



Master Course Syllabus

Semester: Spring

Year: 2025

Course Prefix: FAMS

Course and Section #: 4670 - x01

Course Title: Family Dynamics and Systems

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: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Todd Spencer

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate personal definition of family structure and function.
2. Examine the history and development of the family systems approach.
3. Describe the family systems paradigm.
4. Evaluate other family paradigms used in counseling.
5. Compare family systems with other family paradigms
6. Formulate an enhanced definition of family structure and function.
7. 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:

Each week you will participate in a group discussion of the assigned reading or applicable movie. You will click the Perusal link within the weekly group annotation and make 5 original comments and 2 comments on a peers comments. Group annotations open on Mondays @ 12:00AM and are due before Sunday nights at 11:59PM.

Weekly Quizzes:

Each week you will take a 5 question quiz. Each quiz is open book and lecture but needs to be taken alone. Weekly Quizzes open on Mondays @ 12:00AM and are due before Sunday nights at 11:59PM.

Weekly Application Assignments:

Each week there is an application assignment to help you apply the content from lectures and readings. Weekly Application Assignments vary from week to week and often include personal reflection papers, activities, interviews, and other creative projects. There are detailed assignment descriptions within each weekly unit. Pay attention to the grading rubric for feedback on assignments.

Contemporary Family Issues Paper:

Select a topic that you are passionate about that impacts families and write an academic paper. If you need help selecting a topic please reach out and we can discuss together. The paper should include AT LEAST 5 ACADEMIC sources. The body of the paper should be 5-8 pages, not including a reference page or a title page (75 points).

Family of Origin Genogram Project:

This is your final project for the class. You will create a three generational genogram and write a reflection paper incorporating concepts from class and identifying intergenerational dynamics and themes within your family. Reflection paper is to be 4-5 pgs, double spaced, 12 point font, APA formatting. Detailed instructions and rubric are located within the Final Exam Module.

Grading Scale:

UVU's standard grading scale will be used in this class:

Grading Scale				
Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade
A	94-100	B-	80-82	D+
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-
B	83-86	C-	70-72	E

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

Williams, K. (2020). The Decade in Review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 1-507.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

- Module 1: History of Systems Theory and Cybernetics
 - Module 2: Key Figures in Marriage and Family Therapy
 - Module 3: Intrapersonal Dynamics
 - Module 4: Couple Dynamics
 - Module 5: Transition to Parenthood
 - Module 6: Family Dynamics and Genograms
 - Modules 7: Family Stress Models and Risk and Resilience Framework
 - Module 8: Family Life Cycle and Development
 - Module 9 Trauma Informed Practice
 - Modules 10: Communication Theory
 - Module 11: Sexuality within Families
 - Module 12: Impact of Divorce within Families
 - Module 13: Rituals and Spirituality within Families
 - Module 14: Poverty and Families Across the Income Spectrum
 - Module 15: Mental Health and Family Functioning
 - Module 16: Wrapping things up
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Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

I acknowledge that AI programs can be one of the many tools students utilize to facilitate learning, but they may also be used to generate plagiarized responses to assignments. I expect that all work students submit for this course will be their own. You may use AI programs (such as ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic (such as being plagiarized from innumerable sources). Use of AI programs may also stifle your own independent and critical thinking skills and creativity. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with according to academic integrity policies discussed below.

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.