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</th>
<th>Readings/Exam Schedule</th>
<th>Thought questions</th>
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### Week 3: September 16th
#### Evolutionary Theory and Dating and Mate Selection

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<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
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1. Contrast Ha et al. (2012) and Finkel et al. (2012).
4. Interpret Qian et al. (2005) from an evolutionary theory perspective.
5. Critically apply evolutionary theory to your area of interest.

### Week 4: September 23rd
#### Economic Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Investment Model

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3. Apply the investment model to Stevenson & Wolters (2007).
4. What are the commonalities among economic theory on the family/independence hypothesis, social exchange theory, and the investment model? Where do they diverge?
5. Critically apply economic theory on the family, social exchange theory, and the investment model to your area of interest.

### Week 5: September 30th
#### Adolescents’ Working Models

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<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Furman, W., Simon, V. A., Shaffer, L. and Bouchey, H. A. (2002).</td>
<td>Adolescents’ working models and</td>
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</table>

### Attachment Theory and the Development of Intimate Relationships


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### Week 6: October 7th Social Learning Theory and Intergenerational Transmission

- Amato, P. R., & DeBoer, D. D. (2001). The transmission of marital instability across generations: Relationship skills or commitment to marriage? *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63, 1038-1051.*


women and their offspring in 20 years of follow-up. *Psychological Medicine, 42*, 931-942.


### Week 7:
#### October 14th
#### Family Systems Theory and Parent-Child Relationships


### Week 8:
#### October 21st
#### Gender Theory and the Division of Labor in Families

MIDTERM EXAM
The exam will be distributed in class on October 21st and a **printed hard copy along with the original exam sheet** is due in class on October 28th.


1. Contrast queer theory of families with family systems theory. Are there commonalities? Differences?


5. Critically apply family systems theory to your research area of interest.


2. Synthesize Kornirch et al. (2013), Eagley et al. (2009), and Bianchi et al. (2012).


4. Critically apply gender theory to your research area of interest.


What signal is Marissa Mayer giving to Yahoo employees? By Stephanie Coontz


You Can Go Home Again by Karen Fingerman and Frank Furstenberg
Week 10: November 4th
Symbolic Interactionism and Sibling Relationships


Week 11: November 11th
No class; Veteran’s Day.

Week 12: November 18th
Bioecological Theory, Cumulative Risk Theory, and Families in Context


1. Apply LaRossa & Reitzes (1993) to sibling relationships using Conley & Glauber (2008), Kim et al. (2006), Updegraff et al. (2005), and Volling (2012).

2. Interpret Kim et al. (2006), Conley & Glauber (2008), and Updegraff et al. (2005) in light of the theories identified in Whiteman et al. (2011).


4. Critically apply symbolic interactionism or the theories cited in Whiteman et al. (2011) to your research area of interest.


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 attachment theory, social learning theory, and social control theory. Use findings from readings for this week as evidence to support your claims.

Week 13: November 25th
Family Violence


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<th>Week 14: December 2nd Family Policy</th>
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<td>How My View on Gay Marriage Changed by David Blankenhorn</td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam: December 6th</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam</strong> The exam will be distributed via my Campbell Hall mailbox at 9 am on December 6th and a <strong>printed hard copy along with the original exam sheet</strong> is due in my mailbox by 4 pm on December 10th. 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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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.

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 class on October 21st. 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 October 28th. 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 on hard copy in my
Campbell Hall mailbox (135 Campbell Hall) at 9 am on December 6th. 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 noon on December 10th. 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.

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 show in the following rubric.

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<th>Criteria</th>
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<th>9</th>
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<td><strong>Overall Quality of Ideas, Argument, and Effective Evidence</strong></td>
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<td>Discusses strengths of material, points out unresolved issues, considers multiple perspectives to explain behavior, critiques theory or methodology.</td>
<td>Meets all criteria at a high level; clear</td>
<td>Meets some criteria; uneven; less clear</td>
<td>Meets few criteria; unclear; confusing</td>
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<td>When critiquing theory or methodology, does not simply point out weaknesses, but also discusses how they can be improved.</td>
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<td>Does <strong>not</strong> summarize the readings.</td>
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<td>Develops one or two ideas in depth.</td>
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<td>Demonstrates original critical thinking, depth of thinking, and synthesis of material.</td>
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<td><strong>Organization, Development, Sentence Clarity, and Style</strong></td>
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<td>Has clear, easy-to-follow structure (reader doesn’t get lost).</td>
<td>Meets all criteria at a high level; clear</td>
<td>Meets some criteria; uneven; less clear</td>
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<td>Ideas/argument sufficiently developed.</td>
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<td>Has clear thesis statement.</td>
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<td>Has clear, graceful, grammatically correct sentences.</td>
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<td><strong>Editing Errors</strong></td>
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<td>No major grammatical errors, few or no minor errors.</td>
<td>Meets all criteria at a high level; clear</td>
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<td>Strong professional ethos.</td>
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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 for assistance 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/](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.

![The Pitt-Jolie Family, 2008](image)