The task of transforming the undergraduate curriculum to reflect feminist concerns should involve a consideration of the way existing curricula are structured. This paper pursues the question of structure and considers two existing and separate courses: the sociology of work (or occupational sociology) and the sociology of the family. Alternative ways of structuring these courses are discussed, including one that would focus on the two spheres of life (work and family) together and the design of a course that has as its core the area where the spheres overlap. An outline for a course on work and families is presented and includes lists of readings for several different topics within the larger concepts.
The task of transforming the sociology curriculum can only be accomplished if in addition to including new knowledge and perspectives, existing information and perspectives are critically evaluated as well. One aspect of the existing curriculum that merits scrutiny is the way in which the information covered in the undergraduate curriculum is divided into various courses. It is important for feminist scholars to consider the consequences of the ways the existing curriculums are structured. Furthermore, we will need to examine alternative ways of structuring courses so that they will adequately reflect the experiences, perspectives and priorities of a population that is diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age and so on. Focusing on course organization and structure can lead one to ask a variety of questions. One could, for example, ask what the implications of teaching separate courses in theory and research are. One could speculate on how a course on the sociology of health would compare to the more frequently encountered course in medical sociology. One could think about teaching a course on race and class rather than the more traditional courses -- one on "minority groups" and another on "social stratification".

This paper pursues one such question of structure, and considers two existing and separate courses: the sociology of work (or occupational sociology) and the sociology of the family.

The organization of courses in sociology departments follow closely the academic specialties that have evolved in the field. It is therefore understandable that two separate courses exist, one on work and one on families, just like the dozen or so other separate courses on social groups or institutions (i.e., the sociology of education, political sociology, sociology of religion). In addition, the purpose of studying each institution and group separately may be to make it possible for students to examine
each one in a relative isolation so that each one can be better understood, albeit in a simplified way. One could argue that there is another underlying reason for separating the subject matter of work from that of families in the undergraduate curriculum. It may be that while one course (on work and occupations) focuses on what is commonly considered the "top" or important sphere, the other (on families) focuses on one that is seen as much less important. As Peggy McIntosh has argued, our society as a whole has traditionally defined the world as a pyramid with the top consisting of the "public institutional life of nations, of governments, of militia, universities, churches and corporations" (1983, p. 5). "We are taught that civilization has a clear top and a clear bottom."

The liberal arts curriculum has been particularly concerned with passing on to students the image of what the 'top' has been" (McIntosh 1983, p. 5). The world of paid work and the study of occupations, especially those defined as having great prestige, are clearly on the peaks and pinnacles. The world of the home and family is well below them. A sociology that does not challenge this worldview and its priorities will be most comfortable drawing a line between the two social realities and studying work and family as distinct entities rather than focusing on the similarities between the spheres and their interconnections.

In addition to fostering the separate study of these two worlds, the pyramidal shape of patriarchal culture explains why, currently, occupational sociology is seen as a fairly prestigious specialty within the discipline and why family sociology is near the very bottom of the status hierarchy. Understanding the pyramidal social construct that, as McIntosh argues, influences our institutions, our behavior and our psyches (1983, p. 5) can also explain some of the omissions the content of the courses in both of these areas as they have traditionally been taught. Courses in the sociology
of work, for example, have rarely paid attention to unpaid work or to "emotion work". In addition, much more of the research in the field has been on the "professions" rather than the "semi-professions", or on blue or pink collar jobs. Courses on the family, on the other hand, have traditionally focused on the emotional relationships between members in a way that obscures the material relationships that exist within the unit and that are connected to social structures outside of it. Furthermore, the traditional value system makes it more understandable why more time is usually spent in family courses in analyzing the way the world of paid work affects families than is spent in occupational sociology courses focusing on the influence of families.

Dividing the study of two of the most central spheres of social life into two separate courses, one on work and one on the family, follows and reinforces our conceptualization of the differentness and distinction between these two aspects of life. A feminist "re-vision" of these two courses would not only challenge the paradigms used, re-evaluate the concepts presented, consider the different research methodologies and call for different pedagogy in teaching about families and work, it would search for an alternative organization of course structure.

A possible structural alternative is implicit in a course described by Nona Glazer (1983). Her semi-traditional course on Social Institutions: Focus on Unpaid Work allows one to bring the two spheres together. By using the unpaid/paid dimension as the organizing principal of the course, one can see the nature and extent of work in a variety of social settings, including the home. In her transformed course on social relations, A Political Economy Perspective on Unpaid Work, she presents an integrated view of the social world drawing on both feminist and marxian analyses to construct her framework.
Again one can consider the two spheres of life as they both are played out within an political/economic structure. Although Glazer does discuss types of work, including paid work, the emphasis in this course in on unpaid work.

Another approach would be to focus on the two spheres of life together and to design a course that has as its core the area of overlap visualized as follows:

Traditional Courses

Sociology of the Family

Sociology of Work and Occupations

Sociology of work and families

Transformed Course.

A course on Work and Families (or Families and Work) would, for example, allow the examination of both wage earning and unpaid work and an analysis of the emotional connections in both public and private spheres. Furthermore, balanced perspectives of both families and economic concerns can provide students with some core concepts and frameworks with which to build upon in later coursework. A course outline for an integrated course on work and families follows.

References:
Course Outline

Work and Families

I. Defining The Concepts

This introduction to the concepts of "work" and "family" focuses on the way the terms have been defined, the consequences of those definitions and alternative concepts and formulations.

Possible course readings/teacher preparation material:


2.) Rayna Rapp. "Family and Class in Contemporary America" in Rethinking The Family (above).


4.) Tamara Hareven. "Family Time and Historical Time" in The Family, (above).

5.) Alice Kessler-Harris. Women Have Always Worked; Feminist Press, 1981.


II. Home Work and Market Work: Systematic Segregation

In this section the division between these two spheres of life and the social, political and economic forces that have kept them separate over the past centuries are analyzed.


III. Varieties of Family Experience

A brief look is taken at some of the diversity among households and families.


An alternative approach to this topic is to assign biographies and autobiographies (i.e. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*).

IV. Families and Socialization

This section covers the way in which children's early experiences prepare them for future roles, especially in terms of paid and unpaid work.


4.) Mary Frank Fox and Sharlene Hesse Biber, Ch. 3 in *Women at Work*, Mayfield Publishing, 1984.
V. Couple Relationships and Paid Work

The interrelationship between the couple bond and market work roles are explored among several kinds of couples. One kind of couple that is discussed in detail is the two career couple.

5.) Janet Hunt and Larry Hunt. "Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status: The Case of the Dual Career Family".

VI. Household and Family Work and Social Interaction

The emotional interactions and the household work that goes on in families is discussed with particular attention paid to the homemaker role.

VII. Workplace Experiences

A variety of issues facing women and men in selected occupations and in the labor force in general are considered.

A) Selected Occupations


7.) Jane Lessarman. Men and Women in Medical School, Praeger, 1981.

B) Occupational Segregation and Discrimination


C) **Organizational Structure**


D) **Life Cycle Issues**


VIII. Parenthood

This life experience is discussed from a variety of perspectives.


IX. **Children and Work**

How children are affected by and in turn influence adult work lives is analyzed. Attention is paid to the issue of child care.


