

FCHD 2400: Marriage and Family Relationships

Spring 2017

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30am-11:45am, Old Main 225

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Course Description:

Official Course Description: Overview of couple and family relationships, including marriage, child bearing and rearing, intergenerational relationships, and alternative family forms.

This course provides an overview of current research and theory on the interpersonal relationships that exist within diverse family contexts. The focus is on relationship dynamics, including, but not limited to: romantic and marital relationships, parent-child relationships, and sibling relationships. Contextual factors which influence family life will also be examined, along with discussions about current affairs, demographic trends, and policies that affect families.

Course Materials:

Required Texts:

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

Required Materials:

An iClicker. It is your responsibility to bring the iClicker to class--they will be used to foster class discussion.

Course Objectives, Instructional Activities, and Assessment:

By the end of the course, you will have:

- Studied popular conceptions of marriage and family relationships, including processes that create, dissolve, and sustain U.S. families.
- Examined the ecological contexts that shape contemporary U.S. family life.
- Learned about the basics of conducting family research.
- Demonstrated scientific knowledge about families and family processes to “real world” examples.
- Developed and honed your writing skills.

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

Course Policies:

Class Format and Attendance: The basic format for the class will be lecture and discussion. In order to meet the class objectives, you will need to attend class every day, pay attention and participate in class discussions, complete all class assignments and exams, and read your textbook. Students are responsible for all announcements and class material regardless of whether they attend class; lectures will include content not covered in the assigned readings (but for which students will be responsible on the exams).

Outlines for each lecture will be posted on the course Canvas website hosted at <https://usu.instructure.com>. Students are encouraged to print out these outlines prior to each class session. The outlines provide the organizational framework for the lecture and also reduce note taking during lecture and in-class activities.

Participation in University-Sanctioned Events: Students who miss class due to participation in university-sanctioned activities must identify themselves prior to missing class and make arrangements to complete missed work.

Late Assignment Policy: Assignments are due at the end of the identified class period. Failure to turn in an assignment at that time will result in a letter grade deduction for the assignment. Each additional day the assignment is late results in an additional letter grade deduction. Assignments will only be accepted via e-mail in extenuating circumstances.

University Policies:

Accommodation for Disabilities: Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435) 797-2444. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print, digital, or audio) are available with advance notice. If you would like to discuss additional possible accommodations, please see Dr. Whiteman as soon as possible. All information regarding disabilities is confidential.

Honor Code Policy: As stated in The Student Code, "Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to re-enforce the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students." Upon admission to the university, you agreed to abide by this Honor Code by signing the Honor Pledge, which reads: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." Complete academic honesty is expected in this course. Violations of the Academic Integrity Standard (academic violations) include, but are not limited to:

Cheating: (1) using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any

other academic exercise or activity be done “individually”; (2) depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work; (4) acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission; (5) continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity; (6) submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or (7) engaging in any form of research fraud.

Falsification: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.

Plagiarism: 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 using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

Cheating on quizzes or exams or plagiarism on written assignments will result in a failing grade and may result in further action according to University policy (see <http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=265>)

Grievance Process: Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: See the USU Catalog at the following link:

<http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1080&hl=%22grievance%22&returnto=search>

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.

To make sure that the university is using the email account you prefer, do the following:

- At the USU website, click on the link "MyUSU" at the top right of the page
- Under "Access" click on the link "Login to Access (Banner)"
- Log in using your A number and Password
- Click on "Personal Information"
- Click on "Update E-mail Addresses"
- Follow the short instructions to update your preferred email address

Course Assignments:

Exams (50 points each): There will be three non-cumulative exams. Each exam will cover the material presented in class lecture, class discussion, and assigned readings since the last exam. Students are expected to start their exams at the beginning of class. You will not be able to take an exam before the assigned date.

Make-up exams will be given only in extreme cases, pending Dr. Whiteman's approval. In order to be eligible for a make-up exam you will need to complete the following steps: (1) Notify Dr. Whiteman by phone (435-797-9184) at least two hours prior to the time of the scheduled exam; if no one answers, leave a message on the voicemail, it will record the time of your call. E-mails notifying Dr. Whiteman that you will not attend the exam will not be accepted; (2) Provide written documentation of your excuse (e.g., a dated note from a physician if you are ill).

If you follow these guidelines and Dr. Whiteman determines that your situation meets the necessary criteria, you will be able to take a make-up exam that is different from the original exam and is in a format chosen by Dr. Whiteman (e.g., essay exam); otherwise, you will receive a zero for the exam.

In-Class Assignments (5 points each): Throughout the semester, there will be a series of in-class assignments. Assignments will take a variety of forms, including short quizzes, writing assignments, small group activities, surveys, and homework. Some in-class assignments may require you to answer a series of questions addressed in the prior class. These assignments are designed, in part, to reward class participation and attendance, thus will not be announced in advance. If you miss an in-class assignment, you cannot make these points; however, you can miss up to three in-class assignments without being penalized (i.e., there will be a total of 13 in-class assignments, but only 10 will figure into your final grade). Each in class assignment will be worth 5 points. If you complete more than 10 in-class assignments, the scores from the highest 10 will contribute to your final grade (i.e., the maximum in-class assignment points you can obtain is 50).

Demographic Change Assignment (50 points; due April 13): Using publically available data (see potential sources below), you will investigate and analyze how a specific aspects of families, family roles, or family functions (see potential topics below) have changed over the course of your lifetime (e.g., 20 years, 30 years, 40 years). You can also compare how data for the country compares to that from specific communities (e.g., Cache County) or how patterns differ as a function of race/ethnicity, gender (e.g., husband/wife, father/mother), or other factors.

For this assignment, on the first page, you will document your source(s), articulate the trend in writing (i.e., describe the pattern of change), and develop a graphic (e.g., bar chart, line chart, area map) to illustrate the pattern(s). On the second (double spaced) page, you will connect the pattern to a theory/perspective discussed in class or the text. You will use the data to support (confirm), contradict (disconfirm), or partially confirm any theory/perspective. The goal of this assignment is to use empirical data, as family scientists do, to substantiate/support your claims.

Sources of data could include the US Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/>), American Community Survey (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>), Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/data/>), General Social Survey (<http://gss.norc.org/>), National Center for Education Statistics, (<https://nces.ed.gov/>), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/datastatistics/>), Child Welfare Information Gateway (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/statistics/can/>).

Potential topics include changes in marriage, divorce, cohabitation, same-sex relationships, interracial marriage, adoption, fertility, family size, children's living arrangements, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, work force participation, gender roles, poverty, medical insurance, retirement, and caring for older parents.

Additional data sources and topics are also welcomed; however, it is recommended that you contact Dr. Whiteman or the teaching assistant to before choosing such sources or topics.

Families in the Media Paper (50 points; due February 23): The goal of this assignment is to critically examine the messages about families and family relationships that are presented in media excluding television shows and movies (e.g., newspapers, magazines, books, social media, music, advertisements).

To complete the assignment, you will first select a source of media that contains messages about families (if you are unsure about a piece of media, ask Dr. Whiteman or the teaching assistant before completing the assignment). Second, you will write up to a two-page double-spaced review of the media, noting the messages conveyed. In the paper, you should:

- Include some basic information about the media piece including: the title of the piece, the type of the media piece, and a short description of any plot elements related to the underlying messages about families and/or relationships. This should be a relatively short section.
- Discuss the underlying message(s) about families and/or relationships included in the piece, any family stereotypes that you can identify, and relevant links to class material (tip: read relevant material from your text to address the last point).
- Include a short statement about whether you thought the portrayal was consistent with scientific knowledge on families and how the piece made you feel.

Course Grades:

There will be a total of 300 points possible in this course; 150 points from exams, 50 points from in-class assignments, 50 points from the demographic change assignment, and 50 points from the families in the media paper. Course grades will be based on the following distribution:

A	278-300
A-	269-277
B+	260-268
B	248-259
B-	239-247
C+	230-238
C	218-229
C-	209-217
D+	200-208
D	179-199
F	< 178

Working Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and course structure as necessary. You are responsible for all changes to the syllabus and information presented during class time, regardless of whether or not you attend class.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Date		Topic	Reading
Tues.	1/10	Introduction	
Thurs.	1/12	Defining and Studying Families	Chapter 1, Appendix B
Tues.	1/17	Family Theories	Chapter 3
Thurs.	1/19	Diversity in Families	Chapter 2
Tues.	1/24	Gender and Families	Chapter 7
Thurs.	1/26	Gender and Families	Chapter 7
Tues.	1/31	Singlehood & Dating	Chapter 9
Thurs.	2/2	Partner Selection	Chapter 10
Tues.	2/7	Cohabitation	Chapter 10
Thurs.	2/9	Exam 1	
Tues.	2/14	Transition to Marriage	Chapter 11
Thurs.	2/16	Union Formation and Marriage	Chapter 11
Tues.	2/21	<i>No Class, University on Monday Schedule</i>	Chapter 11
Thurs.	2/23	Marital Communication *Families in Media Paper Due	
Tues.	2/28	Intimacy and Sexuality	Chapter 6
Thurs.	3/2	Intimacy and Sexuality	Chapter 6
Tues.	3/7	<i>No Class, Spring Break</i>	
Thurs.	3/9	<i>No Class, Spring Break</i>	
Tues.	3/14	Transition to Parenthood	Chapter 12
Thurs.	3/16	Parenting	Chapter 12
Tues.	3/21	Parenting	Chapter 12
Thurs.	3/23	Exam 2	
Tues.	3/28	Sibling Relationships	
Thurs.	3/30	<i>No Class, SRCD</i>	
Tues.	4/4	Aging Families	Chapter 13
Thurs.	4/6	Elder Care	Chapter 13
Tues.	4/11	Work and Family	Chapter 8
Thurs.	4/13	Family Poverty *Demographic Change Assignment Due	Chapter 8
Tues.	4/18	Family Violence	Chapter 14
Thurs.	4/20	Divorce	Chapter 15
Tues.	4/25	Single-Parent Families	Chapter 15
Thurs.	4/27	Remarriage and Stepfamilies	Chapter 15
Finals	5/1-5/5	Exam 3	