

**HHD 1024/2024 FAMILY DYNAMICS
FALL 2024**

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Office Hours:	By Appointment
Classroom:	Posvar 5400
Class Time:	Tuesdays 1-3:30 pm

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

It may seem strange to start with this, but I strongly believe we learn best when we are well enough to do so. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep (not just enough to survive, but thrive!), and taking time to relax and enjoy yourself. Using your time to take care of yourself will help you achieve your academic goals more than spending too much time studying.

All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available at Pitt. An important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Take the time to learn about all that's available and take advantage of it. Ask for support sooner rather than later – this always helps. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or difficult feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for assistance connecting to the support that can help.

The University Counseling Center is here for you: call 412-648-7930 and visit their website. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, call someone immediately, day or night:

Suicide and Crisis Hotline: 988

University Counseling Center (UCC): 412 648-7930

University Counseling Center Mental Health Crisis Response: 412-648-7930 x1

Resolve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226 (888-7-YOU-CAN)

If the situation is life threatening, call the Police:

On-campus: Pitt Police: 412-268-2121

Off-campus: 911

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description: This course will examine family and parenthood in US culture across multiple domains such as structure, social-ecology, communication, gender, and others.

Typical and atypical patterns of function, legal and societal impact, and models for helping and engaging will be discussed including the impact on infant, child, and youth development.

Course Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of the course, the students will be able to:

- Describe important historical and contemporary theories of family dynamics
- Recognize culture as a variable in family and parenting structures, beliefs, and behaviors
- Identify factors that promote risk and resilience for families from a social-ecological model
- Recognize typical and atypical patterns of family dynamics during times of transitions
- Identify and consider current problems or issues impacting families and identify potential evidence-based solutions
- Reflect on personal experiences with family and consider how those experiences may impact your work going forward

A Note on Content: Please note that some of the material may cause you to reflect on your past experiences or, the material may coincide with what you are experiencing now. The general field of psychology is a study of life and experience so it's natural that you will connect the material to your own lives. In addition, the stresses of being a college student on top of any other responsibilities you may have can be overwhelming. Please seek me out in person, phone or via email, if you are struggling with anything presented.

COURSE POLICIES

Gender-Inclusive Language Statement: Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first-year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

Professional Behavior:

You are expected to demonstrate professional and courteous behavior during class, within Canvas and in email communications. Such behaviors include listening quietly and attentively when others are speaking, communicating respectfully with others (especially if you

disagree with someone's perspective or idea), and maintaining anonymity and confidentiality of client and/or classmate information discussed in class.

Email Communication: Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read emails sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their email via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students who choose to forward their email from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If email is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. Please note: I will NOT accept any assignments through email. In the case of an emergency, an exception may be made at the instructor's discretion.

Statement on Classroom Recording: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussions, and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Copyright Notice: These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials.

See [Library of Congress Copyright Office](#) and the [University Copyright Policy](#).

Written Work Guidelines:

Papers should be double-spaced in black 12-point Times New Roman font, with margins of 1 inch. They should ***always*** fall within the page range listed in the syllabus or other assignment guidelines. The page requirements given for assignments are exclusive of (do not include) the cover page, references, and appendices (if included).

All submitted papers should show evidence of proofreading. Submitted work should be professional quality, with appropriate structure, grammar, and spelling that reflects undergraduate/graduate writing and thinking. If a paper is submitted containing more than 4 significant grammatical or structural errors that impact the readability of the assignment, it may be returned to the student for correction with a deduction in the final grade. A deadline for re-submission will be given at that time.

Late assignments:

All assignments are expected during the session noted on the syllabus. Unless prior arrangements have been made with me (at least 24 hours in advance), **late submissions will**

not be accepted and will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. Depending on the circumstance, late submissions that are accepted may be at a reduced level of points.

Writing Center: We have an excellent Writing Center here at Pitt that undergraduate, graduate, staff and faculty utilize. Writing is a journey and as you learn more complex ideas your writing will need to accompany that complexity.

The Writing Center, located at 317B O'Hara Student Center, is an excellent resource for working with an experienced consultant on your writing. You can choose to work with a faculty consultant or a trained undergraduate peer tutor. Although you should not expect consultants or peer tutors to “correct” your paper for you, they can assist you in learning to organize, revise, and edit your work. They can also help you get started! Consultants can work with you on a one-time basis or throughout the term. Their services are free. You can browse the services they offer or make an appointment by visiting www.writingcenter.pitt.edu

Religious Observances: The observance of religious holidays (activities observed by a religious group of which a student is a member) and cultural practices are an important reflection of diversity. As your instructor, I am committed to providing equivalent educational opportunities to students of all belief systems. At the beginning of the semester, you should review the course requirements to identify foreseeable conflicts with assignments, exams, or other required attendance. If at all possible, please contact me (your course coordinator/s) within the first two weeks of the first class meeting to allow time for us to discuss and make fair and reasonable adjustments to the schedule and/or tasks.

Academic Integrity: *Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.*

Disability Services: *If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.*

Academic Integrity and AI: Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are essential aspects of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing

strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace and also finding your own writing, research and creative style will be one of the strongest assets you can offer professionally. Finding this style usually happens in a zone that Brian Eno terms, “happy accidents.” Utilizing AI to generate your own work prevents you from making those accidental connections and ultimately slows your progress professionally. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grading will be based on the following class requirements. The instructor reserves the right to add/subtract or alter course content and the grading system as she deems necessary.

Required Reading

All required reading will be posted in Canvas through the Perusall app and in a Course Folder. You may download the readings from the Course Folder; however, you must engage in discussion with your peers on the Persuall app in Canvas.

Family Policy Proposal (FPP: 20 Points) and Presentation (10 points)

Students will work in small (1-4 person) groups to develop a Family Policy Proposal to address concerns, problems, or needs of families in a positive manner. Policies might include maternal/paternal leave, out-of-school care, immigration, Child Protective Services, child care subsidy for low income parents, housing, food access, mental health supports for families and children, COVID’s impact on schooling, etc. Groups or individuals will work to develop a proposal for policy based on evidence (research findings in professional publications). Each group or individual will present their FPP to the class during the last class meeting.

The FPP should include the following;

- o **Cover Sheet:** Title, names of all group members, date due.
- o **Define the Problem:** What is the issue or the problem? Why is it important? Why now? Who is impacted and who cares? When defining your problem, be specific to your audience and clearly frame the issue. Include at least 2 unique citations. (5 points)
- o **State the Policy:** Identify the current existing policy (or lack thereof). Then identify a minimum of 3 specific policy actions that will address the problem. This can be proposing new policies, revising old policies, or a combination. Include at least 3 unique citations. (5 points)
- o **Make Your Case:** Provide evidence from the research literature to support each of the 3 policy proposal actions. There should be separate supporting evidence for all three policy actions. Include at least 3 unique citations. (5 points)
- o **Discuss the Impact:** Discuss the implications of both action and inaction. This may take the form of analyzing pros and cons of the policy action; considering the intended and unintended consequences; and addressing opposing arguments. Include at least 2 unique citations. (5 points)

- o **Conclusion:** Conclude with a (re) statement of how the recommended new policy or revised policy will specifically address the problem. Include at least 2 unique citations.
- o **References**
- o **Appendices with Materials and Copy of In Class Presentation Slides**

Auto-ethnography (30 points)

You will write a progressive document in which you explore your own cultural Identity, beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions about relationships and families.

- **Part 1: Interview your family member(s) to build (10 points)**
 - o A Three Generation **Family Tree/Genogram:** Include DOB/DOD, employment/career/hobby, any personality or behavioral characteristics you learn about (e.g., musical, friendly, depression, alcoholism, etc), quality of relationships (eg. enmeshed, disengaged, etc.). Write 1-2 pages reflecting on what you are learning about your family.
- **Part 2: Examine Your Families Influence on You (10 points)**
 - o Track your life for at least 12 hours. Take field notes to document your experience.
 - o Write a reflective paper (2-3 pages) with a hypothesis about **your own development** in which you consider how your families' culture, race and religion, among other things, have shaped your attitudes toward family relationships, marriage and partnerships, communication, conflict, gender, sexuality, power, and finances in intimate relationships.
 - o How have these family attributes affected your values, beliefs, goals, etc. across these domains?
- **Part 3: Family Theory Application (10 points)**
 - o Analyze and interpret your own family according to the **1 or more theories** we reviewed, including closeness to or differentiation from your family, communication in subsystems (e.g., parents, cross-generation, siblings), family rules, values and beliefs, roles and identity, changes (normative transitions or crises), etc.
 - o Reflect upon and write about (2-3 pages) **changes in your understanding** and perception of families and parenting that may have occurred across the class.

Families Around Us (10 points):

In pairs or alone, you will identify a family dynamic represented in media, TV, podcasts, books, memes, etc. You will discuss this family portrayal by directly referencing at least one of our readings from class. It can be helpful to create a family tree if possible. Each class period, one person or pair will present their family representation. You may show a short clip (no more than 2 minutes) during your presentation. The entire presentation should be no longer than 5-8 minutes.

Holiday Family (10 points):

You will be expected to identify and interview a person in our class who celebrates the same holiday; however, you may have different experiences/traditions with that holiday. You will create a visual representation (e.g., matrix, table, venn diagram, photos) showing the similarities and differences in how you celebrate. You will need to have one significant artifact to inform your discussion. You will present your findings to the class. Each presentation should be 10 minutes in length.

Class Participation (20 points):

Your contributions to class discussion, completion of assignments in a timely manner, and level of preparedness will be evaluated by the instructor and assigned a grade.

1. It is expected that you will engage with course material and your peers for each class. If you need to miss multiple class sessions due to unavoidable circumstances, please talk with the Instructor as soon as possible. There may be an alternative assignment available to minimize learning loss and grade reduction. You are allowed 1 absence for the semester before it impacts your grade.
2. You will need to comment online on each of the readings. This is done on the Perusall app through Canvas. You should provide substantive comments and/or questions throughout each reading. You should also respond to peers' comments or questions. For each reading, you should have at least 2 comments/questions and 1 response to peers' comments/questions. These should be done throughout the entire reading. Please complete each week by 11:59 pm on Monday.
3. You will be graded on your class participation. Please see description below.

Participation Rubric:

Throughout our class meetings, I will invite you to engage in discussions, group activities, and other forms of participation. I will be looking for your meaningful participation via discussions in our class or in the chat and marking this each class meeting. Please see the participation rubric below for how I will assess your participation.

Excellent– leading discussions, bringing in new and original ideas and thoughts, challenging ideas in a way that is thought and discussion-provoking, and showing an ability to listen to the ideas of others. Using technology to support your learning.

Satisfactory - supportive, follow-up points that are relevant and valuable, bringing ideas but not taking a leadership role in discussions. Using technology to support your learning in a non-disruptive manner.

Minimally Acceptable – present, awake, attentive, but not actively involved, at times using technology that does not support our collective learning environment.

Unsatisfactory –absent, present but not attentive, sleeping, irrelevant contributions that block movement in class discussions, and consistently using technology that distracts or disrupts our collective learning environment.

COURSE GRADING

Graduate Students: Students who are taking this course for graduate credit are expected to complete all assignments with the depth and breadth evident of graduate level work.

Grading:

Grading will be based on the following scale. The instructor reserves the right to add/subtract or alter this grading system as they deem necessary. A total of 100 points is possible for the course:

A	94 to 100 %	C+	78 to 79 %
A-	90 to 93 %	C	73 to 77 %
B+	88 to 89 %	C-	70 to 72 %
B	83 to 87 %	D	60 to 69 %
B-	80 to 82 %	F	below 60 %

Please ask if you have questions regarding how you will be evaluated in this course. I am happy to discuss your learning goals and progress toward them at any time, though the earlier in the semester the better.

Please note, however, that I DO NOT discuss grades via email, due to the sensitive nature of grades and laws about student rights and privacy (i.e. FERPA). If you would like to speak to me about your grade, please come to meet with me in person, set up a zoom call, or call me. If you feel there is a specific error in the grading, I will review that particular concern. However, **grades are not negotiable and no extra credit opportunities are given individually.** I am, however, also happy to discuss ways in which you may enhance your learning and performance in this course.

DEPARTMENTAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Departmental Grievance Procedures. The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a HHD student or a student in a HHD class believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow the procedure described in the Guidelines by (1) first trying to resolve the matter with the faculty member directly; (2) then, if needed, attempting to resolve the matter through conversations with the program chair; (3) then, if

needed, resolving the matter through conversations with the department chair; (4) if needed, next talking to the associate dean of the school; and (5) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with the school-level academic integrity officer. [Dr. Michael Gunzenhauser is the Associate Dean and Integrity Officer.]

Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys

Students in this class will be asked to complete a *Student Opinion of Teaching Survey*. Surveys will be sent via Pitt email and appear on your CourseWeb landing page during the last three weeks of class meeting days. Your responses are anonymous. Please take time to thoughtfully respond, your feedback is important to me. [Read more](#) about *Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys*.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES

- Technology/Computer Help Desk: 412-624-HELP [4357]
- Graduate Studies at Pitt: <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/>
- Student Health Services: 412-383-1800 (<http://www.studhlth.pitt.edu>)
- Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (<http://www.counseling.pitt.edu>)
- The Writing Center: 412-624-6556 (www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter)
- Academic Resource Center: 412-648-7920:
(<http://www.asundergrad.pitt.edu/offices/arc/index.html>)
- Disability Resources and Services: 412-648-7890 (<http://www.drs.pitt.edu/>)
- Office of International Services: 412-624-7120 (<http://www.ois.pitt.edu/>)
- Information Technology (Computing Services & Systems Development):
<http://technology.pitt.edu/>
- Office of the Registrar (academic calendar, transcripts, course registration/enrollment): <http://www.registrar.pitt.edu/>
- Career Development Office: 412-648-7130 (<http://www.careers.pitt.edu/>)
- **Software Download Service** (students can get many software programs, including Microsoft Office, at low or NO cost, either online or by picking up CDs at campus computer labs): <http://www.software.pitt.edu>

Course Calendar/Schedule:

Topics to be covered, assigned readings and tasks, and/or assignment due dates may be subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class.

Date	TUESDAY	Additional Assignments/ Suggested Work
WEEK 1 August 27 Introduction to the class	-Group Discussion: <i>Defining a "Family"</i> -Syllabus	-Begin Autoethnography Part 1
WEEK 2 Sept. 3 The Meaning of Marriage and the Family	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Minkin, R., & Horowitz, J. M. (2023). Parenting in America Today. Pew Research Center. FAU Presentation	Autoethnography work
WEEK 3 Sept. 10 Studying Marriages and Families	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Bermudez, 2016; Cowan, 2019; Badger & Miller, 2018 FAU presentation	-Autoethnography Part 1 Due Monday at 11:59 pm
WEEK 4 Sept. 17 Variations in American Family Life	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Choose two Historical articles; Color of Law podcast Assign group projects FAU presentation	-Group Projects
WEEK 5 Sept. 24 Gender and Family, LGBTQ	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Chrisler, 2017; Lincoln, 2016 Assign Auto-Ethno Part 2 FAU presentation	-Group Projects & Begin Auto-ethnography Part 2
WEEK 6 Oct. 1 Communication, Power & Conflict	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Roselia Mendez Murillo, Jennifer A Kam, 2023; Divecha, 2020 (website); McAninch, 2023 FAU presentation Non-verbal communication exercise	-Policy: define the problem due Monday at 11:59 pm
WEEK 7 Oct. 8	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: TheKeezelReview, 2018; Lundberg, 2016, Singlehood Podcast	-Auto-ethnography Part 2 due Monday at 11:59 pm

Dating and Marriage	FAU presentation	
Oct. 15	FALL BREAK	
WEEK 8 Oct. 22 Becoming Parents & Experiencing Parenthood; Loss of child	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Ramussen, 2016; Willer, 2018; Cost of Child, 2017—Executive summary In class activity: When the bough breaks video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIHXyrEj9I FAU presentation	-Begin Auto-ethnography Part 3
WEEK 9 Oct. 29 Marriage, Work & Economics; Mental Load	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Emma: https://english.emmaclit.com/2017/05/20/you-shouldve-asked/ ; Roy, 2016; Perry-Jenkins, 2016 FAU presentation	Work in your groups Policy: state the policy & make your case
WEEK 10 Nov. 5 Intimate Violence & Sexual Abuse	DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Kelly, 2020; Griffith, 2020 In class activity: Time to work on Holiday project FAU presentation	- work on Holiday interview and presentation AND Auto Ethnography Part 3 Work in your groups Policy: state the policy & make your case DUE on Wednesday at 11:59 pm
WEEK 11 Nov 12 Changing family dynamics: Separation and Divorce; Foster and adoption	REMOTE-VOTE! DUE MONDAY AT 11:59 PM: Mitchell, 2016; Raley, 2020 In class activity: Brief informal reflection on Auto Ethnography FAU presentation	Even if you haven't finished the third part, please be ready to share one thing about autoethnography.
WEEK 12 Nov. 19	Holiday presentations	Auto-ethnography Part 3 due Sunday at 11:59 pm
Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Break	

WEEK 13 Dec 3	Group Presentations (15 minutes per group)	Group Project Reports Due on Dec 10 at 11:59 pm
WEKK 14 Dec 10	Group Presentations (15 minutes per group)	