Instructor: Angie M. Schock, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Monday 3:00 pm-4:15 pm, Tuesday 5:00 pm-6:45 pm, and by appointment

Class Meetings: Tuesday 7:00 pm-9:45 pm
Location: 104 Sequoia Hall


COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the social, psychological, cultural, and developmental factors that both influence many different family relationships over the life cycle, and that also shape the individual in the context of his or her personal relationships. We will also discuss and critically evaluate important research considerations, theoretical perspectives, and practical implications that are related to the most recent study of marital and family relationships. Particular emphasis will be placed on studying the expanding number of individual and family arrangements that exist today and how micro-level factors (e.g., individuals’ choices and personality traits) and macro-level factors (e.g., economic forces, culture, social attitudes) affect the institutions of marriage and the family. Most importantly during this course, a main objective is to help you realize how the choices that you make have an impact on your relationships and your experiences within your family. We’ll also aim to have some fun along the way!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Complete all assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to thoughtfully discuss material in the text. Although we will typically not be able to cover all of the material presented in the text during class meetings, you will be responsible for this information on the exams. I will be delighted to address any questions that you may have throughout the semester pertaining to the information discussed in your textbook.
2. Attend class and be prepared to participate in class activities, discussions, and brief writing assignments. To award credit for your attendance and classroom participation, I will randomly collect in-class activities that we will have lots of fun completing throughout the semester. In-class activities that are missed due to class absences cannot be made up.

3. Complete three exams related to the course readings and lectures. The three examinations, including the final exam, are not comprehensive.

4. Complete one “Family Issues in the Media” assignment.

5. Complete one final research project.

CLASS POLICIES

1. Attendance is expected. You will be responsible for all material presented and assignments completed in class, as well as corresponding information in the text. If you are absent, you will be responsible for obtaining a copy of the class notes by contacting another student in the class.

2. All in-class assignments must be completed on time with no exceptions. All late out-of-class assignments will be accepted only in the rare instance in which a legitimate excuse is presented. Any late assignment that is accepted will be penalized with the following point deductions:

   --Before the subsequent class period = 25% point deduction
   --After the subsequent class period = 50% point deduction

3. All assignments must be typed in 10-12 point font and double-spaced.

4. Any behavior that is disrespectful of other students will not be tolerated. We will address issues that may be controversial and we will discuss our own personal examples that are relevant to class material. It is important that we create and maintain a comfortable classroom environment in which you will be encouraged to share your individual family experiences and participate in healthy debate.

5. All exams must be taken at the scheduled date, time and location (see class schedule). Any student with a legitimate reason for missing an exam must contact me prior to the exam. I will determine the legitimacy of the excuse and will schedule a make-up exam if needed. NO missed exams will be excused.
DESCRIPTION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

EXAMS:

There will be three examinations throughout the quarter (two exams plus a final exam). The exams will cover all material presented in class and in the textbook and may consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. None of the examinations, including the final exam, is comprehensive.

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS:

You will select ONE of the following three project options:

A. Marriage Interviews: Happily Ever After…
You will select two married persons, from two separate relationships (i.e., not a couple), who have been married different lengths of time (i.e., one newly married and another that has been married for a significant number of years). Your interview would focus on the “ingredients” (behaviors, characteristics, attributes) that each married individual believes to be important in maintaining a marriage. In your discussion of the interviews, you will be expected to compare/contrast how each of the two couples have described which factors help to sustain a happy marriage.

You would be expected to create an interview protocol outlining questions that will be discussed during the interviews. The interviews need to be recorded and each should last approximately 20-45 minutes. You must hand in a copy of the taped (either audio taped or video taped) interview to receive any credit for this assignment!! Your final paper will include the following:

(a) 10 pts. = Provide a detailed description of the participants and their relationship, if applicable. Be sure to include all relevant background information that would be important for an outside reader to be aware of. Also include detailed information about the interview setting (i.e., who, where, when, how long, any problems?).

(b) 20 pts. = Briefly summarize the topics discussed during the interview. Also, make sure to include a copy of the interview protocol (i.e., a list of your interview questions!).

(c) 25 pts. = Compare and contrast the two interview conversations: What ideas were similar/different between the two interviewees?

(d) 40 pts. = First, analyze how the interview data was related to class material pertaining to the topic. For example: Did the data support concepts/trends discussed in class? Did the data extend or contrast
with ideas presented in your textbook? (20 pts.) Second, how has the interview changed your thoughts regarding the topic? (10 pts.) Third, what related information would you investigate further in future interviews (e.g., what other topics would you discuss and what questions would you ask), and with whom would you be interested in conducting additional interviews. Also for this third part, be sure to explain why your proposed research would be of particular interest to others. (10 pts.)

(e) 5 pts. = You must also include a copy of the interview and a signed participant’s consent form for each of the individuals that I will provide to you.

B. “Shared” Family Perspectives

You will select two family members to interview concerning a topic of interest to you that has been addressed in class (e.g., dating and cohabitation, choosing to parent a child, the process of divorce, grandparenting). For example, you could choose to interview a married couple and have them discuss a significant turning point (e.g., their engagement, a birth of a child, loss of a significant other, financial hardship) in their relationship; you could interview an adult child and his/her parent and have them discuss issues around caregiving for the aged; you could have an adolescent and his/her parent discuss the celebration of cultural/ethnic traditions within the family. Both family members will focus on the same topic during the interviews, but it is also acceptable for each to address other issues during the conversations. Interviews with the two family members should be conducted separately and you would be expected to compare and contrast the interview conversations discussed by each of the individuals.

You would also create an interview protocol outlining questions that will be discussed during the interviews. The interviews need to be recorded and each should last approximately 20-45 minutes. You must hand in a copy of the taped (either audio taped or video taped) interview to receive any credit for this assignment!! Your final paper will include the following:

(f) 10 pts. = Provide a detailed description of the participants and their relationship, if applicable. Be sure to include all relevant background information that would be important for an outside reader to be aware of. Also include detailed information about the interview setting (i.e., who, where, when, how long, any problems?).

(g) 20 pts. = Briefly summarize the topics discussed during the interview. Also, make sure to include a copy of the interview protocol (i.e., a list of your interview questions!).

(h) 25 pts. = Compare and contrast the two interview conversations: What ideas were similar/different between the two interviewees?

(i) 40 pts. = First, analyze how the interview data was related to class material pertaining to the topic. For example: Did the data support
concepts/trends discussed in class? Did the data extend or contrast with ideas presented in your textbook? (20 pts.) Second, how has the interview changed your thoughts regarding the topic? (10 pts.) Third, what related information would you investigate further in future interviews (e.g., what other topics would you discuss and what questions would you ask), and with whom would you be interested in conducting additional interviews. Also for this third part, be sure to explain why your proposed research would be of particular interest to others. (10 pts.)

(j) 5 pts. = You must also include a copy of the interview and a signed participant’s consent form for each of the individuals that I will provide to you.

C. Family Issues in the Community
You will select a family issue that is of interest to you (e.g., premarital counseling, mental health services, parenting programs, teenage pregnancy, care for the elderly) and then research how the topic is being addressed in our community. In order to do this, you will need to contact community agencies, local government officials, university programs, and seek information via the Internet to investigate how the community is offering information and/or services to the public regarding the family issue. You MUST research at least TWO separate community sources. Your final paper will include the following:

(a) 20 pts. = Introductory information. This information should include a description of the family issue, why it is of interest to you, and a detailed description of how you gathered the information that is discussed in the paper.
(b) 30 pts. = Describe and explain how the family issue is currently being addressed within the community based on your research.
(c) 25 pts. = Evaluate the community’s current efforts. (i.e., what is your opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of existing community resources that you have uncovered?).
(d) 20 pts. = Specifically outline future policy initiatives and community-based efforts that you believe could improve the current state of affairs. I want your own thoughtful ideas here, folks!
(e) 5 pts. = Also include any printed materials describing the agency and/or the services offered by the agency to the community (e.g., pamphlets, newsletters, web-based materials).

Note: Be sure to include some form of materials to document your research efforts!!

“FAMILY ISSUES IN THE MEDIA” ASSIGNMENT:
Select a newspaper article that addresses a topic that we will have discussed in class (so...it can be any previous or future topic that is addressed in your textbook). First, briefly summarize the article (2-3 paragraphs). Second, write a thoughtful review of the article, including your reaction to how the topic was presented in the media. For example: Did it appear to be based on solid research? Was it biased in any way? Was it informative? How consistent/inconsistent was the information that was presented in the article in relation to the material that was presented in class and in your textbook? (2-3 paragraphs). YOU MUST ALSO TURN IN THE ARTICLE WITH YOUR PAPER TO RECEIVE ANY CREDIT FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT!! Each assignment should be at least 2 pages typed and double-spaced in length, but no longer than 4 pages total.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES:

There will be a total of 7 in-class activities that I will collect and award points for during the semester. You can receive up to 10 points for each activity. In-class activities may consist of (a) a personal reflection on a topic, (b) a brief analytical writing assignment, (c) completion of questionnaires, (d) a group presentation, etc.

COURSE EVALUATION

Grades will be determined according to a point system. Each course requirement will have a point value as indicated below:

3 Exams/100 points each 300 pts.
1 Research Project/100 points 100 pts.
1 “Family Issues in the Media” Assignment/30 points 30 pts.
7 In-Class Activities/10 points each 70 pts.
TOTAL 500 pts.

Grading Scale:

A  500-463  C  383-363
A-  462-448  C-  362-348
B+  447-433  D+  347-333
B  432-417  D  332-314
B-  416-398  E  313 or below
C+  397-304
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Class #10  The Choice of Parenthood  Ch. 11
4/4  T  Parental Roles and Parenting Issues  Ch. 12

4/11  T  NO CLASS

Class #11  Exam #2
4/18  T  Final Research Project Due

4/25  T  NO CLASS

Class #12  Families and Work  Ch. 13
5/2  T  Family Crises  Ch. 14

Class #13  Separation and Divorce  Ch. 15
5/9  T  Remarriage and Stepfamilies  Ch. 16

Class #14  Issues of Aging Family Members  Ch. 17
5/16  T  Future Issues and the Family  Ch. 18

Class #16  Final Exam  8:00 pm-10:00 pm
5/23  T