

**Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition
University of Guelph**

**FRAN 6280 Theorizing in Family Relations and Human Development
Course Description – Spring 2013**

Meetings 9:30-12:30	Tues May 7	Thurs May 9
	Tues May 14	
	Tues May 21	
	Tues June 4	
	Tues June 11	
	Tues June 18	Thurs June 20
	Tues June 25	Thurs June 27
	Tues July 2	Thurs July 4

MACS 331

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Course Objectives:

This course concerns theorizing in the study of human development and family relationships. The term “theorizing” is used rather than “family theories” or “theories of human development” because we are interested in the activity of the practising social scientist as a consumer and producer of theory. The course focuses on three main objectives: to promote the basic skills of critically analyzing theory, using theory, and creating theory. An overriding objective is for the course is for participants to examine and articulate their own assumptions and stances regarding the process of knowledge construction. A second objective is to begin to develop the guts to theorize.

The first 9 sessions concern the level of meta theory, the last 3 sessions concern the level of substantive theories used by participants in their own approach to the phenomena they are studying.

1. Critical Analysis. Here we look at major dimensions of theory including *epistemology, ontology*, as well as a *theoretically informed approach to methodology*. Essentially these constitute three different choices for researchers to theoretically justify their approach to a research endeavour or as their position as a researcher.

It is impossible to treat all of these comprehensively because each is complex, ever changing and heavily contested in the sciences. Nevertheless, the course will provide an introduction to the ideas that are now at play in the literature. My choices are to be cursory regarding epistemology and to emphasize ontology and the importance of theory in methodology. This means that we will be taking for granted knowledge of traditional epistemological approaches (i.e. positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, postmodernism etc.) that should be familiar from your qualitative methods and interdisciplinary perspectives courses and instead focus on additional ways of positioning oneself as a scientist.

An ontological approach (what is the nature of the phenomenon) overlaps with but does not always lead to the same conclusions as an epistemological approach (How and what can we know). For one thing, ontology involves an interest in the nature of causality, and, as Aristotle pointed out there are a variety of ways for understanding causality (e.g. efficient, formal and final). Our approach to ontology begins by considering Pepper's World View metaphors of mechanism, organicism, and contextualism and then will consider emerging integrative approaches that attempt to transcend the either/or implications of Pepper's analysis. Dialectics will be discussed as an entry point to emerging integrative approaches such as, relationalism, perspectivism and critical realism and new materialism and dynamic systems theory.

During the past decade there has been a growing critique of methodology in which a central concept has been the centrality of phenomena in scientific enquiry. We will examine some of these critiques and emphasize the concept of a methodology cycle in knowledge construction.

2. Using Theory. Traditionally, using theory was a matter of logical deduction and the generation of propositions for testing causal predictions. We emphasize a range of activities that focus on the interpretive processes of the researcher in gaining understanding of a phenomenon. This will mean exploring different functions of theory and the researcher's stance with regard to the "methodology cycle" or the "recursive cycle of knowing."

3. Constructing theory. Theorizing is a relatively unacknowledged aspect of the research process that makes use of the interpretive skills and creativity of the researcher. Here, there is little precedent.... because no one really teaches this stuff. Theory construction is regarded by the hypothetico deductive view of science as a mysterious process that science can test but not teach. However, theories are developed by people and several processes and strategies regarding this creative process have been described.

One of these is *abduction*, the third mode of inference and a counterpart to induction and deduction. Abduction in particular is implicated in the process of generating novel ideas and hypotheses. The second tool is *metaphor*, which is presented as a semiotic mediating device. Most theoretical constructs at all levels of analysis have metaphoric roots and it is important to know the uses and limitations of these in theory construction. The third tool is *concept mapping and mind mapping* which are technologies for facilitating the processes of planning, analyzing ideas, generating ideas, and drawing connections between them. Participants in the course will be using concept-mapping software to organize and analyze the concepts presented in each week's readings.

Concept Mapping/Mind mapping Software

You will be required to obtain and use concept mapping and mind-mapping software, as you will be presenting concept maps as part of every session. There are many useful packages to choose from and I include some links to show you the variety available. They include commercial packages and freeware. In order to have a common ground we will be using INSPIRATION software. A one month free trial version can be downloaded.

Also I include some links regarding the use of mind mapping as a conceptual analysis and theorizing tool.

http://unimelb.academia.edu/MartinDavies/Papers/433992/Mind_Mapping_Concept_Mapp

ing_Argument_Mapping_What_are_the_differences_and_Do_they_Matter

<http://www.slideshare.net/gofull/80263/59>

<http://dmc.umn.edu/activities/mindmap/>

http://www.stanford.edu/dept/SUSE/projects/ireport/articles/concept_maps/ConceptMapsOnlineLearningEnvironment.pdf

<http://www.slideshare.net/gofull/80263>

Evaluation:

The final grade for the course will be based on 3 components:

25 %	Routine seminar contribution and concept maps
25 %	Reflexive Statement: Thurs June 25 1 mark per day after that)
15 %	Theorizing presentation
35 %	Theorizing paper: Fri. July 19 (1 mark per day after that)

Routine seminar contribution and concept maps. The grade for routine seminar contribution is designed to reflect the level of your performance and contribution to class discussion on a weekly basis. Although we recognize that students come to the class with a range of verbal propensities, we see the articulation of thoughts and arguments as an important skill to be developed as part of your academic program.

Evaluation will be based on two kinds of contributions.

- 1) *Contribution to class discussion.* This includes contribution of discussion points based on readings. Demonstration in class that the readings have been read, relevant personal perspectives and experiences.
- 2) *Contribution of Mind Maps or Concept Maps* These should be emailed to the instructor by **midnight before each class** in an electronic format and should include your analysis of concepts in the readings. Class discussions will emerge using each students concept maps.

Reflexive Statement Paper

One of the aims of this course is to have participants to think about their own identity as a social scientist. Throughout the course you will be challenged to articulate your thoughts and beliefs about how science works, and your practices, and ambitions as a social scientist.

The primary purpose of the reflexive theory statement is for you to become aware of your personal reactions to and interpretations of the readings and develop a personal stance on

what you have learned. What specific ideas appeal or don't appeal to you. Consider where you have been and what new thoughts occur to you. What puzzles remain to be solved? What are the implications of your positioning for the type of research you would like to do?

The task is to be reflective and up front about what you actually believed to be true initially, identify specific contradictions, and to describe your processes of working through contradictions that arose during the course thus far and to begin to draw a roadmap for your future scientific practise.

I would like you to position yourself as a social scientist at this point in time, knowing that this is always subject to change. The reflexive statement should be attentive to how You are thinking in terms of preferred values, epistemologies, world views and role as a scientist with regard to the methodology cycle. You may use examples and issues from class or write about key problems or insights for you in this course. Use the first person "I" for this assignment. Talk about specific ideas in the articles you have read. Be authoritative in citing specific ideas. Describe why you are accepting or rejecting specific ideas. **About 10 pages double-spaced.**

Theorizing Presentation 15% & Theorizing Paper (35%) Due July 19

During the final weeks of this course we will be theorizing in class on topics of interest chosen by students. One of the aims of the course is to learn how to use theory in practical ways.

- 1) Choose a topic of interest that is important to the work that you do. This may be related to your future research interests or your specialization paper. Choose one key articles for the class to read as background and have these ready one week prior to your presentation. (be kind).
- 2) Participants will lead a discussion of their theorizing work. This should include 1) a 20-minute presentation, 2) a 30-minute discussion. A theorizing exercise for the class based on the readings and presentation may be incorporated in the discussion.

The presentation may include the following:

- The nature of the phenomenon you wish to study. What is the research question regarding this phenomenon that you are trying to answer or understand?
 - Underlying epistemological, and ontological assumptions and how these have shaped the enquiry
 - Key concepts and how are they used (sensitizing? hypothesis testing? measurement?)
 - What is positioning for this particular piece of research in the methodology cycle?
- 3) Write a 10-12-page paper (APA format) that demonstrates your theorizing activity in this area. You should incorporate feedback from the group for this paper.

Schedule of Classes: Dates, Topics and Readings

Session 1: Tuesday May 7 iTheory & Concept Mapping

Goldhaber (2000). Theories of Human Development: Integrative perspectives (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing. Prologue (p. 1-11)

White J.W. & Kline, D. M. (2007). Family Theories. Sage. Chapter 1: What is Theory?

Concept mapping.

Session 2: Thursday May 9 – 9:30-12:30 Responses to Positivism: Epistemologies of Either/Or

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundation of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage. Ch.2 Positivism

White, J.W. (2005). *Advancing Family Theories*. Sage. Ch.3 Science and its Critics. P. 30-50

Extra reading for fun.

Ch. 1. Crotty (1998) Introduction: The research process. (pp. 1-17)

Session 3: Tuesday May 14 – 9:30-12:30 Theorizing as a Creative Process: Abduction, Metaphor, and intellectual craftsmanship

Guttman, B.S. (2004) The real method of scientific discovery: scientists don't sit around in their labs trying to establish generalizations. Instead they engage in mystery-solving essentially like that of detective work, and it often involves a creative, imaginative leap. *Skeptical Inquirer* 1/1/2004.

Bertilsson, M. (2003). The elementary forms of Pragmatism: On different forms of abduction. Paper presented at the 6th ESA Conference, Mercia.

Haig, B. D. (2005). An abductive theory of scientific method. *Psychological Methods*, 10, 371-388.

Kuczynski, L. Lollis, S. & Koguchi, T. (2003). Reconstructing common sense: metaphors of bidirectionality in parent-child relations (pp.421-438). In L. Kuczynski (Ed.) *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relations*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Mills, C.W. (1959), On intellectual craftsmanship. Appendix from *The sociological imagination*. NY:

Oxford University Press.

Extra readings for fun.

Clegg, J.W (2010). Uncertainty as a Fundamental Scientific Value. *Integr Psych Behav* (2010) 44:245–251DOI 10.1007/s12124-010-9135-6

Kuczynski, L. & Daly, K. (2003). Qualitative methods as inductive (theory-generating) research: psychological and sociological approaches (pp. 373-392). In L Kuczynski (Ed.) *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relations*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Reichertz, J. (2010). Abduction: The Logic of Discovery of Grounded Theory. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol 11, No 1.

Valsiner, J. (1994). Uses of Common Sense and Ordinary Language in Psychology and Beyond: A co-constructionist perspective and its implications. In J. Siegfried (ed) *The Status of Common Sense in Psychology*. N.J.: Ablex

Weick, K.E. (1989). Theory Construction as disciplined imagination. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14, 516-531

Session 4: Tuesday May 21 – 9:30-12:30 Ontologies of Either/Or: World Views of Organicism & Mechanism

Goldhaber (2000). *Theories of Human Development: Integrative perspectives* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.

Chapter 2 How we are: Mechanistic World View

Chapter 3 Why we are: Organismic World View

Shweder, R. (1996). Quanta and Qualia: What is the “Object” of ethnographic method? In Jessor, R., Colby, A., Shweder, R. (Eds). (1996). *Ethnography and human development: Context and meaning in social inquiry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Causation.. Goldhaber refers to Aristotle's classification of causation. Go to the Web and look up “causation” for more on Aristotle and other conceptions. I provide one link to start.

<http://poli.haifa.ac.il/~levi/inference.html>

Session 5: Tuesday June 4 – Ontologies of Either/ Or: World View of Contextualism

Goldhaber (2000). *Theories of Human Development: Integrative perspectives* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.

- Chapter 4. Prologue Part IV What we are: Contextualist World View
- Chapter 15 Postmodern Perspectives
- Chapter 16 Epilogue

Extra reading for fun.

Fay, B. (1996). Solipsism. Do you have to be one to know one? In *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*.

Integrative perspectives

Session 6: Tuesday June 11– 9:30-12:30: Methodology Cycles, Researchers and Phenomena

Valsiner, J. (2000). Chapter 5 Developmental Methodology , Culture and Human Development, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Rosenbaum, P.J. & Valsiner, J. (2011) The un-making of a method: From rating scales to the study of psychological processes. *Theory & Psychology*, 2(1) 47-65.

Toomela, A. (2007a). Culture of science: strange history of the methodological thinking in psychology. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 41, 6-20.

Extra Readings for fun

Tomella a. (2011). Travel Into a Fairy Land: A Critique of Modern Qualitative and Mixed Methods Psychologies *Integr Psych Behav* (2011) 45:21-47.

Valsiner, J. (2006). Dangerous Curves in knowledge construction in psychology: Fragmentation of Methodology. *Theory and Psychology*, 16, 597-612.

Session 7: Tuesday June 18- 9:30-12:30 The idea of Dialectics

Dialectics for Kids Explore this website. Also pick your favourite dialectics song.
<http://home.igc.org/~venceremos/index.htm>

Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). Chapters 1 & 2. Relating; dialogues and dialectics. New York, NY, : Guilford Press.

Kuczynski, L., & De Mol, J. (in press). Socialization in the family: Transactional and dialectical. In R.M. Lerner, W.F. Overton, & P. Molenaar (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science*, 7th edition: Volume 1: Theory and Method. N.Y Wiley.

Session 8: Thurs June 20 – 9:30-12:30 Relational Epistemology Critical Realism, New Materialism

Overton, W. F. (2002). Life-span development: Concepts and issues. In W. F. Overton (Ed).

Cognition, biology, and methods across the lifespan. Volume 1 of the Handbook of life-span development. (pp. 1-29) Editor-in-chief: R. M. Lerner. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

van der Tuin, I. & Dolphijn, R. (2010). The Transversality of New Materialism. *Women: A Cultural Review*, 21(2), 153-171. doi:10.1080/09574042.2010.488377

Extra reading for fun.

DiDonato, M. D., England , Martin, C.L. Amazeen, P.G. (2013). Dynamical Analyses for Developmental Science: A Primer for Intrigued Scientists. *Human Development* 2013;56:59–75. DOI: 10.1159/000342936

McEvoy, P & Richards, D.(2006). A critical realist rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11, 66-78.

Practical Theorizing

Session 9 : Tuesday June 25 – 9:30-12:30 Conclusions.

First student presentation

Reflexive statement **due**

Fay, (1996). Ch 11. Conclusion: What's to be learned from a multicultural philosophy of social science/ *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*. Oxford UK Blackwell Publishers

Smedslund (2009). The Mismatch between Current Research Methods and the Nature of Psychological Phenomena: What Researchers Must Learn from Practitioners. *Theory & Psychology*, 19 (6): 778–794

Session 10 : Thursday June 27 – 9:30-12:30 Three student presentations

Session 11 Tuesday July 2 – 9:30-12:30 Three student presentations

Session 12 Thursday July 4 – 1-4pm Three presentations

Final paper due July 19 by email.

