

American Families

American Families will focus on the development of families and their cultures as we evolved from a colonial theocratic society like that of the Puritans to the complex multicultural and pluralistic society that characterizes our contemporary nation.

We will examine this evolution through the prisms of social history, memoir, literature, photography, and film.

Texts will include Edmund S. Morgan's *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (1944; revised 1966); Willa Cather's *My Antonia* (1918), a novel about Bohemian farm girls in Nebraska; Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953), a memoir of a young Japanese-American woman held in a detention camp during World War II; Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1998); Eugene O'Neill's play *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1955); Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* (1955), an international photography exhibit about the world's families; Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), a novel about a young woman from a Caribbean family coming of age in New York; Carol Stack's *All Our Kin* (1974), an ethnography that deals with the coping strategies of poor black families (1974); Kath Weston's *The Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship* (1991); and Abigail Garner's *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is* (2005).

The seminar will pay particular attention to improving the writing and analytical skills essential to completing the department's senior seminar requirement and independent study option.