SOC 120-900 Introduction to Family Studies
Spring 2015 (3 credits, online, late start)**

Instructor: Mel Moore, PhD
Course location: Online course via Blackboard (http://www.unco.edu/blackboard)
Course dates: **March 30, 2015 – May 8, 2015**
Course prerequisites: None. This is an introductory course-- no prior experience/ courses in
Sociology/ Family Studies required or expected. However, because this course is delivered entirely online, students should have basic computer skills, access to commonly available software for such things as downloading files and viewing video content, and readily available access to the internet. Students should be familiar with and able to navigate basic features of a webpage (i.e., move cursor, click on/open buttons, and open and reply to discussion posts), along with the ability to cut and paste their word-processed work onto a Discussion Board and into an e-mail.

Office location: Candelaria 2048

Office hours: For this semester, I have office hours on Mondays 1:30pm – 3:30pm, Wednesdays 9:00am – 10:00am, and by appointment.

Office phone: (970) 351-2100 (e-mail is preferred!)

E-mail: mel.moore@unco.edu.

Course Description:

Introduction to Family Studies (SOC 120) explores the systematic study of family structures, processes, and dynamics. In this course, we survey the characteristics, dynamics, and problems of families. Topics include: dating practices and traditions, marriage trends and satisfaction levels,
cohabitation statistics, division of couple and family labor, alternatives to marriage, family communication patterns, conflict resolution, parenting practices, causes of divorce, consequences of divorce on children, remarriage trends, and step-parenting dynamics.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:
* explain the framework and philosophical assumptions of Family Studies
* describe why Family Studies is a social science
* compare and be able to offer examples of basic concepts, research findings, and theories in Family Studies
* see and apply Family Studies theories and research in their own lives and in the family-related behaviors of those around them to the extent they apply
* utilize enhanced critical thinking skills with respect to the analysis of family forms, family dynamics, and cross-cultural variations in families.
Readings and Other Course Materials


This also is the least expensive option (by about $50). It can be purchased online through the publisher or through CourseSmart. If you have a used hardcopy of this textbook, that works fine. You also have many other options- including a new hard copy, study guides, and such. For these options, go to the publisher’s website: http://www.pearsonhighered.com/product?ISBN=0205717799

Lecture notes: I have prepared lectures/ summaries/ notes for each of the three units in the course.

Podcasts and Videos: Some units include one or more podcasts or films that exemplify some feature of that unit’s content in a vivid audio and/or video format.

Power-point summaries: Power-point slides for each textbook chapter assigned highlight the major ideas in each chapter and give you a chance to evaluate what you know and how well you know it as you attempt to fill in the blanks—in other words, expand on each phrase in each slide.
Course Design

This course occurs entirely online through software titled Blackboard. You can use the link to Blackboard on your URSA account or simply go to http://www.unco.edu/blackboard. You need your UNC login credentials to open Blackboard. After opening Blackboard, click on this course which will be available to you (if you are registered for it!) by the first day of the course-- at the latest. When the course page opens, you will see a “Welcome” announcement. After reading this announcement, click the blue button on the left-hand side of the opening course screen labeled, “Syllabus.” You should read it carefully as it is essentially our contract with each other for this course. The schedule of course work/ activities described in this Syllabus listed in the Course Plan. You may want to print the Syllabus and/or Course Plan so you have them handy if needed when you are away from a computer. (Who is ever away from a computer these days?? Well. . . I hear it happens. Or that it should happen!)

This course is divided into 3 Course Units. In each unit, you will read, review, study, and hopefully be able to teach others what you find in that unit. In addition to textbook chapters, lectures, and online discussions with others in the course, you have required podcasts and videos to play and study. If any additional material is added to a unit, such as a current news story relevant to a unit topic, an announcement about the addition will be made on the course web page and an e-mail will be sent to you about it.

During each unit, you also will be responsible for completing graded work. All graded work and their corresponding deadlines are listed in this Syllabus and again in the Course Plan. Graded work
includes a paragraph or so that introduces you to everyone else in the course, discussion essays/posts that offer your thoughtful analysis of unit content or carefully crafted responses/replies to the analysis of unit content offered by others, and a short paper/project (approximately 2 - 4 pages) in which you offer new examples of course concepts from your own experiences or you practice/ apply family-related sociological principles or theories in your everyday life. The last graded work in each unit is an exam covering only that unit’s content. All graded work, except exams, have deadlines—not due dates. That means that you have flexibility and can work around your schedule and life needs. However, deadlines are firm and so you are encouraged to submit work early and often to assure that you meet each deadline. Exams have some flexibility. They are given on the specific dates listed in the Syllabus, yet you can take the exam any time between 7am and 7pm (Colorado time) on the exam day. If you are unable to take an exam on the specified date and between the specified times on that date, you have another opportunity to get a score for a missed exam near the end of the course when make-up exams are given.

My Expectations of You

I expect you to be well versed in all features of the course design and expectations as described in this syllabus and to meet all deadlines for graded work. I also expect you to be actively engaged in the course by logging onto the course webpage and your UNC e-mail account just about every day, if not more often! This will keep you up-to-date on course announcements, keep you involved in the ongoing discussions of course content, and remind and encourage you to do your graded work on time, if not in advance of deadlines. In fact, all assignments have deadlines-- not due dates, meaning
you can and should post your work early and often to avoid missing any deadlines. The good news here is that to some degree you can set your own pace in the course—completing assignments far in advance of a deadline or simply meeting the deadline. Exams though are offered on one day only so if something comes up and you miss an exam for any reason, do not worry—you are welcome to make-up the exam at the end of the course. However, because all other assignments have deadlines (meaning you can (and should!) post them well in advance of their due dates, you CANNOT make up assignments. The course works best when done as designed.

I also expect you to work hard in this course. Just because this course is online or offered in a condensed time period does not mean less is required of you. The amount of work and time you put into this course should be about the same as you would/should put into any 3-credit on-campus course. You get your money’s worth here! In general, students are expected to do about 2.5 hours of course-related work per week for each week of the semester for each credit hour they are taking. That means 7.5 hours a week for 15 weeks for a 3-credit course or a total of more than 112 hours. Taking this course for the 3 semester hours of credit then in just six weeks means you should put about 18 to 19 hours a week into the course. For a four-week course, you are expected to devote about 28 hours per week to get 3 credit hours. Put 112 hours into this course, and I am pretty confident you will learn a ton and get a great grade!

Another expectation I have is that you will be respectful of one another. Sometimes people forget there is a human being on the other end of your discussion replies. I like to say—evidence instead of insults. Disagreeing with others is perfectly acceptable and should be shared, but offer evidence to support your position not personal insults. On that note, the use of basic network etiquette (“netiquette” as some call it) is expected. This includes not sending “flames” or heated messages
with mean-spirited, derogatory, or disrespectful content. You should expect to receive such messages though. So if you get one, do not “flame” back. Take time and respond respectfully and with evidence. . . even if you are provoked. Some other common etiquette for online discussions include using mixed case letters as using all capital letters amounts to screaming at recipients. Emphasize things with symbols or underlining and feel free to use smiley faces and such but do so sparingly, and of course, do not assume that adding a smiley face will lessen the impact of negative words sent to a course-mate. Also, be brief but complete with your thoughts. Do not put the entire message you are responding to in your post as that is distracting. You are welcome to repeat a phrase used (put it in quotes) if that is the focus of your comments. Of course, not attending to spelling and grammar is disrespectful and distracts your readers.

Finally, if you do not understand something, I expect you to ASK!!! ASK, ASK, and then ASK some more!!

What You Can Expectation of Me

I will log into the course just about every day, and most days I will log into the course many times. So I will be available. You should never go more than 24 hours without getting a response to your questions or comments, and you will often get a response within an hour. Also, I will have your graded work completed and your grades posted to the grade-book on the course page (and individual feedback available to you if applicable) within 3 days of the deadline for each assignment. That means you can expect a speedy response from me to your questions about course content or course mechanics, along with timely individual feedback about your work when indicated. In fact, if you
have not heard from me within 24 hours of posting a question for me or sending an e-mail to me in need of reply, contact me again! It means something strange is going on—such as my junk mail filter gobbled up your message. If 48 hours go by and you have not heard back from me, you might consider calling the police because I have probably fallen and cannot get up! In other words, you should never wait for more than a day or so for a response from me. If you do, please re-send as I probably did not receive your message.

Graded Work

You will be evaluated in this course based on your introduction of your self to the group, discussion posts/essays for each unit, short paper, and three exams.

Introduction of self: Your first assignment is to introduce yourself to the class. Should be easy enough—just offer at least one substantial paragraph about who you are at this point in your life. You need to go beyond your age, major, and hometown to get full credit. Please offer a thoughtful description so we can really get to know you, and include a picture. I would like you to post a picture of yourself, but a picture of something else—something important to you perhaps—would be fine. This should personalize our interactions some. This getting-to-know-each-other process facilitates substantial discussion on the provocative topics to come. Feel free to reply to the introductions of others if you have questions or comments for them.

Discussion Posts/ Essays: For the discussion posts/essays for each unit, you need to offer at least 5 substantial (1 or more paragraphs EACH) responses on five different days before the deadline for
EACH Unit. With 3 Course Units that means a minimum of 15 posts are required on different days (5 by each of the respective Unit deadlines listed below) for full credit. Only one post per day counts in order to keep you involved regularly in the discussions. If you pop in on the last day to post for credit and offer 100 great discussion posts, you only get credit for one as only one post per day counts. The content of your discussion posts are up to you (really!!), but need to reflect one or more of the topics/issues from the unit and may center on unit topics that bother, provoke, surprise, or confuse you the most. For example, your first discussion post for a unit might be a description of something that troubled you from the material, along with an explanation about why you were bothered by it. Or you might post thoughtful and apt examples from your life that relate to (support or refute) one or more principles described in that unit. The idea is to play with course content in significant ways and share that analysis with your course-mates. In turn, they will be sharing their questions, curiosities, and examples with you. Discussion posts also may be replies to the posts of others. Yes, replies to the posts of others count as long as they are substantial and add to the discussion. In fact, replies are desired because that means you are having a real discussion with ideas going back and forth. So, discuss whatever you want from each unit. We want to read about what you have the most to say about!

While these discussion assignments are about you interacting with each other, and I will try to stay out of YOUR discussion, I may respond to or highlight things in your post for the benefit of you and/or your course-mates so do not put anything in your posts that you do not want all of us to discuss together and in great detail, and please remember that all posts on the Discussion Boards are required course content and may be included on exams so be sure to keep up with what your course-mates are writing/thinking about in this course. And again, assignment deadlines are firm and so you
should post your work far in advance of this deadline as **no late assignments are accepted.** REALLY!! Late posts defeat the purpose of being involved with the discussion and do not help anyone. Additionally, post your assignments EARLY to avoid technical, health, or other possible delays. You cannot make-up “discussion.” No one wants to discuss Unit 1 ideas on exam day or during Unit 2... The expectation is that almost all of you will get full credit for your introduction and for your discussion posts/essays for each unit, and thus, 100% of these assignment points. These online discussions are intended to get you thinking and exploring course ideas with others. This typically expands your thinking and helps to make these ideas your own. Jump into these discussions, and your experience of course ideas and your understanding of this material will be so much richer for it.

You must put your posts in the Discussion Board under the appropriately titled thread and “publish” or “submit” them for all to view. You will see the threads for the course on the Discussion Board now, so take a look at them so you are sure you understand what needs to be done and receive 100% of these assignment points. However, you cannot do a discussion post for a unit for credit until the unit begins—usually the day after the exam from the previous unit. We work together—one unit at a time! In all cases, your posts should be prepared in advance so that they are well-written and your ideas are efficiently presented. Posts with multiple spelling errors or typos won’t receive credit. More is not better, and please do not simply summarize course content. Add to what we know/think. If your post is empty—you simply repeat ideas or congratulate the author of the previous post—you will receive no credit for that post. You are welcome to do these kinds of posts, but make sure you also have 5 substantial posts PER unit on different days by the deadline for full credit.

Note that I determine whether or not your discussion is substantial and worth full credit so to assure
yourself of full credit, do much MORE than the minimum required of you! Ten or twenty posts per person per unit probably makes more sense given the quality and provocative nature of the course material. Of course, you are encouraged to ask any questions you have at any time during the course, and please ask those questions or make comments to ME in the discussion thread designed for that purpose—the first one—so that everyone has access to all questions and responses related to course content and course mechanics.

Discussion Board Assignments Rubric: To receive full credit for each of these assignments, minimally, you need to offer at least one substantial post on five different days before each deadline. Because each unit discussion assignment is worth 30 points, each individual substantial post on a unique day before the deadline is worth 6 points.

A full credit (6 point) discussion post: 1. relates to some topic or issue addressed in that unit’s material (1 point) 2. is original in that it adds to course materials and does not repeat previous posts (3 points) 3. is at least one full rich paragraph—meaning four or more unique sentences (2 points)

Short Paper/ Photo Essay

You will write one short paper/ essay/ project. This project is an opportunity for you to see the relevance or value of these sociological concepts or theories in your life or to practice and apply these concepts in your everyday routines. This assignment also offers you the opportunity to see how your course-mates use these concepts in their lives in ways you may find useful or familiar. While the deadlines for these assignments are listed in this Syllabus and in the Course Plan, the actual paper topic/ task may not be posted until a few days before the deadline for each paper so that these
assignments can be fresh—specifically developed for this particular class and/or in light of current news about families.

Short Paper Rubric: To receive any of the 100 points for this assignment, papers must be submitted before the deadline and posted in the appropriate discussion forum.

A full credit (100 points) paper:

1. Offers original examples/experiences/visual images that expand our understanding of the concept(s)/issue. (50 points)

2. Includes especially insightful or novel analysis of the connections between the experience/examples and the concept(s). (30 points)

3. Is a well-written and effective essay/photo collection in that it is persuasive and clearly demonstrates the author’s comfort and familiarity with the concepts/issues at hand. (20 points)

**Exams**

Exams will be given online on the specific dates listed in the Course Plan below. You may take the exam any time between 7am and 7pm Colorado time on those days. Common exam formats I use are 33 multiple-choice items with a 30-minute time limit, and 50 multiple-choice items and one short essay with a 50-minute time limit. Really--30 minutes to complete 33 multiple-choice items, for example, is plenty of time for just about everyone, and many finish long before the time limit of 30 minutes. Yet if you are uncomfortable with or anxious about timed exams, this might not be the
course for you. Also, note that these are closed book/closed note exams. You should work alone and without any materials—just as if you were taking the exam in a classroom. If you begin the exam and your internet connection fails for any reason, you will need to take the make-up exam near the end of the course—the same day you take Exam 3. Sorry--no exceptions, so please, use a very reliable connection!! On the other hand, looking on the bright side, if your connection fails or you do not take the exam for any reason (for example—you are not prepared for it, have a family emergency, or are sick), don’t worry! You can take a make-up later in the course.

All course material, including readings, lectures, podcasts, films, discussions, and papers may appear on exams. When you are taking an exam, you will not be able to go back to questions you have already answered. So for each exam, find a secure internet connection in a quiet place so that you can focus on the exam. If you are not ready for the exam or are sick or have a family emergency, just skip the exam. You can take the make-up exam near the end of the course. However, if you exceed the time limit for an exam, you will get a zero (no points) for that exam so be careful to keep track of your time when taking exams. I will take any questions you have until the day of an exam. On exam days, I will only respond to questions about course or Blackboard mechanics.

Also, please note that multiple-choice items on exams given in this course may not be like your grandmother’s multiple-choice questions or the ones you had on exams in courses you took last semester. For many of these questions, you will not be able simply to recognize a word or phrase and get that question right. Rather, believe it or not, even with multiple-choice items, I am able to assess the depth of your understanding of a concept or theory, your ability to apply theories/research to real world situations, and the extent to which you can differentiate between concepts and offer unique examples of them . . . among other things. So please, hear my pleas for you to sit with and play with
the concepts in this course— to connect them to your real world experiences and make them your own. If you do, exams are likely to be a breeze. If not, you may find exam questions perplexing. My purpose in this is not to trick you— it is to challenge you to really learn what is offered in this course so that you take some of it with you when the course ends.

Course Grade

Your final course grade will be based on three equally weighted exams (60% of final grade), your introduction and discussion posts/ essays for each unit (20% of final grade), and a short paper (20% of final grade). More specifically, the maximum number of points possible is 500 and for each evaluative component is as follows:

**Introduction to group** = 10 pts

**Unit 1 Discussion posts/essays** = 30 pts

**Unit 2 Discussion posts/essays** = 30 pts

**Unit 3 Discussion posts/essays** = 30 pts
Short Paper = 100 pts

Exam 1 = 100 pts
Exam 2 = 100 pts
Exam 3 = 100 pts

Total possible points = 500 pts

Your final course grade is calculated based on the percentage of the total possible points you obtain—

A = 90% or more (448 - 500 points)
B = 80% - 89% (398 - 447 points)
C = 70% - 79% (348 - 397 points)
D = 60% - 69% (298 - 347 points)
F = 59% or less (297 or fewer points).

Note that I do not use the +/- grades.
Computer and other technical issues

On the Blackboard home page (http://bb.unco.edu), there is information about how to make sure that your computer is compatible with the technical requirements of this course, and if you do have technical problems, you should contact an IT Technician at UNC’s Help Desk (970-351-HELP). I am not an IT technician and so I cannot address your technological problems efficiently. By virtue of taking an online course, you become responsible for figuring out how to manage the technological aspects of this course, including how to make and reply to posts and upload assignments . . . Also, note that I do not accept assignments via e-mail, and will not open e-mail attachments. So again, to avoid technological problems that impact your learning and your course grade, do not wait until the last minute to make a discussion post or submit an assignment. Late work is not accepted and technological problems do not excuse you from completing the work on time. It pays then to make sure you are comfortable navigating this course long before anything is due!

Some final comments

Please read this syllabus carefully and note all deadlines/ due dates-- they come quite quickly. Because this course is online, you have to be able to work hard— and to do so ON YOUR OWN. Do not just read chapters. Instead, study and learn them so that you can comfortably talk about specific issues, findings, and concepts. You should know the material so well that you could teach the ideas to someone else. A casual understanding of the basic topics is NOT enough to be successful in this course. That is because I do not want you to forget these important ideas the moment you complete
an exam or the course ends. And you really need to know your stuff to do well in this course. Indeed, we do not even read all of the chapters in your text so that you have time to learn the material we do read—very well. Also, I just want to be clear that no extra credit is offered. You must do the course as it is designed and during the time period described in the schedule below. The best learning happens that way in my view.

Resources

**Student Resources:** The button on the main course page titled, **Student Resources**, describes and includes links to a variety of services designed to facilitate your success in this course. These resources include UNC’s library, academic advising center, bookstore, psychological/counseling center, academic tutoring and writing center, and technical/computer support services.

**Disability Support Services:** Students who believe they may need accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact UNC’s Disability Support Services at 970-351-2289 as soon as possible, and to inform the instructor of any accommodations requested in a timely manner.

**Honor Code:** All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere that serves as a foundation for learning and guides the UNC community’s academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate ([http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor code](http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor code)).
**Academic Integrity:** UNC’s policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. Instances in which cheating, plagiarism, or unauthorized use of copyrighted materials, computer accounts, or someone else’s work is suspected will be referred to Student Services for investigation. Likewise, facilitating academic dishonesty, meaning helping another student to cheat or plagiarize, is academic misconduct as well. For additional information, please see the Student Handbook at the Dean of Students’ website (http://www.unco.edu/dos/pdf/StudentCodeofConduct.pdf).

**Student Evaluation of this course:** You will be asked to evaluate this course as the course nears its end, please participate in this process. Thank you.

**If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me as often as you like. Posting to the first forum in the Discussion Board soliciting your questions and comments is the most reliable method of communication with me and allows all to be involved in what you are thinking about course content and mechanics. For personal/private matters, use my e-mail. Note that it is best to use your UNC e-mail account as others (such as hotmail and gmail) almost always go to my junk mail folder. In fact, sometimes even your UNC e-mail goes to my junk mail filter! I look through the filter, but may miss your e-mail. So know that I respond quite quickly, often within a couple of hours or the next day for sure so if you have not heard from me in a day or two, e-mail me again or post to the discussion board saying you sent an e-mail. This problem only happens about once a semester, but it is pretty frustrating if you are the student waiting days and days for a response.
## COURSE PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit # /Dates</th>
<th>Unit Topics</th>
<th>Unit Readings/ Content</th>
<th>Graded Work</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Unit 1:** 3/30- 4/10 (12 days) | 1.1: Studying Families/ Social Status  
1.2: Building Relationships/Love | *Syllabus  
1.1: Chapters 1 and 2 — Seccombe; Lecture- Families in Social Context  
1.2: Chapters 3 and 4— Seccombe. | 1a: Introduction of Self  
1b: Unit 1 Discussion Posts/Essays  
1c: Exam 1 | 1a: Monday, 4/6 by 11:59pm  
1b: Wednesday, 4/8 by 11:59pm  
1c: Friday, 4/10 between 7am and 7pm |
| **Unit 2:** 4/11- 4/24 (14 days) | 2.1: Communication and Conflict  
2.2: Marriage  
2.3: Parenthood and Raising Children | 2.1: Chapter 6 —Seccombe; Lecture- Communication and Conflict  
2.2: Chapter 7 —Seccombe  
2.3: Chapters 8 and 9 — Seccombe | 2a: Paper (Last name begins with A to L)  
2b: Unit 2 Discussion Posts/Essays  
2c: Exam 2 | 2a: Tuesday, 4/21 by 11:59pm  
2b: Wednesday, 4/22 by 11:59pm  
2c: Friday, 4/24 between 7am and 7pm |
| **Unit 3:** 4/25-5/8 (14 days) | 3.1: Families and Work  
3.2: Divorce  
3.3: Remarriage  
3.4: Families and Social Change | 3.1: Chapter 10—Seccombe; Lecture- Families and Work  
3.2: Chapter 12—Seccombe; Lecture- Divorce and Remarriage  
3.3: Chapter 13—Seccombe  
3.4: Videos- Changing Gender Roles at Home; Gender Difference over Time; The Longevity Revolution; The Role of Family and Social Change | 3a: Paper (Last name begins with M to Z)  
3b. Unit 3 Discussion Posts/Essays  
3c. Exam 3 & make-up (meaning missed) exams | 3s. Tuesday, 5/5 by 11:59pm  
3b. Wednesday, 5/6 by 11:59pm  
3c. Friday, 5/8 between 7am and 7pm |