

Comparative Marriage and Family Study List for Exam 2 - 2009

Class Material:

1. Marriage is a human universal (except the Nayar and the Na). Why?
2. Although it is a human universal (almost) there is a lot of variation, especially in who can marry whom and sexual rights once people are married. Describe this variation for:
 - a) Polygyny - Why would men want more than one wife? Why would a wife want her husband to have a co-wife?
 - b) Polyandry - Why would several men have one wife? Use the Nepalese-Tibetan examples.
 - c) Duration - What are some advantages and problems of serial monogamy? What are advantages for *mut'a* marriage in the Mid East?
 - d) Remarriage Rules - What are the levirate and sororate? Why do they exist?
 - e) Man-to-Man marriage - Why does it exist at the Siwah Oasis? (Speculate.) Explain why gay men want to marry in the USA?
 - f) Woman-to-Woman marriage (actually more specific questions on this later)
3. Why did Tibetan High Mountain Pastoralist fraternal polyandry develop? And for the Nepalese Agriculturalists? Who engages in fraternal polyandry? Describe the relationship between husbands. What do men do to help it work well?
4. Fraternal polyandry produces surplus women. **Describe** what might a single woman do and what happens to divorced women among the Nepalese. What causes divorce? What could cause marriage to a second wife?
5. Describe what happens with land or yaks if there are no sons but only daughters in the family to inherit. Also who is included in their incest taboo for Tibetan pastoralists?
6. Explain the basic premises of Sociobiology. What kind of human behavior do Sociobiologists try to explain? Give an example they successfully explain and one that they can't.

7. According to Sociobiologists, what are the two basic reproductive strategies for HUMAN males? Human females have a different strategy. **Why** are they different? (Explain the two strategies men may have and the strategy for females.)
8. How would a Sociobiologist explain the following?
 - a) Mid Eastern marriage and sexuality? Yanomamö? !Kung San? Does this explanation work well?
 - b) Tiwi marriage and sexuality? Tibetans and Nyinba of Nepal)? Does this explanation work well?
 - c) Na. Does this explanation work well?
 - d) Hijras of India. Does this explanation work well?
9. Why did Margaret Mead go to Samoa? What was her theoretical background and what was she hoping to find? What was she studying? Describe Samoan marriage and family life, including marriage? What were her conclusions in *Coming of Age in Samoa*?
10. What did Derek Freeman find when he went to Samoa? Why were his results different? What was his theoretical background and what was he hoping to find? What have other studies shown? Do they support Mead or Freeman? How do you explain the differences between Mead's and Freeman's research?
11. Gender roles – How large an impact do genetic and physiological differences between men and women have on gender roles? What is Margaret Mead's view on this question? What did she find in her research? What do the sociobiologists think? Sanday studied differential contributions to the economy. What did she find? Is division of labor based on biology? What is the evidence pro and con? How are rules of residence and descent related to gender roles and gender stratification?

Films:

1. *Without Husbands or Fathers: the Na of China*: Do the Na have an institution that you would call marriage? Why are they not? What about their system fits the criteria on the class handout on marriage? What doesn't fit? Describe the Na family system and discuss its advantages and disadvantages for the Na. What do people do to arrange a visit?

2. *Margaret Mead and Samoa*: Would this film be successful in convincing people without a background in anthropology that Margaret Mead was wrong?

Readings:

1. "Arranging a Marriage in India" What factors do families in India take into consideration when they arrange a marriage? Is the strategy the same for daughters as for sons?
2. "Woman-to-Woman Marriage" Describe how woman-to-woman marriage is a strategy women use to further their social and economic positions in society. Discuss the three circumstances under which women take wives. Discuss the motivations for those involved: a) female husband, b) the wife of the female husband, c) the wife's lover, d) the female husband's husband (if he exists).
3. "The Visit" Describe Na family life. Who lives in a household? How do people who live in a household deal with each other? Describe the prohibitions. Describe the two kinds of visits. What are the circumstances that lead to each? Describe the reaction of the Chinese to Na customs and steps they have taken. How successful are the Chinese?
4. "Marriage Among Tibetans: The Nyinba of Nepal" from the book. These Tibetans share a lot with the traditional Chinese we read about before: farmers with a hierarchy of social classes and gender inequality, but they have polyandry, not polygamy (concubinage).
 - a. Why does polyandry work so well? Describe the dynamics of polyandry in Nepal? Who engages in polyandry?
 - b. Describe wealth transfer. How is high altitude agriculture related to it? What happens to unmarried people? Describe exceptions to polyandrous marriages.
 - c. Describe divorce. What causes divorce? What happens to divorced women with children? Without children?
 - d. Describe why polygyny might occur. (What could cause a marriage to a second wife?) What complications might result?
5. "Marriage Among the !Kung San" from the book.
 - a. Describe the division of labor between men and women. Describe a camp and the !Kung San kinship system.

- b. Meat and sex cause conflicts. Describe why. How do the !Kung avoid conflict over meat? Why must a hunter act modest after a kill? How is meat distributed? Why is it important?
 - c. Describe marriage practices among the !Kung. Be sure to include age at marriage, marriage arrangements, and brideservice. Why do (boys) men want to get married and girls (women) do not? What are the advantages of uxorilocal residence for the wife's parents and the wife?
 - d. Describe divorce among the !Kung. Discuss how the !Kung limit conflict over sex.
6. "South Seas Squall" This reading should help you with the Mead/Freeman controversy questions above.
 7. "Society and Sex Roles" Male dominance and patriarchies are prevalent. Why and what conditions lead to their being strong?
 8. "Life Behind the Veil" Discuss the notion of male supremacy and how women are viewed among the Pakhtun. Explain *pardah* and how it is related to the ideology of women's sexual power. What must men do to maintain their honor?
 9. "The Berdache Tradition" Describe the role of the berdache. How do Indian religions explain berdache? How is this related to a person's spirit? How could a vision quest lead to a person becoming a berdache? Is anyone forced to become a berdache?
 10. "Hijras of India" Describe the *Hijra* third gender role in Indian society.