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Course Description: This is an introductory course in couple and family psychology. The course takes an in-depth look at the meaning of marriage and the family, variations in American family life, diverse family forms (e.g., single-parent, 2-parent, blended, intergenerational), unmarried lives, parenthood, and sex and sexualities, among other topics. An important thread throughout the course is the diversity expressed in (post)modern marriage and family experiences.

Course Objectives: Students will...

1. Develop a sociocultural-historical perspective on diversity in American marriage and family.
2. Understand major theories relevant to marital and family adjustment
3. Understand unique conceptual and methodological challenges of marital and family research.
4. Recognize the internal and external factors affecting family life; e.g., gender roles, power distribution, and the effects of social institutions.
5. Understand romantic relationship formation and issues related to gender and human sexuality.
6. Identify various parenting styles, and their effects upon child behavior.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of common marital/family processes identified in the literature (e.g., communication, conflict resolution, interaction patterns, etc).
8. Understand risk and resilience factors in marital/family functioning and/or dissolution.
9. Examine the impact of divorce and remarriage, both on adults and children.
10. Recognize the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy families over the life cycle.

Readings:

Lamanna, M.A., Riedmann, A., & Stewart, S. (2012/2015). *Marriages, families, and relationships: Making Choices in a Diverse Society*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Mikulincer, M., Florian, V., Cowan, P. A., & Cowan, C. (2002). Attachment security in couple relationships: A systemic model and its implications for family dynamics. *Family Process*, 41(3), 405-434. (available online through UNT Libraries PSYCinfo data base)

Course Requirements: (Class Policies are in Appendix A)

1. **THIS IS A TEAM-BASED LEARNING CLASS that will** blend lecture, discussion, video, team activities.
 - a. You will participate in team activities that will be the basis for many class discussions. You will be assigned to teams of 5-7 students. Your team will need to sit together to facilitate working as a team. Bring 1+ electronic device to access internet.
 - b. To ensure that you are ready to participate, you will take Reading Assessment Tests (RATs) as an individual (iRATs) then immediately afterward with your team (tRATs). These RATs will

take place at the beginning of 6-10 class periods, prior to any lectures so don't be late.
Chapter Review Guides are posted on Blackboard.

- c. You will evaluate your team members twice in terms of preparation, flexibility, contributions and respect for the group, once at mid- and once at end of semester.

2. **Participation** is expected and appreciated.

- a. RATs and team activities require regular attendance. Please arrive promptly.
- b. Your participation in discussions is strongly encouraged. Sometimes the instructor will play "devil's advocate" to stimulate a debate of sorts – please do not let that deter you. EVERYONE'S opinion is valued, so please assert your opinion without fear of judgment, and with some anticipation of disagreement; conversely, please be open to others' opinions that might differ from your own and refrain from judgment regarding their worth.

3. **Grading.**

- a. Individual Work - 55%. If absent on day of assessment, grade = 0.
 - i. iRATs (15%) – The lowest grade will be dropped. **No RAT make-ups for any reason.** Mid-semester peer evaluation of your team members counts as one iRAT (if not submitted, grade = 0).
 - ii. Exams (40%) – There will be 2 objective exams (e.g., 50-60 M/C or T/F questions). Bring a scantron and #2 pencil to class on exam days. Content of exams will be based on readings, lectures/discussions, activities, videos, and handouts. *If it is in the book or class, it's fair game for a test question.* You will have the option of taking a comprehensive final (100-150 items) to replace the lowest exam grade.
 - b. Team Work – 45%. If absent for (i) and (ii), grade=0.
 - i. tRATs (15%) – The lowest grade will be dropped.
 - ii. Team Activities (20%) – signed by each member to indicate presence.
 - iii. Peer Evaluation (10%) – Points awarded by teammates (averaged) will **ONLY** be added after you submit your evaluations of your team members (i.e., if not submitted, grade = 0).
4. **Extra Credit.** Extra credit opportunities are available via the Psychology Department SONA system at <http://unt.sona-systems.com>. Each research credit constitutes ½ point added to your overall point total at the end of the semester to determine your course grade. Maximum = 5 extra points.

希望

HOPE

智慧

WISDOM

运气

LUCK

*Learning without thought is labor lost,
thought without learning is perilous.*

– Confucius

As a teacher, my sincerest hope is that we will create
an interesting and enjoyable dialogue in this
room...one that follows you and makes you think
about our activities & discussions outside of class,
one that inspires you to invest maximum effort to
learn and grow, so that you leave here as more skillful
critical and creative thinkers and citizens.

GOOD LUCK!

Shelley A. Riggs

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1/20	Introduction to Course	Ch. 1
1/27	Theory & Research	Ch. 1-2
2/3	Gender Roles, Sex, and Sexuality	Ch. 3, 4
2/10	Isn't it romantic?	Ch. 5; Mikulincer et al.
2/17	Singlehood & Cohabitation	Ch. 6
2/24	Marriage	Ch 7
3/3	EXAM 1 ; Team activities	
3/10	Parenthood <i>Mid-semester peer evaluations due</i>	Ch. 8, 9
3/17	<i>Spring Break – No class</i>	
3/24	Work and Family	Ch. 10
3/31	Communication, Interaction Patterns	Ch. 11
4/7	Power & Violence	Ch. 12
4/14	Family Stress & Resilience	Ch. 13
4/21	Divorce and Remarriage	Ch. 14, 15
4/28	EXAM 2; Team activities	
5/5	Aging & Multigenerational Families <i>Final peer evaluations due</i>	Ch. 16
5/12	FINAL EXAMINATION 1:30-3:30	



NOTE: This syllabus does not constitute a contract. Changes in class content and assignments may occur as the semester progresses. Changes will be communicated to you by the instructor or TA.

APPENDIX A: Class Policies

1. **Assistance.** Contact the instructor or TA if you have questions regarding the course or need assistance to succeed in class. HOWEVER, if you miss a class, first ask a fellow student about what happened that day; then, if that is insufficient ask the TA. ***The best way to contact us is via email (not phone, not Blackboard)*** or in person during office hours. We will try to respond to email within 48 hours (excluding weekends).
2. **Make up examinations** will be given only when a valid, *documented* excuse for an absence is provided, preferably in advance of the test date. If an emergency situation arises on the day of an exam, you should notify the instructor via email ASAP, then bring documentation to the next class. You must make up an exam within 7 days of the scheduled exam date (which will generally be when graded exams are returned to the rest of the class); missing the Final Exam will result in a grade of 0 for that exam, or an Incomplete for the course if documentation validating the absence is provided to the instructor before final grades are assigned. ***No make-ups are allowed for RATs for any reason; lowest score is dropped.***
3. **Student behavior in the classroom.**

UNT rules: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

Riggs rules: Essentially, my rules for classroom behavior include all those you learned in kindergarten (see Appendix B) plus a few more. I work with an ***ethic of reciprocity***, which some of you may know as the Golden Rule: "Treat others as you wish to be treated." So, the first and foremost rule is *Be respectful and courteous*. Other expectations follow that rule. For example:

- a. *LISTEN and pay attention* to others when they are speaking.
- b. *Raise your hand* to be recognized during class discussions, and take turns in groups; please do not interrupt others.
- c. Please limit the use of electronic devices in class to purposes relevant to the ongoing lecture or discussion. Any other use is disrespectful to the instructor and your classmates, and also disruptive to your learning.
 - Turn your *cell phone notification tones* off during class. Refrain from writing/reading personal texts or emails unless you inform me ahead of time of an extenuating issue requiring you to maintain contact (e.g., sick child, pregnant wife, etc).
 - Use *laptops or other electronic devices* for notes and internet searches related to class assignments. Refrain from other personal uses (e.g., email, shopping, etc).

4. **Academic Honesty:** Cheating involves the use of prohibited materials in the completion of an examination, attempting to obtain credit for class assignments by use of fraudulent, deceptive or dishonest means, or helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty (e.g., copying another person's work or allowing your work to be copied). *Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy as defined in the Code of Student Conduct. Any incidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a "0" for that assignment/exam and possibly for the entire class.*

5. Equal Opportunity.

a. *Americans with Disabilities*: The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.unt.edu/oda/apply/index.html. Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union (room 321) or call (940) 565-4323.

The Department of Psychology cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA) to make reasonable accommodations for *qualified* students with disabilities. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to the instructor no later the 12th class day of the semester to allow arrangements to be made. Grades assigned before verification of an approved accommodation is provided will not be changed.

b. Also, the Department complies with the University's policies concerning *discrimination and sexual harassment*. If you have any complaints please contact the departmental chairperson or UNT's Equal Opportunity Office.

6. **SETE**. The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you with an opportunity to comment on how this class is taught. I would appreciate any feedback and suggestions, positive or negative, regarding the course organization and my teaching effectiveness.
7. **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Information**. Students have the right to expect their grades will be kept confidential. Neither your course grades nor grades for any assignment will be posted in a way that could result in your being identified by other students or faculty members. However, because of the size and/or nature of this class, you should be aware that complete confidentiality may not be possible when collecting and distributing test results, papers, projects, etc. For example, it may be necessary for the instructor/TA to call your name in order to return your text/assignment to you. The instructor/TA, under the reasonable assumption guidelines, assumes students are collecting only their own materials.
8. **Incompletes**: If you take an "I" (incomplete) in any course, you must complete the work and have the "I" removed within one year or the grade will automatically revert to an "F" and you must reenroll in the course again.

SETE Humor:



APPENDIX B: ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN

(a guide for Global Leadership)

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand pile at school.

These are the things I learned:

- Share everything.
- Play fair.
- Don't hit people.
- Put things back where you found them.
- Clean up your own mess.
- Don't take things that aren't yours.
- Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Flush.
- Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
- Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
- Take a nap every afternoon.
- When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
- Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
- Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
- And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living.

Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all - the whole world - had cookies and milk at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

[Source: "ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN" by Robert Fulghum. See his web site at <http://www.robertfulghum.com/>]