

The Rational Family: Marriage and Childbearing in Modern America

Demography 24, Fall 2003
University of California, Berkeley

Time: Tuesday 10-11 am
Place: Demography Seminar Room, 2232 Piedmont Avenue
Professor: Jennifer Johnson-Hanks
Office: 2232 Piedmont Avenue, Room 204
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-5
Email: *johnsonhanks@demog.berkeley.edu*

What is this course about?

This course will explore the contemporary American family as a thing made on purpose—not only by individuals or couples, but also by legislatures, courts, churches, insurance companies, and others. Looking at topics from gay marriage, polygynous marriage, and arranged marriages, to inter-racial adoption, assisted reproduction and the new voluntary childlessness, the course will examine current topics in the public debate on the family through the lens of social science. For example, we will consider:

- Who are the stake-holders in the shape and character of the family?
- What forms of leverage do they have to influence family form?
- What positions do they take? And why?

Thus, our aim is not so much to take sides (for or against gay marriage, for or against surrogacy contracts, etc.), but rather to understand how the sides are aligned, organized, and motivated.

How much work should you expect?

Not too much. Like all Freshman Seminars, this course is intended to introduce you to a way of thinking about a topic, rather than to transmit a particular corpus of knowledge. We will read popular non-fiction, rather than technical academic work, and not more than 25 pages a week. The only requirements are that you read and participate in the discussion. There will neither exams nor required papers. My goal is that you acquire the habit of thinking critically about seemingly obvious and inevitable things, so that you can approach the news, electoral politics, and the choices you will face in your own lives with more information and better analytic skills.

Schedule of topics

August 26. Introduction

September 2. For and against marriage

Smiley, Jane (2000) Why Marriage? Matrimony at the millennium offers solace to Capitalism. *Harper's, Special edition celebrating 150 years of literature*. Summer 2000: Pp. 151-159.

Waite, Linda and Maggie Gallagher (2000) *The Case for Marriage: Why married people are happier, healthier, and better off financially*. New York, NY: Doubleday Press. Chapter 2.

September 9. Gay marriage

Bumiller, Elisabeth (2003). Cold Feet: Why America has Gay marriage jitters. *The New York Times*. August 10, 2003.

Feldman, Linda (2003) New battle line in "culture war": gay marriage. *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 1, 2003.

Gomez, Jewelle (2000) Otherwise Engaged: Marriage is an offer I can refuse. *Ms*. June/July 2000: 67-69.

Pope, Justin (2003) The dollar cost of no legal marriage. *The Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 2003. Page C-3.

September 16. Cohabitation and divorce

Centers for Disease Control. (2002) *Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the United States*, Vital and Health Statistics, Series 23, No. 22. Pages 1-5 and 10-19.

Whitehead, Barbara (1997) *Divorce Culture*. New York: Alfred Knopf. Selected Pages.

September 23. Marriage and welfare reform

Boo, Katherine (2003) The marriage cure: Is wedlock really a way out of poverty? *The New Yorker*, August 18 & 25, 2003. 105-120.

Toner, Robin (2002) Welfare chief is hoping to promote marriage. *The New York Times*, February 19, 2002. Page A1,16.

September 30.

American Polygyny

Booth, William (2001) Polygamist is found guilty of bigamy. Utah traveling salesman flaunted his lifestyle with 5 wives, 29 children. *Washington Post Archives*, May 20, 2001.

Egan, Timothy (1999) The Persistence of Polygamy. *The New York Times Magazine*, February 28, 1999.

Pollitt, Katha (1999) Polymaritally perverse. *The Nation*. October 4, 1999. Page 10.

October 7.

Arranged marriage and mail-order brides

Jana, Reena (2000) Arranges marriages, minus the parents. For Some South Asians, matrimonial sites both honor and subvert tradition. *The New York Times*, August 17, 2000:D-1.

Sun, Lena (1998) The search for Miss Right takes a turn toward Russia. *The Washington Post*, March 8, 1998. Page A-1.

Razdan, Anjula (2003) What's love got to do with it? Are arranged marriages healthier than romantic attraction? *The Utne Reader*. May-June 2003, 69-71.

October 14.

Childlessness: voluntary and involuntary

Hewlett, Sylvia (2002) *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*. Miramax Press. Selected Pages.

Carroll, Laura (2000) *Families of Two: Interviews with Happily Married Couples without Children by Choice*. Xlibris Corp. Selected Pages.

October 21.

New Reproductive Technologies, part 1:

Centers for Disease Control (2001) "Glossary of Terms," and "Introduction," from the *1999 National Report on Assisted Reproductive Technologies*.

Powledge, Tabitha (2002) Looking at ART: Is it time to scrutinize assisted reproduction? **Scientific American**, April 2002. 20-23.

Pollitt, Katha (2002) Egg on the Brain. *The Nation*. March 4, 2002, page 10.

October 28.

New Reproductive Technologies, part 2:

Cohen, Jessica (2002) Grade A: The Market for a Yale Woman's Eggs. *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 2002:75-78.

Daar, Judith (2001) Frozen embryo disputes revisited. *Journal of Law, medicine and ethics*. Summer 2001. (Printed from *findarticles.com*).

Pyton, Elizabeth. 2001. Is Surrogate Motherhood Moral? **The Humanist**, Sept/Oct. 2001. Pp. 20-21.

November 4.

Adoption

Corbett, Sara (2002) Where do babies come from? *The New York Times Magazine*, June 16, 2002, Pp. 42ff.

Funderberg, Lise (1998) Who should adopt our children? *Essence*, January 1998. (Printed from *findarticles.com*).

Gardner, Marilyn (2003) One + one makes a family: growing numbers of single American women are adopting children. *Christian Science Monitor*. March 19, 2003.

November 11.

No Class (Veteran's Day)

November 18.

Non-marital and teen childbearing

Marks, Alexandra (2002) As teens' prospects rise, pregnancies fall. *Christian Science Monitor*. October 22, 2002.

Waller, M. (2002) My baby's father: Unmarried parents and parental responsibility. Itaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 2.

November 25.

Bioethics

Conrad, Peter (2001) Off target, IN: Symposium: The Shifting Ground of Life and Death. *Social Science and Modern Society*, Vol 38, 5.

Singer, Peter (2001) Changing Ethics of Life and Death, IN: Symposium: The Shifting Ground of Life and Death. *Social Science and Modern Society*, Vol 38, 5.

Vega, Cecelia (2003) Sterilization offer to addicts reopens ethics issue. *The New York Times*. January 6, 2003.

December 2.

Conclusion (a.k.a. class party)