing process. Take advantage of the free individual tutoring that you can receive there. The Writing Center is located in 485 Mendenhall Laboratory, on the south side of the oval. Phone: 614.688.4291 Website: <http://ctsw.osu.edu/>
- Please also check our Carmen site under Course Content > Resources for additional online sources.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time.

NOTE ON READINGS: *If you are asked to “select one of the readings below,” individuals with last names beginning A-L will read the first listed reading. Individuals with the last names beginning M-Z will read the second listed reading.*

Course Schedule

PART 1: CRITIQUING MOTHERHOOD

Week 1

Lecture 1 (1/9/2013): Course Introduction, Announcements
No Office Hours

Lecture 2 (1/11/2013): *Constructing Motherhood and Family*

Available on Carmen:

- Introduction – Chodorow, Nancy. (1999) *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Second Edition.
- Thorne, Barrie. (1992) “Feminism and the Family: Two Decades of Thought” in Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom (Eds.) *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, pp. 3-30. Second Edition.

Week 2

Lecture 3 (1/16/2013): *Reproducing Kinship and Marginalized Mothers: The Intersection of Race and Class*
Research Proposal Guidelines Provided

Available on Carmen:

- “The Ultimate Revolution: Demands and Speculations” in Firestone, Shulamith. (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist-Revolution*. New York: Quill.

Select one of the following readings (available via Carmen):

- Brush, Lisa D. (1997) “Worthy Widows, Welfare Cheats: Proper Womanhood in Expert

Needs Talk about Single Mothers in the United States, 1900 to 1988.” *Gender & Society* 11(6): 720-746.

- Bock, Jane D. (2000) “Doing the Right Thing? Single Mothers by Choice and the Struggle for Legitimacy.” *Gender & Society* 14(1): 62-86.

Lecture 4 (1/18/2013): *Purchasing Maternal/Domestic Labor*

Available on Carmen:

- Uttal, Lynet. (1996) “Custodial Care, Surrogate Care, and Coordinated Care: Employed Mothers and the Meaning of Child Care.” *Gender & Society* 10(3): 291-311.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. (2002) “Love and Gold” in Ehrenreich, Barbara and Arlie Russell Hochschild (Eds.) *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. New York: Owl Books, pp. 15-30.

PART 2: EXAMINING THE AMERICAN FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Week 3

Lecture 5 (1/23/2013): *American Families*

Reflection on Family assignment provided

- Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 3 – Stacey, Judith. (1996) *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Lecture 6 (1/25/2013): *LGBTQ Parents (Part 1)*

Documentary screening: *Daddy and Papa*

Available on Carmen:

- John Raible, “LGBT parents & transracial adoption” (<http://johnraible.wordpress.com/lgbt-parents-transracial-adoption/>)

Week 4

Lecture 7 (1/30/2013): *LGBTQ Parents (Part 2) & Research Proposal Due*

- Chapter Five – Stacey, Judith. (1996) *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age*. Boston: Beacon Press.

EXTRA CREDIT EVENT: Eleana Kim Lecture (4pm – 5pm Ohio Union Multicultural Center) or *In the Matter of Cha Chung Hee* film screening, January 31, 2013 (8-9:30pm Gateway Film Center)

To receive extra credit, students must attend the event and check in with the instructor. Each event is a separate extra credit opportunity. Students must write a 2 page (double-spaced; 12 point Times New Roman font; 1 inch margins) reflection on the event regarding what they learned. This reflection is due by February 6, 2013 (at the beginning of class). Students may earn upwards of 3 points towards their research proposal grade.

Lecture 8 (2/1/2013): *The Pathologization of the Black Family*

Available on Carmen:

- Hill Collins, Patricia. (1998) “It’s All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation.” *Hypatia* 13(3): 62-82.
- “Slaying the Dream: The Black Family and the Crisis of Capitalism” in Davis, Angela.

(1990) *Women, Culture, and Politics*. New York: Vintage Books.

Select one of the readings below:

- “Constraining Choice: Welfare Queens as Illegitimate Consumers” in Solinger, Rickie. (2001) *Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare in the United States*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- “Introduction” in Roberts, Dorothy. (1997) *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage Books.

Week 5

Lecture 9 (2/6/2013): *Foster Care*

- Film screening *Ask Us Who We Are*

Available on Carmen:

- Selections from: Roberts, Dorothy. (2002) *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.
 - “The System’s Changing Racial Composition and Approach to Child Welfare” – “Black Children are More Likely to Get Stuck in Foster Care” (pg. 14-25)
 - “The System’s Fundamental Flaw” to “A Racist Institution?” (pg. 74-99)

Optional readings available on Carmen:

- Anton, Leonora LaPeter. (2011, December 27) “Is a child always better off with relatives, even after bonding with a foster family?” *Tampa Bay Times*
<http://www.tampabay.com/features/humaninterest/is-a-child-always-better-off-with-relatives-even-after-bonding-with-a/1207883>
- Wessler, Seth Freed. (2011, November 2) “Thousands of Kids Lost from Parents in U.S. Deportation System.” *Colorlines*
http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/11/thousands_of_kids_lost_in_foster_homes_after_parents_deportation.html
- Sullivan, Laura and Amy Walters. (2011, October 25) “Native Foster Care: Lost Children, Shattered Families.” *National Public Radio*
<http://www.npr.org/2011/10/25/141672992/native-foster-care-lost-children-shattered-families>

Lecture 10 (2/8/2013): *Mixed Race in the United States (Part 1)*

Reflection on Family Due

Reflection on Family Values Prompt Provided

In class screening and discussion of *One Big Hapa Family*

Available on Carmen:

- Spickard, Paul (1988) “The Problem of Intermarriage” and “Conclusion” in *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

PART 3: CHILD WELFARE, FOSTERING, ADOPTION

Week 6

Lecture 11 (2/13/2013): *Mixed Race in the United States (Part 2)*
No Office Hours

- Guest Lecture, Adrienne Winans (PhD Candidate, Department of History)

Lecture 12 (2/15/2013): *Historicizing Domestic Adoption: Perspectives of Domestic Birth Mothers*

- Guest Lecture, Kate Livingston (PhD Candidate and Undergraduate Studies Advisor, Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies)
- In class screening/discussion *Adopted: for the Life of Me*

Available on Carmen:

- Chapter 2-3; Fessler, Ann. (2006) *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade*. New York: Penguin Press.

Week 7

Lecture 13 (2/20/2013): *Transracial Adoption: Black Children, White Parents* and **Reflection on Family Values Due**
Review Rubric for Research Proposal Draft

- Roberts, Dorothy. (2006) "Adoption Myths and Racial Realities in the United States." Trenka, Jane Jeong, Julia Chinyere Oparah and Sun Ying Shin. (Eds.) (2006) *Outsiders Within: Writings on Transracial Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. Pp. 49-55
- Briggs, Laura. (2006) "Orphaning the Children of Welfare: 'Crack Babies,' Race, and Adoption Reform" Trenka, Jane Jeong, Julia Chinyere Oparah and Sun Ying Shin. (Eds.) (2006) *Outsiders Within: Writings on Transracial Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. Pp. 75-88

Lecture 14 (2/22/2013): *Native American adoption*

- Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, Heidi and Kekek Jason Todd Stark. (2006) "Flying the Coop: ICWA and the Welfare of Indian Children" Trenka, Jane Jeong, Julia Chinyere Oparah and Sun Ying Shin. (Eds.) (2006) *Outsiders Within: Writings on Transracial Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. Pp. 125-138.

Week 8

Lecture 15 (2/27/2013): *Intercountry Adoption Case Study: South Korea and Lessons Learned*
Review Mini-Conference Presentation Requirements

- Park Nelson, Kim. (2006) "Shopping for Children in the International Marketplace" Trenka, Jane Jeong, Julia Chinyere Oparah and Sun Ying Shin. (Eds.) (2006) *Outsiders Within:*

Writings on Transracial Adoption. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. Pp. 89-104

- KADNexus. (2010, May 17) "John Seabrook NPR Segment." *The Transracial Korean Adoptee Nexus* <http://kadmexus.wordpress.com/2010/05/17/john-seabrook-npr-segment/>
- Seabrook, John. (2010, May 10) "The Last Babylift: Adopting a child in Haiti." *The New Yorker* http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/05/10/100510fa_fact_seabrook

EXTRA CREDIT EVENT: "ICONIC: Decoding Images of the Revolutionary Black Woman" with Dr. Lakesia Johnson, Thursday, February 28, 2013 - 4:00pm, Traditions Room- The Ohio Union

To receive extra credit, students must attend the event and check in with the instructor. Students must write a 2 page (double-spaced; 12 point Times New Roman font; 1 inch margins) reflection on the event regarding what they learned. This reflection is due by March 6, 2013 (at the beginning of class). Students may earn upwards of 3 points towards their reflection on family values.

Lecture 16 (3/1/2013): *Korean Birthmothers*
Instructor meeting signup in class

- Selected letters from: Dorow, Sara (Ed.) (1999) *I Wish You a Beautiful Life: Letters from the Korean Birth Mothers of Ae Ran Won to Their Children*. St. Paul, MN: Yeong and Yeong Book Company.
- Kwon Dobbs, Jennifer. (2011) "Unwed Mother and Adoptee Rights." *Nodutdol* http://nodutdol.org/index.php/enews/june_2011/article/2/

PART 4: NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES
Week 9

Lecture 17 (3/6/2013): *Tracing the Origins of New Reproductive Technologies*

- Guest Lecture: Jeff Vernon (PhD Candidate, Department of History)
- Chapters 1 and 2; Raymond, Janice G. (1993) *Women as Wombs: Reproductive Technologies and the Battle Over Women's Freedom*. North Melbourne, Australia: Spinfex.

Lecture 18 (3/8/2013): *The Racialized and Classed Nature of Reproductive Labor (Part 1)*
Research Paper Draft Due by 5pm via correct Carmen dropbox folder

- Chapters 4 and 6 – Raymond, Janice G. (1993) *Women as Wombs: Reproductive Technologies and the Battle Over Women's Freedom*. North Melbourne, Australia: Spinfex.

Week 10 Spring Break (No Classes)

Week 11

Lecture 19 (3/20/2013): *The Racialized and Classed Nature of Reproductive Labor (Part 2)*

Available on Carmen:

- Ragoné, H. (1998) "Incontestable Motivations" in Franklin, S. and Ragoné, H. (Eds.) *Reproducing Reproduction: Kinship, Power and Technological Innovation*. Philadelphia:

University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 118-131.

Lecture 20 (3/22/2013): *Locating the Meaning of Fatherhood: How are “good” fathers characterized in comparison to “good” mothers?*

Review Final Paper Rubric

Available on Carmen:

- MetroDad: “In Hell, Everyone Wears Pink” (http://metrodad.typepad.com/index/2004/10/the_pink_mafia.html)
- Williams, Alex. (2012, August 10) “Just Wait Until Your Mother Comes Home.” *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/fashion/dads-are-taking-over-as-full-time-parents.html?pagewanted=all>)
- Marks, Loren and Rob Palkovitz. (2004) “American fatherhood types: the good, the bad, and the uninterested.” *Fathering* 2(2): 113-129.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. (2002) “Confessions of a Black Mr. Mom.” *Washington Monthly*

PART 5: MINI CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Week 12

Lecture 21 (3/27/2013): *Mini Conference Presentation – Theme TBA*
Office Hours Amended: 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Lecture 22 (3/29/2013): *Mini Conference Presentation – Theme TBA*

Week 13

Lecture 23 (4/3/2013): *Mini Conference Presentation – Theme TBA*

Lecture 24 (4/5/2013): *Mini Conference Presentation – Theme TBA*

Week 14

Lecture 25 (4/10/2013): *Mini Conference Presentation – Theme TBA*

PART 6: EVOLVING NOTION OF “FAMILY”

Lecture 26 (4/12/2013): *What happens when we rethink family?*

- Students and the instructor will reflect on how our personal notions of family may have been challenged and shifted throughout the semester.
- This class will allow students to share any shifts in their research paper to the class and ask for feedback on these ideas

Week 15 No Classes – ONLY MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR

Meetings will be held: Friday, April 12; Monday, April 15; and Tuesday, April 16 via Skype. Please make sure you add the instructor on Skype (mckeekee). Meetings will be 15 minutes in length. If you cannot attend meetings on either day, please speak to the instructor about Skype meetings on Sunday, April 14 (time TBD) or evening Skype meetings on Monday, April 15.

The instructor will be attending a conference from Wednesday, April 17 – Sunday,

April 21. E-mail access will be intermittent.

Week 16 **Final Research Paper Due Wednesday, April 24 by 2pm EST in the correct Carmen Dropbox folder**