



Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Course Prefix: FAMS

Course Title: Family Dynamics and Systems

Year: 2025

Course and Section #: 4670-002

Credits: 3

Course Description

Introduces the fundamentals of family dynamics and systems as they relate to family structure and function. Focuses on historical development, theoretical underpinnings, and applied utility of dynamics and systems. Includes boundary management, infraction, and renewal in contemporary family systems.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other:

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Professor Rachel Munk

Student Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate personal definition of family structure and function.
 - Examine the history and development of the family systems approach.
 - Describe the family systems paradigm.
 - Evaluate other family paradigms used in counseling.
 - Compare family systems with other family paradigms
 - Formulate an enhanced definition of family structure and function.
 - Discuss current and future trends in the family systems paradigm.
-

Course Materials and Texts

No textbook required.

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Weekly Group Annotations (20% of final grade): Group discussion of the assigned reading or applicable movie on Perusall.

Weekly Quizzes (20% of final grade): 5-question quizzes based on lecture and reading materials. Quizzes are open book.

Weekly Application Assignments (30% of final grade): Weekly Application Assignments vary and include personal reflection papers, activities, interviews, and other creative projects.

Contemporary Family Issues Paper (15% of final grade): Academic paper (5 to 8 pages) on an issue that impacts families.

Family of Origin Genogram Project (15% of final grade): Students create a three generational genogram and write a reflection paper incorporating concepts from class and identifying intergenerational dynamics and themes within your family.

Final grades are assigned the corresponding letter grade:

A = 94-100	B - = 80-83	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	C+ = 77-79	D = 64-66
B+ = 87-89	C = 74-77	D- = 60-63
B = 84-86	C- = 70-73	F = 0-59

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

- Smock, P. J., & Schwartz, C. R. (2020). The demography of families: A review of patterns and change. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 9-34.
- Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (2020). Research on marital satisfaction and stability in the 2010s: Challenging conventional wisdom. *Journal of marriage and family*, 82(1), 100-116.
- Nomaguchi, K., & Milkie, M. A. (2020). Parenthood and well-being: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 198-223.
- Buehler, C. (2020). Family processes and children's and adolescents' well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 145-174.
- Weber, J. G. (2011). The abcx formula and the double abcx model. In *Individual and Family Stress and Crises* (pp. 82-96). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452274720>
- Carr, D., & Utz, R. L. (2020). Families in later life: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 346-363.
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., & Hill, N. E. (2020). Ethnic-racial socialization in the family: A decade's advance on precursors and outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 244-271.
- Reczek, C. (2020). Sexual-and gender-minority families: A 2010 to 2020 decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 300-325.
- Raley, R. K., & Sweeney, M. M. (2020). Divorce, repartnering, and stepfamilies: A decade in review. *Journal of marriage and family*, 82(1), 81-99.
- Cooper, M., & Pugh, A. J. (2020). Families across the income spectrum: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 272-299.
- Umberson, D., & Thomeer, M. B. (2020). Family matters: Research on family ties and health, 2010 to 2020. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 404-419..

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Week 1: History of Systems Theory and Cybernetics

- Identify key figures and their contributions to the family systems perspective
- Describe fundamental principles of family relationships

Week 2: Key Figures in Marriage and Family Therapy

- Explain and discuss how relational dynamics influence the broader family system
- Identify key figures and their contributions to the family systems perspective
- Describe fundamental principles of family relationships

Week 3: Intrapersonal Dynamics

- Identify family dynamics within their own relationships
- Explain and discuss how relational dynamics influence the broader family system

Week 4: Couple Dynamics

- Identify family dynamics within the couple
- Explain and discuss how relational dynamics influence the broader family system

Week 5: Parenting and Parent-Child Dynamics

- Identify family dynamics within parent-child relationships
- Explain and discuss how relational dynamics influence the broader family system

Week 6: Family Dynamics and Genograms

- Utilize additional theoretical approaches for conceptualizing families and relationships including the ABC-X and double ABC-X models and the family risk and resiliency framework.

Week 7: Family Stress Models and Risk and Resilience Framework

- Utilize additional theoretical approaches for conceptualizing families and relationships including the ABC-X and double ABC-X models and the family risk and resiliency framework.

Week 8: Family Life Cycle and Development

- Utilize developmental theoretical approaches for conceptualizing families and relationships Erikson's psychosocial stages and The Family Lifespan Model

Week 9: Trauma Informed Practice

- Compare and Contrast different systemic approaches to family therapy in the context of family or individual trauma.

Week 10: Communication Theory

- Identify and implement concepts from communication theory to the study of families and relationships

Week 11: Sexual, Racial, & Ethnic Diversity

- Examine contemporary Issues within families including sexual orientation and identity and race and ethnicity.

Week 12: Poverty

- Examine the role of poverty on family dynamics – as a stressor and a precursor to negative child outcomes.

Week 13: Divorce & Nontraditional Family Structures

- Examine the impact of divorce and family restructuring on the family system.

Week 14: Rituals and Spirituality within Families

- Examine family rituals and spirituality and religiosity as resources in families and relationships.

Week 15: Mental Health & Family Functioning

- How mental health challenges impact family dynamics and relationship quality.

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, Copilot, etc.) is permitted in this course ONLY for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
- Fine tuning your research questions;
- Finding information on your topic (be sure you check for accuracy and properly cite);
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and
- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board responses assigned to you.
- Generating answers to quiz questions.
- Writing a draft of a written assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.
- To complete entire assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited to stay within university policies on academic honesty. For example, you must use APA citations in text and on a reference list. Any situation when an assignment is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways will be treated as an academic honesty violation. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.