

FCHD 2400: Marriage and Family Relationships, Section 1
T/Th 7:30 – 8:45, Old Main 225

Instructor: Mitchell Rhodes, M.S., FCHD PhD Student

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Office Location: LINK 101 – ground floor of the glass and concrete building between the Family Life and Ray B. West buildings

Office Hours: T 9:00 – 10:30 or By Appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Email:

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to the scientific study of marriage and family. In this course, you will learn about methods and theories used to study family relationships. An emphasis will also be on current demographic trends in the U.S. concerning marriage and family relationships. Additionally, contextual factors which influence U.S. family life will be examined along with discussions on current affairs, media trends, and policies that impact families. Finally, emphasis will be placed on the need for critical thinking and analysis of current research as well as one's personal paradigms when studying marriage and families.

Course Objective:

By the end of the course, you will have:

- Studied processes that create, dissolve, and sustain US families.
- Examined the context of contemporary U.S. family life.
- Learned ways that scholars study and think about families and how the media portrays them.
- Applied what you have learned to your own family experiences.

These objectives will be met through assigned textbook *readings*, in-class *discussion and lecture*, *assignments*, and *exams*.

Course Structure:

Each class will consist of a combination of lecture and discussion. In order to effectively participate in class, **reading assignments are expected to be completed before each class period.**

Required Materials:

- Olson, D. H., DeFrain, J., & Skogrand, L., (2014). *Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths* (8th Ed). New York, NY: McGraw Hill. ****8th Edition**
- **Required**
- An iClicker 2

Grading Policies:

Grade Cutoffs:		Point Distribution		
A	100-94.0%	Assignment	Points	Percentage
A-	93.9-90.0%			
B+	89.9-87.0%	Class Participation	50	5%
B	86.9-83.0%	Family Application Paper (2 @ 150 each)	300	30%
B-	82.9-80.0%	Media Assignment	100	10%
C+	79.9-77.0%	Four Exams	550	55%
C	76.0-73.0%	(3 @ 150, 1 @100)		
C-	72.9-70.0%			
D+	69.9-67.0%			
D	66.9-60.0%			
F	59.9-0.0%		Total 1000	100%

Student Responsibility:

You are responsible for knowing everything in the syllabus, assignment descriptions, and for completing your own work in a timely manner. Additionally, you are responsible for assigned readings. Essentially, as a student, you are responsible for your own education.

Class Participation:

Class participation points will be entered twice during the semester, once halfway through the semester and once at the end of the semester (25 each time). Points for participation will be collected via iClicker questions that vary from individual opinions and experiences, book material, and practice exam questions. Each class will consist of a minimum of 3 iClicker questions. Participation point break down will follow the percentage that you participate. A breakdown of how points will be earned is as follows:

Midterm and Final Participation Points	
Percentage of Participation	Points Earned
90-100%	25
80-89%	20
70-79%	15
60-69%	10
59% and below	0

It is your responsibility to ensure that your iClicker is functioning properly. This requires that you come to class with fresh batteries and you are tracking whether or not your responses are recorded.

Family Application Paper:

The family application paper is designed to assist you in applying the course material learned about the scientific study of families to your own family experiences. The main purpose of this assignment is to put the experience in the context of what you have

learned in class, not to emphasize the experience. *Please do not write about an experience about yourself or a family member that may make you or them feel uncomfortable. Please change the names of the family members to keep things anonymous.*

In order to complete this assignment:

1. Select an experience that you or someone in your family has had that best relates to any topic in the class that we have covered. The topic may come from assigned book chapters, or class lectures.
2. Write a two-page review of your experience (following APA guidelines) that evaluates the experience in light of what we have learned in class. Possible ways of accomplishing this:
 - a. Showing how the experience illustrates in-class and textbook concepts.
 - b. Discussing how the experience is consistent (or inconsistent) with studies we've talked about in class. If the experience is inconsistent with research, speculate about why that might be the case.
 - c. Reinterpret family experiences in light of new understanding you've gained through the class.
3. Each paper should use correct terminology to explain the concepts in you are discussing along with your experience.

***PLEASE NOTE** – For Family Application Papers, the class topic of *religion* has been overused for this assignment, thus it is off limits. Please choose something other than *religion* for the Family Application Papers. Papers using this topic will be returned to you and you will be asked to rewrite the assignment and it will be marked late.

**A grading rubric will be provided prior to the due date.

Media Assignment:

The media assignment is designed to help you critically examine the messages about families that we receive on nearly a daily basis from TV, Movies, Social Media, Magazines, and Newspapers.

In order to complete this assignment:

1. Select a piece of media. Almost any type of media is sufficient* for the purposes of this assignment as long as it portrays families, or presents information about families. Examples of appropriate media include movies, TV shows, theatrical plays, magazine articles, commercials/print/internet advertisements, cartoons, newspaper articles, songs, children's books, etc. If you are unsure about a piece of media, *ask the instructor or TA*.
2. Consume the media piece.
3. Write a two-page (following APA guidelines) review of your experience.
 - a. You should include some basic information about the media piece including: the date of entry, the date you consumed the piece, the title of the pieces (include TV show and episode title), and a short description.

- b. Include the underlying message(s) of the piece, any family stereotypes that you are able to identify, and link the media piece to class material.
- c. Finally, include a brief statement about how the piece made you feel.

***PLEASE NOTE** – The TV shows *Modern Family* and *Parenthood* have been overused for this assignment, thus they are both off limits. Please choose something other than *Modern Family* or *Parenthood*. Papers using either show will be returned and you will be asked to rewrite the assignment and it will be marked late.

**A grading rubric will be provided prior to the due date.

Late Assignment Policy:

Assignments are due by 11:59 PM via Canvas on the due date outlined in the syllabus. Failure to turn in the assignment at the time specified will result in the loss of 20% of the possible points (within 24 hours). For each additional day late, 10% will be marked off. Assignments that are not turned in within a week of the due date may not be turned in for credit.

Paper Format:

Papers are expected to be written in the American Psychological Association (APA) style including a title page, running head, in text citations, and a references page (meaning all papers will be between 3-4 pages in length by including the references page and title page). Assistance in the use of APA style can be found at:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Prior to the due date of the first assignment, a lecture will be provided in class as an introduction to the use of APA style.

Exams:

Exams will be held in-class on the days outlined in the course schedule. For each exam, a **blue 8 ½ x 11 scantron is required and it is your responsibility to bring one with you on exam days**. Designed to help you learn the course material, each exam will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and matching questions. Questions will be pulled from lecture, class discussions, videos shared in class, and the textbook.

Exam Make-Ups:

- For the first three exams, you have the opportunity to earn points back that were missed on the exam through make-ups. After the class following the exam, copies of the exam will be available in my office for those who would like to make up points from the exam. Make-ups are due one week after they become available. **Make-ups** can earn you 1/3 of the raw point(s) missed per question. In order to earn these points, you should turn in a paper that briefly explains 1) why the answer you chose was incorrect and 2) why the correct answer is the best answer.

Missed Exam Policy:

- You should plan to take *all* of the exams. No make-up exams will be given unless you experience a verifiable illness/accident, verifiable school excused activity, or a verifiable death of a family member. If you know that you will miss an exam for an excused reason, please contact me **BEFORE** the exam is given (preferably a few days in advance) to discuss and schedule an appropriate time to take the exam. Make-up exams may be substantially different from the exam given in class. I reserve the right to interpret/modify these policies as necessary.

Canvas:

It is your responsibility to check the course Canvas page often as it will be the primary source of information and resources outside of class. On Canvas you will find slides for lectures, exam review, study guides, outside resources, course schedule, and announcements. Although I will do my best to respond, please try to not send messages to me via Canvas. The preferred mode of communication is using the email address mitchell.rhodes@aggiemail.usu.edu

Extra Credit Opportunities:

You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit points on low attendance days (days when less than 65% of the class is present). These extra credit days will be worth 1 point each. There may be more opportunities for extra credit, these opportunities will be announced as they arise.

Additional Issues:**Academic Integrity - "The Honor System"**

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.

The Honor Pledge: To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Grievance Process (Student Code)

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated [in matters other than (i) discipline or (ii) admission, residency, employment, traffic, and parking - which are addressed by procedures separate and independent from the Student Code] may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII Grievances

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act states: "Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program." If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative format, large print, audio, diskette, or Braille.

Communications via email

Email is an official form of communication at USU. Any communication to you about this course will be to the email address you have listed in ACCESS as your preferred address. You are responsible for any information conveyed to you at that email address. It is your responsibility to check your email account regularly.

Course Schedule			
Date	Topic	Exams and Assignments Due	Assigned Reading
T 8/30	Course Introduction		
Th 9/1	Union Formation Principles		Chapter 10
T 9/6	Cohabitation		
Th 9/8	Family Systems Theory		Chapter 3
T 9/13	Basic Family Processes		Chapter 4
Th 9/15	Positive Family Processes		
T 9/20		Exam 1	
Th 9/22	Marriage		Chapter 11
T 9/27	APA Guidelines/Plagiarism		
Th 9/29	Divorce		Chapter 15
T 10/4	Stepfamilies		
Th 10/6	Parenting	Family Application Paper	Chapter 12
T 10/11	Discipline		
Th 10/13	Studying Families		Appendix B
T 10/18	Media and Families		
Th 10/20	No Class	Friday Schedule	
T 10/25		Exam 2	
Th 10/27	Families in Historical Context		
T 11/1	Culture and Families		Chapter 2
Th 11/3	No Class		
T 11/8	Race/Ethnicity	Media Assignment	
Th 11/10	Religion		
T 11/15		Exam 3	
Th 11/17	Gender		Chapter 7
T 11/22	Gender in Families		
Th 11/24	No Class	Thanksgiving Break	
T 11/29	Sex and Sexuality	Family Application Paper 2	Chapter 6
Th 12/1	Family Policy		
T 12/6	Work-Family Issues		
Th 12/8	SES/Class		

Exam 4 will take place in the classroom on **December 13 from 7:30-9:20**

**** Topics are subject to change**