

FYC 6230: Theories of Family Development, Systems, and Change

Spring 2026
Online, 3 Credit Hours

Instructor

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Office Hours: By Appointment

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.

Course Learning Objectives

Through the experiences provided, you will be able to:

1. Explain each of the major theoretical frameworks for the study of families (assumptions, concepts, and key propositions).
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.

Course Prerequisites

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.

Required Text

Smith, S. R., & Hamon, R. R. (2021). *Exploring family theories* (5th Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Recommended Text & Readings

- Adamsons, K., Few-Demo, A.L., Proulx, C., & Roy, K. (2022). *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach*. Springer. * **Note:** Though this is an optional text, I

HIGHLY recommend doctoral students purchase as it will be a great resource to have throughout your time in the program and beyond.

- Access to an *APA style manual* (7th edition). Students should have this for their graduate work if they do not already have it.
- Additional readings will be provided via Canvas.

Technical Support

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> | 352-392-4357

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Topic
1 (1/12)	Defining Family
2 (1/19)	No Class: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
3 (1/26)	Introduction to Family Science & Theory
4 (2/2)	Symbolic Interaction
5 (2/9)	Life Course/Family Development Theory
6 (2/16)	Bioecological Theory
7 (2/23)	Family Systems Theory
8 (3/2)	Family Stress Theories
9 (3/9)	Family Resilience
10 (3/16)	No Class: Spring Break Week
11 (3/23)	Social Exchange/Rational Choice
12 (3/30)	Attachment Theory
13 (4/6)	Critical Perspectives
14 (4/13)	Critical Perspectives (cont.)
15 (4/20)	Course Wrap-Up

Grading Policy

Course grading is consistent with [UF grading policies](#).

Course Grading Structure

Assignment Type	Point Value
Discussions *10 @ 15 points each	165
Exams *2 @ 100 points	200
Worksheets *13 ranging in point-value 10-30 points	245
Final Course Project	50
Total	660

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	100 - 90
B+	87-89.9
B	80-86.9
C+	77-79.9
C	70-76.9
D+	67-69.9
D	60-66.9
S	<60

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Please contact [UMatterWeCare](#) for additional and immediate support.

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.

Privacy and Accessibility Policies

- Instructure (Canvas)
 - [Instructure Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Instructure Accessibility](#)
- Zoom
 - [Zoom Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Zoom Accessibility](#)