CAST 203: For Better or Worse: Marriage & Family in American Culture
Spring 2014, Monday | Wednesday | Friday, 11:00 - 11:50am [KING 239]

Professor Maria Paz G. Esguerra
Office: King 141-F
Office Hours: Monday | Wednesday, 3:30- 4:30pm and by appointment
Mailbox: King 141 Suite
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While I make every effort to respond promptly to emailed questions and concerns, I will respond to emails within one business day from Monday to Friday. If you need immediate attention, please bring all substantive questions or concern to me in person during office hours or before/after class. If you are having trouble making it to my office hours, I am happy to schedule an appointment with you.

Course Overview
In this class, we will critically interrogate the evolution of “marriage” in U.S. history and its impact on American society. While we will focus on the history of marriage in America, this course will also consider contemporary issues that impact our current understandings of marriage and the family. The following questions will help guide some of the themes we will explore: Who can marry? What privileges and rights does marriage afford? How have economic, legal, and social forces shaped what marriage means? What will the future of marriage in America look like? The class will pay particular attention to the ways that issues of race, sexuality, and class complicate and enrich constructions of marriage and family.

Required Readings
Andrew Cherlin. *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America*

The book will be available for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore and on reserve at Mudd Library. All other required readings will be available on Blackboard or distributed in class.

Required Assignments and Class Participation
Students in the class will be evaluated on the basis of their individual performance on assignments, exams, and class participation. You are responsible for submitting your assignments on the date it is due in class (unless otherwise noted). Assignments are due at the beginning of class.

*Class Attendance and Participation [10%]*
Regular attendance is mandatory. Please do not be tardy to class. If you expect to miss class, please meet with me and notify me in advance. If there is an emergency or you are ill, you are required to provide documentation of your illness or emergency upon your immediate return to class. Emails do not count as proper documentation. An absence without my prior consent or proper documentation will be considered an unexcused absence. Please be aware that consistent tardiness or absence from the class will affect your class participation.
Class participation means attending class, thinking, listening attentively, and speaking. To ensure that everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas, we will all listen and respond respectfully to one another.

Four Reading Responses, 3-5 pages [40%]
You will be responsible for four reading responses during the semester. Reading response papers will summarize, analyze and evaluate the themes and connections between the week’s readings. You may choose which week/set of readings you want to respond to, but you must do two in each half of the semester. You will sign up in advance for the readings you are interested in. All reading responses are due on Fridays at the beginning of class. NO late assignments will be accepted.

Blackboard Discussion [10%]
A small group of you will offer an informal conversation about the day’s reading. Groups will be assigned and you will sign up for your dates ahead of time. Prior to meeting for class, your group will post a Blackboard prompt on the assigned readings by 6 pm the day before your presentation. Your group’s post must reflect substantive and thoughtful engagement with the readings as well as questions for discussion.

Final Paper [40%]
For the final assignment, you will write a 10-12 page essay based on your own individual research. Using themes and content in our class, you will do independent research that examines state marriage laws and policies that have shaped and affected the evolution of marriage in American history. Your paper will offer historical and critical analyses of primary and secondary sources.

Classroom Etiquette and Expectations
Please come to class prepared to discuss class readings and materials. The use of cell phones, mobile devices, and laptops are prohibited in class.

Honor Code
As a student you are bound by the Oberlin College Honor Code policy regarding plagiarism and cheating. Violation of these rules is grounds for failure in the assignment and/or course. If you have any specific concerns or questions about the Honor Code, please come and talk to me.

http://new.oberlin.edu/office/dean-of-students/honor/students.dot

Disability Services
If you have a need for reading and writing accommodations, please come and discuss this with me as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services offers accommodation for students with documented disabilities.

Office of Disability Services:
http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services

CAST 203: For Better or Worse 2
Syllabus subject to revision as necessary.
Spring 2014 Class Schedule

*Week One: The History & Origins of Marriage*

**Monday 2/3**
Class Introduction

**Wednesday 2/5**
Coontz, “The Many Meanings of Marriage”
Coontz, “The Invention of Marriage”

**Friday 2/7**
“Executive Summary” and “Overview” in The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families

*Week Two: Marriage: An American Love Story?*

**Monday 2/10**
Cherlin, Introduction and Ch. 1 “How the American Family Life is Different”

**Wednesday 2/12**
George, “What is Marriage?”

**Friday 2/14**
Cott, “An Archaeology of American Monogamy”
“Section 2: Marriage” in The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families

*Week Three: Getting Married*

**Monday 2/17**
Cherlin, Ch. 2 “The Historical Origins of the American Pattern”

**Wednesday 2/19**
Cott, “Perfecting Community Rules with State Laws”

**Friday 2/21**
Hartog, “Acting the Husband”

*Week Four: What’s Love Got to Do with It?*

**Monday 2/24**
Cherlin, Ch. 3 “The Rise of the Companionate Marriage”

**Wednesday 2/26**
Davis, “Not Marriage at All, but Simple Harlotry”

**Friday 2/28**
Simmons, “Companionate Marriage and the Lesbian Threat”

*Week Five: A Long History of Miscegenation*

**Monday 3/3**
Pascoe, “Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of Race”

**Wednesday 3/5**
Romano, “The Dangers of ‘Race Mixing’”

**Friday 3/7**
Miles, “Black Women, Interracial Dating and Marriage”
“The Mixed Marriage”
“Kentucky Church Bans Interracial Marriage”
“Interracial Couple Denied License”

CAST 203: For Better or Worse 3

*Syllabus subject to revision as necessary.*
**Week Six: Here Comes the Bride…zilla?**

Monday 3/10          Hartog, “Being a Wife”

Wednesday 3/12       Mead, “One Perfect Day” [excerpts]

Friday 3/14          Mead, “One Perfect Day” [excerpts]

**Week Seven: The Way We Never Were**

Monday 3/17          May, “Homeward Bound”

Wednesday 3/19       Coontz, “‘Leave it to Beaver’ and ‘Ozzie and Harriet’: American Families in the 1950s”

Friday 3/21          No Readings | No Class

**Week Eight:** 

**SPRING BREAK 3/22-3/30**

**Week Nine: The Economics of Marriage**

Monday 3/31          Cherlin, Ch. 7 “Blue-Collar Blues/White-Collar Weddings”

Wednesday 4/2        TBD

Friday 4/4           “The High Price of Being Single in America”
                    “Treasury and IRS Announce that All Legal Same-Sex Marriages will be Recognized”

**Week Ten: The Question of Same Sex Marriage**

Monday 4/7           Rauch, “What is Marriage For?” and “How Straights Will Benefit”

Wednesday 4/9        Cherlin, Ch. 5 “The American Way of Marriage”
                    “Defense of Marriage Act”

Friday 4/11          Warner, “Beyond Gay Marriage”
                    Magpantay, “The Ambivalence of Queer Asian Pacific Americans Toward Same-Sex Marriage”

**Week Eleven: Romance on a Global Stage**

Monday 4/14          Brenner, “Conscripted Allegiance: Marital Naturalization and the Immigrant Woman”

Wednesday 4/16       Zeiger, “GIs and Girls Around the Globe: The Geopolitics of Sex and Marriage in World War II”

Friday 4/18          Constable, “Feminism and Myths of ‘Mail-Order’ Marriages”

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CAST 203: For Better or Worse 4

*Syllabus subject to revision as necessary.*
Week Twelve: Rethinking Marriage
Monday 4/21        Cherlin, Ch. 6 “The M-Factor”
Wednesday 4/23     Ma, “Cohabitation and the Law”
Friday 4/25        McMillan, “Why You’re Not Married” and “Why You’re Still Not Married”

Week Thirteen: Why Did I Get Married?
Monday 4/28        Cherlin, Ch. 4 “The Individualized Marriage and the Expressive Divorce, 1960-2000”
Wednesday 4/30     Paul, “The Starter Marriage”
Friday 5/2          No Readings | No Class

Week Fourteen: The Future of Marriage
Monday 5/5         Cherlin, Ch. 8 “Slow Down”
Wednesday 5/7      “New Family Types” in “The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families”
Friday 5/9          LAST DAY of CLASSES