

CHFD 3920: Issues in Family Systems
Department of Child and Family Development
The University of Georgia
Spring 2006

Instructor: Bowden Templeton, M.F.T.
Office: 112A Dawson Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3:15 to 4:00 and by appointment
Office phone: 542-6873
E-Mail: bowdent@uga.edu I do check e-mail regularly so this is probably the most efficient way to contact me other than during class. Every effort will be made to reply promptly.
Class Meets: Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 to 3:15 in 208 Dawson Hall

This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course. However, please note that deviations may be necessary. Changes will be announced in class.

Course Description:

How do families cope with the multiple tasks that they must undertake throughout their lives? How do we select our mates? What issues will couples face when they begin to have children? How often have you thought, "I'm just like my mom/dad"? Using lecture and discussion, Issues in Family Systems will explore these and other family issues over the lifespan with a special emphasis on family research and theory, transitions in families, intergenerational relations, and diversity in families. In addition, we will consider the effects of various social issues on the American family.

Readings:

1. Textbook: Anderson, S. A. & Sabatelli, R. M. (2002). *Family Interaction: A Multigenerational Developmental Perspective*. (referred to as A&S)
2. Course readings on reserve at the Science Library and accessible on-line through WebCT.
 - a) Miller, E. (2000). Religion and families over the life course. In S. J. Price, P. C. McKenry, & M. J. Murphy (Eds.), *Families across time: A life course perspective* (173 – 186). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury.
 - b) Allen, K. R., & Wilcox, K. L. (2000). Gay/Lesbian families over the life course. In S. J. Price, P. C. McKenry, & M. J. Murphy (Eds.), *Families across time: A life course perspective* (51 - 63). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury.

Course Objectives:

1. To examine major theoretical approaches to the study of families.
2. To identify adaptations in family structure and interactional patterns during periods of family transition.
3. To explore the impact of various social issues on American families.
4. To consider the diversity in families as influenced by gender, ethnicity, and structure.
5. To gain an understanding on intergenerational family dynamics.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to come to class prepared to share ideas and discuss assigned readings. I encourage and welcome discussion, diversity of opinions, and critical thinking. With this in mind, I do expect that you will complete all class readings and attend class regularly.

1. Students will take three exams that will cover lectures and readings.
2. Students will participate in a **collaborative group research project** and present the findings of this research to the class.
3. Complete all **assigned readings** and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Students are responsible for all material in the text and assigned readings even though it may not be discussed in class lectures.
4. **Attendance and participation** in class discussions. My belief is that class attendance is critical. Showing up in life will carry you a long way.
5. Students will be given 12 **weekly chapter quizzes** on WebCT throughout the semester, 10 of which will count toward your final grade. Thus you have the chance to miss/skip two or make a better grade if you did not do well on one. Quizzes are worth 10 points each. Quizzes will be available on WebCT for 48 hours leading up to noon of the due date. For example, if the due date is listed as Thursday, 1/19, then the quiz will be available from noon Tuesday, 1/17 until noon Thursday, 1/19. The quizzes will cover material from the text. Quizzes will only be available for the stated time period and cannot be made up. You are encouraged to use your text for assistance.
6. Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected of all students enrolled at the University of Georgia. "Academic Honesty refers to performing all work without cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving assistance from any other person or using an source of information which is not common knowledge (unless that assistance or use is authorized by the person

responsible for supervising that academic work or fairly attributed to the source of assistance or information)." "Academic Dishonesty" will not be tolerated in this class. "Academic Dishonesty refers to knowingly performing, attempting to perform, or assisting any other person in performing any academic work, which does not meet this standard of academic honesty..." Please review the UGA Academic Honesty policy at: <http://www.uga.edu/~vpaa/polproc/ahpol/secto4.htm>

Student Needs: If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a special circumstance or disability (i.e., physical, mental, psychological, or learning), have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me during office hours as soon as possible so that your needs can be met.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Day/Date	Lecture Topic	Reading Assignment
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PART ONE: RESEARCH AND THEORIES OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING

WEEK ONE:

T 1/10	Introduction to course	
R 1/12	Defining the family	A&S CH 1

WEEK TWO:

T 1/17	Family strategies	A&S CH 2 – Quiz 1 due
R 1/19	Family strategies (continued)	A&S CH 2

WEEK THREE:

T 1/24	Structural Models of Family Functioning	A&S CH 3 – Quiz 2 due
R 1/26	Intergenerational Models of Family Functioning	A&S CH 4 – Quiz 3 due

WEEK FOUR:

T 1/31	Contextual Models: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture	A&S CH 5 – Quiz 4 due
R 2/2	Family Diversity: Religion and Families Group 1 Debate	Miller reading

WEEK FIVE

T 2/7	Family Diversity: Gay and Lesbian Families	Allen & Wilcox reading
R 2/9	Panel Discussion	

WEEK SIX

T 2/14	Part one catch up and review	
R 2/16	EXAM ONE	A&S CHS 1 – 5 and readings

PART TWO: FAMILY IN EARLY ADULTHOOD, MARRIAGE, AND PARENTHOOD

WEEK SEVEN

T 2/21	Transition to Adolescence and Adulthood	A&S CH 6
	Group 2 Debate	
R 2/23	Mate Selection	A&S CH 7 – Quiz 5 due
	Group 3 Debate	

WEEK EIGHT

T 2/28	Mate Selection (continued) Group 4 Debate	A&S CH 7
R 3/2	Transition to Marriage Group 5 Debate	A&S CH 8 – Quiz 6 due
WEEK NINE		
T 3/7	Communication and Intimacy Group 6 Debate	A&S CH 9 – Quiz 7 due
R 3/9	Communication and Intimacy continued	A&S CH 9
WEEK TEN		
T 3/14	Spring Break – No Class	
R 3/16	Spring Break – No Class	
WEEK ELEVEN		
T 3/21	Conflict/Quarreling	A&S CH 10 – Quiz 8 due
R 3/23	Conflict/Quarreling continued Group 7 Debate	A&S CH 10
WEEK TWELVE		
T 3/28	Transition to Parenthood Group 8 Debate	A&S CH 11
R 3/30	The Parent-Child Relationship Group 9 Debate	A&S CH 12 – Quiz 9 due
WEEK THIRTEEN		
T 4/04	Part two catch up and review	
R 4/06	EXAM TWO	A&S CHS 6 – 12

**PART THREE: MIDDLE AND LATER YEARS OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND
ALTERNATIVE FAMILY DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS**

WEEK FOURTEEN		
T 4/11	Family in Middle Adulthood	A&S CH 13
R 4/13	Family in Later Life Group 10 Debate	A&S CH 14 – Quiz 10 due
WEEK FIFTEEN		
T 4/18	Death, Loss, and Bereavement in Families Group 11 Debate	A&S CH 15
R 4/20	Divorce and Family Stress Group 12 Debate	A&S CH 16 – Quiz 11 due
WEEK SIXTEEN		
T 4/25	Single Parent Households Group 13 Debate	A&S CH 17 – Quiz 12 due
R 4/27	Part three catch up and review	

WEEK SEVENTEEN

T 5/9**FINAL EXAM 3:30 to 6:30**

***Please note that this schedule is tentative and is subject to change. Students will be informed of such changes during class announcements.

Assignments	Points	Due Date
Collaborative Project	100	Throughout the semester
Exam One	100	Thursday 2/16/05
Exam Two	100	Thursday 4/06/05
Final Exam	100	Tuesday 5/9/05
Participation/weekly quizzes	100	Throughout the semester

Grading Scale:

500 - 450 = A

449 - 400 = B

399 - 350 = C

349 - 300 = D

299 & below = F

Class Policies:

1. Attendance is expected.
2. Students are responsible for all material presented in class as well as readings assigned from the text.
3. All work assigned must be completed on time. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED** without documentation of an emergency. A physician's note is required for all medical emergencies.
4. Students must take all exams at the scheduled date and time. Students with special circumstances (legitimate and documented excuses) must contact me prior to the exam to make arrangements for a make-up exam.
5. Students who wish to withdraw from this course are encouraged to meet with me prior to making a decision. Students who wish to pursue withdrawal are referred to University of Georgia for policy information and deadlines.
6. Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected of all students enrolled at the University of Georgia. "Academic honesty refers to performing all work without cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information which is not common knowledge (unless that assistance or use is authorized by the person responsible for supervising that academic work or fairly attributed to the source of assistance or information)." "Academic Dishonesty" will not be tolerated in this class. "Academic Dishonesty" refers to knowingly performing, attempting to perform, or assisting any other person in performing any academic work, which do not meet this standard of academic honesty..." Please review the policy manual, *A Culture of Honesty*, as well as the UGA Academic Honesty policy at <http://www.uga.edu/~vpaa/polproc/ahpol/secto4.htm>

COLLABORATIVE GROUP PROJECT AND DEBATE

The purpose of this project is for students to work in small groups (i.e., 4 in each group) and critically analyze current family issues. Groups will be determined by matching students' interests as closely as possible. Groups will be graded on their ability to critically think about the issues and their impact on families and individual members. Each topic will be presented in a **debate** format, with each group presenting both sides of the particular family issue. Each student will be graded on their participation in the group project as well as on how the group works together to research, organize, and present an informative and thought provoking debate and

report to the class. **Each group member should plan to summarize his or her research articles during the debate.** In other words, if you read and summarize a study about the impact of abuse on children as part of your argument that they should be removed from abusive homes, then I expect that this will be one of the points that you make in your debate. I expect you to include your research directly in the debate.

GROUP GUIDELINES:

- Members should meet as a group several times to plan the project and help organize and conduct the work. Equal participation among group members is expected and **members will be asked to evaluate each other's contribution**. Each person should participate in the planning, research (e.g., each person is responsible for finding at least two scholarly sources), preparation and presentation.
- Once the research has been conducted and evaluated each group will type a one-two page "Group Presentation Outline" of their findings and conclusions based on **empirical objective information** from the research that describes the evidence supporting each side (i.e., pro and con) of the issue. During the debate you will then present data from this research to support whatever position you have taken in the debate.
- Evidence to support your conclusions for **each side** of the issue should come from at least four scholarly sources (e.g., each group will have 4 people and each person will contribute 2 sources for a total of 8). Examples of scholarly sources include research studies published as articles in professional peer reviewed journals such as *Family Relations*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Journal of Family Psychology*, *Journal of Family Issues*. Non-research based Internet information, newspaper articles, and other types of periodicals (e.g., Psychology Today) may only be used for "extra" or supplemental sources, and will not count towards the total number of sources. If you have any questions about whether or not a source is scholarly and peer reviewed be sure to ask in advance...before you get too involved in reading and understanding the research.
- Each person in the group will:
 - Locate two scholarly sources supporting either the pro or the con side of the issue, make copies of the sources, and type the reference for each source (APA format), along with writing a "Source Summary" (i.e., one or two brief paragraphs or a one page outline summarizing the relevant information) from each source.
 - In addition to sharing this information with the group and contributing to the group presentation, each person will hand in their Source Summaries attached to copies of their sources on the day of their presentation.
- The group will need to have all of the sources that are used in the presentation and outline typed onto a reference page (in accordance to the APA Style guide) and handed in with the outline paper.
- Each group will then orally present their findings to the class (please plan for the entire presentation to last no longer than 30 minutes...your presentation plus questions and answers) in a debate format, facilitating class discussion around the provided evidence supporting each side of the particular family issue. The purpose is to present the information in a debate format to facilitate discussion between group members as well as the class as a whole. The "Group Presentation Outline" will serve as a guide for the class to follow during the presentation, as well as a good source for future reference. However, presenters should NOT READ DIRECTLY from the "Group Presentation Outline." The outline is simply a summary of the key points and sources and serves as a guide as each presenter verbally

elaborates his or her key points, findings, and conclusions. Be willing to ask your classmates what they think about the material you have presented. Get their thoughts. Stir some discussion.

- Each group will provide a copy of the outline (no more than 2 pages) and references to the instructor **two class periods prior** to the presentation (make sure all group members' names are on the paper) so that copies can be made for each student in the class. If you do not get the outline to me in time, you will be responsible for providing each class member with a copy it.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR GROUP PROJECTS

Please don't hesitate to suggest others that may be of interest to you.

1. 2/2: Marriage - Sexual Orientation: Should gays and lesbians be given the same rights to marry that heterosexual couples currently have?
2. 2/21: Adolescent pregnancy - marriage: Should pregnant teens marry the fathers of their babies?
3. 2/23: Mandatory premarital counseling: Should premarital counseling be required?
4. 2/28: Premarital sex: Is it better to wait until marriage or get some experience?
5. 3/2: Cohabitation versus marriage –Which is better?: Does cohabitation lead to better relationships?
6. 3/7: Mandatory premarital counseling: Should premarital counseling be mandatory?
7. 3/23: Marital conflict and children: Does marital conflict have a negative influence on children? Is this influence vary by the age of the children or by gender?
8. 3/28: Maternal Employment and child development: Does maternal employment have a negative or positive effect on child development?
9. 3/30: Is spanking detrimental to children or a necessary discipline strategy? For example is the old saying “spare the rod spoil the child” true?
10. 4/13: Should children who are at risk for abuse remain with their families?: Where should the line be drawn between family preservation and children's well-being?
11. 4/18: Parental depression/mental health and child and adolescent development: Does parental depression/mental illness create such a high risk environment that children should be removed from their care until parental mental health improves?
12. 4/20: Effects of remarriage on children: Are stepfamilies inherently problematic for children's development?
13. 4/25: Fatherhood: Are fathers really necessary?: Do children need active fathers in their lives or can children develop into healthy adults without active involved fathers?