

**Brescia University College**  
**Family Studies 4220A**  
**Theoretical Perspectives in Family Studies Research**  
**September 2011 – December 2011**  
**W 11:30-12:30 F 11:30-1:30**

**Professor:** Dr. Lara Descartes  
**Phone:** 432-8353 ext. 28059  
**Office hours:** MWF 10:45-11:30

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**Course Description:**

Students will be introduced to the major theoretical frameworks used by social scientists to explain variation in family life including life span, life course, developmental, social learning, social exchange, social conflict, symbolic interactionist, ecological, family systems and feminist theory perspectives. This is a rigorous course and students are expected to demonstrate advanced work.

**Course Objectives:**

Students will learn what theory is, and how theory aids family studies research and practice. Students will become familiar with some of the main bodies of theory used in family studies. Students will see how theory has developed in family studies over time. Students will use theory to think through several social issues, and will demonstrate analytic thinking through comparing different theories' applicability and usefulness for selected social issues.

**Prerequisite:**

FS2200E or FS2225

**Required Texts:**

Smith, S. R., Hamon, R. R., Ingoldsby, B. B., & Miller, J. E. (2009). *Exploring Family Theories, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Articles available through the library's website.

**Evaluation and Grading:**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Participation                                | 10% |
| Group presentation                           | 20% |
| Exam, one in class (20%) and one final (30%) |     |
| Group project                                | 20% |

**Participation**

This includes: Informed participation (the kind that shows that you've done the readings) in class. Attendance. Attention. Lack of negative participation (inattention, disruption, not attending).

**Group presentation and project**

I'll lecture about a chapter on Wednesday (the 2 hr. block). Students will use that lecture to guide us through the chapter's sample reading on Friday (the 1 hr. block). I will assign you to a group. There will be 2-3 students per group, depending on class enrolment. You

will write up your presentation as a group: this will be your group project. There will be a separate handout on this.

### **Exams**

2 exams, one in class and one during finals. Multiple choice and short essay questions. Everything will be covered; lectures, student presentations, etc. The final is cumulative.

### **Course Policies:**

**No laptops, no phones, no electronic devices** Class time is our time, free of texting, FB, etc.

**Late Assignments** The policies governing requests for accommodation for course components worth 10% or more of the course grade are outlined in the Academic Policies section at the end of the outline. Exams must be taken when specified unless there is academic accomodation, granted with documentation for medical and personal emergencies. Assignments must be handed in on the day they're due unless there is academic accomodation. Late assignments get 10 points off per day otherwise, where the day turns over at 4 pm. In other words, hand in your paper at 4:01 pm on the day it's due, and it's 10 points off. Just turn it in on time. ☺

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| A+ 90-100  | One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level   |
| A 80-89    | Superior work which is clearly above average                    |
| B 70-79    | Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory |
| C 60-69    | Competent work, meeting requirements                            |
| D 50-59    | Fair work, minimally acceptable                                 |
| F below 50 | Fail  |

**Course Etiquette** When sending an email to me, put something in the subject line like "FS4220." Address email with something like "Dear Dr. Descartes" or "Hello Dr. Descartes." "Hey" isn't really a good opening line on a professional email. No opening line isn't good either. Sign your name to your email. Most of you are mature adults and don't need the following reminders, but: Come to class. Be on time for class. Don't leave class early. There are exceptions of course, but these should be rare, not standard. Finally, please be respectful of each other and of me. Diverse opinions may be and should be expressed: If you read or hear something you don't agree with, talk about it, but try to separate that from going on the offensive or the defensive.

**Final Note** This syllabus may be amended by the professor if needed.

**Course Calendar:**

Read the chapter for Wednesday. For Friday, read the sample reading for the prior week's chapter. I'll lecture, etc. on Wednesdays. Fridays will be student presentations using the prior Wednesday's theory.

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>                     | <b>Readings and assignments</b>  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Sept. 9 F   | Course introduction              |  |
| Sept. 14 W  | What is theory?                  | Introduction to book   |
| Sept. 16 F  | Family theory today              | Daly, K. (2003). Family theory versus the theories families live by. <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> , 65, 771-784.                                      |
| Sept. 21 W  | Symbolic interactionism          | C1   |
| Sept. 23 F  |                                  | Group 1  |
| Sept. 28 W  | Structural functionalism         | C2   |
| Sept. 30 F  |                                  | Group 2  |
| Oct. 5 W    | Family development               | C3   |
| Oct. 7 F    |                                  | Group 3  |
| Oct. 12 W   | Family stress                    | C4   |
| Oct. 14 F   |                                  | Group 4  |
| Oct. 19 W   | Exam                             | Exam   |
| Oct. 21 F   | Go over exam                     |  |
| Oct. 26 W   | Family systems                   | C5   |
| Oct. 28 F   |                                  | Group 5  |
| Nov. 2 W    | Conflict                         | C6   |
| Nov. 4 F    |                                  | Group 6  |
| Nov. 9 W    | Social exchange                  | C7   |
| Nov. 11 F   |                                  | Group 7  |
| Nov. 16 W   | Feminist                         | C8   |
| Nov. 18 F   |                                  | Group 8  |
| Nov. 23 W   | Biosocial                        | C9   |
| Nov. 25 F   |                                  | Group 9  |
| Nov. 30 W   | Ambivalence                      | Connidis, I. & McMullin, J. (2002). Sociological ambivalence and family ties: A critical perspective. <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> , 64, 558-567.     |
| Dec. 2 F    |                                  | Sarkisian, N. (2006). "Doing family ambivalence": Nuclear and extended families in single mothers' lives. <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> , 68, 804-811. |
| Dec. 7 W    | Final class: discussion, wrap-up | <b>Group project due</b>   |
| Dec. XX     | <b>Final exam, date TBA</b>      | <b>Final exam</b>  |

## **BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

### **1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES**

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

If supporting documentation is from a family physician, Hospital Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Department, or a walk-in clinic a UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required**. To download an SMC go to <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> and follow the link under "Medical Documentation". Documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial visit. If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations document-ation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** considered adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2011/pg117.html>.

### **2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS**

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, [www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca), for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the

Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

### **3. ABSENCES**

**Short Absences:** If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

**Extended Absences:** If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

### **4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

#### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

#### **Computer-marked Tests/exams:**

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams

performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS**

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

## **6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES**

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

## **7. SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at [http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar\\_services/index.html](http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html).

The University of Western Ontario Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>

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Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.