



Syllabus

Welcome to BYU Online!

This course is part of a small pilot of online courses at BYU. This course is a highly structured learning experience that meets the university's general education requirements and will mirror the intensity of the on-campus course. This course differs from on-campus courses and other online courses in the following ways:

- **Course Content** – Aside from your textbook, all of the course content is contained online. You will also submit all your assignments and complete all your course quizzes online.
- **Course Completion** – You are allowed to complete this course at your own pace. The only restrictions are you cannot complete the course before halfway through the semester and you must complete the course by the end of the semester.
- **Orientation Meeting** – You are required to attend an initial class meeting. At this meeting, you will meet your instructor, course TAs and other members of the class. You will also have the opportunity to ask any questions you have about the class and how it operates.
- **Course TA** – This course has a specific TA that you can contact with questions about the course or course content. The TA will also assist you in creating a course completion schedule and meet with you for the course checkpoints.
- **Checkpoints** – Throughout the course you will be required to meet with the course TA 3 times. These meetings will take place in Adobe Connect. These checkpoints will allow you to discuss your progress in the course and help you follow your course completion plan.

As part of the pilot, we will be asking you to help assess the success and effectiveness of this course, the faculty member, the course delivery and the course support. Your participation in this assessment effort will be

critical to future opportunities for online learning at BYU. Please be prepared to provide meaningful feedback about your experience.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be introduced to the main theoretical frameworks used in the family sciences. An early unit in the course will cover and introduce students to the major theories that help us understand family systems. After focusing on these theories for several lectures, the course materials will then reference these theories throughout the course as we learn about various components of families and how they interact. Students will also be asked in one of their major papers for the class to analyze your own family. This will help students gain a better appreciation for how the concepts from class might help them interpret their own family.
2. Students will learn how researchers uniquely study families and family systems. In addition to just learning about what scholars know about families, we will also study how scholars study families. Family scientists employ unique research methods to study family interactions and patterns. As a part of this course students will be introduced to the basics behind how we study the family unit.
3. Students will gain an understanding of the basic terms, concepts, and ideas used to describe family systems. Although terms such as rituals, communication, and problem-solving are likely familiar to students, throughout the course we will learn how these concepts are utilized and understood in the family sciences. Understanding these terms and concepts will help students both analyze family units and give students a strong base from which to grow their understanding of family systems in future coursework.
4. Students will learn to apply family systems ideas and concepts to their own families, past and future, in order to learn how they might improve their own family well-being. Both the assignments and lectures from the course will give students opportunities to apply what they are learning to themselves in terms of where they have been and where they are going. Discussion questions, activities, and assignments will challenge students to critically analyze their family, past and future, and to understand their own personal strengths and weaknesses in regard to family life.
5. Students will improve their writing skills. This course has an emphasis on writing and, as such, is designed to help students improve their academic writing skills. Through the reflective writing

assignments due throughout the course, I hope students emerge from this class more confident in their writing proficiency and more capable of delivering strong, clear writing.

Course Materials

David H. Olson, John DeFrain, and Linda Skogrand. *Marriage and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths*, 8th edition. McGraw-Hill Education, 2014.

Assignments

Assignment 1: Family Interview Assignment

This writing assignment tasks you with understanding the strengths and weaknesses you bring with you from your family background. You will interview a family member and then write about the experience. Your finished paper will include a three-page, single-spaced summary of an interview you completed with either a parent or grandparent (you will complete an interview worksheet for this part of the assignment).

Assignment 2: Family Sculpture Assignment

For this assignment, you will construct several family sculptures and write about the strengths and weaknesses that you see due to your family background.

This assignment will have two parts. First, you will construct *three family sculptures: one for the families of each of your parents and one for your own family when each person was ten years old* (you will be given specific instructions on how to draw a family sculpture).

Next, you will create two short write-ups: a two-page, double-spaced summary of the strengths of your family of origin based on the family sculptures, and a two-page, double-spaced summary of the weaknesses of your family of origin based on the family sculptures.

Assignment 3: Family Theory Analysis Paper

You will study several major family science theories during the course. For this assignment, you will write a five-page, double-spaced paper in which you analyze a family from a television show through the lens of one of the three major theories you learn about in class. You must reference at least 10 ideas and terms from each theory and **bold** them in your paper the first

time you use them. Your analysis should include discussion of how the theory would identify both strengths and weaknesses in your current family.

Assignment 4: Family Symbolism Assignment

Several times in the course, you will learn how symbolism within families is an important component of family process. For this assignment, you will think about how your family might be represented in a symbolic way.

The first part of the assignment is to create a “family flag” that symbolizes your family and then write about the symbols involved. You may design this flag in any way you wish (such as using graphic software or drawing the flag by hand and scanning a copy), but it must include the following elements:

- Your family’s last name
- At least five symbols that represent your family

This flag should collectively represent your family and be unique to the experiences that you had growing up. You will not get bonus points for unusual creativity in media or execution, and you will not be graded on your artistic ability. However, you should make sure your flag is neat and professional looking.

For the second part of the assignment, you will write a three-page, double-spaced paper briefly describing the five symbols you picked. This write-up should focus on the symbolic nature of the objects you use, not just describing the symbols, but explaining the deeper meaning behind them.

Assignment 5: Family Process Self-Analysis

For the final assignment of the class, you will submit a six-page, double-spaced paper that is essentially a self-analysis of your current family process utilizing the concepts from the course. This assignment serves as evidence that you can apply the material from the course to a real situation. You will select *four* from a list of ten topics that we have covered in the course. You will use the course materials from those four areas to build an analysis of both the positive and negative elements of their family process.

Reading Quizzes

In addition to the two exams, you will complete three online quizzes based on the reading material from the textbook. These quizzes consist of approximately 15 multiple-choice questions (worth 2 points each). These quizzes help you prepare for the exams—so you will have a **time limit** of 20 minutes to complete each one. This won't give you enough time to find the answers in your textbook, so be sure you have thoroughly read the material before you begin.

Exams

There will be two exams for the class, a midcourse and a final. The final exam is comprehensive, and includes elements from the entire course (roughly 75% new material and 25% old material). Both exams are comprised of multiple choice, true-false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay questions.

Important Exam Note

You will take your exam online at the Morris Center. You will need to schedule your exam time at least 2 days before you want to take the exam. Please read the two “Preparing for the Exam” pages for details.

Course Schedule

Note: The schedule for lessons and readings is only a suggestion. The assignment due dates **will be enforced** with the following late penalty:

All assignments are due **online** the day they are scheduled to be turned in. Any assignment handed in late will be deducted 2.5% for each day late it is turned in. **This includes weekends.** Exams will be deducted by one letter grade (10%) for each day they are taken late. Quizzes must be completed prior to the deadline on the syllabus or students will receive a 0 on the quiz.

Date	Lesson	Readings	Assignments
T Sept 1 Tuesday	Introduction	Course Syllabus	
Th Sept 3 Thursday		Chapter 1 Marriages and Families	
T Sept 8 Tuesday	Current Trends		

Th Sept 10 Thursday		Appendix B Marriages and Families	
T Sept 15 Tuesday	Studying the Family		
Th Sept 17 Thursday	Family Theory - Family Systems Theory	Chapter 3 (pgs. 70-91) Marriages and Families	Interview Assignment Due Date
T Sept 22 Tuesday	Family Theory - Life Course	Article Reading: "The Life Course as Developmental Theory" Glenn Elder	
Th Sept 24 Thursday	Family Theory - Symbolic Interaction		
T Sept 29 Tuesday		Chapter reading from " <i>Family Paradigms</i> " Larry Constantine	Reading Quiz 1 Due
Th Oct 1 Thursday	Family Paradigms		Family Sculpture Assignment Due
T Oct 6 Tuesday		Chapter reading from " <i>Introduction to Family Process</i> " Randal Day	
Th Oct 8 Thursday	Family Rules		
T Oct 13 Tuesday			
Th Oct 15 Thursday		****Article reading " <i>Family Routines and Rituals</i> " Mary Spagnola and Barbara Fiese*****	
T Oct 20 Tuesday	Family Rituals		Family Theory Assignment Due
Th Oct 22		Chapter 4 Marriages and Families	

Thursday			
T Oct 27 Tuesday	Healthy Communication		Mid-Term Due
Th Oct 29 Thursday	Conflict in Families	Chapter 5 Marriages and Families	Reading Quiz 2 Due
T Nov 3 Tuesday	Distance Regulation		
Th Nov 5 Thursday	Circumplex Model	Chapter 3 Marriages and Families (91-106)	Family Symbolism Assignment Due
T Nov 10 Tuesday	Gender in Families	Chapter 7 Marriages and Families	
Th Nov 12 Thursday	Family Finances	Chapter 8 Marriages and Families	
T Nov 17 Tuesday		Chapter 14 Marriages and Families	
Th Nov 19 Thursday	Family Stress		
T Nov 24 Tuesday		Chapter 6 Marriages and Families	
Th Nov 26 Thursday			
T Dec 1 Tuesday	Romantic Relationships		Family Process Assignment Due
Th Dec 3 Thursday		Chapter 9 Marriages and Families	Reading Quiz 3 Due
T Dec 8 Tuesday	Sexual Intimacy		
			Final Exam

Grading

The points from the assignments and exams make up your course grade.

Assignments	Points
Family Interview Assignment	30
Family Sculpture Assignment	50
Family Theory Analysis Paper	75
Family Symbolism Assignment	50
Family Process Self-Analysis Assignment	100
Midcourse Exam	100
Final Exam	100
3 Reading Quizzes	90
Total Points	595

Note: You must pass the final exam to earn credit for the course.

Grading Scale

Your letter grade will be determined using these percentages:

A	94–100
A–	90–93
B+	87–89
B	84–86
B–	80–83
C+	77–79
C	74–76
C–	70–73
D+	67–69
D	64–66
D–	60–63

Plagiarism

As a part of the Honor Code, all students are expected to do their own work and not copy or plagiarize from other sources. When you write down an idea from someone else, you need to cite that person. Students who are caught plagiarizing will receive a 0 for that paper assignment. **This policy will hold even if the plagiarizing was unintentional.** Students who are found to have intentionally copied or are found to have plagiarized multiple times will receive an E in the course and be reported to the proper university office. If you have any questions or concerns regarding how to properly cite sources please contact me. Students are referred to the [BYU Academic Honesty Policy \(http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2011-2012ucat/GeneralInfo/AcademicHonesty.php\)](http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2011-2012ucat/GeneralInfo/AcademicHonesty.php) for specific examples of plagiarism.