

HIST 4580  
Fall 2007  
MWF 1:25 – 2:23 PM  
P 164

B. Carroll  
B 118C  
667-3564  
bcarroll@csustan.edu  
Office Hours: MWF 9:30 – 11:00

## THE FAMILY IN U.S. HISTORY

***Please read this syllabus carefully. You are responsible for knowing its contents and for requesting clarification. By staying in the course you are agreeing to all course policies.***

***The instructor reserves the right to modify course policy -- with appropriate notice to students -- if it is judged that doing so will further the course objectives.***

**Content:** This course examines the changing nature of family structures and dynamics over the course of U.S. history from European colonization to the present, and the relation between these changes and broader social, cultural, and political developments in United States history. The analytic focus is on the American family as a complex, historically conditioned, socially and culturally constructed, and often highly politicized institution that has developed in interaction with broader currents in US history and has varied along lines of class, ethnicity, race, and region. Its fundamental assumption is that the family, often assumed to be a “private” institution, has in fact been inseparable from American public life, discourse, and identity.

**Learning Objectives:** Upon successful completion of this course, the student will

- (1) be familiar with major issues and controversies in U.S. family history.
- (2) understand how historians use the study of the family to analyze broader historical currents.
- (3) understand how historical arguments are constructed.
- (4) have strengthened skills in conducting historical research.
- (5) have strengthened skills in interpreting primary-source historical documents.
- (6) have strengthened skills in critical and analytical thinking and writing.

**Requirements:** All students in the class must:

- (1) attend and arrive on time at class sessions.
- (2) do the assigned reading *completely and on time*.
- (3) actively participate in class discussions.
- (4) take the midterm exam and a cumulative essay-style final examination.
- (5) submit a research paper of approximately 2500 words (for graduate students, approximately 5000 words) on a selected topic in U.S. family history (this assignment is explained in detail on a separate handout).

**Class activities:** This course is arranged into units, each consisting typically of 3 class sessions and devoted to the examination of a particular topic. The first class session of each unit will be a lecture intended to contextualize the week’s reading assignments. The second and third sessions will be devoted to discussions of the assigned readings; these discussions are the central element of the course and are intended to identify arguments, examine their structure, and assess their persuasiveness.

Participation in class discussions is an important part of this course -- and of your grade. You must come prepared for class discussions, and be ready to be called upon for your input. Your level of class participation will be monitored during the semester. At the end of the semester, you will be assigned a class participation score and it will count for 1/4 of your course grade. The minimum score -- given to one who never participates in class discussions -- is 35 out of a possible 50 points (the equivalent of a C-), though a score of 35 will never be permitted to raise the grade of a person whose scores in other course areas average below a C-.

Study questions, designed to focus your thoughts about the reading, will be distributed in advance. Writing out your answers to these questions will benefit you greatly -- both in class discussions and on the final exam -- and is therefore strongly suggested.

**Attendance policy:** While conflicting commitments and unforeseen and unpreventable developments may occasionally force an absence, this class, like one's family or job, is a major commitment. Attendance is required and will be monitored by means of daily sign-up sheets. To allow for unforeseen circumstances, every student will be permitted three "cuts" (the equivalent of a week of class), with no questions asked and no penalty. But 5 points will be deducted from your course point total (on which, see below) for each additional absence. If appropriate documentation for severe illness, employment conflict, or other compelling reason for absence is presented, that absence will be "excused" and will not be charged against you. This policy reflects life in the working world, where employers have strict attendance policies and the penalties for violating them are much greater. As in the working world, demonstrated commitment to the class in the form of perfect attendance will be rewarded. 10 points will be added to the course point total of anyone who completes the semester with no unexcused absences.

**Make-up policy:** Make-ups of the midterm and final exams will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances, and only if those circumstances are verified in writing to the instructor by the appropriate authority. If such verification is presented, the student will be permitted to take an *oral* examination at a time agreed upon by both student and instructor.

**Grading:** *Please note that plus-minus grading is used in this section of HIST 3680.* A maximum of 300 points will be available in this course. These points are distributed as follows:

- 50 points maximum for the midterm exam
- 100 points maximum for the paper
- 100 points maximum on the final exam
- 50 points maximum for class participation

Grades will be assigned largely on the basis of total points earned, as follows:

280 – 300 = A	260 – 269 = B+	230 – 239 = C+	200 – 209 = D+
270 – 279 = A-	250 – 259 = B	220 – 229 = C	190 – 199 = D
	240 – 249 = B-	210 – 219 = C-	180 – 189 = D-

Points earned for perfect attendance will be added to your total, and points lost for poor attendance will be subtracted from your total.

## IMPORTANT NOTES CONCERNING GRADING:

- 1) For CR/NC students, 210 points are required for credit.
- 2) A passing grade requires that all assignments, including the term paper and final exam, be submitted.
- 3) Change from letter grade to CR/NC will be granted after the university deadline ONLY IF compelling reasons, supported by appropriate written documentation, are offered. Compelling reasons include but are not limited to (a) a change in work schedule that makes attendance at class impossible; (b) an illness serious enough to require hospitalization or medically-ordered bedrest for a lengthy period. Reasons NOT considered compelling include but are not limited to (a) avoidance of a failing grade; (b) avoidance of grade-related loss of financial aid.

**Extra credit policy:** Your grade for the course is based solely on required course work. *No opportunity for extra credit is available.*

**Required books** (available for purchase at Kiva bookstore; copies will be sent to Stockton and may be ordered through Kiva bookstore by students at other remote sites):

Anya Jabour, ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children*  
 Judith E. Smith, *Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Lives in Providence, Rhode Island 1900-1940*

Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*

**Important Dates:**

Last day to drop:	T 10/2
Last day to choose CR/NC option:	T 10/2
Final exam:	M 12/17, 11:15 AM – 1:15 PM

**PLEASE NOTE:** The instructor will be happy to accommodate needs arising from legitimate instances of disability, supported by documentation from the appropriate university authorities. *Making the necessary arrangements is the student's responsibility and should be done during the first week of the course.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** Any student caught in an act of academic dishonesty will fail the course and may be subject to full disciplinary procedure.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

W Sept. 5 Introduction to the course

### UNIT 1: American Families in Historical Perspective

Reading: *Major Problems*, 3-23

F,M,W Sept. 7, 10, 12 Discuss *Major Problems*, 3-23

### UNIT 2: Families in Colonial America

Reading: *Major Problems*, 33-35 (doc. 1), 38-39 (docs. 3 & 4), 42-58

F Sept. 14 Lecture / **PAPER TOPIC MUST BE APPROVED BY TODAY**

M Sept. 17 Discuss *Major Problems*, 42-58

W Sept. 19 Discuss *Major Problems*, 33-35, 38-39

### UNIT 3: A Revolution in Family Dynamics

Reading: *Major Problems*, 73-74 (doc. 1), 75-86 (docs. 3-7), 86-103

F Sept. 21 Lecture

M Sept. 24 Discuss *Major Problems*, 86-103

W Sept. 26 Discuss *Major Problems*, 73-74, 75-86

### UNIT 4: Families in Victorian America

Reading: *Major Problems*, 106-113 (docs. 1-4), 115-130

Bret E. Carroll, "I Must Have My House in Order: The Victorian Fatherhood of John Shoebridge Williams"

Handout reading: selection from the spiritual journal of John Shoebridge Williams

F Sept. 28 Lecture

M&W Oct. 1&3 Discuss *Major Problems*, 115-130 and "I Must Have My House in Order"

F Oct. 5 Discuss *Major Problems*, 106-113 and handout reading

### UNIT 5: The Family in Slavery

Reading: *Major Problems*, 39-41 (doc. 5), 58-69, 134-143 (docs. 1-5), 144-165

M Oct. 8 Lecture / **BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE TODAY**

**W Oct. 10 NO CLASS: COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVANCE**

F Oct. 12 Discuss *Major Problems*, 58-69, 144-165

M Oct. 15 Discuss *Major Problems* 39-41, 134-143

### MIDTERM EXAM

W Oct. 17 Review

**F Oct. 19 Midterm exam: please bring 8 ½" x 11" blue book**

UNIT 6: Family on the Frontier

Reading: *Major Problems*, 205-215 (docs. 3-5), 224-248

M Oct. 22 Lecture  
 W Oct. 24 Discuss *Major Problems*, 224-248  
 F Oct. 26 Discuss *Major Problems*, 205-215

UNIT 7: Families in the New Immigration

Reading: *Family Connections* (entire)

M Oct. 29 Lecture / **THESIS STATEMENT & OUTLINE DUE TODAY**  
 W&F Oct. 31 & Nov. 2 Discuss *Family Connections*

UNIT 8: Progressive Reform, the State, and the Family

Reading: *Major Problems*, 259-268 (docs. 4&5), 279-288, 295-300 (docs. 3&4), 311-322

M Nov. 5 Lecture  
 W Nov. 7 Discuss *Major Problems*, 279-288, 311-322  
 F Nov. 9 Discuss *Major Problems*, 259-268, 295-300

UNIT 9: American Families During World War II

Reading: *Major Problems*, 325-343 (docs. 1-5), 348-369

**M Nov. 12 NO CLASS: VETERAN'S DAY**  
 W Nov. 14 Lecture / **OPTIONAL FIRST DRAFT DUE TODAY**  
 F Nov. 16 Discuss *Major Problems*, 348-369  
 M Nov. 19 Discuss *Major Problems*, 325-343  
**W Nov. 21 NO CLASS: HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

UNIT 10: American Families During the 1950s

Reading: *Homeward Bound* (entire)

M Nov. 26 Lecture  
 W&F Nov. 28&30 Discuss *Homeward Bound*

UNIT 11: The Politics of the Family in Contemporary America

Reading: *Major Problems*, 443-460 (docs. 1-5), 460-481

M Dec. 3 Lecture / **RESEARCH PAPER DUE TODAY**  
 W Dec. 5 Discuss *Major Problems*, 460-481  
 F Dec. 7 Discuss *Major Problems*, 443-460

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 M Dec. 10 Course evaluations / Discuss final exam essay  
**M Dec. 17 Final exam, 11:15 AM – 1:15 PM**