# 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 TA Information

Your TA for this course is **Sarah Shepard**. Please contact your TA if you have any questions, run into difficulties with the course, and to schedule checkpoints.

* ta\_sfl160@byu.edu
* Open Office Hour: Thursdays 10-11am in 1053 JFSB

Remember, your TA is your first line of contact, and will be able to help you with most issues that come up. She is looking forward to getting to know you!

## 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 Jan 06 Tuesday | Introduction | Course Syllabus |  |
| Th Jan 08 Thursday |  | Chapter 1 Marriages and Families |  |
| T Jan 13 Tuesday | Current Trends |  |  |
| Th Jan 15 Thursday |  | Appendix B Marriages and Families |  |
| T Jan 20 Tuesday | Studying the Family |  |  |
| Th Jan 22 Thursday | Family Theory - Family Systems Theory | Chapter 3 (pgs. 70-91) Marriages and Families | **Interview Assignment Due Date** |
| T Jan 27 Tuesday | Family Theory - Life Course | Article Reading: “The Life Course as Developmental Theory” Glenn Elder |  |
| Th Jan 29 Thursday | Family Theory - Symbolic Interaction |  |  |
| T Feb 03 Tuesday |  | Chapter reading from “Family Paradigms” Larry Constantine | **Reading Quiz 1 Due** |
| Th Feb 05 Thursday | Family Paradigms |  | **Family Sculpture Assignment Due** |
| T Feb 10 Tuesday |  | Chapter reading from “Introduction to Family Process” Randal Day |  |
| Th Feb 12 Thursday | Family Rules |  |  |
| T Feb 17 Tuesday |  |  |  |
| Th Feb 19 Thursday |  | \*\*\*\*Article reading “Family Routines and Rituals” Mary Spagnola and Barbara Fiese\*\*\*\*\* |  |
| T Feb 24 Tuesday | Family Rituals |  | **Family Theory Assignment Due** |
| Th Feb 26 Thursday |  | Chapter 4 Marriages and Families |  |
| T Mar 03 Tuesday | Healthy Communication |  | **Mid-Term Due** |
| Th Mar 05 Thursday | Conflict in Families | Chapter 5 Marriages and Families | **Reading Quiz 2 Due** |
| T Mar 10 Tuesday | Distance Regulation |  |  |
| Th Mar 12 Thursday | Circumplex Model | Chapter 3 Marriages and Families (91-106) | **Family Symbolism Assignment Due** |
| T Mar 17 Tuesday | Gender in Families | Chapter 7 Marriages and Families |  |
| Th Mar 19 Thursday | Family Finances | Chapter 8 Marriages and Families |  |
| T Mar 24 Tuesday |  | Chapter 14 Marriages and Families |  |
| Th Mar 26 Thursday | Family Stress |  |  |
| T Mar 31 Tuesday |  | Chapter 6 Marriages and Families |  |
| Th Apr 02 Thursday |  |  |  |
| T Apr 07 Tuesday | Romantic Relationships |  | **Family Process Assignment Due** |
| Th Apr 09 Thursday |  | Chapter 9 Marriages and Families | **Reading Quiz 3 Due** |
| T Apr 14 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:

| **Grading Scale** | |
| --- | --- |
| **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 |
| **E (fail)** | 59 and lower |

## 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) for specific examples of plagiarism.