

Sociology of the Family

LEVEL	SEMESTER	ECTS	FORMAT	LANGUAGE
Bachelor - Master	Winter	3 ECTS	Lectures and seminars	English

Course description

This course introduces students to the basic theoretical concepts and sociological approaches to the study of the family and family behaviour. It examines the historical development of the family and the main characteristics of family life up to 1989, as well as contemporary changes and new trends in family development. Particular attention is paid to changing family structures, reproductive behaviour, marriage patterns, new family forms and the relationship between family development and family policy. The course also introduces students to different theoretical and methodological approaches to the sociological study of the family and to current challenges in family research in Slovakia and Europe.

Main topics

- Theoretical and historical context of the sociological study of the family
- The family as an object of research in related social sciences, including ethnology and psychology
- Classical theories of the family: C. Lévi-Strauss, H. Sumner, H. Spencer and E. Durkheim
- The beginnings of empirical family research: F. Le Play and others
- Czech and Slovak sociology of the family: T. G. Masaryk, I. A. Bláha, A. Chalupný and others
- The development of structural functionalism in the 1950s
- Theories of social change and conflict approaches
- Symbolic interactionism and new approaches to the study of the family
- Diversity of research approaches to the family and eclectic approaches
- New challenges in family research
- Reproductive behaviour and changes in marriage patterns
- New family forms and contemporary family structures

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- understand basic theoretical concepts and approaches in the sociology of the family
- critically analyse factors influencing changes in family behaviour and family trends
- identify and apply theoretical knowledge relevant to the analysis of demographic development in Slovakia and Europe
- describe and discuss different approaches to new family forms in the context of family policy in Slovakia and Europe
- evaluate sociological concepts of the family and their relevance for research on family and family behaviour
- demonstrate an understanding of different research approaches to the study of family variability
- apply basic practical skills in the sociology of the family to contemporary challenges in family research in Slovakia
- analyse reproductive behaviour, changing marriage patterns and transformations of family structures
- understand the historical and contemporary development of family forms from a sociological perspective
- apply basic sociological approaches to the analysis of contemporary family and demographic issues

Teaching methods

Lectures, seminars, discussions, student presentations, individual reading, group work and analysis of selected research topics and contemporary family phenomena. Students are also expected to engage in independent study, including reading recommended literature and preparing presentations and assignments.

Assessment

Continuous assessment based on assignments, student presentations and active participation in seminars.