

Old Dominion University: Department of History
HIST 402W: The Family, Prehistory to Present
Spring 2019: Tuesdays, 4:20–7:00 PM

Instructor: Nicholas Abbott

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Course Description:

What is a family? Families have, among other things, been portrayed as the “natural” and foundational units of society, as static repositories of tradition, customs, and virtue, or as prisons of domination and exploitation. Yet “the family” eludes easy categorization and has been defined, constructed, and practiced in multiple (and often conflicting) ways across time and across the globe. Moreover, the family has also been a frequent site for constructing and enforcing other equally fluid concepts like race, class, and gender in ways that further complicate our understanding of what families are and have been.

Taking a global and expansive chronological perspective, this class examines some of the ways family has been defined and practiced in human history, as well as the ways changing ideas about the family have intersected with changing conceptions of race, class, and gender. At the same time, the class will also explore the evolution of family history as a distinct field of historical inquiry and investigate recent developments in the historiography of the family. As the history major’s capstone seminar, this class will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their acquired analytic and interpretative skills by asking them to craft a historiographic essay about a particular topic related to the history of the family.

Course Objectives:

- To investigate changing meanings, structures, and practices of the family from human origins to the present
- To analyze the family as a site for constructing, reproducing, and enforcing ideas of race, class, and gender in different cultural and historical contexts
- To understand what family history is as a field of history and how it has changed
- To build skills of critical reading and writing through historiographic analysis

Required Readings:

- Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner, *The Family: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

- Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Joshua Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood: Sex and Family across the Color Line in Virginia, 1787-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)
- Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)
- Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2016 [1993])
- Daniel Rivers, *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers and their Children in the United States since World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013)

Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard

Course Requirements:

Successful completion of this course requires regularly attending weekly class sessions, participating actively in discussions, submitting required analysis worksheets, giving individual and group presentations and leading discussion on assigned weeks, meeting semi-weekly deadlines for completion of the final paper, and earning a passing grade on the final paper.

Grade Distribution:

Attendance and Participation	30%
Analysis Worksheets	10% (2 at 5% each)
Group Presentation and Leading Discussion	10%
Individual Research Presentation	10%
Final Paper	40%

Attendance and Participation

To receive full credit for attendance and participation, students must attend all weekly sessions, having read all assigned readings carefully and completely, and participate actively in class discussion. Active participation is especially critical for seminars like this that are driven by conversation and collective engagement with texts and ideas. Active participation, however, does not mean having the “right answers” or making insightful comments about each and every work. Rather, it

means being attentive and engaged in classroom conversation, responsive to instructor and peer comments, and generally willing to ask and answer questions, seek clarification, share ideas, etc.

Students will be permitted ONE unexcused absence. Every additional absence will result in the deduction of one letter grade from the final grade.

Group Presentations and Leading Discussion

At the beginning of the semester, students will be divided into groups by the instructor. Each group will be responsible for giving a short presentation of approximately 20–30 minutes for one of the assigned books. The presentation should give a brief overview of:

- Historical context (What time and place is the book discussing? What kinds of information might a non-specialist reader need to know to understand the book?)
- Central argument(s) (What is the author trying to convince the reader of?);
- Organization (What does each chapter discuss? How does each chapter advance the book's argument?) AND
- Evidence (What kinds of primary sources does the author use? How does the author interpret those sources to develop the argument?)

Each group will also help the instructor lead the discussion of their assigned book by formulating a list of open-ended discussion questions and posing them to the group.

Possible questions might include:

- What did the class like or dislike about the book?
- How effectively did the author make his/her argument? Use or present his/her evidence?
- How does this week's book affect how we understand or think about previous works discussed in class?
- How might this week's author might respond to other works discussed in class? How might other authors previously discussed respond to this week's book?
- What contributions does the book make to the study of family in its particular context or of the family more broadly?
- What new questions does the book raise or new areas of research does it open up?

Student discussion leaders should modify these sample questions with relevant specifics, devise questions of their own, and be ready to formulate additional questions in response to points raised by class discussion as the conversation develops.

Analysis Worksheets

Students are responsible for completing analysis worksheets for two of the assigned books per the class schedule below. Books will be assigned by group but the worksheets are to be completed individually. Electronic worksheets will be made available on Blackboard and will ask students to answer the following questions about the assigned book:

- What central argument(s) does the book make? (50-100 words)
- How is the book organized? What topic(s) does each chapter address and how does each chapter build the book's larger arguments? (150-250 words)
- What evidence does the author use and how is that evidence interpreted? Does the author use any theories or interpretive/analytic methods from other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, political science, literary studies, gender studies, etc.? If so, what are they? (150-200 words)
- Is the author in conversation with other scholars in the field? Whose work is the author building upon? Whose work is the author critiquing? (150-200)
- What does the author think are the book's main contributions to the study of their particular topic? What does the author state or suggest are the implications of the book for other areas of study? (150-200)

Final Paper and Individual Presentations

Each student is responsible for selecting a topic related to family history; identifying 10–15 relevant scholarly books about that topic that have been published since 1970; and writing a 4,000 to 5,000-word (approximately 12-to-15-page) historiographic essay that uses those works to illustrate how historical analysis of that topic has changed over time. Among other issues, essays should consider:

- How have questions about the topic have changed?
- What new kinds of sources are historians are consulting for this topic?
- What new theoretical paradigms or methodologies (if any) are being deployed by scholars working on the topic to interpret their sources? AND
- How have assumptions about the study of the topic changed? How might authors be responding to issues in their own present?

The essay should not be a sequential summation of the selected works but should instead use those works to make an original argument about how scholarly inquiry into the chosen topic has changed over time.

Essays should be:

- Footnoted and formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style
- Double-spaced and written in 12-point Times New Roman font
- Stapled in the upper left-hand corner

Essays are due in class, in hardcopy, on Tuesday, April 23. Late essays will receive a deduction of one letter grade for each day they are submitted after the due date. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER APRIL 29.**

In addition to the strength of their historiographic analysis, essays will be evaluated for organization, clarity, and an absence of spelling, grammatical, and typographic errors. **Please proofread accordingly.** Additional guidelines and a grading rubric will be distributed in class and on Blackboard.

Prior to the essay's final due date, students will also complete a series of benchmark assignments:

- **Preliminary/revised topics:** The preliminary list of topics should include 3–5 topics the student is interested in for their paper (**Due: Jan. 29**). Students should do some preliminary research to make sure that their chosen topics are neither too broad nor too narrow and that at least 10–15 significant scholarly works have been written about that topic since 1970 but not vastly more. After receiving instructor feedback, students should narrow their list to 2–3 topics for the revised topics list (**Due: Feb. 12**). For the revised list, each topic should be phrased as a question, such as “How have historians written about (e.g., the effects of industrialization on childhood in nineteenth-century Britain or the impact of religious and social reform in late-colonial India)?”
- **Bibliography:** After further instructor feedback, students will pick their final research question from the revised topics list and identify 10–15 significant works on their topics. Bibliographies should identify the research question at the top of the page and should format entries according to the Chicago Manual of Style. (**Due: Feb. 19**)
- **Rough outline:** Students should formulate a skeletal outline of their paper indicating what they will argue; how they will organize their paper and substantiate their argument; and which books they might use as evidence for each point. Students will discuss these outlines (and revised bibliographies if necessary) in individual meetings with the instructor on **Mar. 5**.

- **Draft introductions and detailed outlines:** Students will draft 1–2-page introductions that will state their arguments more precisely, followed by a more detailed outline of their papers (**Due: Apr. 2**). These will be discussed in individual meetings with the instructor on Apr. 9.

Finally, students will give 15–20 minute oral presentations of their work in class on April 16 or April 23.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failure of the course. The ODU catalogue defines plagiarism as follows:

“A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she produces someone else’s work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group’s work and participates in none of the group’s activities, but attempts to take credit for the work group.”

If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, please see me BEFORE submitting dubious work. **When in doubt, indicate language that is not your own with quotation marks and cite ALL sources used in your work.**

Accessibility: If you have a disability that will affect your access to and/or participation in any aspect of this class, please provide me with an accommodation letter from the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) so that any and all necessary arrangements can be made. The OEA is located at 1021 Student Success Center and can be contacted at (757) 683-4655 and <http://www.odu.edu/educationalaccessibility/>. Additionally, if you have any other concerns about your participation or performance in the class, please feel free to discuss them with me.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (1/15): Course Introduction

Week 2 (1/22): What is a family? What was family history? What is family history?

-Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner, *The Family: A World History*

-Tamara K. Hareven, “The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change,” *The American Historical Review*, 96, 1 (1991): 95–124

[Blackboard]

-Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, 91, 5 (1986): 1053–79), and "Gender: Still a Useful Category of Historical Analysis?," *Diogenes*, 225 (2010): 7–14
[Blackboard]

Week 3 (1/29): Gender, power, and the family, I

-Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*
Due: Preliminary paper topics

Week 4 (2/5): Gender, power and the family, II

-Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power* (**Group 1 presents**)
Due: Analysis worksheet 1 (Groups 2, 3 and 4)

Week 5 (2/12): Race and the family, I

-Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (**Group 2 presents**)
Due: Revised paper topics; Analysis worksheet 1 (Groups 1, 5, and 6)

Week 6 (2/19): Race and the family, II

-Joshua Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood* (**Group 3 presents**)
Due: Bibliography; Analysis worksheet 2 (Groups 1, 2, and 4)

Week 7 (2/26): Work, class, and the family

-Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches* (**Group 4 presents**)
Due: Analysis worksheet 2 (Groups 3, 5, and 6)

Week 8 (3/5): Individual meetings w/instructor

Due: Revised bibliographies (if necessary), rough outlines

Week 9 (3/12): Spring Break (No class)

Week 10 (3/19): Research and writing day (No class)

Week 11 (3/26): The family in post-war America, I

-Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were* (**Group 5 presents**)

Week 12 (4/2): The family in post-war America, II

-Daniel Rivers, *Radical Relations* (**Group 6 presents**)

Due: Draft introductions and detailed outlines

Week 13 (4/9): Individual meetings w/instructor

Week 14 (4/16): Presentations

Week 15 (4/23): Presentations

Due: Final papers