



College of Education and Human Development/
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Human Development and Family Science Program
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HDFS 200.001 Individual and Family Development (3:3:0)
Fall 2014
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10pm
Robinson Hall B124

Instructor: Bethany L. Letiecq, PhD
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Course Description

Examines how individuals and families function and develop over the lifespan. Uses a multidisciplinary approach to integrate theories of family science and human development emphasizing the role of contextual factors in contemporary families' lives. Explores the impact of gender, socioeconomics, race/ethnicity, culture, and immigrant status on human development and family relationships. Introduces a basic model of scientific inquiry and theorizing.

Nature of Course Delivery

This course utilizes a distributed learning format requiring active participation of all students. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue, productive learning, and critical reflection. Activities will include instructor presentation, small-group discussions, student presentations, videos, and whole class sharing to support course content. In addition, a Blackboard online component of coursework is required.

Learner Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse experiences of contemporary families across the lifespan,
- Show understanding of how various micro- and macro-level systems shape individual and family development,
- Apply family theories to explain individuals' development across the lifespan within the context of their families,
- Understand some of the normative and non-normative challenges and opportunities faced by American families across the lifespan,
- Understand research methods used for examining the development, coping, and adaptation of individuals and families
- Engage in personal growth and development that will enhance students' academic and interpersonal experiences.

Professional Standards

This course is aligned with the standards established by the National Council on Family Relations, focusing specifically on the “families and individuals in societal contexts” content area, to include “an understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as educational, governmental, religious, and occupational institutions in society.”

Required Texts

Karraker, M.W., & Grochowski, J.R. (2012). *Families with futures* (2nd Edition). New York, NY: Routledge.

Suggested Readings:

Cherlin, A.J. (2010). *Public and private families: A reader* (6th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

Ihinger-Tallman, M., & Cooney, T.M. (2005). *Families in Context: An introduction*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury.

Seccombe, K. (2012). *Exploring Marriages and Families*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Skolnick, A.S., & Skolnick, J.H. (2014). *Family in Transition, 17th Edition*. London: Pearson.

George Mason University Policies and Resources for Students

- Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- Mason Email – Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- Counseling and Psychological Services – The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- Office of Disability Services – Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor in writing at the beginning of the semester <http://ods.gmu.edu/>.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The Writing Center (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- University Libraries (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See <http://library.gmu.edu/>].

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment: The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

Collaboration

Collaboration is an important human activity that involves shared responsibility in promoting healthy, productive lives, and educational success. We commit ourselves to work toward these goals in genuine partnerships with individuals, families, community agencies, schools, businesses, foundations, and other groups at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

Ethical Leadership

In all professions represented by the college, leadership is an essential component denoting ability and willingness to help lead professional practice to higher levels. We commit ourselves to practice ethical leadership through deliberate and systematic attention to the ethical principles that guide all leaders in a moral society.

Innovation

We have a history of creating dynamic, innovative programs, and we are dedicated to continue creating innovative approaches in all areas of our work. We commit ourselves to seeking new ways to advance knowledge, solve problems, improve our professional practice, and expand on our successes.

Research-Based Practice

The best practice in any discipline is based upon sound research and professional judgment. We commit ourselves to basing our instruction, scholarship, and policy recommendations on well-established principles that, wherever possible, emerge from research and reflection on its implications for professional practice.

Social Justice

Social justice embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in society, in accordance with democratic principles and respect for all persons and points of view. We commit ourselves to promoting equity, opportunity, and social justice through the college's operations and its missions related to teaching, research, and service.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Course Requirements

General Requirements

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Attendance in class and/or online is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions and/or complete online modules within the designated timeframe. Absences, tardiness, leaving early, and not completing online modules in the designated timeframe may negatively affect course grades. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message or send an email before class. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

3. In line with Mason's policy that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays, students shall be given an opportunity to make up, within a reasonable time, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observations in advance of the class that will be missed. Notice should be provided in writing as soon as possible.
4. During face-to-face and live online meetings, cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Students must keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, etc.) will result in a significant deduction in their participation grade.
5. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time. However, it is recognized that students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor prior to the assignment due date (when possible). If the student does not communicate with the instructor, a late penalty will be applied.
6. Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when responsible for a task, students will perform that task. When students rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, they will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), students will ask for guidance and clarification.

Written Assignments

All formal written assignments will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

Students will do the following:

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Grading Criteria

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	60-69	D	Below 60	F
93-96	A	83-86	B	73-76	C				
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-				

Grading Policy

All CEHD/CHSS undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>

Specific Course Assignments

Assignments	Due Dates	Points
Attendance & Engagement	Ongoing	10
Participation Posts on BB	Ongoing	20
Quizzes (5 @ 8 points each)	Ongoing (see schedule)	40
Genogram Project	Dec 3	30
TOTAL		100

CONTENT MODULES – 5 MODULES TOTAL

This course will utilize 5 content modules. Within these modules, all the relevant course material will be available in the format of course notes, power point presentations, and additional readings. This content will be incorporated into all discussions, quizzes, and projects. It is critical for students to review all content on each module in a timely manner. Following a traditional classroom model, each module contains several “in class” lectures that are based on your readings and also include information gleaned from other sources. It is imperative that you view each module to prepare for class discussions, quizzes and the genogram project.

I. Attendance (10 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class and online learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions and in-class exercises, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.

□ Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections. Go to mymason, <http://mymason.gmu.edu>, to login to Blackboard.

II. Participation Posts (20 points)

For each module, I will post a series of discussion questions. You are asked to participate in these “class discussions” by addressing the question and expanding upon a classmate’s posting.

Requirements of Posts: To earn full credit, you will need to answer each question posted by the instructor for each discussion session as well as post at least one additional response. This means that you must complete at least 2 posts (1 post with your answer to the question and a second response, typically to a group member’s answer of the question) within the one-week period allotted for posts and responses. Each post should include references to your readings and other sources to enrich the discussion. These are not opinion posts and should be based on what you are learning in this course.

Evaluation of Discussion Posts: I consider three categories that are important for building a learning community through group discussions: 1) promptness and initiative, 2) quality of posting in terms of relevance and contribution to the learning community, and 3) quantity of posts.

- Promptness and initiative: Student responds in a timely manner to the discussion questions posted, leaving adequate time for fellow students to reply and engage in a meaningful dialogue about the questions and responses. **Please be kind to your group-mates and do not wait until the last minute to participate in the discussions.**
- Quality of posting: Responses to the instructors question should be at least 3 paragraphs in length (remember a paragraph must be no less than 3 sentences long) and must directly reference either module notes or readings in the formulation of your response. Skimpy responses or responses that do not cite course resources will not receive full credit. I will give you feedback early on so you understand the depth and breadth or expected responses.
- Quantity of postings: Students engaged in discussions will likely post multiple times throughout the open discussion as they dialogue with group-mates to delve deeply into course materials and explore relevant course constructs and research findings. Quantity of postings is considered in relation to quality of postings. In other words, all postings should be meaningful and thoughtful.

Discussions are asynchronous, which means that you will have time to read and respond at any time during the 1-week window that the discussions are available. You do not have to respond at the same exact time as everyone else in class. **Discussion windows will close at the end of the 1-week period at 11:00PM.** Refer to the course schedule for “due by” dates. You will NOT be able to make up any missed discussion post except under extraordinary circumstances (as previously defined in this syllabus).

III. Quizzes (Each exam worth 8 points; Total: 40 points)

There will be a total of 5 quizzes – one for each module. Quizzes may be accessed on Blackboard under Assessments. ALL quizzes will be open until we conclude the course, but it is recommended that you complete the quiz at the conclusion of each module. All quizzes will be timed, meaning that once you begin the quiz you will have a set amount of time (typically 60 minutes) in which to complete the quiz. Therefore, it is imperative that once you begin the quiz you have enough time to finish it in one sitting.

You will not be able to re-enter the quiz once you have completed it. **If you run into difficulties while taking the quiz, contact me immediately.**

Quiz Due Dates: See Schedule

IV. Final Paper: Genogram Project (30 points)

You will be required to complete a genogram project (see genogram assignment description, example genograms, genogram symbols page, and genogram grading rubric on Blackboard to fully understand and correctly execute this requirement).

Evaluation of Genogram: There are two parts to this assignment: a paper and a family genogram, which is like a “family tree”. I will review, edit, and give feedback on draft genograms—just ask!

- **Paper:** Your genogram paper should be written in MS Word, double-spaced, using 12-point font with a page MAXIMUM of 5 pages (including references). **You should include 6 sections in your paper and use the following headers:**
 - INTRODUCTION, where you introduce the three themes that you will explore in your paper;
 - THEME 1: _____, which identifies the first theme to be examined. For each theme, be sure to draw linkages to course concepts and relate theme to research findings in your text. Example themes might include a pattern of marital stability through the generations, a pattern of divorce and remarriage, parenting practices used across the generations, sibling relationships across the generations, single-parenting, health problems (e.g., diabetes, alcoholism, drug abuse, cancer, heart disease, mental health issues), commitment to education, etc. **You should include a discussion of both micro-level processes and macro-level forces throughout the themes;**
 - THEME 2: _____;
 - THEME 3: _____;
 - DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS
 - REFERENCES (typically students reference the course text and readings as well as any other resources utilized in applying your theme/pattern to your family system. For example, it is recommended that you find journal articles related to your themes or a helpful website—these should all be referenced to give credit where credit is due and to avoid plagiarism!).
- **Genogram:** I recommend keeping this simple—using an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper, drawing out your genogram in pencil, including as much pertinent information as possible for each family member (ages, names, health status, education level, occupation for starters). It is also important to show graphically relationship quality indicators (marriage/divorce dates, length of cohabitation, highly conflictual/abusive relations, highly cohesive/supportive relations, etc.)—see the symbols page to help represent these relationships as clearly as possible! We will discuss this project often in class.

Final Project Due: Dec 3

Course Topics and Schedule

Week/Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments DUE
Aug 27	INTRODUCTION TO COURSE: Syllabus Review and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please read over syllabus carefully and ask questions for clarity as needed. • Test browser, discussion boards, email • Introduce yourself to class 	READ: Syllabus Genogram assignment requirements
MODULE 1: Individual and Family Development		
Sept 3	Changing families in a changing world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review lecture notes and instructor posts • Read/Explore... • Post and discuss questions posed on Blackboard (2 entry minimum). 	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 1 EXPLORE: US Census: Households and Families, 2010 DUE: Introductions on BB
Sept 10	Family Research Methods and Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Quiz 1 	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 2 DUE: Quiz 1 (9/16)
MODULE 2: From Risk to Resilience		
Sept 17	From Risk to Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review lecture notes and instructor posts. • Read/Explore... • Post and discuss questions posed on Blackboard (2 entry minimum). 	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 3-5 Walsh, 1996 APA: Building Resilience DUE: Post 2 (Sept 17)/Response (Sept 24)
Sept 24	Family Health & Sexual Intimacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Quiz 2 	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 3-5 EXPLORE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RWJF: Social Determinants of Health • Commission to Build a Healthier America DUE: Quiz 2 (Sept 30)

MODULE 3: Family Life Course: Intimate Relationships, Committed Unions, & Parenthood

Oct 1	Being Single, Choosing Mates Intimate Relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review lecture notes and instructor posts.• Read/Explore...• Post and discuss questions posed on Blackboard (2 entry minimum).	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 6-8 Bogle, 2007: Hooking Up
Oct 8	Marriage and Civil Unions Same-sex Marriage	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 6-8 Kefalas et al., 2005: Meaning of Marriage EXPLORE: National Conference of State Legislatures: Civil Unions DUE: Post 3 (Oct 8)/Response (Oct 15)
Oct 15	Parenthood, Assisted Reproduction, Adoption Kith and Kin: Creating families in communities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take Quiz 3	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 6-8 DUE: Quiz 3 (Oct 21)

MODULE 4: Family Life Course: Family Challenges and Opportunities

Oct 22	Family Violence across the Lifespan (Child abuse, intimate partner violence, elder abuse) Community Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review lecture notes and instructor posts.• Read/Explore...• Post and discuss questions posed on Blackboard (2 entry minimum).	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 9-10
Oct 29	De-coupled Families Divorce & Remarriage	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 9-10 Rutter, 2009: Divorce DUE: Post 4 (Oct 29)/Response (Nov 5)
Nov 5	Single-parent families Stepfamily & blended family systems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take Quiz 4	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 9-10 The Atlantic: Single Parenthood EXPLORE: APA: Stepfamily Success First Comes Love Trailer DUE: Quiz 4 (Nov 11)

MODULE 5: Future of Families		
Nov 12	Money Matters: Economics and Family Living Future of Families: From Family Values to Valuing Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review lecture notes and instructor posts. • Read/Explore... • Post and discuss questions posed on Blackboard (2 entry minimum). 	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 11-12 EXPLORE: Policy Institute for Family Impact National Council on Family Relations DUE: Post 5 (Nov 12)/Response (Nov 19)
Nov 19	No Class	
Nov 26	No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday	
Dec 3	Future of Families: From Family Values to Valuing Families (cont'd)	READ: Karraker & Grochowski, Ch. 11-12 DUE: Genogram Projects
Dec 10	Course Wrap-Up Final Exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Quiz 5 • Course Evaluations 	DUE: Quiz 5 (12/10)

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. If changes are made, you will be notified of the changes in class or by your university e-mail address.