

Myths & Reality: Marriage & Family (SOCI 3350)

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Duane A. Williams

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Office: CAB 435E

Student Hours: Tuesdays 11am – 12pm | Wednesday's 7:30am – 9am

Virtual and evening appointments available upon request

When Should You Meet with Me?

Student hours are dedicated times for discussing course content, academic success strategies, career goals, or any concerns that may affect your success. If you are unable to meet during scheduled hours, please email me to arrange an appointment. I encourage you to reach out whenever you have questions or need support. I am here to help you succeed.

Course Information

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 am – 10:45 am

Where: Madla 353

Term: Fall 2026

Course Catalog Description

In this course, students will explore the location and role of family in social structure, the functions of marriage and family, and the ways in which this critical social institution has adapted to and reflects larger social changes.

Course Overview

This course examines marriage and family as foundational social institutions, exploring how they shape—and are shaped by—broader social, cultural, and economic forces. Students will critically evaluate common myths about family life and compare them with sociological realities using theory, research, and lived experience.

Open Source Text

[Sociology of the Family](#) (Ron J. Hammond)

[Sociology of the Family](#) (Amy Traver)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain marriage and family as social institutions using sociological theories
- Analyze how social forces shape family structures and relationships

- Apply sociological concepts to personal and observed experiences
- Critically evaluate myths about marriage and family using evidence
- Assess how families change across time and social contexts
- Communicate evidence-based insights through written and visual analysis

Course Structure:

Section I (Weeks 1–4): Foundations

- Week 1: Historical Changes & Definitions (Chapter 1: Hammond)
- Week 2: Defining Family and Myths (Chapter 1: Traver)
- Week 3: Sociological Theories (Chapter 3: Hammond)
- Week 4: Sociological Research Methods (Chapter 3: Traver)

Section II (Weeks 5–12): Relationships and Family Transitions

- Week 5: Love and Intimacy (Chapter 5: Hammond)
- Week 6: Communication (Chapter 6: Hammond)
- Week 7: Dating and Mate Selection (Chapter 8: Hammond)
- Week 8: Cohabitation and Marriage (Chapter 5: Traver) (1/2 week)
- Week 9: Parenting (Chapter 10: Hammond)
- Week 10: Divorce and Separations (Chapter 12: Hammond)
- Week 11: Remarriage and Step-Families (Chapter 13: Hammond)
- Week 12: Family Stressors and Strengths (Chapter 8: Traver)

Section III (Weeks 13–15): Families Across the Life Course

- Week 13 Aging and Families (Chapter 14: Hammond)
- Week 14: Family Strengths and the Future (Chapter 17: Hammond) (1/2 week)
- Week 15: Family Strengths and the Future and Wrap-up
- Week 16: Final Presentations

Note: Circumstances may arise during the semester that require adjustments to assignment, quiz, or reading deadlines. Any changes will be communicated to students promptly.

Presentation 1 | Family Activity (max 8 slides) | Week 9

Analyze your family (or another family of your choice) through a sociological lens – analysis of family structure, social influences, gender roles, myths vs reality. Your analysis should include:

- Family structure: nuclear, extended blended, single-parent, etc.
- Social influences: culture, gender, religion, policy
- Roles and expectations: how are these assigned/distributed?

- Myth vs. reality: identify 2-3 common myths about families and compare them to your observations
- Apply at least one sociological theory to your observation

Reflection Paper | Week 13-14

Using at least two sociological theories and course readings, analyze how family and marriage customs have changed across generations. Include common myths that exist about family and marriage based on readings or additional research. Length: 2-3 pages (max).

Presentation 2 | Family Change Over Time (Final) | Week 16

Family myths timeline – Multi-generational timeline connecting family experiences to social change. Create a multi-generational timeline, across 3 generations (grandparents, parents, you or similar), illustrating how family experiences and expectations have changed/shifted over time.

- In your analysis, consider, marriage, gender roles, parenting styles, work-family balance, other.
- Which changes were related to larger societal forces (economy, policy, technology, culture)

Assessment	Weight
Discussions/Participation	10%
Weekly Reading Quizzes	20%
Presentation 1	20%
Reflection Paper	25%
Presentation 2 (Final)	25%

Detailed grading rubrics for Presentation 1, Reflection Paper, and Presentation 2 will be available in Blackboard.

Grading Scale	Grade
90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

Academic Dishonesty

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic Dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submission, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. All students are responsible for being familiar with the

Academic Dishonesty Policy which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook (<http://www.tamusa.edu/studentengagementsuccess>).

Classroom Expectations

Attendance – Regular attendance and active participation are essential to success in this course. Because much of the learning occurs through lectures, discussions, and in-class activities, students are expected to attend class consistently and arrive on time. While circumstances beyond a student's control may occasionally arise, excessive absences can negatively affect academic performance. Students who miss four (4) class meetings may have their final course grade reduced by one letter grade. Students who miss more than four (4) class meetings will not earn a passing grade in the course. If you must be absent, please notify me as far in advance as possible. Communication does not automatically excuse an absence, but it does allow us to discuss missed work and any available options. Students are responsible for obtaining any missed notes, assignments, announcements, or other course materials.

Civility – This course includes discussions of topics related to marriage, family, and society that may be personally meaningful or emotionally challenging for some students. Students are expected to engage respectfully with classmates and consider differing viewpoints with civility and professionalism. My goal is to foster an inclusive learning environment where ideas can be explored thoughtfully and respectfully. If course content or discussions raise concerns for you, please reach out to me. Open communication will help me support your success and connect you with appropriate campus resources when needed.

Quizzes – There will be a total of 12 quizzes administered through Blackboard, with the lowest two quiz scores dropped. The quizzes are designed to support and assess achievement of the course learning outcomes. Active engagement with the assigned weekly readings will help students prepare for these assessments. Each quiz will include a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions based on the weekly reading assignments. All quizzes are open-book, but students are expected to complete them independently and demonstrate their understanding of the course material. Quizzes will be available during designated time periods and will open and close at specific times each week. It is the student's responsibility to complete each quiz before the posted deadline.

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the website or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784- 1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Online tutoring is also available for after-hours and weekend assistance.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

Weekday	Appointments Available	Walk-in Tutoring (no appointment needed)
Monday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Tuesday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Wednesday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Thursday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Friday	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

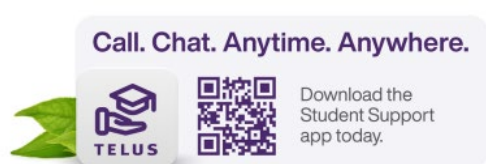
Counseling/Mental Health Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional

difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.

The [TELUS Student Support App](#) provides a variety of mental health resources to include 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit the [Jag E Alert System website](#). You can access more information about [Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan on our website](#). Download the [SafeZone App](#) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC)

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as e-portfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects.

The Writing Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in real time with a tutor can schedule an Online Appointment. Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an e-Tutoring appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on the [Writing Center's website](#). The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing: writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to [submit a CARE report for support](#). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. The [General's Store is a food pantry](#) that is available on campus as well.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided with an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive

drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu. Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's

Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students

Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide reasonable accommodation for pregnant students as it would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that is related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from

substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784- 2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university students' rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#).

Important Fall 2026 Dates

Dates	Event
August 20	Tuition and Fee Payments deadline
August 24	First Day of Class
September 7	Labor Day – No Classes / University Closed
September 9	Census Date - Students not paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan by 4:59 pm may be dropped for non-payment
October 5-16	Midterm grading period
November 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W” (withdrawal)

Dates	Event
November 25	Study day – no classes
November 26	Thanksgiving – no class (university closed)
November 30	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 -11	Final Examinations
December 15	Commencement

The complete [Academic Calendar](#) as available on our website.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

Responsible Use of Generative AI SOCI 3350

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Claude) may be used in this course as learning support tools. Students may use AI to help brainstorm ideas, organize content, create outlines, improve clarity, generate practice questions, or assist with the design and organization of presentations.

However, AI may **not** be used to generate substantive written content that is submitted as the student's own analysis, interpretation, or reflection. Assignments in this course are intended to assess your understanding of sociological concepts and your ability to apply them to your own observations, experiences, and critical thinking. Therefore, the writing and analysis submitted in your name must be your own work.

Specific expectations for course assignments include:

- **Presentation 1 (Family Activity Analysis) and Presentation 2 (Family Change Over Time):** AI may be used to assist with brainstorming, organizing information, developing presentation structures, improving slide design, or suggesting visual elements. Students remain responsible for all content, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions presented.
- **Reflection Paper:** AI may be used to help organize ideas, develop an outline, or identify relevant concepts and theories. AI may **not** be used to write, draft, rewrite, or generate the paper's substantive content. The analysis, examples, reflections, and written narrative must reflect the student's own thinking and voice.

- Students must verify the accuracy of any information obtained through AI tools and are responsible for any errors, omissions, or misrepresentations included in submitted work.
- If AI significantly contributed to the organization or development of an assignment, students should disclose its use in a brief statement submitted with the assignment.

Using AI to generate content that is submitted as original student work without permission or attribution constitutes academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M University-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.