

**CHFD 3920: Issues in Family Systems**  
Department of Child and Family Development  
The University of Georgia  
Spring, 2003

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Office Hours:

Class Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 in 101 Dawson Hall

**Textbooks:**

Anderson, S.A. & Sabatelli, R.M. (2002). *Family Interaction*. (A&S)  
Bel-Jean Packet

**Course Description:** An advanced study of family issues over the lifespan with an emphasis on family research and theory, transitions in families, intergenerational relations, diversity in families, and the effects of social issues on the American family.

**Course Objectives:**

- To examine major theoretical approaches used in the study of families;
- To explore identify the adaptations in family structure and interaction patterns during times of transition;
- To gain an understanding of inter-generational family dynamics;
- To consider the diversity in families as influenced by gender, ethnicity, and structure;
- To explore the impact of various social issues on American families.

**Course Requirements:** Students are expected to come to class prepared to share ideas and discuss assigned readings. Lively discussion, diversity of opinions and critical thinking are encouraged and welcomed. It is expected that you will complete all readings by the assigned date, come to class prepared to discuss the readings and attend class regularly. All work must be completed on time; LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE DROPPED ONE FULL GRADE FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE. Some assignments will be given in class to facilitate discussion and may not be made up. In the event of a *documented* emergency, late assignments will be accepted and substitutes for in class assignments will be given PROVIDED the student takes initiative to make arrangements with the instructor within 2 class periods of return to class and completes the substitute assignment by the end of the following week. Students are expected to follow University policy on academic honesty and *are responsible for reading the University policy on academic honesty at [www.uga.edu/~vpaa/polproc/ahpolsecto4.html](http://www.uga.edu/~vpaa/polproc/ahpolsecto4.html)*.

Violation of these regulations is grounds for filing a report.

**GRADING**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>
Research Article Critique	50
Article Presentation	20
Exam 1 (2/4)	100
Exam 2 (3/6)	100
Exam 3 (4/13)	100
Exam 4 (5/5)	100
Class Participation, Attendance & Current Events	30
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>500</b>

Grading Scale: 500-450=A    449-359=B    358-250=C    249-149=D    148 and below=F

**Exams** (400 points)

Students will take four exams which will cover lectures, readings, and guest lectures. Students are responsible for all material in the text and assigned readings although it may not be discussed in class lectures. Students must take all exams at the scheduled date and time. Each exam will be given in class. No make-up will be

given without a valid medical excuse. In the event of such special circumstances (legitimate reasons) students must contact the instructor prior to the exam to make arrangements for the make-up exam.

**Research Article Critique (50 points)**

Students will be required to write a 5-7 page paper critiquing one research article associated with issues encountered by families and family members over the life course. Each student will select a topic from the syllabus and locate a research article to critique. Selection of topics will occur on 1/23. See HANDOUT *Guidelines for Critiquing a Research Article* for information on how to critique a research article. Papers will be due on the day you are scheduled to present.

**Research Article Presentation (20 points)**

During the semester, each student will present the article that they have chosen to critique in a symposia format to the class. Each symposium will consist of 4 to 5 presenters grouped by topics related to family issues. *Each presenter* is to provide the instructor with two questions from your presentation **in the class period prior to your presentation**. *Each presenter* is responsible for developing a presentation that uses both graphics and texts to convey major points regarding the selected family issue article. *Each presenter* will give a 7-8 minute presentation on his/her article. See HANDOUT *Article Symposium* for additional information about this assignment. The presentations will be graded individually. ARTICLES WILL BE PRESENTED IN THE LAST 45-MINUTES OF CLASS.

**Class Participation, Attendance & Current Events (30 points)**

Attendance is required. You will be allowed **two** absences from class without valid medical excuse. Any absences beyond this one will result in a loss of class participation and attendance points. Participation is more than simply attending class and includes preparation prior to class, actively engaging in discussions, sharing ideas, and bringing current events and other observations to share with the class. Showing respect to fellow students is expected. To master various concepts in this course, students will be expected to bring articles from newspapers, magazines, or the web, which relate to class topics and discussions. Each student is expected to bring current events to class (on-going) and we will spend a few minutes each class discussing their relevance to the course material.

## COURSE OUTLINE (Revision Feb, 2003)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Day/Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading Assignment</i>
1	Th 1/9	Introduction	
2	Tu 1/14	Defining Family & Present State of Families	A&S Ch 1
	Th 1/16	Family as a System & Family Strategies	A&S Ch 2
<b><i>MODELS OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING</i></b>			
3	Tu 1/21	Structural Models of Family Functioning	A&S Ch 3
	Th 1/23	TOPIC SELECTION Intergenerational Model: Genogram and Family Functioning I	A&S Ch 4
4	Tu 1/28	Intergenerational Model: Genogram and Family Functioning II Contextual Models of Family Functioning	A&S Ch 5
	Th 1/30	Life Course Perspective Exam Review	Burton, 1996
5	Tu 2/4	<b><i>EXAM I</i></b>	
<b><i>DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES IN FAMILIES</i></b>			
	Th 2/6	<b><i>Relationship Developmental Stages</i></b> Mate Selection & Cohabitation	A&S Ch 7
6	Tu 2/11	Transition to Marriage <i>Questions Due – Group 1</i>	A&S Ch 8 Jarrett, 1996
	Th 2/13	ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS – GROUP 1 <i>Questions Due – Group 2</i>	
7	Tu 2/18	ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS –GROUP 2	

***Parenting Issues***

- Th 2/20 Transition to Parenthood A&S Ch 11  
*Questions Due – Group 3*
- 8 Tu 2/25 Transition to Parenthood  
ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS – GROUP 3
- Th 2/27 Parent-Child Relationship System I A&S Ch 12  
Autonomy and Connectedness in the Family Peterson et al., 2000  
*Questions Due – Group 4*
- 9 Tu 3/4 Parent-Child Relationship System II  
ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS – GROUP 4  
Exam Review
- Th 3/6 ***EXAM 2***

***MIDDLE AND LATER YEARS OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT***

- 10 Tu 3/11 Family in Middle Adulthood A&S Ch 13
- Th 3/13 Family in Later Life, Guest Lecturer-Tina Salva A&S Ch 14  
Caregiving in Families Burton, 1996
- 11 3/17 – 3/21 SPRING BREAK

***FAMILY PATTERNS OF INTERACTION***

- 12 Tu 3/25 *Couple Skills Workshop* – Jason Rohacs  
Communication and Intimacy A&S Ch 9, 10
- Th 3/27 *Couple Skills Workshop* – Jason Rohacs  
Conflict in Marriage  
*Questions Due – Group 5*
- 13 Tu 4/1 Death, Loss & Bereavement A&S Ch 15  
RESEARCH ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS GROUP 5
- Th 4/3 Death, Loss, Bereavement  
*Questions Due – Group 6*
- 14 Tu 4/8 Gay/Lesbian Families Patterson, 2000  
RESEARCH ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS – GROUP 6  
Exam Review

	Th 4/10	<b>EXAM 3</b>	
15	Tu 4/15	Guest Panel: Gay & Lesbian Families <i>Questions Due – Group 7</i>	
	Th 4/17	Single-Parent Household RESEARCH ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS – GROUP 7	A&S Ch 16
16	Tu 4/22	Remarriage & Step Parenting	A&S Ch 18
	Th 4/24	Policy Implications <i>Guest Lecturer: Virginia Robinson</i>	A&S Ch 17
17	Tu 4/30	Religion and Families Community Context	Gershoff, 1999 Ge & Brody, 2002
	Th 5/2	Economic Issues Exam Review	Seccombe, et al., 1998
	<b>5/5</b>	<b>EXAM 4</b> <b>Noon-3:30</b> <b>Dawson 101</b>	

