

Work, Family, and Organizations

Catherine White Berheide, Skidmore College, Fall 2006
Sociology

Textbooks

Chow, Esther N. and Catherine White Berheide (eds.), 1994. *Women, the Family, and Policy: A Global Perspective*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Fried, Mindy. 1998. *Taking Time: Parental Leave Policy and Corporate Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gerstel, Naomi, Dan Clawson, and Robert Zussman (eds.), 2002. *Families at Work*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Hertz, Rosanna and Nancy L. Marshall (eds.), 2001. *Working Families: The Transformation of the American Home*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Jacobs, Jerry A. and Kathleen Gerson. 2004. *The Time Divide: Work, Family, and Gender Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Course Description

Adults organize their lives around two social institutions: work and family. This course analyzes those institutions and their relationship to one another, specifically asking how work and family do, and do not, support one another. It examines the lived realities of managing the responsibilities of work and family today, especially how people cope with the conflicting demands. It considers gender, race, class, and cross-cultural differences in work and family experiences.

Finally, the course asks what changes in the institutions of work and family are necessary in the United States today to allow adults to combine both successfully. It pays close attention to recent policy changes, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act, and policy changes that employers and government could adopt which would ease the tensions adults experience between their work and family lives. In short, we consider the relationship between work and family from both a theoretical and a policy perspective.

Course Objectives

This course will expose you to theory and data that should, when combined with your own effort and the efforts of your classmates, enable you to do the following by the end of this class:

1. Analyze the relationships between work and family from a historical perspective.
2. Identify the social and demographic changes of recent decades that have altered the once-established dynamic of work and family.
3. Analyze how gender, class, and culture affect the relationship between work and family.
4. Analyze the effect of the family system's structure, function, and roles upon workplace structure, function, and roles.
5. Understand how work-family issues affect organizations.
6. Identify workplace and government policy initiatives aimed at helping people manage work and family roles.

Class Format

The class follows a discussion format. Students are required to participate actively each day by coming to class prepared, listening closely, thinking critically, contributing your ideas, and respecting the diversity of perspectives people have on the issues. The readings cover more material than we can discuss in class. If you have a question you want answered or a point you want clarified, you are responsible for raising it in class.

Course Requirements

<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Percent of Course Grade</i>
February 20	First Paper	20%
March 10	Second Paper	20%
April 7	Third Paper	20%
May 9	Final Paper	30%
	Class Participation	<u>10%</u>
		100%

Thus, discussion papers, the midterm exam, the final exam, and class participation determine your grade in this course. You must complete all papers and exams to receive credit for the course. Failure to meet any of the requirements results in flunking the entire course.

Except for medical reasons, you must take the exam and hand the papers in on the designated date. Failure to do so will result in your grade being lowered a fraction of a grade for each class day the exam or paper is late (in other words, if you are one class day late and your exam or paper would have earned a B, you will receive a B-).

COURSE OUTLINE

Section I: Trends in Work, Family, and Organizations

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
1-23	Introduction	None
1-25	Studying Work, Family, and Organizations	Chow & Berheide, pp.1-29; Hertz & Marshall, pp.1-20
1-27	Changing Work Hours	Jacobs and Gerson, pp.1-40
1-30	Changing Number of Workers	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 1; Jacobs and Gerson, Ch. 2
2-1	Changing Life Course	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 2 & 3

Section II: The Changing Division of Labor

2-3	Agriculture	Chow & Berheide, Ch. 5
2-6	Fishing	Gerstel et al., Ch. 3
2-8	Vending	Chow & Berheide, Ch. 7
2-10	Maquiladoras	Chow & Berheide, Ch. 9
2-13	Medicine	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 12
2-15	High Tech	Gerstel et al., Ch. 1
2-17	Household Labor	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 4
2-20	Equal vs. Fair	Gerstel et al., Ch. 4; First Paper Due

Section III: Changing Workplaces

2-22	Do Americans Feel Overworked?	Jacobs & Gerson, Ch. 3
2-24	How Does Work Spill Over into Life?	Jacobs & Gerson, Ch. 4
2-27	Do Workers Prefer Flexible Hours?	Jacobs & Gerson, Ch. 5; Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 7
3-1	Which Organizations Provide Family Responsive Benefits?	Hertz & Marshall, Ch.5
3-3	Which Organizations Provide Family Responsive Benefits? (cont.)	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 8
3-6	Do Unions Fight for Family Responsive Benefits?	Gerstel et al., Ch. 15
3-8	Do Small Businesses Offer Family Responsive Benefits?	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 6
3-10	Do Workers Take Advantage of Parental Leave?	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 11; Second Paper Due
3-20	Why Is Parental Leave Needed?	Fried, Ch. 1 & 2
3-22	Who Decides to Take Parental Leave?	Fried, Ch. 3
3-24	What Is It Like Being on Leave?	Fried, Ch. 4

3-27	What Is It Like Returning from Leave?	Fried, Ch. 5
3-29	What Changes Are Needed?	Fried, Ch. 6 & 7

Section IV: Arranging Child Care

3-31	Working Different Shifts	Gerstel et al., Ch. 5
4-3	Family vs. Paid Care	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 17; Gerstel et al., Ch. 7
4-5	Reciprocity in Child Care	Gerstel et al., Ch. 10 & 13
4-7	School Age Children	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 18

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
4-10	School Age Children (cont.)	Gerstel et al., Ch. 8; Chow & Berheide, Ch. 10
4-12	Child Care Providers	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 13; Gerstel et al., Ch. 6

Section V: The Third Shift

4-14	The Third Shift in the United States	Gerstel et al., Ch. 11 & 16; Third Paper Due
4-17	The Third Shift in Australia and Costa Rica	Chow & Berheide, Ch. 4 & 8

Section VI: The Future of Work and Family Policy

4-19	The Political Context of Work and Family	Hertz & Marshall, Ch. 9; Gerstel et al., Ch. 14
4-21	Is It Better in Other Countries?	Jacobs & Gerson, Ch. 6
4-24	Is It Better in Sweden?	Chow & Berheide, Ch. 1
4-26	Can We Bridge the Time Divide?	Jacobs & Gerson, Ch. 7
4-28	Where Do We Go from Here?	Jacobs & Gerson, Ch. 8
5-1	Will We End Gender Inequality?	Chow & Berheide, Ch. 11
5-9		Final Paper Due

(Spring 2006 Papers)

First Paper

This paper explores how Americans combine their work and family lives today. Husbands and wives “negotiate, bargain, trade and occasionally battle in an effort to shape career, marriage and children into a complex but livable arrangement” (Hertz in Lundgren et al. 2001:254). A life course perspective reminds us that these arrangements change over time. A historical perspective also reveals that these arrangements change over time. This paper explores the variety of “livable arrangements” at which parents arrive to address these competing needs at different stages of their lives and in different historical periods.

For this paper, each student will interview two couples who are actively parenting children. Students must choose couples whose children are at different stages of their lives. The stages are:

- A couple who has at least one child under six.
- A couple whose youngest child is between 6 and 12.
- A couple whose youngest child is between 13 and 18.
- A couple whose youngest child is over 18, but still economically dependent.

Using the interview protocol developed by the class, interview the two couples.

Begin the paper by drawing on the course readings to frame the problem of the contemporary conflict between work and family at the theoretical level. Be sure to define key concepts. Next discuss what the data from the interviews as well as the data in the course readings tell us about contemporary work and family arrangements. Indicate whether the interview data follow the patterns described in the readings. If they do not, what makes these families different from the "typical" American families? Are these arrangements egalitarian or specialized? Are they equal or fair? What factors influence the choices the couples make? Conclude by discussing whether the arrangements are the result of individual preferences, cultural expectations, or structural changes.

The paper should be five pages long (typed and double-spaced with normal margins and type font). Attach a copy of your notes from your interviews to your paper. Include a reference page listing any of the course readings referred to in the paper. Footnote (using the internal citation format) any direct quotations or paraphrasing. Be sure you cite the exact reading to which you are referring and not the editors of the book from which the reading comes. For example, if you were citing Carrington's distinction between equal and fair, the citation would be (Carrington 2002) or if using a direct quotation (Carrington 2002:83). Then the reference on the reference page would read:

Carrington, Christopher. 2002. "Domesticity and the Political Economy of Lesbian and Gay Families." Pp.82-107 in *Families at Work* edited by Naomi Gerstel, Dan Clawson, and Robert Zussman. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Second Paper

This paper examines how employers respond to their employees' family concerns. This paper explores the variety of "family-responsive benefits" which employers provide (or fail to provide) to address the challenges of combining work and family.

For this paper, each student will choose five employers to study. The student needs to identify what family-responsive benefits each employer offers to its employees. To find out what benefits an employer offers, the student can go to the company's web site, interview someone in the human resources department (as Galinsky and Deitch and Huffman both did), or interview an employee. All three approaches would be the optimum way to obtain the best data.

Be sure to consider the full range of family-responsive benefits, from the standard benefit packages that the union representatives argue are so important (see Gerstel and Clawson 2002) to flexible work arrangements (see Kropf 2001). The readings provide details about how the authors conducted their studies; use them as guides for yours.

Begin the paper by drawing on the course readings to frame the issue of how employing organizations are responding to the contemporary conflict between work and family. Next discuss what the data in the course readings tell us about family-responsive benefits. Then raise the question of whether the patterns they identify are still true today. Be sure to define key concepts and to indicate how the data on the five employers were collected. Indicate whether the data from the five companies follow the patterns described in the readings. If they do not, what makes these

companies different from the ones in the readings? What factors influence the choices employers make about what family-responsive benefits to offer? End the paper by drawing a conclusion about what these data indicate about the likelihood that organizations will offer more or fewer family-responsive benefits in the future.

The paper should be five pages long (typed and double-spaced with normal margins and type font). Attach a copy of your data on each employing organization. Include a reference page listing any of the course readings referred to in the paper. Footnote (using the internal citation format) any direct quotations or paraphrasing. Be sure you cite the exact reading to which you are referring and not the editors of the book from which the reading comes. For example, when discussing the argument union representatives made, which I cite above, the citation would be (Gerstel and Clawson 2002), or if using a direct quotation (Gerstel and Clawson 2002:322). Then the reference on the reference page would read:

Gerstel, Naomi and Dan Clawson. 2002. "Union's Responses to Family Concerns." Pp.317-342 in *Families at Work* edited by Naomi Gerstel, Dan Clawson, and Robert Zussman. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Third Paper

This paper focuses on the child care problem. First, using the course readings and your previous interviews and/or new ones, you need to identify what the problem is. Second, using course readings and your previous interviews and/or new ones, you need to describe the range of solutions workers in the United States today use to meet their child care needs. Third, you need to develop a solution to the child care problem for your company. The company can be a real one, perhaps one you studied for your second paper or it could be a company for which one of the parents you interviewed works, or it could be a company of your own creation.

Begin the paper by drawing on the course readings (and interviews) to frame the child care problem. Be sure to consider it from the point of view of the employees who are parents (or prospective parents) and from the point of view of your company.

Next discuss what the data from the interviews as well as the data in the course readings tell us about contemporary child care arrangements. Be sure to consider the complexity of the problem—children of different ages, different times of year, different times of day, different health statuses, different numbers of parents, different income levels, etc.

Finally, develop a plan for your company to help its employees meet their child care needs. Don't limit yourself to just providing information about or money to provide paid child care as a solution. What about parental leaves, part-time or part-year jobs, flextime, etc.? Think as well about how to enable employees to take time off, whether an afternoon for a soccer game or several months to a year after the birth of a baby, to spend with their children without committing career suicide, as Sheila Wellington called it.

The paper should be five pages long (typed and double-spaced with normal margins and type font). Include a reference page listing any of the course readings referred to in the paper. Footnote (using the internal citation format) any direct quotations or paraphrasing. Be sure you cite the exact reading to which you are referring and not the editors of the book from which the reading comes. For example, if you were citing Deutsch's discussion of alternating shift work as a solution, the citation would be (Deutsch 2002) or if using a direct quotation (Deutsch 2002:114). Then the reference on the reference page would read:

Deutsch, Francine. 2002. "Halving It All: The Mother and Mr. Mom." Pp.113-38 in *Families at Work* edited by Naomi Gerstel, Dan Clawson, and Robert Zussman. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Proofread your paper carefully. I will be glad to help you in any way I can. Enjoy the assignment!

Final Paper

This paper serves as a culmination of your work this semester. Drawing on your interviews, the data the class collected on the family friendly benefits of employers in the United States, and the course readings, develop a proposal for making the employer of your choosing (either real or fictitious) into a family friendly workplace. To write this proposal, you will need to draw heavily on your previous papers (although I strongly advise you to rewrite them before including them in this paper).

In the first section of your proposal, you need to identify what the problem is. To write this section, you need to draw heavily on the course readings and your previous interviews and/or new ones. Be sure to consider it from the point of view of the employees who are parents (or prospective parents) as well as those who are not (but might have other family concerns such as an elderly parent) and from the point of view of your company.

In the second section, you need to describe the range of options that are either in place here or abroad or have been proposed for making workplaces in the United States family friendly. To increase the likelihood that your proposal will be adopted, you want to highlight which kinds of family friendly benefits are being adopted by which kinds of employing organizations.

Finally, in the last section, you want to indicate which family friendly benefits you recommend your employing organization adopt. As in the previous paper, the company can be a real one, perhaps one you studied for your second paper or it could be a company for which one of the parents you interviewed works, or it could be a company of your own creation.

The paper can be up to ten pages long (typed and double-spaced with normal margins and type font), but top executives are more likely to read short reports, so brevity is a virtue. Include a reference page listing any of the course readings referred to in the paper. Footnote (using the internal citation format) any direct quotations or paraphrasing. Be sure you cite the exact reading to which you are referring and not the editors of the book from which the reading comes. For example, if you were citing the organizational characteristics of workplaces that provide certain types of benefits, one citation would be (Deitch and Huffman 2001) or if using a direct quotation (Deitch and Huffman 2001:120). Then the reference on the reference page would read:

Deitch, Cynthia H. and Matt L. Huffman. 2001. "Family Responsive Benefits and the Two-Tiered Labor Market." Pp.103-30 in *Working Families* edited by Rosanna Hertz and Nancy L. Marshall. Berkeley, CA University of California Press.

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