

Posters for “Timeline of Family Studies” activities

To become familiar with the material before class, students are welcome to access this information online at:

www.marybold.com/timeline.htm

Before
1850

Human behavior
explained by
traditional beliefs,
folklore, religion,
superstition

1850 -
1900

Positivism

the dominant philosophy of science

First psychology “textbook”

Anthropologists
conducting
comparative studies
and taking a
moralizing stance

1880 -

1900

Industrial revolution in the U.S.

Time of U. S.
industrialization
+
urbanization

Concerns:

- ❖ social reform
- ❖ the endangered family
- ❖ industrialization

Richards's Oekology:
“the science of
our normal lives”
AKA home economics

Birth of family science



tied to sociology +
home economics

Federal stats on
marriage and
divorce began

1900 -
1920

First wave: behaviorism

First wave: feminism

Right to vote
extended to
women
(1920)

Social scientists
striving for value-
free methodology
in research

World War I

1920 -
1940

“Best interest of
the child”
considered in
custody cases

Family defined as
“a unity of
interacting
personalities”

NCFR founded
for the
interdisciplinary field
of family studies

Family study
recognized as a
growing field

Freudian theory spreading

Greatest growth of symbolic interactionism as a theory

(1930s & 1940s)

Concerns:

- ❖ divorce
- ❖ extramarital sex
- ❖ women's roles
- ❖ the personal domain

Social scientists
using both quantitative
and qualitative research
methods, including
polling and surveys

1940s

World War II

41% of families
look like the Cleavers
(in terms of employment
and marriage)

1950s

Korean War

Concerns:

- ❖ security
- ❖ returning to “normal”
gender roles

Birth rate up
+
marrying age down

Americans moving to the suburbs

Nuclear family as an ideal form

Academics begin
calling themselves
“social scientists”

Groundbreaking work: effect of nonrepresentation of ethnicity on children

(Kenneth B. Clark)

Symbolic
interactionism
textbook emphasizes
family roles
and stress

1960s

Major social upheaval
including protests on
college campuses

43% of families
look like the Cleavers
(in terms of employment
and marriage)

Late in decade:
home economics
departments began to be
redefined and renamed
as “human ecology”
schools

Ethologists
tie animal instinct
to human
development

Research on parenting styles

Growth of graduate education

Theories of psychosocial development, cognitive development, behaviorism based on operant conditioning

1970s

Mid-decade:
women into the
paid work force
in large numbers

Second wave: feminism

Decade of
greatest change
in women's roles
and divorce rate

Sociobiology

Globalization of scholarship

Number of grad students
trained in a theory
determines
the subsequent
popularity of that theory
(Mullins)

1980s

Postpositivism
becoming
dominant view

Multicultural, Black, and feminist studies emerging in the family field

Greatest development of human ecology theory

1990s

Stepfamily
predicted as the next
traditional
American family

New family form
emerging: intentional
childbearing/adoption by
gay and lesbian couples

Among family
scientists,
no consensus about
what constitutes a
family

Fathering as an area of research

Group Socialization Theory