Official Course Description: Provides an overview of theoretical perspectives used to study families and family change topics in HDFS from the perspective of psychology, sociology, economics, demography, anthropology, and others.

Unofficial Course Description: This course will introduce you to theoretical perspectives on the family, as well as the state of the art in family scholarship from across disciplines. Family research is inherently interdisciplinary, with scholars in psychology, sociology, economics, history, ecology, anthropology, communication, and other disciplines studying the family.

Why should scholars interested in human development, public health, education, economics, sociology, or business, care about families? What are their perspectives on the family? These are questions we will be exploring in this class. The impacts of the family are apparent across several different domains of human experience. A stressful day at work may impact a conversation with a spouse about what to do for dinner. A parents’ morning argument may impact their child’s day at school. Having a child who is often sick could impact his mother’s career trajectory. A close relationship with a sibling may be critical when dealing with a breakup. Family relationships impact who we are, where we live, what career we chose, and our overall experience of the world. Family scholars have been interested in the interaction between family members, between the family and each member’s development, and between the family and the larger social environment. We will be exploring the cutting edge of theory and research on the family in this course, using interdisciplinary research and theory to help us form cutting edge theories and questions that may move family scholarship forward, and our respective disciplinary scholarship forward, in the 21st century.
Course Goals

Students will understand major theories related to the family.

Students will cite major trends in family research.

Students will synthesize and criticize family theory and scholarship.

Students will advance new family theories and identify ways family scholarship could advance.

Learning Objectives

Describe the tenets of major family theories

Contrast major family theories, identifying both differences and similarities

Demonstrate knowledge of major trends in family research.

Compare family research across disciplines.

Synthesize family research from across disciplines and topics.

Criticize existing family research; identify theoretical gaps as well as holes in the literature.

Create new family theories or extend existing family theories in meaningful ways.

Identify research questions that would advance family scholarship and theory.

grade breakdown

To accomplish the goals of this course and achieve course learning objectives, you will be required to do the following.

Class discussion
25%
Class discussion and participation in activities is required. This work cannot be made up; you must be in class.

Weekly reaction papers
30%
2 pages, double-spaced reaction papers written in response to one of several thought questions for each week. 10 are required.

Midterm exam
20%
Take-home exam covering the first half of the course.

Final exam
25%
Take-home exam focused on the last half of the course, but drawing on material from the entire course.

The Kardashian Family, 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: August 31st</th>
<th>Readings/Exam Schedule</th>
<th>Thought questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cowan, P., &amp; Cowan, C. (2009). <em>When is the relationship between facts a causal one?</em></td>
<td>4. Should family research be more concerned with scientific description or scientific explanation? Use other articles from this week to support your answer.</td>
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</table>

| Week 2: September 7th | NO CLASS: LABOR DAY | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3: September 14th</th>
<th>Evolutionary Theory and Dating and Mate Selection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO CLASS: LABOR DAY</td>
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</table>
**Week 4: September 21st**
**Theory and Research about Couples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Week 5: September 28th**
**Economic Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Investment Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Week 6: October 5th
Attachment Theory and Relationship Development.


2. Reconcile Guzzo (2014), Huang et al. (2011), and Barr et al. (2015).
3. Comment on Huang et al. (2011) from an attachment perspective.
5. Critically apply attachment theory to your research area of interest.

Week 7: October 12th
Social Learning Theory and Intergenerational Transmission


4. Critically apply social learning theory to your research area of interest.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8: October 19th</th>
<th>Family Systems Theory and Parent-Child Relationships</th>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9: October 26th</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>The exam will be distributed via my Campbell Hall mailbox at 9 am on October 26th and a <strong>printed hard copy along with the original exam sheet</strong> is due in class on November 2nd. I will not accept the exam electronically nor will I accept it without the hard copy of the original exam.</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10: November 2nd</th>
<th>Gender Theory, Queer Theory, Intersectionality, and the Division of Labor in Families</th>
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</table>


Week 11: November 9th
Life-course Theory and Intergenerational Relationships

1. **Apply life-course theory to Barnett et al. (2010) and Fingerman et al. (2012).**

2. **Synthesize Barnett et al. (2010), Fingerman et al. (2012), Kiecolt et al. (2011), and Tsai et al. (2012).** What is the state of contemporary intergenerational relationships?

3. **Reconcile Fingerman et al. (2012), Tsai et al. (2012), and Dunifon et al. (2014).**

4. **Critically apply life course theory to your research area of interest.**
Week 12: November 16th
Symbolic Interactionism and Sibling Relationships


2. Interpret Conley & Glauber (2008), Campione-Barr et al. (2015), Volling (2012), and Whiteman et al. (2014) in light one of the major theories identified in McHale et al. (2012).


4. Critically apply symbolic interactionism or the theories cited in McHale et al. (2012) to your research area of interest.

5. How would incorporating siblings into your research agenda change and expand that agenda? Cite readings from this week to support your claim.

Week 13: November 23rd
Bioecological Theory, Cumulative Risk Theory, and Families in Context


Lareau, A. (2010). Unequal childhoods and unequal transitions to adulthood: The importance of social class in turning points. In M. J. Carlson & P. England (Eds.), *Social class and changing family.*

1. Synthesize the following theories to determine the importance of the family for optimal human development: bioecological model, ecobiodevelopmental framework, and cumulative risk theory.


3. Interpret Schofield et al. (2011) using Bronfenbrenner


Week 14: November 30th

Family Violence

1. What are the risk factors for family violence? What are the consequences? Include references to this week’s articles.


3. What processes are at play in violent relationships? Compare perspectives from Lawson (2012) and Sokoloff & Dupont (2005). Use findings from readings for this week as evidence to support your claims.

4. Critically apply the bioecological model, ecobiodevelopmental framework, and cumulative risk theory to your research area of interest.
### Week 15: December 7th
#### Family Policy and Economic Theory

- **Required:**

Read all abstracts, please choose 4 to read in depth:


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**Final Exam:** December 6th

**FINAL EXAM**

The exam will be distributed in class on December 7th and **a printed hard copy along with the original exam sheet** is due in my mailbox by 4
pm on December 11th. I will not accept the exam electronically nor will I accept it without the hard copy of the original exam.

Course Requirements

Class participation (25%). Graduate school is about developing critical thinking skills and advancing science. To do this, students must begin to understand that any scholarly discipline has multiple points of view and clashing values. Your task in this class is to analyze assumptions, challenge theories, and formulate alternative hypotheses or solutions to problems related to family scholarship. With this in mind, this class will not be taught in a lecture format, as this passive model of learning is not effective in graduate training. It will be discussion based. This means that to participate in class, you must come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings, and reflected on them. You are expected to come armed with questions, comments, challenges, and syntheses for discussion. High quality participation in this class involves not only asking questions and commenting on the readings, but also listening to, responding to, and learning from your peers. A quarter of your grade is based on your course participation and because verbal skills are so important in academia, part of your grade will be based on enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, and frequency of comments. Note that thoughtfulness is more important than frequency.

How to take this course
There are a variety of reasons you might be taking this class. Maybe it is required, maybe you are interested in family research, maybe your advisor told you to take it. Whatever your reason, you can do okay in this class by giving the material only cursory attention. Or, you can go deeper, and have a more meaningful experience that could shape your future research and teaching. It all depends upon your commitment.

What kind of commitment do you want to make?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hooking up</th>
<th>dating</th>
<th>married</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You cram before class by perusing the readings. When writing your reaction papers, you do so quickly, only skimming the parts of the papers you need to in order to get the paper done. You turn in your first draft, and do not revise. You come to class, but send the occasional text to a friend. The exam is hard for you; you have to do a lot of reading during the exam period. Overall, you are not really that into this course.</td>
<td>You do readings before class, giving each at least a cursory read. You spend some time on your reaction paper, reading it once out loud before turning it in. You find class discussion interesting, participating mostly with comments summarizing the readings. The exams are somewhat difficult for you; you have only given a cursory reading to the material so it is hard to synthesize. Overall, you are interested.</td>
<td>You complete readings before class and have a study group where you go deeper into the readings and ask questions. Therefore, you have an easier time engaging in the reaction papers and exams, and you get more out of, and contribute more to, class discussion because you have already thought about the material. You can see how the material relates to your own research interests and have new ideas for scholarship that would push the literature forward. You find that you are passionate about the course material.</td>
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</table>
Midterm exam (20%). The midterm exam will consist of questions intended to assess your comprehension and integration of the course material to date. Questions will be similar to the weekly thought questions and I will ask you to respond to a subset of them. I will distribute the exam on hard copy in my Campbell Hall mailbox (135 Campbell Hall) at 9 am on October 26th. You may write your exam anywhere you like. A printed hard copy of the exam, along with the original exam sheet, is due in class on November 2nd. I will not accept the exam electronically nor will I accept it without the hard copy of the original exam. I will also not accept the exam if you attempt to turn it in after the deadline. Please do not copy the hard copy of the exam.

Final exam (25%). The structure of the final exam will be similar to the midterm exam. It will primarily focus on material from the second half of the course, but will draw on material from the entire semester. Again, the exam will consist of questions intended to assess your comprehension and integration of the course material and questions will be similar to the weekly thought questions. I will distribute the exam in class on December 7th. You may write your exam anywhere you like. A printed hard copy of the exam, along with the original exam sheet, is due in my mailbox by 4 pm on December 11th. I will not accept the exam electronically nor will I accept it without the hard copy of the original exam. I will also not accept the exam if you attempt to turn it in after the deadline. Please do not copy the hard copy of the exam.

Weekly reaction papers (30%). To develop your writing and critical thinking skills, both of which are essential for success in graduate school and beyond, you will be turning in weekly reaction papers. These papers will be written in response to one of several questions based on the readings for that week. Note you are allowed to use the question “Critically apply [theory] to your research area of interest” twice during the semester (it appears several weeks). You will turn in a hard copy of your paper at the beginning of the class in which it is due. You are required to underline the main point or thesis (1-2 sentences). The thesis statement should summarize your main argument.

Papers should be about 2 pages, double-spaced. You are required to turn in 10 thought papers, but you will have opportunity to write a thought paper for 12 weeks. I will take the 10 highest grades. If you would like to revise a paper for a higher grade, you may revise two papers, once each. Revisions are due one week after you received the grade. Grading will be based on a 1 to 10 scale. Please make sure you proof read your writing for grammar and spelling errors. I often use the strategy of reading the paper out loud prior to turning a paper in, most often prior to journal submission.

Your reaction papers will be graded on the criteria shown in the following rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Rubric for Reaction Papers</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Quality of Ideas, Argument, and Effective Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discusses strengths of material, points out unresolved issues, considers multiple perspectives to explain behavior, critiques theory or methodology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When critiquing theory or methodology, does not simply point out weaknesses, but also discusses how they can be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not summarize the readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops one or two ideas in depth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates original critical thinking, depth of thinking, and synthesis of material.</td>
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</table>
Policies

Class norms – We will discuss a variety of potentially sensitive topics in this course. In-class participation is part of your grade. But, you will not be evaluated on the degree to which you ascribe to my own beliefs. Further, my own beliefs may not be obvious. That said, you will most likely have different opinions, different experiences, and different emotional reactions to class material. Given this, I have a variety of expectations for the behaviors of students in this class. I have articulated these as “class norms”.

- Students should respect confidentiality. Specifically, another student’s personal information, experiences, or comments should not be shared outside the classroom.
- Students should listen respectfully to one another; different perspectives should be respected. Specifically, let other students finish their thought before you respond.
- Students should respond to the content of what is said in class. Specifically, you should comment on what the person said, not on the person saying it; your response to another student’s comments should not be personalized.
- Students should use "I statements" (such as "I believe that . . .") rather than generalizing their comments to a group to which they belong (e.g. Christians think . . .) or society or societal groups as a whole (All children of divorce . . .).
- Students should avoid playing the devil’s advocate (but don’t you think that. . .?) because the other student may not be comfortable having an argument in front of the class.
- All students have the right to be silent in any group discussion.

Disabilities Statement: ODS Statement – Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. The Office of Disability Services is relied upon in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 (V) or 614-292-0901 (TDD) in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/. Students are expected to follow Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines for access to technology.

Academic Misconduct – The Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Example of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), and copying the work of another student. Ignorance of the University’s Code of Student Conduct is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course. I am obligated by University rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have
violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct. [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_cas.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_cas.asp)

**Statement on Diversity** – The College of Education and Human Ecology affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help &amp; Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If you are feeling lost or overwhelmed. . .</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **1. Make an appointment with me**  
I am more than happy to meet with you. You are welcome to email me, and we can find a time for us to meet. Many problems in any family can be resolved through open lines of communication!  

**2. Try forming a study group!**  
Study groups can help you by allowing you to: share notes and study tips, grapple with class material and bounce around ideas, learn class material faster and easier, and, make new friends! Consider forming a study group to help you manage the reading load for this course.  

**3. Visit the Writing Center often**  
You may visit the [Writing Center](http://writingcenter.osu.edu) at any point in time over the course of the semester. The Writing Center offers help at any stage of the writing process, and can give you substantive feedback on your writing. You can [schedule online](http://writingcenter.osu.edu) or call 614-688-4291.

**4. Visit one of the OSU Health and Wellness Resources for Students**  
Ohio State has a rich set of resources for students who need a little help with a range of issues. There is the [Student Wellness Center](http://studentwellness.osu.edu), the [Wilce Student Health Center](http://wellnesscenter.osu.edu), and the [Counseling and Consultation Service](http://counseling.osu.edu), which provides students with up to 10 free sessions per academic year. If you are struggling this semester, come talk to me sooner rather than later. Do not wait until the end of the semester, when it will be too late.