

Sociology 440 – Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage

Spring 2020

Chambers 1045 – T 1:40-4:20

Gayle Kaufman, *she/they*

Course description

Americans love marriage. Most people will marry at some point in their lives and many will marry more than once. In fact, 40% of marriages involve a second or higher marriage for one or both spouses. At the same time, marriage rates have gone down, particularly for those with less education, and people are marrying later, with the median age at first marriage at 28 for women and 30 for men. In its place, more and more young adults are cohabiting, one-quarter by age 20 and three-quarters by age 30. Divorce rates remain relatively high, but there have been declines in the overall rate since the 1980s. Amidst these trends, the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage across the country. Before this, estimates showed about 4 in 10 same-sex cohabiting couples were married, while after the ruling same-sex marriages increased resulting in 60% of same-sex cohabiting couples being married. This course will examine these trends as well as the decisions, relationships, and conflicts behind them. Much of the course will also be spent investigating topics of interest to class members. All students will conduct research on a topic of their choice and discussions will center on readings related to students' research topics as well as the research process itself.

Fulfills: Sociology major requirement, Gender and Sexuality Studies major and minor requirement, Communication Studies minor requirement

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify patterns of marriage, divorce, and remarriage
2. Explain and evaluate previous research findings
3. Design a research project
4. Analyze sociological data
5. Interpret research findings
6. Write and talk about research

Outside the classroom

Drop in office hours – no appointment necessary

- Tuesdays 9:40-11:00 in Preyer 104
- Wednesdays 12:30-2:00 at Commons (Sociology table)

Scheduled office hours – please email to schedule an appointment during these times

- Thursdays 2:00-5:00
- Fridays 2:00-5:00

Contact me:

- [gakaufman@davidson.edu](mailto:gakaufman@ davidson.edu)
- 704-894-2485

Email is the best way to contact me outside of class and office hours. I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours Monday through Friday. I may take longer to respond over weekends or breaks.



Course requirements

Class participation (15%)

This is a seminar and as such class meetings will largely be driven by discussion. You are expected to attend class and fully participate in every aspect of the class. About half of our class time will be devoted to discussion of the reading material and the other half will be used as a workshop to discuss your research projects. This means that preparation and participation will be key components to a successful class. Steps to successful participation:

1. Before class – read the assignment, write a response to two questions (see below), do the research assignment for the week.
2. During the first part of class – listen to discussion leaders and others when they talk, answer questions posed by the discussion leaders, engage in discussion (ask yourself: am I contributing to the discussion?)
3. During the second part of class – be prepared to talk about your research progress, listen to others when they talk about their research, provide useful comments and suggestions and/or ask questions about others' research that will help them improve their projects.

Discussion Leader (15%)

You will be responsible for leading class discussion once during the semester. Starting February 18, each class will have 2 leaders, either a team (those collaborating on a project) or two individuals separately. Here are the guidelines:

1. *Select the topic*: choose a topic related to your research project.
2. *Select the reading*: if pair, choose 2-3 articles and if individual, choose 1-2 articles for the class to read. I suggest using Sociological Abstracts or other library databases to find relevant sources. I also recommend recent studies within the last 10 years.
3. *Develop discussion questions*: come up with 3-6 thought provoking questions based on the assigned readings.
4. *Email the class*: Email the class the reading citations and links or pdf files AND at least 2 questions by **the Friday before class**.
5. *Create a handout*: include a brief outline of the major points, critiques, and discussion questions. Bring copies to class.
6. *Facilitate class discussion*: lead a discussion based on your questions. You can share your own insights to the questions and ask follow-up questions during the discussion.
7. *Other materials/activities*: you may bring in other materials that are relevant to the topic (news/magazine article, song lyrics/music, movie/television show clip, etc.). You may also plan exercises or use other strategies to encourage class participation. Be creative.

Discussion question (DQ) responses (20%)

Each week, you will write a response to 2 of the questions that the discussion leaders send via email (1 each if individual leaders). Limit each response to 300 words. These responses are meant to be informal in tone (intended audience = peers) but should be clear, concise, and well written. **Submit your responses via Moodle each Tuesday by 1:40 pm.** A penalty will be

Assessment

assessed for late responses and responses will not be accepted after 1:40 on Friday. You will not submit a response the week you are discussion leader.

Research project (50%)

You will conduct original research based on your own data collection (observations, interviews, survey) or analysis of a secondary data source. In the first few weeks, we will discuss potential topics and you will start reading the literature on your specific topic. You will then design your research methodology and submit an IRB application if necessary. You will then collect your data. You will then analyze your data. Finally, you will make connections to previous theory and literature and consider the implications of your findings. You may work in pairs on this project.

Access Statement

The college welcomes requests for accommodations related to disability and will grant those that are determined to be reasonable and maintain the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact the Office of Academic Access and Disability Resources, which is located in the Center for Teaching and Learning in the E.H. Little Library: Beth Bleil, Director, bebleil@davidson.edu, 704-894-2129; or Alysen Beaty, Assistant Director, albeaty@davidson.edu, 704-894-2939. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.

4 means of assessment:

- 1) Class participation = 15%
- 2) Discussion leader = 15%
- 3) DQ responses = 20%
- 4) Research project = 50%

Grading scale:

- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 60-66
- F = <60

Class schedule (1 team)

1:40 – 3:05	Discussion
3:05 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 4:20	Research workshop

Class schedule (2 individuals)

1:40 – 2:25	Discussion, part 1
2:25 – 2:30	Stretch
2:30 – 3:15	Discussion, part 2
3:15 – 3:25	Break
3:25 – 4:20	Research workshop

Davidson College Honor Code

Each Davidson student is honor bound to refrain from stealing, lying about College business, and cheating on academic work.

Please refer to the Honor Code:

<https://www.davidson.edu/about/distinctly-davidson/honor-code>



Research Paper Structure

- **Title Page** – title, your name, course number and name, date
- **Abstract** – this includes the research problem/topic, description of the data, and summary of important findings. Typical abstracts are about 150 words.
- **Introduction** – state the research problem/topic/question, discuss the significance of your research, and outline what will be covered in your paper.
- **Literature Review** – summarize previous findings related to your research. You should organize this section thematically and use subheadings. At the end of this section, you should note where your study fills in gaps in the literature and the specific research questions and/or hypotheses to be addressed.
- **Methods** – provide details about your sample, data collection, questions, and analytical strategy.
- **Results** – report findings, based on your data analysis. You should include direct quotes for qualitative research or figures/tables for quantitative research.
- **Conclusion** – link your findings to the literature review. Are your findings consistent with or contradictory to previous research, and what might explain these findings? Describe the limitations of your research. Discuss the implications of your research for policy and/or future research in the area.
- **References** – all citations in the text of your paper should be included in the reference section, and vice versa. Use ASA or APA style

Helpful resources:

- Meet with a librarian – schedule a 30 or 60 minute consultation online
- Go to the Writing Center
- Go to the Speaking Center

The final paper should be approximately 20 to 30 pages double-spaced (including references, etc.)

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading	Research
Jan 14	Welcome and introductions		
Jan 21	Cohabitation and LAT	Lundquist & Lin Hatch Benson & Coleman	Selecting a topic and framing a research question
Jan 28	Marriage	Green, Valleriani, & Adam Johnson & Loscocco Ocobock	Library research
Feb 4	Divorce	Crowley & Brand Killewald Allen & Goldberg	Research design
Feb 11	Remarriage and stepfamilies	Guzzo Crowley Nuru & Wang	IRB process
Feb 18	TBD	Discussion	Library research
Feb 25	TBD	Discussion	Begin data collection (after IRB approval)
March 3	<i>No Class</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>	
March 10	TBD	Discussion	Transcribing interviews and inputting/cleaning survey data
March 17	TBD	Discussion	Coding interviews/analyzing survey data
March 24	TBD	Discussion	Writing a literature review
March 31	TBD	Discussion	Writing up findings
April 7	TBD	Discussion	Writing an introduction
April 14	<i>No Class</i>	<i>Easter Break</i>	
April 21	TBD	Discussion	Writing a conclusion
April 28	Presentations		
May 5	Presentations		
May 11			Final paper due by 6 pm

Readings (available on Moodle)

January 21 – cohabitation and LAT

- Lundquist, J. H., & Lin, K. (2015). Is love (color) blind? The economy of race among gay and straight daters. *Social Forces*, 93, 1423-1449.
- Hatch, A. (2017). Saying “I don’t” to matrimony: An investigation of why long-term heterosexual cohabitators choose not to marry. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38, 1651-1674.
- Benson, J. J., & Coleman, M. (2016). Older adults developing a preference for living apart together. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78, 797-812.

January 28 – marriage

- Green, A. I., Valleriani, J., & Adam, B. (2016). Marital monogamy as ideal and practice: The detraditionalization thesis in contemporary marriages. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78, 416-430.
- Johnson, K. R., & Loscocco, K. (2015). Black marriage through the prism of gender, race, and class. *Journal of Black Studies*, 46, 142-171.
- Ocobock, A. (2018). Status or access? The impact of marriage on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer community change. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 80, 367-382.

February 4 – divorce

- Crowley, J. E., & Brand, J. D. (2019). Should it be easy? Divorce process attitudes among those who have split up in midlife. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 60, 47-68.
- Killewald, A. (2016). Money, work, and marital stability: Assessing change in the gendered determinants of divorce. *American Sociological Review*, 81, 696-719.
- Allen, K. R., & Goldberg, A. E. (2019): Lesbian women disrupting gendered, heteronormative discourses of motherhood, marriage, and divorce. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/10894160.2019.1615356

February 11 – remarriage and stepfamilies

- Guzzo, K. B. (2017). Shifts in higher-order unions and stepfamilies among currently cohabiting and married women of childbearing age. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38, 1775-1799.
- Crowley, J. E. (2019). Once bitten, twice shy? Gender differences in the remarriage decision after a gray divorce. *Sociological Inquiry*, 89, 150-176.
- Nuru, A. K., & Wang, T. R. (2019). “He’s my dad because he just is!”: Cohabiting (step)children’s responses to discursive challenges. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 58, 227-243.