



**Department of Psychology**  
**Psychology 447 (L01) – Psychology of Family**  
**Fall 2008**

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Kelly Schwartz	<b>Lecture Location:</b>	A253
<b>Phone:</b>	403.220.3669	<b>Lecture Days/Time:</b>	Tu/Th 14:00-15:15
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:kdschwar@ucalgary.ca">kdschwar@ucalgary.ca</a>		
<b>Office:</b>	EDB 292		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	T/Th 13:00-14:00		

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### **Course Description and Goals**

This course will focus on the many aspects of family interaction, family dynamics, and family functioning. Using family-systems theory and a multigenerational, developmental framework, the course will explore the challenges faced by contemporary families as they move through time. Several conceptual lenses will be used to assess and understand family functioning and to guide us through each successive stage of the family life cycle.

### **Required Text**

Olson, D. H., DeFrain, J., & Skogrand, L. (2007). *Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed). Boston, MS: McGraw-Hill.

### **Evaluation**

- 1) Written Exams:** There will be two (2) written examinations, one mid-term exam and one final exam (during the final exam period scheduled by the Registrar's Office). Both exams will cover required readings and class material. The mid-term exam will be on **October 23** and cover Chapters 1-7 inclusive, while the final exam will be on Chapters 9-16 inclusive. Both exams will be made up of multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions, and each exam is worth **30%** of the final grade.
- 2) Family Genogram:** Genograms are a three-generational picture of a family and its motion through the life cycle. They provide graphic illustrations of the family history and pattern, showing the basic structure, family demographics, functioning, and relationships. In this assignment, you will construct a three-generational genogram using either your family OR that of a family you know well (incl. interview). Genograms must be presented on a single sheet of paper (11x14 max) and include a table of the symbols and abbreviations (see Genogram Marking Sheet and samples provided). You may do this assignment freehand or use one of several free downloadable programs e.g., <http://www.genopro.com>. You may accompany the genogram with a brief narrative (2-3 page max) providing a description of notable individual and family/historic events, patterns of functioning among family members (e.g., triangles, cut-offs, etc.), significant life transitions, and important demographic information. This assignment is due in class on **October 16** and is worth **20%** of the final mark (late assignments will be accepted up to 72 hours after due date; 10%/day will be deducted). Examples of genograms and handouts of common symbols used in genograms will be provided.

3) **Important Issues in Family Development Presentation:** Beginning in class on September 25, each student will come prepared to present on a topic or issue related to family development. Each presentation will be exactly five (5) minutes in length and will cover a very narrowly defined area of investigation. At the conclusion of the presentation, students will hand in a brief executive report (5-6 pages max, APA style) that summarizes theoretical, empirical, and applied findings related to their topic. Each topic will be posed as a question that has both a positive and negative perspective; you will be required to defend only one perspective. The presentation and accompanying report will be worth **20%** of the final grade. Missed presentations receive a zero grade. Sample topics are listed as follows:

- Does the internet help people form healthy romantic relationships?
- Are men and women really from different planets?
- Can men and women really be “just” friends?
- Living together: Good preparation for marriage or just playing at commitment?
- Does distance in a relationship make the heart grow fonder or go wander?
- Is it better for men/women to marry early or later in life?
- Does marriage really matter?
- Should parenting require a license?
- Are companies becoming friendlier to working moms and dads?
- Does daycare make kids mean?
- Do fathers matter?
- Is divorce really harmful to children?
- Are stepparents bad for children?
- Should Canada’s divorce laws be reformed?

### Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor’s discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

### Lecture Schedule

<u>Class Date</u>	<u>Chapter/Topic</u>
September 9, 11	Ch. 1 Perspectives on Intimate Relationships
September 16	Ch. 2 Cultural Diversity: Family Strengths and Challenges
September 18, 23	Ch. 3 Understanding Marriage and Family Dynamics
September 25, 30	Ch. 4 Communication and Intimacy
October 2, 7	Ch. 5 Conflict and Conflict Resolution
October 9	Ch. 6 Sexual Intimacy
October 14	Ch. 7 Gender Roles and Power in the Family
October 16, 21	Ch. 9 Friendship, Intimacy, and Singlehood
October 23	<b>Mid-Term Exam (Chs. 1-7, 9)</b>
October 28, 30	Ch. 10 Dating, Mate Selection, and Living Together
November 4, 6	Ch. 11 Marriage: Building a Strong Foundation
November 11	<b>No Class (Remembrance Day)</b>
November 13, 18	Ch. 12 Parenthood: Choices and Challenges

November 20  
November 25  
November 27, December 2  
December 4

Ch. 13 Midlife and Older Couples  
Ch. 14 Stress, Abuse, and Family Problems  
Ch. 15 Divorce, Single-Parent Families, and Stepfamilies  
Ch. 16 Strengthening Marriages and Families

### **Reappraisal of Grades**

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

### **Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

### **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

### **Absence From A Test**

Make-up exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). You must contact the instructor before the scheduled examination or you will have forfeited any right to make up the exam. At the instructor's discretion, a make-up exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup exam is written within two (2) weeks of the missed exam. A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test for health reasons. The student will be required to pay any cost associated with the Physician Counselor Statement.

### **Course Credits for Research Participation**

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to the student's final grade. Students earn 0.5% (0.5 credits) for each full 30 minutes of participation. The demand for timeslots may exceed the

supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally approved research studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>. The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **December 4, 2008**.

### **Student Organizations**

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 220-5567.

**Student Union VP Academic:** Phone: 220-3911 [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)  
**Student Union Faculty Rep.:** Phone: 220-3913 [socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca)

### **Important Dates**

The last day to drop this course and still receive a fee refund is **September 19, 2008**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **December 5, 2008**.