



**Course** Marriage and Family Psychology, CLPD/PSY 4347.001, 3 credits, Spring 2013  
**Professor** Dr. Jackie Nelson  
**Meetings** GR 4.301, Tues & Thurs 8:30am-9:45am

**Dr. Nelson's Contact Information**

**Office Phone** 972-883-4478      **Email Address** Jackie.Nelson@utdallas.edu  
**Office Location** GR 4.822      **Office Hours** T/Th 10:30am-11:30am

**General Course Information**

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to give students a broad overview of theories and research relevant to close relationships. We will examine key concepts, themes, strengths, and challenges faced by individuals throughout the life-course beginning with relationship formation and ending with family relationships in later life. Information presented and discussed will be grounded in peer-reviewed scientific research findings. Diversity in relationships will be a persistent focus of the course, along with the micro- and macro-level contextual influences on families.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of the theories of families and close relationships.
2. Knowledge of the history, trends, and controversial issues in the field of family psychology.
3. The ability to recognize and think critically about the methods involved in scientific research.
4. An understanding of the diverse contexts individuals experience and how various aspects of diversity influence family processes and development.
5. Knowledge of the strengths and challenges faced by families today.
6. The ability to apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings to everyday life.
7. Recognition that families shape and are shaped by many environments.
8. Understanding of the multiple roles and characteristics of individuals that affect family dynamics
9. Appreciation of attitudes that focus on strengths of families rather than emphasize weaknesses.
10. Knowledge of federal and state legislation affecting families.

**Required Text** Secombe, K. (2012). *Exploring Marriages & Families*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. (available at the UTD bookstore, Off-Campus Books, and online)

**Course Schedule**

Date	Topic	Assignment
Jan 15	What is a family?	Ch 1
Jan 17	Theory and research on families	Ch 1
Jan 22	Social status and families	Ch 2
Jan 24	Social status continued	Ch 2
Jan 29	Friendship and dating	Ch 3
Jan 31	Cohabitation and love	Ch 3-4
Feb 5	Love continued	Ch 4
Feb 7	<b>Exam 1</b>	
Feb 12	Sexuality	Ch 5
Feb 14	Communication in relationships	Ch 6
Feb 19	Conflict and power	Ch 6
Feb 21	Marriage	Ch 7
Feb 26	Marriage continued	Ch 7
Feb 28	Fertility	Ch 8
Mar 5	Paths and transitions to parenthood	Ch 8
Mar 7	<b>Exam 2</b>	
<b>No class for spring break, March 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup></b>		
Mar 19	Parenting	Ch 9
Mar 21	Parenting continued	Ch 9
Mar 26	Work and families	Ch 10
Mar 28	Work continued	Ch 10

Apr 2	Family stress	Ch 11
Apr 4	Violence and abuse	Ch 11
Apr 9	<b>Exam 3</b>	
Apr 11	Divorce	Ch 12
Apr 16	Remarriage	Ch 13
Apr 18	<b>No class meeting. Online: Families in middle life</b>	Ch 14
Apr 23	Families in later life	Ch 14
Apr 25	Families and public policies	Ch 15
Apr 30	Public policies continued	Ch 15
May 2	<b>Exam 4</b>	

<b>Assignments</b>	<p><u>Exams</u>: Exams will consist of multiple choice questions. Exams are not cumulative. Exams will draw from content covered in the text, additional readings and class activities, and lectures. There will be 4 exams given, 3 of which will count toward the final grade. <b>The student's lowest grade from the 4 exams will be dropped.</b> Exams are each worth 100 pts, for a combined 75% of your final grade.</p> <p><u>In-class writing reflections</u>: Pop writing assignments will be given where students are asked to reflect on and write about an issue from class. Each reflection is worth 25 pts. Students will be graded on their participation and ability to thoughtfully integrate ideas from class. The lowest grade will be dropped; all others will count toward the final grade worth a combined 100 pts, or 25% of the total.</p>		
<b>Grading Criteria</b>	<table> <tr> <td>A: 93-100%, A-: 90-92%, B+: 87-89%, B: 83-86%, B-: 80-82%, C+: 77-79%, C: 73-76%, C-: 70-72%, D+: 67-69%, D: 63-66%, D-: 60-62%, F: 59% or less</td> <td> Exam 1.....100  Exam 2.....100  Exam 3.....100  In-class writing reflections..... 100  <b>Total.....400</b> </td> </tr> </table>	A: 93-100%, A-: 90-92%, B+: 87-89%, B: 83-86%, B-: 80-82%, C+: 77-79%, C: 73-76%, C-: 70-72%, D+: 67-69%, D: 63-66%, D-: 60-62%, F: 59% or less	Exam 1.....100 Exam 2.....100 Exam 3.....100 In-class writing reflections..... 100 <b>Total.....400</b>
A: 93-100%, A-: 90-92%, B+: 87-89%, B: 83-86%, B-: 80-82%, C+: 77-79%, C: 73-76%, C-: 70-72%, D+: 67-69%, D: 63-66%, D-: 60-62%, F: 59% or less	Exam 1.....100 Exam 2.....100 Exam 3.....100 In-class writing reflections..... 100 <b>Total.....400</b>		
<b>Instructor Expectations</b>	In order to ensure a safe and productive learning environment, students are expected to come to class prepared having done the assigned reading, avoiding chit-chat during lectures or films, being respectful to other students, arriving on time with cell phones turned off, engaging in appropriate laptop behavior (no Facebook!), and being alert and attentive. Students will likely have strong opinions about many of the issues covered in the course. While all should feel comfortable sharing their perspectives, statements that could be interpreted as offensive or discriminatory have no place in this classroom and <b>will not be tolerated</b> .		
<b>Make-up Exams</b>	<b>Make-up exams will not be offered.</b> Missing 1 of the 4 exams for any reason (e.g., illness, personal/family problems, etc.) will result in a grade of zero that may serve as the student's 1 dropped grade. In extremely rare cases, a makeup exam or writing reflection may be given at the instructor's discretion if verified documentation for <b>all</b> legitimate absences is provided.		
<b>Late Work</b>	No late work will be accepted.		
<b>Class Attendance</b>	In order to learn the concepts and engage in class activities, students must attend class. Attendance will be graded through the use of pop in-class activities. Attendance may also affect your performance on exams and other assignments given much of the material that is covered in lecture goes beyond what is included in assigned readings.		
<b>Student Conduct and Discipline</b>	<p>The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, <i>A to Z Guide</i>, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.</p> <p>The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the <i>Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System</i>, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's <i>Handbook of Operating Procedures</i>. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <a href="http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html">http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html</a></p> <p>A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university</p>		

	<p>regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.</p>
<b>Academic Integrity</b>	<p>The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.</p> <p>Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.</p> <p>Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.</p>
<b>Email Use</b>	<p>The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.</p>
<b>Withdrawal from Class</b>	<p>The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.</p>
<b>Student Grievance Procedures</b>	<p>Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's <i>Handbook of Operating Procedures</i>.</p> <p>In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.</p> <p>Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.</p>
<b>Incomplete Grades</b>	<p>As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of <b>F</b>.</p>
<b>Disability Services</b>	<p>The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities equal educational opportunities. Disability Services provides students with a documented letter to present to the faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for accommodation. If accommodations are granted for testing accommodations, the student should remind</p>

	<p>the instructor five days before the exam of any testing accommodations that will be needed. Disability Services is located in Room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You may reach Disability Services at (972) 883-2098. Guidelines for documentation are located on the Disability Services website at <a href="http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html">http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html</a>.</p>
<p><b>Religious Holy Days</b></p>	<p>The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.</p> <p>The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.</p> <p>If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.</p>

*These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*