

Kinship and the Family

親屬與家庭

Course Syllabus

Undergraduate Program in the Humanities and Social Sciences

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

National Tsing Hua University

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

Sprint Semester 2023-2024 Academic Year

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Office hours: 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Keywords

1. Kinship, 2. Family, 3. Marriage, 4. Gender, 5. Biological Evolution, 6 Social Evolution, 7. Marriage Types, 8. Family Types, 9. Residential Patterns, and 10. Kinship and the Family as Sociotechnologies.

Time and Place

Wednesdays, 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

Classroom: TBA.

Language of Instruction and Writing Assignments

Although course titles and language of instruction have varied worldwide, this course is regularly offered as a required course for undergraduate majors and minors in anthropology at historically English language Universities.

Course Description

Core Concept. The core concept of this course is that kinship and the family have a - sociocultural cultural side but the sociocultural side cannot be wholly separated from their biological side.

The Teaching Content. The teaching content includes lectures and readings and writing assignments and the semester's progress is organized step-by-step around the chapters of the required textbook and the progressive steps in writing the critiques and turning them into a research article. Grading takes into consideration attendance and participation together with writing assignments. Otherwise, the course has no special requirements.

“Kinship and the Family” is an undergraduate course in anthropology that introduces students to the main themes in the study of kinship and the family. Over the past decade, this course has taken on an increased social relevance and attracted considerable academic interest as profound changes in marriage and the family have reverberating around the world. For instance, in countries like Taiwan and the United

States, increases in the frequency of international marriages and the rising visibility and changing legal status of gay and lesbian marriage are just two issues in a long list of contentious issues now surrounding kinship and the family.

Two broad themes are emphasized in this course. First, the course pays special attention to locating contemporary realities about kinship and the family across both the broader social and the biological histories of the human species. Thus, the course will include consideration of the degree to which the human family and its organization might or might not be due to biological or even genetic “givens.” The question on the table is whether kinship and the family are in any way fixed by human biology or are wholly and only socially and culturally “constructed”? This course examines the way that kinship and the family may or may not involve biological “givens,” may or may not involve social and cultural “variables,” or may involve some mix of “givens” and “variables.”

This course similarly probes what lays behind the huge diversity of kinship and the family around the world. Course coverage of this theme includes kinships and family systems that are systematically organized in terms of relations between women (“matrilineal”), between men (“patrilineal”), and still other less common forms of kinship and marriage, such as polygamous and polygynous marriages. Thus, coverage includes the more the organization of families around one wife and one husband, the less familiar organization of families around more than one husband, and even more rarely the organization of families around even more than one husband and more than one wife. Although given less emphasis, kinship terminologies are also apt to reflect more-or-less similar classificatory features.

In the end, the question is whether patrilineal monogamous families are more inevitable than the other possible family forms and what might be their reproductive implications? These especially important subjects are well-covered in Linda Stone and Diane E. King’s *Kinship and Gender* (2019, sixth edition), where the coauthors also include coverage of new medical technologies, families that include members with different nationalities, and families organized around single parents, and even family-like residential groupings such as households of “friends,” of “roommates,” or “coworkers.”

Although the course thus includes a broad view of kinship and the family, many of the examples somewhat in the readings and more thoroughly in the class lectures draw on recent research specific to East Asia and especially to Taiwan.

Course Requirements

Course requirements include the following: (1) regular class attendance (normally a maximum of no more than two unexcused class absences) and energetic participation in class discussions, and (2) written work in the form of three critiques and/or a research paper (see below). Discussion of the precise schedule for the completion of all written work take place at the beginning of the semester.

Readings. The course textbook is Linda Stone and Diane E. King’s *Kinship and Gender* (2019, sixth edition). There are no Chinese translations of this textbook. Additional required readings can be individualized to meet each student’s needs and interests. The maximum weekly reading load will be between thirty-to-forty pages.

Writing Assignment. Depending on student progress towards their respective degrees, students may write three critiques or first write three critiques and then eventually combine them into a research article. In either case, the first critique reviews a selection of the evidentiary literature, the second reviews a selection of the theoretical literature, and the third critique attempts a novel theoretical innovation that accounts for the fresh evidence. The length of each of the three critiques is between three and

five pages. The research article combines the three critiques that will be between fifteen to twenty pages in length. Whether a critique or a research article, each piece of writing must full citations in a references-cited section at the end of each piece of writing. The style standards for all writing projects are those available in the most recent edition of the *American Anthropologist*.

Grading

To receive a passing grade in this course students must have regular and punctual class attendance and active in-class participation, keep up with the weekly required readings, and punctually complete all three critiques. To receive a better than passing grade in this course students must also punctually complete both the three critiques and the research article.

Course Schedule and Required Readings for Kinship and the Family 親屬與家庭.

Week	Date	Readings
Week 1	21 February	Course Introduction. No readings
Week 2	28 February*	Peace Memorial Day. No class.
Week 3	6 March	Chapter 1, “Gender, Reproduction, and Kinship” (pp 1-30).
Week 4	13 March	Chapter 2, “The Evolution of Kinship and Gender” (pp 31-60).
Week 5	20 March	Chapter 3, “The Power of Patriline” (pp 61-102)
Week 6	27 March	Chapter 4, “Through the Mother” (pp 103-142)
Week 7	3 April*	Intercollegiate Activities. No class.
Week 8	10 April	Chapter 5, “Double, Bilateral, and Cognatic Descent” (pp 143-168)
Week 9	17 April	Midsemester Discussion. Catch up on readings.
Week 10	24 April	Chapter 6, “Marriage” (pp 169-188)
Week 11	1 May	Chapter 7, “A History of Euro-American Kinships and Gender” (pp 189-234)
Week 12	8 May	Chapter 8, “Kinship, Gender, and Contemporary Social Issues” (pp 235-254)
Week 13	15 May	Chapter 9, “Kinship, Gender, and the New Reproductive Technologies” (pp 255-278)
Week 14	22 May	Chapter 10, “The Globalization of Kinship” (pp 279-300).
Week 15	29 May	No readings. Student research article presentations.
Week 16	29 May	Concluding Discussions

Course Textbook

The required course textbook is only available in English. Students will be reading one chapter per week. The English is easy to follow and relatively easy to understand. The course textbook is available online and here is its link:

https://nthu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/886UST_NTHU/80cpsf/alma990056585270206774

Stone, Linda. 2014. *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*. Fifth edition. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Other Selective Readings

Depending on the individual interests and language skills of the students in this course, there are additional readings that the students in this course might consider using, including:

Du, Shanshan. 2002. "Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs": Gender Unity and Gender Quality Among the Lahu of Southwest China. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hsieh Jih-chang and Chuang Ying-chang. 1985. *The Chinese Family and its Ritual Behavior*. Nangang: Institute of Ethnology.

Wolf, Arthur P. and Chieh-shan Huang. 1980. *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845-1945*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Wolf, Arthur P. 1995. *Sexual Attraction and Childhood Association: A Chinese Brief for Edward Westermarck*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Freedman, Maurice. 1970. *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Watson, Rubie S. and Patricia Buckley Embrey. 1991. *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.