

GRADUATE PROGRAM in FAMILY SOCIOLOGY
Department of Sociology

Purpose

The objective of the graduate program in family studies is to prepare students for careers in teaching, research, and/or governmental or community service focusing on families and family relations. The program gives students insights into the complexities of contemporary families, the historical development of family systems, and the social psychological and demographic processes that influence and are influenced by family phenomena. Family studies may be selected as either the major or minor area of study by PhD students. Students in the doctoral program who do not already have a master's degree or have a non-thesis master's degree will obtain one during their course of study. All graduate students in family studies are encouraged to develop a professional orientation toward teaching, research, and publication through direct involvement in the activities of the faculty.

Course Requirements

Students selecting a major or minor in family studies are responsible for all the degree requirements described in the Graduate Catalog and for those specified in the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) of the Department of Sociology. The program in family studies consists of a core curriculum.

The Core Curriculum

- SOC 5500: Gender in Families
- SOC 6530: Social Psychology of the Intimate Dyad
- SOC 6540: Family Theory and Research
- SOC 6560: Family Demography
- SOC 6580: Sociology of Aging
- SOC 7280: Human Fertility and Family Planning
- SOC 7310: Sociology of Adolescence
- SOC 7530: Socialization

Students who emphasize family studies in their master's degree program are required to take at least three courses from the core curriculum, which must include SOC 6540: Family Theory and Research. Students who major or minor in family studies at the PhD level are required to take SOC 6540: Family Theory and Research, in addition to four electives for the major or three electives for the minor. SOC 6540 reviews the theories, methodologies, and substantive issues investigated by family sociologists such as family formation, marital and parent-child relations, divorce and remarriage, and kinship. At all levels, students are strongly encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses from the core curriculum. For doctoral students who receive their master's degrees from BGSU, the course requirements for the major and minor are inclusive of those for the master's.

Students are encouraged to take as many elective courses from the core curriculum as is consistent with their own professional goals and development. Students may also enroll in SOC 6850 or 7850, Readings in Sociology, with a faculty member in the area of family studies as a means of pursuing topics that are not routinely covered in existing seminars. (These courses do not count toward the minimum number of seminars required for the MA or PhD major or minor.) Department policy precludes more than 6 hours of Independent Study as part of the minimum requirements for the MA degree, or more than 9 hours for the PhD degree.

Specializations

Students who major in family studies at the doctoral level will choose one of two specializations within the field: (1) demography of the family; or (2) social psychology of the family. This choice may correspond with the student's minor area of study within the department (i.e., demography or social psychology), but this is not necessary. The choice of specialization does not necessarily entail the choice of a particular curriculum within the family area, although some courses are explicitly demographic (SOC 6560 and SOC 7280) while others are social-psychological (SOC 6530 and SOC 7530). The specialization is better interpreted as a matter of relative interest that helps to identify substantive research topics for seminar papers and the dissertation, and that determines part of the contents of the written preliminary examination (see below). Regardless of specialty within family, students are encouraged to take as many seminars in the area as possible.

Examination Requirements

Doctoral students majoring in family studies must successfully complete an eight-hour preliminary examination, which is normally taken after the completion of all course work. A 3.2 grade point average in post-master's work is necessary to take any preliminary examination.

The examination is divided into two eight-hour sessions. The first covers the major schools of thought in family studies, methodological issues, and selected substantive issues that are common to scholarship in the family area. The second session is specific to the student's specialization within family (demography of the family or social psychology of the family).

It is assumed that all graduate students in family studies will be familiar with recent monographs in the field, and with relevant articles appearing in current issues of the *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, *Social Problems*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Demography*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and other journals.

Summary

The Department of Sociology at Bowling Green State University offers a PhD program with family studies as either a *minor* or *major* area. The core curriculum consists of elective courses, and only one required course (SOC 6540) for the master's and the doctoral degree. This policy reflects the philosophy of the family studies program, a philosophy that emphasizes flexibility and coursework tailored to meet the needs and interests of our students. All students are encouraged to select additional courses from the core curriculum in family studies. Other courses are offered in and outside the department that would be useful (e.g., Human Development & Family Studies, Psychology, and Ethnic Studies offer additional classes). In short, each student must accept

responsibility for designing a course of study that will best serve his or her professional goals. The Department of Sociology's faculty in family studies will make every reasonable effort to insure that students will meet all degree requirements and emerge as well-qualified professionals. Family Studies is a major division of the [American Sociological Association](#) and we feel that our program is a challenging opportunity for able, motivated students.

FAMILY AREA FACULTY

- Brown, Susan L. (PhD, The Pennsylvania State University, 1998). Distinguished Professor. Family demography; family formation and dissolution; cohabitation.
- Lin, I-Fen (PhD, University of Wisconsin, 1997). Professor. Aging and life course; kinship and intergenerational exchange; family caregiving; discordance in parents' and children's reports; social policies for families and children.
- Longmore, Monica A. (PhD, Washington State University, 1991). Professor. Socialization; adolescence; parent-child relations.
- Manning, Wendy D. (PhD, University of Wisconsin, 1992). Dr. Howard E. and Penny Daum Aldrich Distinguished Professor. Family demography; cohabitation; nonresident fathers; nonmarital fertility; adolescence.
- Newmyer, Lauren (PhD, The Pennsylvania State University, 2023). Assistant Professor. Demography; fertility; health; aging; social networks.
- Nomaguchi, Kei (PhD, University of Maryland, 2003). Professor. Parents and children; work and family; gender; health and well-being; life course.
- Sanchez, Laura (PhD, University of Wisconsin, 1992). Professor. Family; demography; marriage and family policy.
- Yahirun, Jenjira (PhD, UCLA 2012). Associate Professor. Family; demography; migration/immigration.