

Sociology 169, Changing Family Forms (G.E.)

Spring 2002

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:50am

Salvation Computer Science Center (SAL) 101

Class Web Page: <http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~biblarz/>

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Discussion Sections (Required)

1) Wednesday, 10-10:50, KAP 159

2) Wednesday, 1-1:50, VKC 108

3) Wednesday, 2-2:50, VKC 108

4) Wednesday, 3:30-4:20, GFS 213

INTRODUCTION

The institution of the family has evolved throughout history. It is different from one society to another, and it has changed over time within our own society. Recently, however, the changes seem to have intensified. So much has changed that fundamental assumptions about the character of the institution are being questioned. Some scholars and politicians are alarmed at the ways in which the family has changed, and believe that the family itself is disintegrating, and that we are headed for social disaster. Others believe that many of the changes in the family have been positive, and that the family is, by and large, an enduring institution that continues to function as it's supposed to, albeit in some new-looking forms. Here are a few examples of some recent changes in the family, from a variety of domains of family life.

Headlines

- **Divorce.** The divorce rate has more than doubled over the past 40 years. At present rates, over 50% of all marriages contracted today will end in divorce over the next 25 years. Compare this with the late 19th Century, when only about 5% of first marriages ended in divorce (though many more ended in the early death of a spouse).
- **Single-Parent Families.** About 50% of today's children will spend some portion of their childhood living in a single-parent family. 30% to 40% of children will live with a stepparent prior to reaching age 19.
- **Nonmarital Childbearing.** In 1998, 26% of all births to white mothers, 41% of births to Latina mothers, and 70% of births to African-American mothers occurred outside of marriage.
- **Female Labor Force Participation.** In 1950, 20% of women with dependent children worked in the paid labor force. By the late 1990s, close to 70% of women with dependent children work in the paid labor force.
- **Composition of Marriages.** Traditionally, women in the U.S. have married men who were better educated than themselves. Since 1980, marriages in which women were better educated than their husbands have become more likely than marriages in which men were better educated than their wives.
- **Fertility.** Couples in the 1950s had slightly more than 3 children, on average. By the late 1990s, couples are averaging slightly less than 2 children. This means that today's youth are growing up with fewer siblings and, without immigration, the U.S. population would begin to decline in the next century.
- **Surviving Parents.** Comparing adult children aged 50 from 1900 to 2000, chances of having both parents alive has increased from 4% to 40%; comparing adult children aged

60 from 1900 to 2000, chances of having at least one parent alive have septupled, from 7% to 48%.

- **Surviving Grandparents.** It is more likely that today's 20-year-olds have a grandmother still living (91%) than 20-year-olds in 1900 had a mother still living (83%). In 1900 only 23% of newborns had all grandparents still alive and by age 30, 80% had no grandparents alive. By 2000, 68% of children born will have four (or more) grandparents; and at age 30, 80% will have one or more grandparents still living.
- **Multigenerational Families.** 4 million children today are being raised by their grandparents.
- **Gay and Lesbian Families.** Increasingly vocal movements have emerged that seek to remove legal doctrines that allow sexual orientation to be used as a basis for restricting marriage and parenthood. Counter movements seek to entrench legal assumptions that homosexual relations are harmful to children, and to prevent gays and lesbians from marrying, adopting children, or gaining custody of children following divorce.

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to begin to investigate answers to three important questions about the contemporary family in the United States: 1) how has the family been changing over time? (the headlines above offer some clues!); 2) what are the causes, or explanations, of the recent changes in the family offered by sociological, economic, psychological, legal, political, and evolutionary theories, and which explanations are most strongly supported by the empirical evidence?; and 3) what are the consequences of recent changes in the family for individuals and the larger society?

The Four "D's" of Family Change

It turns out (by happenstance) that the major changes in the family can be grouped into four categories, all of which begin with the letter "D": 1) Diversity; 2) Divorce; 3) Division of Labor; and 4) Dependents.

Diversity

Family life has become increasingly diverse, as some of the headlines above suggest. Working dad + stay-at-home-mom + children today comprise a minority of all families, replaced to some degree by dual-career families, single-parent families, extended single-parent families, blended families, binuclear families, childless (or "child-free") families, long-distance (or commuter) marriages, and so on. Cohabitation, divorce, nonmarital childbearing, and remarriage are all processes that have further served to diversify the family. The main issues are, how has the family diversified, and what are the causes and consequences of that diversification for

individuals and society? How and why these processes may differ, or may be felt differently, depending on social class location, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation will be key parts of this investigation.

Divorce

What has caused the unprecedented increase in divorce rates since the 1960s? Some researchers propose economic explanations that identify the entry of women into the paid labor force as a key culprit. Others offer cultural explanations - that a shift in values away from family and community, and toward individual self-fulfillment, has caused the rise in divorce. Still others argue that recent changes in gender roles and gender role values have placed greater stress on today's marriages, because how the husband is supposed to behave and how the wife is supposed to behave is no longer well-defined and prescribed by the society (i.e., "incomplete institutionalization"). Each couple has to negotiate marital roles on its own, without a lot of normative guidance.

One of the main areas of heated debate regards the consequences of divorce for children. Are children who experience their parents' divorce less well off (in terms of educational attainment, psychological well-being, unemployment, their own likelihood of getting divorced, etc.) than children raised by two natural parents? Are the effects of divorce on children short-term or long-term? What happens to children's relationships with their father and mother following divorce, and do these changes in relationships persist throughout the life course? What happens when their parent(s) remarry? We will try to answer each of these questions through a careful examination of the theory and evidence produced by two decades of theory and research on family structure and process conducted in sociology, psychology, and other disciplines.

Division of Labor

Among the most significant recent changes in the family have been the dramatic rise in the educational attainment of women, the widespread entry of women (and mothers) into the paid labor force, and women's emergence as breadwinners (or co-breadwinners) in families. One of our goals in this section of the course will be to examine the ideological, economic and sociological forces that can explain these changes in women's roles.

Conventional wisdom has it that while women have become co-breadwinners with men, men have not responded by playing a substantially greater role in household and childcare work. Consequently, today's women end up with primary responsibility for a "second shift" in the domestic sphere that accompanies their work responsibilities in the public sphere. The ways in which men's roles have and have not changed, and the explanations for those changes (or lack of changes) will be an important component of this investigation.

According to national opinion surveys, most adults agree that increased gender equity has enriched both sexes, approve of women working outside the home, and believe that men and

women should have equal work opportunities. But other numbers reflect ambivalence and dissatisfaction: partners feel greater stress and unhappiness about the lack of time that they spend with each other and with their children. In fact the majority of dual-breadwinner and dual-career partners report feeling bad about leaving their children with others, and wish they could devote more time to their families, but close to 70% say that it takes two incomes to get by these days. There also seems to be an age gradient to these trends, which we will explore: young adults (both men and women) are far more likely than middle aged and elder adults to say that change in gender roles have made their lives better.

In addition, parents are concerned about the effects their changing roles may have on children. We will take a close look at the theory and evidence about whether maternal employment is beneficial/detrimental to children. Key to this will be an examination of how the gender of children and gender of parents interact to affect how children are socialized in contemporary families.

Dependents

From a demographer's perspective, "dependents" typically refer to the two non-working-age populations: Children (those under 18) and Elders (those 65 and older). We will begin our investigation of young dependents by examining theories that attempt to explain "the great fertility decline." Why are people choosing to have fewer children than ever before (or none at all), and what are the consequences of low fertility for the society?

The major changes that occurred in the family from the late 1960s through the 1990s -- divorce, female labor force participation, and so on -- were lived through generations. The childrearing practices and values of parents changed substantially over this period as well. All of this means that family life, and "growing up," was a very different experience for youth who reached young adulthood in the 1990s, than it had been for their parents, who reached young adulthood in the 1960s and 1970s, and their grandparents, who reached adulthood in the 1940s and 1950s. How have the changes in the family differentially shaped the values and behaviors of subsequent generations of youth?

Regarding elders, more years of adults' lives after retirement are spent in active and healthy states, and fewer years are spent with chronic illnesses and limiting disabilities (these trends are reflected in 1998's 173 percent rise over 1997 in the number of over-65s injured taking part in roller-blading, aerobics, and weight training!). A new view of retirement and old age has become dominant in the U.S. The view is that this period of life should be characterized by prosperity, activity, productivity, and self-reliance, rather than as the beginning of disengagement and inactivity. We will investigate these trends, with particular attention to what they mean for contemporary families.

Elders are increasingly providing influence - and resources - to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, well into the children's adulthood. Today it is not just parents, but grandparents and great-grandparents, helping younger adults with college expenses, down

payments on homes, and the like. Contrary to some popular images, when help flows across generations, it most often flows downward, from older parents to children, grandparents to grandchildren - not the reverse. In addition, more aging parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are providing role models for the aging of their descendants, and are playing a role in shaping the aspirations, expectations, and material desires of younger generations. At the same time, a substantial proportion of elders (particularly women and minorities) live in poverty, and the care of the oldest-old in particular is raising new questions for families and social policy.

A political contingent in the U.S. (exemplified by groups like Americans for Generational Equity) depicts the elderly as “greedy geezers” who consume a disproportionate and unfair level of public resources (Social Security, disability insurance, Medicaid, etc.), to the detriment of the working age population and children. If the contingent is successful in shifting public resources away from seniors, a substantial proportion of seniors will experience economic slippage, which could slow or reverse some of the positive trends involving elders over the past 30 years.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

1) Newman, David M. 1999. *Sociology of Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

This is the main textbook. It is a well-written discussion of family sociology that begins with pressing issues of the day that involve families, and then goes about investigating how sociological research and theory can inform our understanding of these issues. Available for purchase at the USC Bookstore.

2) Skolnick, Arlene S. and Jerome H. Skolnick. 2000. *Family in Transition, Eleventh Edition*. New York: Allyn & Bacon.

This book contains dozens of selected articles written by people both inside and outside of sociology and related disciplines. Some of the essays are scholarly, generally attempting to describe a reality. Others are personal, showing us how a reality appears as seen by a participant. Still others are specifically intended to persuade us to see things in a particular way. Available for purchase at the USC Bookstore.

3) Compilation of readings put together by the instructor.

This reader includes provocative classic and contemporary articles that have been published in sociological journals and books. Available for purchase from the USC Bookstore.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Midterm and Final Examinations

The midterm and final examinations are in-class, closed-book essay exams. The purposes of these exams are to 1) facilitate your ability to analyze, integrate, apply, and criticize the materials from both lectures and readings; 2) develop your ability to write in a purposeful, logical, clear and organized way; and 3) encourage you to develop your own perspectives and arguments, and to write with a sense of authorship.

For both exams, blue-books will be provided. The midterm will comprise 20% of your course grade. The final will comprise 30% of your course grade. No late exams will be accepted. Exceptions will only be made if you provide clear evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented your timely performance.

2. Homework Assignments

There will be **four homework assignments** in this course. The main purpose of these assignments is to have you engage with and critically analyze the readings. Some of the chapters/articles you will read are scholarly, generally attempting to describe or explain some social phenomenon. They can be evaluated in terms of the adequacy of their description, their reasoning, and their overt or covert biases. Other chapters/articles are personal statements about how reality appears to the particular author. They can be evaluated in terms of how much they show us, how clear and convincing they are, and what consequences are likely to follow -- will we act differently because of what we have read? Still other chapters/articles are specifically intended to have particular consequences; that is, to persuade us to see things in a particular way. These can be evaluated in terms of how well they make their case, how much they change or reinforce what we think. In homeworks we will also attempt to facilitate your application of the materials of the course to real world settings and real world social phenomena.

Homework assignments will be handed out in main lecture and due in main lecture one week later. Graded homework assignments will be handed back to you in discussion sections. No late homework assignments will be accepted. Exceptions will only be made if you provide clear evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented your timely performance. Together, the homework assignments comprise 20% (5% each) of your course grade.

3. Debates in Discussion Sections, and Discussion Section Attendance

In discussion sections, sets of four students will be assigned to prepare a 32-minute public oral debate on a question raised in the course. One team of two students will use the materials of the course (readings, lectures, discussion in sections, and so on) to develop a case in the affirmative, while the other team of two students will do the same to develop a case in the negative (see the Debate Guidelines attached to the end of this syllabus). The two teams will then debate each other in the public forum of the discussion section. The debate teams will be responsible for generating class discussion following the debate. If the teams are feeling particularly ambitious/excited about what they have prepared, we would love to have them

volunteer to hold their debate in the main lecture class. The debate comprises 15% of your course grade.

In addition, attendance in discussion section is expected and required. Roll will be taken in each discussion section. Two or more absences from discussion section will result in a 1-grade lowering (B to C, C to D and so on) of your debate score, unless you can provide clear and formal evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented your attendance.

4. Quizzes

Over the course of the semester, during the main lecture sessions, there will be **four short (15-minute), closed-book, unannounced quizzes**. The primary purpose of these quizzes is to test whether you are actively engaged in the course. If you have been regularly attending the lectures and discussion sections and doing the readings, you will be able to do well on these quizzes without having studied for them.

Together the quizzes will comprise 15% of your grade for the course. If you miss a class session during which a quiz is given, you will receive an F for that particular quiz, unless you have made prior arrangements with the TA or instructor for your absence.

FINAL GRADING SCHEME

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Percentage of Final Grade</u>
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%
4 Homework Assignments	20%
Debate	15%
4 Quizzes	15%

Total	100%

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

- 1) Homework #1 handed out Thurs. Jan. 24, due in class Thurs. Jan. 31
- 2) Homework #2 handed out Thurs. Feb. 7, due in class Thurs. Feb. 14
- 3) Midterm exam in class Thurs. Feb. 28
- 4) Homework #3 handed out Thurs. March 21, due in class Thurs. April 4
- 5) Homework #4 handed out Thurs. April 18, due in class Thurs. April 25
- 6) Final Exam in class Tues., May 7, 11am-1pm
- 7) Student debates (see discussion section schedule)
- 8) The four quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester.

DISCUSSION SECTION SCHEDULE

Week 1 (W, Jan. 9)	No discussion sections
Week 2 (W, Jan. 16)	Discussion - Introduction, and sign-up for student debates
Week 3 (W, Jan. 23)	Discussion - Homework #1, readings
Week 4 (W, Jan. 30)	Student Debate #1
Week 5 (W, Feb. 6)	Student Debate #2
Week 6 (W, Feb. 13)	Student Debate #3
Week 7 (W, Feb. 20)	Discussion - Midterm exam review
Week 8 (W, Feb. 27)	Midterm exam week - no discussion sections
Week 9 (W, Mar. 6)	Discussion - midterm results, homeworks, readings, progress
Week 10 (W, Mar. 13)	Spring Break
Week 11 (W, Mar. 20)	TBA
Week 12 (W, Mar. 27)	Student Debate #4
Week 13 (W, Apr. 3)	Student Debate #5
Week 14 (W, Apr. 10)	Student Debate #6
Week 15 (W, Apr. 17)	Student Debate #7
Week 16 (W, Apr. 24)	Final exam review

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN FAMILY LIFE OVER TIME

Week 1 (Jan. 8, 10)

A. Historical change: simplification and diversification of the family at the same time.

B. The contemporary landscape

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Issue 1, Issue 2, and Issue 8
- 2) Newman: Chapter 1 and Chapter 9
- 3) Skolnick and Skolnick, I.1. and I.2: Giddens, Skolnick, Coontz, Hays, Giele; IV.12., K. Newman

II. DIVORCE

Week 2 (Jan. 15, 17)

A. Trends

B. Causes: Theory and Evidence

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Issue 4, Chapter 7
- 2) Skolnick and Skolnick, II.5., Furstenburg Jr., Edin; II.6., Hetherington et al.; IV.12., Jacobson and Gottman
- 3) Reader: Arland Thornton and Deborah Freedman. 1982. "Changing Attitudes Toward Marriage and Single Life." *Family Planning Perspectives* 14 6.
- 4) Reader: Lynn K. White. 1990. "Determinants of Divorce: A Review of Research in the Eighties." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52:904-912.

Week 3 (Jan. 22, 24)

C. Consequences: Theory and Evidence

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Chapter 7
- 2) Reader: The Council on Families in America. 1995. "Marriage in America: A Report to the Nation." Washington, D.C.: Institute for American Values.
- 3) Skolnick and Skolnick, II.6., Hackstaff; IV.12., Glassner

Week 4 (Jan. 29, 31)

D. Remarriage and stepfamilies

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Chapter 7

- 2) Skolnick and Skolnick, II.6., Bernstein
- 3) Reader: Marilyn Coleman and Lawrence H. Ganong. 1990. "Remarriage and Stepfamily Research in the 1980s: Increased Interest in an Old Family Form." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52 4:925-940.
- 4) Reader: Andrew Cherlin. 1978. "Remarriage as an Incomplete Institution." *American Journal of Sociology* 84 3.
- 5) Reader: Andrew J. Cherlin and Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. 1994. "Stepfamilies in the United States: A Reconsideration." *Annual Review of Sociology* 20:359-81.

Week 5 (Feb. 5, 7)

III. INTERSECTIONS: DIVORCE, DEPENDENTS, AND FAMILY DIVERSITY: SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE FAMILY

Readings:

- 1) Skolnick and Skolnick, II.4., Bailey, Pasternak et al.
- 2) Reader: Judith Stacey. 1996. *In the Name of the Family*. Boston: Beacon Press. Chapter 5: "Gay and Lesbian Families are Here..."
- 3) Internet: Lynn Wardle. 1997. "The Potential Impact of Homosexual Parenting on Children." *University of Illinois Law Review* 833.
- 4) Internet: Carlos A. Ball and Janice Farrell Pea. 1998. "Warring with Wardle: Morality, Social Science, and Gay and Lesbian Parents." *University of Illinois Law Review* 253.

IV. DEPENDENTS: CHILDREN

Week 6 (Feb. 12, 14)

A. Below-replacement fertility: causes and consequences

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Chapter 4
- 2) Skolnick and Skolnick, IV.12., Luker
- 3) Reader: Larry L. Bumpass. 1973. "Is Low Fertility Here to Stay?" *Family Planning Perspectives* 5 2.
- 4) Reader: Samuel H. Preston. 1986. "Changing Values and Falling Birth Rates." Pp. 176-195 in *Below Replacement Fertility in Industrial Societies* (supplement to Vol. 12 of *Population and Development Review*).

Week 7 (Feb. 19, 21); Week 8 (Feb. 26, 28)

B. Changes in childrearing over the 20th Century

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Chapter 5

- 2) Reader: Duane F. Alwin. 1990. "Historical Changes in Parental Orientations to Children." *Sociological Studies of Child Development* 3.
- 3) Skolnick and Skolnick, III.7., Cowan and Cowan, Hertz

C. Intersections: Social Class (Diversity), Parent/Child Relations (Dependents), and Family Life

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Issue 7
- 2) Skolnick and Skolnick, IV.9., Rubin, Epstein et al.

Week 9 (March 5, 7)

D. Generational comparisons

Readings:

- 1) Reader: Richard A. Easterlin and Eileen M. Crimmins. 1988. "Recent Social Trends: Changes in Personal Aspirations of American Youth." *Social Science Research* 72 4.
- 2) Reader: Richard A. Easterlin and Eileen M. Crimmins. 1991. "Private Materialism, Self-Fulfillment, Family Life, and Public Interest." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 55:499-533.
- 3) Reader: Eileen M. Crimmins, Richard A. Easterlin and Yasuhiko Saito. 1991. "Preference Changes Among American Youth: Family, Work, and Goods Aspirations, 1976-86." *Population and Development Review* 17:115-133.
- 4) Skolnick and Skolnick, III.7., Ragone; III.8., Hernandez and Myers, Galinsky

SPRING BREAK Week 10 (March 12, 14)

V. DEPENDENTS: ELDERS

Week 11 (March 19, 21)

A. Aging in modern society

B. Changing meaning of retirement, and what it means to be old

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Chapter 8
- 2) Skolnick and Skolnick, IV.11., Cherlin and Furtstenburg
- 3) Reader: Timothy J. Biblarz. 1997. "The Future of Aging in the United States." Pp. 19-26 in G. Hermann, B. Huber and H. Schneider (Eds.), *Gesellschaft und Technik*. Berlin: Daimler-Benz.

C. Intergenerational relations over the life course

Readings:

- 1) Skolnick and Skolnick, IV.11., Riley
- 2) Reader: Samuel H. Preston. 1984. "Children and the Elderly: Divergent Paths for America's Dependents." *Demography* 28.

- 3) Reader: Vern L. Bengtson. 1999. "Beyond the Nuclear Family: The Increasing Importance of Multigenerational Relationships in American Society. The 1998 Burgess Award Lecture." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (forthcoming).

VI. DIVISION OF LABOR

Week 12 (March 26, 28)

A. Continuity and change in roles of men and women in the family and beyond.

Readings:

- 1) Reader: Cynthia Fuchs Epstein. 1988. "Toward a Family Policy: Changes in Mothers' Lives." Pp. 157-192 in A. Cherlin (Ed.), *The Changing American Family and Public Policy*. Washington: Urban Institute.
- 2) Reader: Diane N. Lye. 1991. "Where's Daddy? Paternal Participation in Childrearing in Intact Families." Working Paper, Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, University of Washington.
- 3) Reader: Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. 1988. "Good Dads-Bad Dads: Two Faces of Fatherhood." Pp. 193-218 in A. Cherlin (Ed.), *The Changing American Family and Public Policy*. Washington: Urban Institute.
- 4) Newman: Chapter 3
- 5) Skolnick and Skolnick, II.3., Jackson, Gerson, Iwao; II.5., Merten

Week 13 (April 2, 4)

B. Consequences of changing roles of men and women in the family and beyond.

Readings:

- 1) Skolnick and Skolnick, II.3., Cotrane and Adams; II.5., Schwartz; IV.9., Hochschild
- 2) Elizabeth G. Menaghan and Toby L. Parcel. 1990. "Parental Employment and Family Life: Research in the 1980s." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52 4:1079-1098.

VII. FAMILY DIVERSITY: "RACES," ETHNICITIES, AND FAMILIES

Week 14 (April 9, 11), Week 15 (April 16, 18)

Readings:

- 1) Newman: Issue 6
- 2) Skolnick and Skolnick, IV.10., Suro, Taylor, Baca Zinn and Wells, Benkov
- 3) Reader: Maxine Baca Zinn. 1996. "Family, Feminism and Race in America." Pp. 169-183 in E. N. L. Chow, D. Wilkinson & M. B. Zinn

(Eds.), *Race, Class, and Gender: Common Bonds, Different Voices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

4) Reader: Bonnie Thornton Dill. 1994. "Fictive Kin, Paper Sons, and Compadrazgo: Women of Color and the Struggle for Family Survival." Pp. 149-169 in M. B. Zinn & B. T. Dill (Eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

5) Reader: Maxine Baca Zinn. 1994. "Feminist Rethinking from Racial-Ethnic Families." Pp. 303-314 in M. B. Zinn & B. T. Dill (Eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

6) Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values. 1999. "Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America." Atlanta: Morehouse Research Institute.

VIII. CLOSING THE CIRCLE Week 16 (April 23, 25)

****FINAL EXAM IN CLASS, TUESDAY, MAY 7, 11-1****

Sociology 169, Changing Family Forms

Guidelines for Student Debates

A debate round takes place between two teams which consist of two people each. One team is designated “The Affirmative.” This team proposes a major social change (e.g., we should repeal no-fault divorce law, or make covenant marriage mandatory, or legalize same-sex marriage, and so on). The other team is designated “The Negative,” and this team opposes the major social change.

Let The Debate Begin

- 1) One member of the Affirmative team speaks first, for 7 minutes. S/he introduces the Resolution, and presents their case - usually three or four strong arguments - backed with research/evidence - supporting the case.
- 2) One member of the Negative team cross-examines the Affirmative speaker for two minutes, in an attempt to reveal holes in the Affirmative team’s case, and/or issues they have overlooked.
- 3) One member of the Negative team speaks next, for 7 minutes. S/he tries to rebut all of the arguments that were made by the Affirmative team, and present their best arguments - also backed with research/evidence - for why the status quo is better than the social change the Affirmative team is advocating.
- 4) One member of the Affirmative team cross-examines the negative speaker for two minutes.
- 5) The other member of the Affirmative team then speaks for 7 minutes. Since the Negative team just launched its counter attack, it is the job of this speaker to reinforce and rebuild the Affirmative team’s position. The speaker can provide an overview of what just transpired, attack the analysis of the opposition, repair any damage the Negative team may have made to their case, and introduce any new arguments they may have to strengthen their case.
- 6) The other member of the Negative team then speaks for the final 7 minutes. This speaker reviews the Negative team’s position, covers the main issues brought up by the previous speakers, counters the most recent points brought up by the Affirmative team, and introduces any new (final) points and analyses to strengthen its case against the Affirmative and for the status quo.