

# Tutorial Letter 201/2/2018

## Sociology of Families and Social Problems

**Soc2604**

**Semester 2**

**Department of Sociology**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Student

This tutorial letter contains feedback on the two compulsory formative assessment assignments, as well as important guidelines for your successful preparation for the summative assessment at the end of the semester. We also include information on the critical role of *myUNISA* Discussion Forums in your preparations for the forthcoming examination.

## 2. COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENT 01

The first assignment was compulsory in order for you to gain admission to the exam. The main source for answering these multiple choice questions was the Study Guide. The purpose of the assignment was to get you to familiarise yourself with the scope of the study material, the focus themes of the module, and key terms in the different study units, by means of a learning technique called scanning or speed reading.

The correct option (answer) is placed in brackets.

### QUESTION 1(2)

In **Question 1**, Option 2, which is (a), (b) and (c) is the correct answer that helps us understand that the definition of “the family” is problematic.

### QUESTION 2 (4)

In **Question 2**, Option 4 is the correct answer since the functions of the family according to Murdock includes, (a), (c), (d), and (e); while (b), the stabilisation of adult personalities is incorrect.

### QUESTION 3 (5)

In **Question 3**, Option 5 is the correct option since all the statements mentioned are correct in categorising men and women according to their biological features.

### QUESTION 4 (4)

In **Question 4**, Option 4 is the only correct option as it provides explanations of the following concepts, an extended family, a nuclear family, household, marriage and kinship.

### QUESTION 5 (5)

In **Question 5**, **Option 5** is the correct option since it explains the theoretical perspective in relation to Functionalism and Marxism.

## QUESTION 6 (2)

In **Question 6**, the correct option is **Option 2** since only b and d statements are correct and the rest of the statements are not.

## QUESTION 7(5)

All the options in **Question 7** are correct therefore, **Option 5** is correct. Statements (b), (c) and (e) relate to the Functionalist perspective of the family and statements (a) and (d) refers to the Marxist perspective.

## QUESTION 8 (5)

The correct statement in **Question 8** is **Option 5** since the definition of a social problem include all the statements mentioned here.

## QUESTION 9 (3)

In **Question 9**, **Option 3** is correct since only (a), (b) and (d) are important features of a social problem.

## QUESTION 10 (2)

In **Question 10** all the statements are correct since the different theoretical models of disability and impairment includes all these mentioned characteristics of models of disability.

### 3 COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENT 02

#### Assignment topic

#### Question 2

**2.1 Briefly explain Marxist perspectives on the family and critically discuss factors that contribute to problems in the families as well as possible solutions.**

**(40 marks)**

Under this section you have to offer a brief introduction to the functionalist and Marxist perspectives on family life should be provided here. You also need to explain that the family as a social institution has specific functions to contribute towards the harmony in the society. These functions play interrelated roles with other social institutions like economic, education, politics, and religion to adapt during change in order to harmonise all the functions towards this equilibrium. Also, you must critically analyse the functions of the family according to Parsons and Murdock in detail and use examples to illustrate your own understanding. Unpacking the relationship between the infrastructure or economic base and the superstructure or systems of ideas using the Marxist perspective should be done to illustrate how the base is structuring the division of labour and gender roles within the family. Criticism on Marxist perspective should highlight the fact that this perspective failed to explain different types of families as well as how a family can evolve due to its social environment.

**Discuss the various considerations in defining a problem as a social problem.  
(60 marks)**

In this question you are required to describe various considerations in defining a problem as a social problem. You have to demonstrate your critical writing and thinking skills through giving examples and backing up your discussion with other sources and refrain from copying the Study Guide. Firstly, you need to demonstrate your understanding of what a social problem is. In answering this question, you are expected to mention and discuss the following points

- An awareness of a social condition must exist
- A pressure group must define a social problem
- Values and norms must be under threat and there must be a belief that a collective action could solve the problem.

#### **4 EXAMINATION PREPARATION GUIDELINES**

Use the *myStudies @ Unisa* brochure for general examination guidelines and examination

##### **4.1 Admission**

Kindly note that in submitting the first compulsory assignment on or before the due date, you are granted automatic admission to write the final examinations regardless of the mark obtained for this assignment. The marks obtained for the second credit bearing assignment count 20% towards your final mark for this module. The written examination carries the remaining 80% of your final mark.

You have to obtain a minimum of 45% in the examination to qualify to write the supplementary examination if you fail this module (this 45% does not include the assignment mark). The supplementary exam takes place in the next semester.

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE LATEST EXAMINATION TIME TABLE FOR THE CORRECT DATE OF EXAMINATION: 2018**

##### **4.2 Examination format**

You examination paper will consist of four questions (50 marks each) of which you have to select and answer **TWO (2)** questions. The total of the examination paper is therefore 100 marks. You can expect long 'essay-type' questions. You will have 2 hours in which to complete the examination paper. This implies that you should spend approximately one hour on each question during the examination. We advise you to use this time fully as many students tend to answer questions too hurriedly and cursorily.

You have to read the question carefully and make sure that you know what is expected of you before you write your answer. Look carefully at the instruction word given, for example: a term such as *discuss* or *explain* requires a detailed answer but a term such as *identify* requires only an outline of the concepts concerned. Ensure that you pay attention to all the aspects of the question.

We are often asked whether students have to include references and a list of references in an examination. The answer is NO. An examination is written under different conditions than an assignment and we cannot expect you to follow strict referencing techniques if the sources you are using are not next to you.

### 4.3 Examination content

The examination covers the full extent of your work, that is, the whole study guide, the relevant readings in the prescribed textbook if one is used for the module, and the contents of the comments tutorial letter. Lecturers will not provide a delimitation of the work that will be covered in the examination.

The previous examination question papers are available under 'Official Study Material' on myUnisa provides examples of exam questions and you will benefit from practicing answering these questions.

Please take note that lecturers cannot mark any draft or practice examination question prior to the Examination.

### 4.4 Why do students fail this module?

Generally we notice a few main trends when students fail. Firstly, students study selectively and when they do not receive the questions they "spotted", they fail miserably. Planning and timing is of the essence.

Remember, if you do well in one question and don't know anything about a second question, you may only get 40% for the paper.

Secondly, students do not answer questions in enough depth; they write the main headings and sub-headings with a few general ideas but not enough specific material to demonstrate that they have insight in the particular issue.

The third problem is related to not being specific enough, students write down general knowledge as a substitute for sociological insight. Although sociological insight benefit is greatly from informed knowledge about the world, it is not exactly the same since sociology is more specific and systematic.

Fourthly, often students just rewrite what the literature is saying in the Study Guide and do not show an understanding of the topic. You can do this by using examples and/or further explanations in your own words and understanding.

All four of the above problems are the result of not devoting enough time to prepare for the examination; you cannot study this module in one or two evenings and expect to obtain good results. Give yourself enough time for preparation!!

**Please note that there is also a dedicated e-tutor on MyUNISA who is working with the course facilitators to support you in your learning. Make use of MyUNISA to update you on a regular basis as well as to share ideas and resources with fellow students. The course facilitators will also publish regular messages on this website to support you doing this module.**

## 5. myUNISA DISCUSSION FORUMS

Thus far, only a handful of students have ventured to use the discussion forums to network with fellow students in this module, that is, check if they live close to each other in order to form study groups, exchange copies of reading materials, compare answers to assignments, or

discuss the course's learning material. It is clear that many other students merely choose to view the sight and read the chat or discussion on this site, but choose to refrain from making contributions to the discussion. All students should make an effort to occasionally visit the discussion forum and get an idea how useful it may be to successfully completing the module.

Details on how to access myUnisa are provided in the SOC2604/101/3/2018 Tutorial Letter at section 3.4. Once you open the website, you must navigate your way to this module code, then select 'discussion forum'.

## **6. CONTACT DETAILS OF YOUR LECTURERS FOR SOC2604**

If you have any queries about the course or need assistance with your examination preparation, please feel free to contact the lecturers for this module. We wish you every success in your examinations.

Ms P. Nkete  
Tel (012) 429 6658  
E-mail: nketep@unisa.ac.za

Prof. N. Mazibuko  
Tel: (012) 429 6652  
E-mail: mazb@unisa.ac.za

## **7. FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The *myStudies @ Unisa* brochure contains an A-Z guide of the most relevant study information.

## **8. GENERAL**

We hope that you find this module interesting and exciting. Studying group dynamics enables you to look at the world around you with new insight. Sociology is not only about studying books and articles, but also engaging with the world around you. The way in which people relate to one another, and even your own interaction with others, can all be linked with your sociology studies. Please join the *myUnisa* group for this module where extra interesting links are given to stimulate your thinking on the aspects covered in the study guide. You will also find that some students are raising issues on the discussion forum of *myUnisa* that may be of interest to you. We wish you all the best with your studies!

If you have any queries regarding the content of this module you are welcome to contact either Ms Nkete or Prof. Mazibuko using the abovementioned contact details.

It is highly recommendable that you communicate with them mostly via e-mails for formal and quicker replies as they may often be out of office doing other University responsibilities.

Please ensure that you make an appointment if you want to consult us in person to ensure that we are available.

We would like to take this opportunity of wishing you well with your examinations.

Kind regards

**YOUR SOC2604 LECTURERS**