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**FCHD 2400: Marriage and Family Relationships, Section 1**  
MWF 11:30 – 12:20, Family Life 206

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

**Email:** Mitchell.Rhodes@aggiemail.usu.edu

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

**Office Hours:** M 12:30 – 1:30 or By Appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Ty Aller

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## 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* (8<sup>th</sup> Ed). New York, NY: McGraw Hill. **\*\*8<sup>th</sup> Edition**
- **Required**
- An iClicker 2

**Grading Policies:**

<b>Grade Cutoffs:</b>		<b>Point Distribution</b>		
A	100-94.0%	Assignment	Points	Percentage
A-	93.9-90.0%			
B+	89.9-87.0%	Class Participation	50	6%
B	86.9-83.0%	Introductory Survey	10	2%
B-	82.9-80.0%	Media Assignment	100	14%
C+	79.9-77.0%	Annotated Bibliography	100	14%
C	76.0-73.0%	Family Application Paper	100	14%
C-	72.9-70.0%	Three Exams (120 each)	360	50%
D+	69.9-67.0%			
D	66.9-60.0%			
F	59.9-0.0%	<b>Total</b>	720	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.

**Introductory Survey:**

The introductory survey is designed to help apply course material to student demographics. Students will complete the survey during the first two weeks of the semester. Students will respond to questions from various aspects of the course material including dating, marriage, communication, and other relationship skills. Information gathered will be used to supplement lectures and will not be used for any other purpose.

**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:

<b>Midterm and Final Participation Points</b>	
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.

### **Annotated Bibliography (AB):**

This assignment is meant to help students read, summarize, and evaluate relevant research to the field of Family Studies. This assignment will require that you read, summarize, and evaluate a research article.

In order to successfully complete this assignment:

1. Students should read, summarize, and evaluate one of five assigned articles.
2. Your annotated bibliography should include:
  - a. Research question(s) that the author(s) sought to answer.
  - b. What were the hypothesized outcomes
  - c. What methods did the author(s) use to answer the question.
    - i. What variables were measured and how were they measured.
  - d. What were the findings of the study
    - i. Did these findings match their hypotheses?
  - e. How do these findings add to the research on the topic?
  - f. What were the limitations of the study?
  - g. Your personal reaction to the research. Did their findings reflect what you expected or did they surprise you? How do you feel the researcher(s) could have better approached their study? Different sample? Different measures? Different questions...?
3. Your AB should include an APA reference for the article you are summarizing.

\*\*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.** *Exams will not be handed out to late students after the first exam is turned in.* 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](mailto:mitchell.rhodes@aggiemail.usu.edu)

### **Extra Credit Opportunities:**

You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit points on low attendance days (when less than 65% of the class is present in class). 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 used 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 Assignment Due Dates	Assigned Readings
M 1/9	Course Introduction		
W 1/11	What is Family Studies?		
F 1/13	APA Guidelines/Plagiarism		
M 1/16		NO CLASS	
W 1/18	Studying Families		Appendix B
F 1/20	Studying Families	Introductory Survey	
M 1/23	Theoretical Perspectives		Chapter 3
W 1/25	Theoretical Perspectives		
F 1/27	Families in Historical Context		
M 1/30	Basic Family Processes		Chapter 4
W 2/1	Positive Family Processes		
F 2/3	Communication/Miscommunication		
M 2/6	Exam Review		
W 2/8		Exam 1	
F 2/10	Union Formation Principles		Chapter 10
M 2/13	Dating		
W 2/15	Cohabitation		
F 2/17	Marriage		Chapter 11
M 2/20		<i>Monday Schedule on Tuesday</i>	
T 2/21	Marriage		
W 2/22	Sex and Sexuality	Annotated Bibliography	Chapter 6
F 2/24	Sex and Sexuality		
M 2/27	Divorce		Chapter 15
W 3/1	Divorce		
F 3/3	Media and Families	Class Participation 1	
M 3/6		NO CLASS	

W 3/8		NO CLASS	
F 3/10		NO CLASS	
M 3/13	Single Parenting		
W 3/15	Stepfamilies		
F 3/17	Parenting	Media Assignment	Chapter 12
M 3/20	Parenting		
W 3/22	Discipline		
F 3/24	Midlife and Older Couples		Chapter 13
M 3/27	Exam Review		
W 3/29		Exam 2	
F 3/31	Culture and Families		Chapter 2
M 4/3	Race/Ethnicity		
W 4/5	Religion		
F 4/7	Gender		Chapter 7
M 4/10	Gender in Families		
W 4/12	Gender in Families		
F 4/14	Family Policy	Family Application	
M 4/17	Family Intervention		Chapter 5
W 4/19	Family Intervention		Chapter 16
F 4/21	Work-Family Issues		
M 4/24	Money and Families		Chapter 8
W 4/26	SES/Class	Class Participation 2	
F 4/28	Exam Review		

**FINAL EXAM – FRIDAY, MAY 5: 9:30 – 11:20**

**\*\* Topics are subject to change**