

**21A230: THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FAMILY**  
**FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

Write an autobiographical account dealing with one, two, or three issues addressed in this course as they pertain to your own family. Your discussion should have some personal elements (e.g., how did you feel at 14 years of age when your mother gave birth to another child?) and some analytical elements.

Even though you aren't an expert on American families, you are an expert about your *own* family, and so, in anthropological terms, you can be both an informant providing information and an anthropologist who analyzes it. First provide information about your family, and then put on your anthropologist hat and analyze this information. Presumably you have already thought about your own family and how it compares to other families. Try to do this more systematically in the assignment. For example, how did the divorce in your family resemble or differ from your understanding of divorce patterns in general? You may not, in fact, be correct in some of your assumptions about families, but this is fine. Your assumptions are "data," nonetheless, and what you say is an accurate representation of your knowledge. If you want to do some library research on the topic you choose, fine, but this is entirely optional.

Do not give a summary of your childhood experiences or simply list the changes in your family's developments, but present a solid and well-thought-out discussion of one, two, or three issues that are important to you. If you want to discuss something painful or very personal, be assured we keep the content of these papers in strictest confidence.

You need not write about negative issues, by the way.

For international students: you may do this assignment by situating your family in the context of your own society and culture, or comparing your family to what you understand to be American patterns.

As already mentioned in class: these papers will not be discussed, in class nor anywhere else. Only your recitation instructor will read your paper.

7 or more typewritten pages

Handed out Feb. 19  
Due ***In Class*** March 9

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