

FYC 6230 (ONLINE)

THEORIES OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, SYSTEMS, AND CHANGE

"Only the family, society's smallest unit, can change and yet maintain enough continuity to rear children who will not be "strangers in a strange land," who will be rooted firmly enough to grow and adapt."

- Salvador Minuchin

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Larry Forthun, Ph.D. Associate Professor Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences	Office Location: 3014 McCarty Hall D, University of Florida
Email: lforthun@ufl.edu	Course Website: http://elearning.ufl.edu
Office Hours and Course Communications: Tuesdays 5:00 - 6:30pm and Wednesdays 10:00am to noon (EST); or by appointment	Phone: 352-273-3528 Skype address: lforthun

REQUIRED TEXT & READINGS

Smith, S. R & Hamon, R. R. (2017). *Exploring family theories* (4th Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Readings assigned on the course calendar. These can be accessed via the library electronic course reserves (ARES), Internet, library databases, or the course elearning site, depending on the source. Other readings may be added by the instructor or students as needed.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT & READINGS

Fine, M. & Fincham, F. (2012). *Handbook of Family theories: A content-based approach*. New York: Routledge. **This is an e-Book that can be accessed through the UF libraries electronic course reserve system. You will need one or two chapters from this book for your final paper.**

Access to an *APA style manual* (6th edition). Students should have this for their graduate work if they do not already have it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This is a list of supplemental material you can use throughout the semester to complete assignments and your final project.

- *Journal of Family Theory and Review* (Journal devoted to family theory)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291756-2589>

- White, J.M. & Klein, D.M. (2008). *Family theories* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Following are additional materials that will give you a more in-depth look at families and family theory.

- Allen, K. (2007). *The social lens*. SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Bengston, V.L. et al. (2005). *Sourcebook of family theory & research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Boss, P.G. et al. (1993). *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Coontz, S. (2008). *American families: A multicultural reader* (2nd Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Thorne, B. & Yalom, M. (1992). *Rethinking the family: Some feminist questions*. New York: Longman.
- Stacey, J. (1991). *Brave new families: Stories of domestic upheaval in late twentieth century America*. (pp. 251-271). New York: Basic Books.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An examination of the major theoretical perspectives on families, including family development, family systems, and family relationships, and emerging theories relevant to diverse and changing families in the social context. Special attention is given to the application of these perspectives for research, practice, and policy.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Students need to have some coursework in sociology of family or family sciences. The following courses are listed as prerequisites in the Catalog: SYG 2430 Marriage and Family or equivalent; or FYC 3101 Parenting and Family Development and 3201 Youth Development. If you do not have these prerequisites, please speak to the instructor. In addition, the following are recommended: (a) an awareness and basic understanding of demographic and social changes in families in the U.S.; and (b) some background in theory from an undergraduate social science course.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

COURSE GOALS

In this course, you will learn the “lens” of each family theory and explore how families look through that perspective. Specifically, the goals of the course are to provide the experiences students need:

1. To understand the major theoretical perspectives on families and how these affect what we see and study in families.
2. To use appropriate family theories to guide their own research and practice.
3. To critically examine each theory according to set criteria, and in the context of today’s diverse families.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through the experiences provided, you will be able to:

1. Explain each of the major theoretical frameworks for the study of families (what is important, assumptions, and key concepts).
2. Analyze the strengths and limitations of each theory in explaining aspects of family life.
3. Re-vision family theories to help us better understand and explain the diversity of modern family life.
4. Analyze examples of research, policy, and practice for the theoretical perspectives guiding this work.
5. Apply the theoretical concepts to case examples.
6. Identify a theoretical perspective that is relevant to your own research or practice.
7. Interpret your environment, experiences, and thinking according to selected theories. Students analyze policies and programs from specific theoretical perspectives and think critically about the perspectives provided by the theory.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

A variety of activities and interactions are planned to engage students in exchanges around your insights about the theories and families, critical thinking, and application of the material. Most modules include: readings, short lecture, the application of concepts to video case examples, worksheets, case analysis, presentation, short papers, and discussions.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN WORK

All written work for the course must comply with APA (6th Ed.) guidelines. That is, it must be typed on 8 1/2" X 11" white paper, 1" margins, and appropriate headings and subheadings. The font should be 11-12pt (Times New Roman or similar). All papers should be proofread before they are turned in with special attention to correcting any and all spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors. Professional use of the English language is expected. If you quote, paraphrase, or summarize the work of others, you must cite your source. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and can result in failure.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are required of all students. You must complete all assignments to pass the course. All written assignments, with the exception of online discussions, must be submitted electronically on the Elearning FYC 6230 site, which uses the TurnItIn originality tool (an online service that checks for plagiarism).

DISCUSSION (FORMERLY BLOGS)

DUE throughout the semester by specified dates on the Course Calendar. 185 points total: 1 introductory discussion @ 20 points; 11 theory application discussion posts @ 10 points = 110 points; 11 comments @ 5 points=55 points.

INTRODUCTORY POST (20 points)

Please start with an introduction of yourself to the rest of the class, including:

- Your name and any picture of yourself, a symbol of yourself, or an avatar you would like to post.
- Your professional goals; what you plan/hope to do in the future
- What is really exciting to you about your grad program, your future direction, or your dreams in life? Why are you doing what you are doing? In other words, where is your passion?
- Summarize your past education and work and/or volunteer experience.
- Describe your background in theory, such as previous courses and what you covered.
- From your point of view, how is family theory relevant to you?
- Any personal information you want to share such as whether you have pets and other family members (no names, please!), leisure activities (if you can squeeze in any while grad school!), favorite music, etc. This part is up to you.
- Any links or pictures would like to post.

(The grade on this discussion will not be on personal information, but rather that you have put some thought into this.)

Note: Commenting on the introductory post will not count towards your commenting grade.

THEORY APPLICATION DISCUSSION (Due throughout the Semester 11 Posts @ 10 Points = 110 Points)

Theory Application Discussions should be at least two solid paragraphs wherein you show you have given thought to your material. Links to any materials you reference (e.g., YouTube videos, news articles) should be included. The purpose of the theory application assignment is to help you recognize theories as they appear in day-to-day life. To write your discussion post, put on the “lens” of the theory assigned for the week. Select one of the three options listed below to guide your writing on what you observe about theory in “real life”. Think about how things look, according to your theory. Notice what you pay attention to, and what you disregard, compared to other theories or your own tendencies or inclinations. Be sure to clearly tie-in your discussion post to course material. Explain whether and how the theory changes or enlightens your view of the world, or how it limits your thinking.

You have three options to express your thoughts in your blog:

1. Find a picture (or take one) of what you think is a visual example or explanation of theory. Explain what the picture is and how it relates to the theory. **Be sure to be specific about how the photo represents certain concepts, or illustrates points from a reading.**
2. Describe something that has happened to you or someone you know recently. You might write about your interactions with friends and colleagues or your home and work environment. Explain how life events are relatable to theory, **being specific about what learned about the theory from course materials such as readings.**
3. Find another example of literature that is related to theory. This can be from an academic journal, policy events, or current news coverage. Summarize what is being said and explain how it relates to the theory, **being specific about what you have learned about the theory in course materials such as readings.** Include the link or a copy of the article you found in your post.

Sometimes the instructor will provide some additional prompts to serve as lead-in questions about the topic for the week that you may use as a springboard for your post.

COMMENTS (11 short comments @ 5 points = 55 points).

Comments may be one short paragraph of 4-6 lines. Comments on others' posts need to be objective and constructive. You may want to raise additional questions, or respond with your own examples of the others' points. You are free to comment on any student's post as long as you comment on at least 5 different theories throughout the semester.

Note: Leaving comments on or about the introductory post will not count towards your commenting grade. However, feel free to respond to your fellow students to encourage comradery.

WEEKLY THEORY ANALYSIS (180 POINTS)

This assignment is designed to help you learn, evaluate, and apply the theories. It meets all the goals and objectives 1-5.

1. **Choose 9 of the 10 theoretical perspectives** covered throughout the semester. Write 9 weekly 3-page papers, each worth 20 points. Upload the Theory Evaluation Matrix (see below) with your paper.
2. **Everyone** must complete the final summary and final evaluation matrix worth 20 points by the assigned due date.

Refer to the grading rubric.

1. Synthesize the theory's "lens" for families. In your own words, explain what this theory tells us about families (in about one paragraph).
2. Summarize the theory's key assumptions and major concepts.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the theory, based on course content, readings, and your own reflections. Refer to the matrix for guidance. Put this in your own words. Do not copy the ideas presented in the book or elsewhere—express at least one original idea of your own. Identify your original idea in your writing using italics.
4. Discuss: How useful is the theory for understanding family diversity? Does it help or hinder this understanding and how? Be specific.
5. Use writing conventions properly! This includes correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. Proofread! Follow the formatting instructions below.
6. Late papers will have 10% deducted for the first day late and 5% for the next two days, including weekends; papers will not be accepted after 3 days.

Formatting Instructions

- ✓ Three pages, double-spaced *per theory*.
- ✓ 12 point Times New Roman font or 10 point Arial font
- ✓ 1-inch margins all around
- ✓ Number the pages
- ✓ Your name, the date, and name of the theory in the upper left corner

- ✓ Use the following headings: What this Theory Says about Families; Assumptions and Key Concepts; Applications; Usefulness for Understanding Diversity; Strengths and Weaknesses (using the matrix)
- ✓ Identify your original thoughts using italics.

Final theory analysis DUE at the end of the semester. Reread your previous analyses for the semester and answer these questions:

1. How has your understanding of theory or particular theories changed? What progress have you made? Be specific.
2. Which theories (at least 2) have you found most useful for your work? Thoroughly explain why and give examples.
3. What thoughts do you have about areas of weakness and/or where the field needs to be headed?

WORKSHEETS (20 POINTS EACH)

Worksheets are designed to help you better understand the “lens”, concepts, and applications of the theory. Worksheet activities include application of concepts to video case examples, reactions to readings, and other assignments. At times worksheets are completed with another class member, as assigned.

EXAMS (2 @ 100 POINTS)

Exams

There will be two exams worth 100 points each. Both will cover the course material up to that point in the semester (from beginning to midpoint and midpoint to endpoint). Questions will prompt you to demonstrate higher-order (more complex) thinking by interpreting family issues and problems using the theories, applying the theories to case examples, and analyzing strengths and weaknesses of the theories. Exams might be open-book. Organize your notes and readings and review before you begin the exam. There will not be a study guide.

DUE: There will be two exams at 100 points each, covering the course material up to that point in the semester (midpoint and endpoint). Once you're ready to start click "Take the Quiz". You will be presented with your question prompts and will have 3 hours (180 minutes) to compose your response. The timer will continue even if you close out of Canvas, so be ready to complete the exam after you click "Take the Quiz." The exams are open note, open book.

Exam Policies

Students who miss the exams may take the exam only if they have written, professional documentation of a serious illness (i.e., not physically able to complete the exam or other work); or other unanticipated circumstances warranting a written excuse (e.g., death in the family). Written, professional, and verifiable documentation (with a phone number and email) is required. This course policy follows UF make-up policy. Exams missed for any other reason will receive a grade of ZERO.

FINAL PROJECTS (100 POINTS)

REPORT, PRESENTATION, AND PEER EVALUATION

This written assignment will acquaint you with theories that may be suitable for your research and practice on a particular topic. Unlike the broad conceptual frameworks covered in class, you will be able to select a midrange and/or mini-theory that can be applied specifically to a topic of interest to you. An oral presentation using PowerPoint is also required; this is so other students in the course can benefit from your learning. You must also submit peer evaluations on every other student's presentation.

NOTE: Your theory will be from the recent volume, Fine, M. & Fincham, F. (2012). *Handbook of Family Theories: A Content-Based Approach*, which will be available as an e-Book through the UF libraries ARES electronic course reserve system.

INSTRUCTION

1. Select and summarize one theory in your own words. Focus on the perspective the theory provides, and include major assumptions and key concepts. This should be about 2 pages.
2. Explain why you selected this theory. **Be specific** about how it could be applied to *your* work, whether that is your professional practice or non-thesis project. This should be at least 1 page.
3. Paper Format:
 - 3-4 pages total, double-spaced
 - 12 point Times New Roman font only
 - 1-inch margins only
 - Your name, the date you submit your paper, and name of the theory in the upper left corner
 - Number the pages top right or bottom right
 - Use the following two headings for the two sections of your paper: **Summary of the Theory** and **Application of the Theory** (to your work). Headings should be flush to left margin and in **bold**.
 - Reference list on a separate page; cite the source (or sources) you used in APA style. The reference list should be titled Reference(s) and the title should be centered. You are not required to use any other sources than the chapter, but you may.
4. Presentation format:
 - Use any PowerPoint template.
 - Present about five slides summarizing the theory and why you selected it, in terms of its usefulness (1 and 2 above).
 - Present your ideas in simple bullet lists; explain details in more depth in your audio. You may use illustrations to highlight your points; however, you MUST make sure you use (a) Microsoft office clip art; (b) your own photographs with permissions by subjects understood; or (c) Creative Commons NON-copyrighted photographs.
5. Submit your paper and presentation to e-Learning for a TurnItIn originality report.
6. Submit your evaluations of your peers' presentations to e-Learning.

7. Presentations will be scheduled for the final week of the semester. The presentation schedule and posting of PowerPoint presentations will be explained via e-Learning.

GRADING

Assignment	Points
Discussion (11 posts @ 10 points = 110 points; 11 comments@ 5 points=55 points; Introductory Blog @ 20 points) *	165
Exams (2@ 100 points each) *	200
Weekly Theory Analysis Papers* (9 papers and a final summary with Theory Evaluation Matrix, 20 points each)	200
Worksheets and Discussions (TBD)	160
Report, Presentation, and Peer Evaluation*	100
TOTAL	825

*Rubric provided

GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	93	767-825
A-	90-92.9	742-766
B+	87-89.9	718-741
B	83-86.9	685-717
B-	80-82.9	660-684
C+	77-79.9	635-659
C	73-76.9	602-634
C-	70-72.9	578-601
D+	67-69.9	553-576
D	63-66.9	520-552
D-	60-62.9	495-519
E	<60	<495

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

BASIC RULES FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS

RESPECT OTHERS. This course covers a variety of sensitive issues, and students in the class come from a variety of backgrounds. We expect a class atmosphere of tolerance and respect for every individual and her/his opinion. If anyone feels she/he has been harmed or misrepresented--by the instructors or any individual in the class—we urge you to speak with one of us via phone, Skype or e-mail so that the problem can be dealt with immediately. Please do not let feelings build up and interfere with your experience in this course.

EXPECTATIONS OF CONFIDENTIALITY. Respect for confidentiality of personal information shared by your classmates is an absolute must. Do not talk to others about personal information your classmates share in discussions. Likewise, if you choose to share personal information or use a friend or family member as a case example, please refrain from using their names and/or identifying information.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE: Please check your calendars against the course schedule. Any student having a conflict in the class schedule due to religious observances should contact the instructor as soon as possible so that she can make necessary arrangements.

UF POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation

0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual

responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP WORK

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open for students to complete during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will be notified of the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY:

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all online communication. For specific guidelines READ the following:

<http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

SOFTWARE USE

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

GETTING TECHNICAL HELP

For technical difficulties with Canvas or elearning, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

HELPING RESOURCES

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available for

both on and off campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. Some services are only available to on campus students.

University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575,
www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/

- Counseling Services
- Groups and Workshops
- Outreach and Consultation
- Self-Help Library
- Wellness Coaching

U Matter We Care, www.umatter.ufl.edu/

Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu/

Note that the instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus as needed.