



## **FRAN\*6340 Interdisciplinary Perspectives in FRHD COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2025**

### **1. GRADUATE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION**

This course serves as an introduction to graduate studies in Family Relations and Human Development. It examines the epistemological, ontological and axiological foundations of various approaches to the study of family relations and human development, including developmental theories, critical approaches, and Indigenous Ways of Knowing. It explores questions of what constitutes a discipline and the challenges and possibilities of interdisciplinary approaches in research. Emphasis will be placed on student exploration of their own relationships with knowledge and emerging identities as researchers.

**Credit Weight:** 0.5 credits

**Course Hours:** 3-0 (36 lecture; 0 lab/seminar)

**Pre-Requisite(s):** None

**Co-Requisites(s):** None

**Restriction(s):** FRAN MSc and PhD

### **2. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course we will examine some of the disciplinary perspectives used in the study of family relations and human development. We will explore what constitutes a discipline and the meaning and practice of interdisciplinarity, particularly in relation to research in Family Relations and Human Development. We will identify and engage with several theoretical perspectives that underlie various approaches to the study of human development and family relationships and explore the challenges and possibilities of interdisciplinary approaches. We will also examine the foundations of western scientific thought and Indigenous world views to deepen our understanding of our own epistemological, ontological and axiological orientations. This course serves as an introduction to the Department of Family Relations and Human Development and key goals include developing a supportive community of scholars. Emphasis will be placed on student exploration of their emerging identities as researchers. Assignments focus on providing supportive opportunities for students to develop scholarly skills relating to oral and written communication.

### **3. TIMETABLE**

**Lecture:**

**Location:**

### **4. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT**

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Olga Smoliak, PhD, C. Psych., RMFT (she/her), Professor in FRHD

**Email:** [osmoliak@uoguelph.ca](mailto:osmoliak@uoguelph.ca)

**Telephone:** 519-824-4120 ext. 56336

**Office:**

**Office Hours:** By appointment

## 5. LEARNING RESOURCES

### Required Resource(s):

No textbook is used in the course. The readings are posted on CourseLink/Content/Readings (can be accessed free of charge):

- Allen, K. R., & Henderson, A. C. (2022). Family theorizing for social justice: A critical praxis. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 14(3), 364-383.
- Allen, K. R., & Jaramillo-Sierra, A. L. (2015). Feminist theory and research on family relationships: Pluralism and complexity. *Sex Roles*, 73(3), 93-99.
- Burton, L. M., Bonilla-Silva, E., Ray, V., Buckelew, R., & Hordge Freeman, E. (2010). Critical race theories, colorism, and the decade's research on families of color. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 440-459.
- Choate, P., & Tortorelli, C. (2022). Attachment theory: A barrier for indigenous children involved with child protection. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(14), 8754.
- DePouw, C. (2018). Intersectionality and critical race parenting. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31(1), 55-69.
- Dyer, K. D. (2025). Human development and family science: A story of disciplinary fragmentation and kinship. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 17(1), 12-28.
- Farrugia, D. (2010). The symbolic burden of homelessness: Towards a theory of youth homelessness as embodied subjectivity. *Journal of Sociology*, 47(1), 71-87.
- Fish, J. N., & Russell, S. T. (2018). Queering methodologies to understand queer families. *Family Relations*, 67(1), 12-25.
- Jacobs, J. A., & Frickel, S. (2009). Interdisciplinarity: A critical assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35(1), 43-65.
- James, A. G., Coard, S. I., Fine, M. A., & Rudy, D. (2018). The central roles of race and racism in reframing family systems theory: A consideration of choice and time. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10(2), 419-433.
- Huang, C., Zhang, Z., Mao, B., & Yao, X. (2022). An overview of artificial intelligence ethics. *IEEE Transactions on Artificial Intelligence*, 4(4), 799-819.
- Kafer, A. (2016). Un/safe disclosures: Scenes of disability and trauma. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, 10(1), 1-20.
- Khalifa, M., & Albadawy, M. (2024). Using artificial intelligence in academic writing and research: An essential productivity tool. *Computer Methods and Programs in Biomedicine Update*, 5, 100145.
- Park, A. S. (2015). Settler colonialism and the politics of grief: Theorising a decolonising transitional justice for Indian residential schools. *Human Rights Review*, 16(3), 273-293.
- Riggs, D. W., & Peel, E. (2016). Introduction. In *Critical kinship studies: An introduction to the field* (pp. 1-21). Springer.
- Sanner, C., Williams, D. T., Mitchell, S., Jensen, T. M., Russell, L. T., & Garnett-Deakin, A. (2024). Reimagining stagnant perspectives of family structure: Advancing a critical theoretical research agenda. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 16(4), 761-786.
- Smoliak, O., Al-Ali, K., LeCouteur, A., Tseliou, E., Rice, C., LaMarre, A., Davies, A., Ugucioni, B., Stirling, L., Dechamplain, B., & Henshaw, S. (2023). The third shift: Addressing emotion work in couple therapy. *Family Process*, 62(3), 1006-1023.
- Smoliak, O. & Knudson-Martin, C. (under review, 2025). The enduring logics of settler colonialism in family therapy: A case of sociocultural attunement. *Family Process*.
- Smoliak, O., Rice, C., Rudder, D., Tseliou, E., LaMarre, A., LeCouteur, A., ... & Henshaw, S. (2025). Emotion regulation as affective neoliberal governmentality. *Family Process*, 64(1), e13064.

- Stern, J. A., Barbarin, O., & Cassidy, J. (2022). Working toward anti-racist perspectives in attachment theory, research, and practice. *Attachment & Human Development*, 24(3), 392-422.
- Szostak, R. (2012). The interdisciplinary research process. In A.F. Repko et al. (Eds.), *Case studies in interdisciplinary research* (pp. 3-19). Sage.
- Walsh, F. (2016). Family resilience: A developmental systems framework. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 13(3), 313-324.
- Wilson, N. J., & Inkster, J. (2018). Respecting water: Indigenous water governance, ontologies, and the politics of kinship on the ground. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 1(4), 516-538.

### Recommended Resource:

Repko, A. F., & Szostak, R. (2025). *Interdisciplinary research: Process and theory* (5th ed.). Sage. Print format \$156 and 180-day eBook \$59.85 or Lifetime eBook \$91. The book can be purchased online through the publisher: <https://collegepublishing.sagepub.com/products/interdisciplinary-research-5-282493>. Prices are in US dollars and are subject to change.

## 6. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Explain different meanings and forms of interdisciplinarity
- Develop and apply critical thinking skills, including the ability to understand disciplines and begin to integrate knowledge across disciplinary boundaries
- Identify and describe different theoretical orientations that underlie research and theory in Family Relations and Human Development
- Identify and describe ethical and political dimensions of research in Family Relations and Human Development
- Investigate and explain your own developing scholarly identity, including disciplinary orientations and philosophical foundations
- Practice and develop oral and written communication skills
- Practice and develop global understanding with respect to the cultural embeddedness of knowledge and ways of knowing

## 7. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES/CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due
Sept	Course Overview		
Sept	Introducing Interdisciplinary Studies	Jacobs & Frickel (2009) Szostak (2012)	Journal 1
Sept	Types of Interdisciplinarity AI in Interdisciplinary Research	Khalifa & Albadawy (2024) Huang et al. (2023)	Journal 2
Sept	Integrating Disciplinary Insights	Smoliak et al. (2023) Smoliak et al. (2025) Smoliak & Knudson-Martin (2025)	Journal 3
Oct	Family Studies Family Systems Theory	Dyer (2025) Allen & Henderson (2022)	Journal 4 Family Theory Presentation Group 1 (Family Systems Theory)

		James et al. (2018)	
Oct	Critical Kinship Studies	Riggs & Peel (2016) Wilson & Inkster (2018) Farrugia (2010)	Journal 5 Family Theory Presentation Group 2 (Critical Kinship Studies)
Oct	Attachment Theory	Choate & Tortorelli (2022) Stern et al. (2022)	Journal 6
Oct	Feminist Theory Queer Theory	Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra (2015) Fish & Russell (2018)	Journal 7 Family Theory Presentation Group 3 (Feminist Theory)
Oct	Family Developmental Theory Family Stress and Resilience Theory	Walsh (2016) Park (2015) Kafer (2016)	Journal 8 Family Theory Presentation Group 4 (Family Developmental Theory)
Nov	Critical Race Theory Functionalist Theory	Burton et al. (2010) DePouw (2018) Sanner et al. (2024)	Journal 9 Family Theory Presentation Group 5 (Critical Race Theory)
Nov	NO CLASS – Individual meetings with the instructor to discuss Interdisciplinary Paper		Journal 10 (explore how you have grown and what you have learned as an interdisciplinary scholar throughout the course)
Nov	Last Class: Reflection on Learning		Interdisciplinary Paper

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule; however, due to various unknown factors there may be changes. Any changes will be announced during class and an announcement will be posted on the CourseLink site.

## 8. ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Assessment	LOs Addressed	Due Date Final	% of
Reading Journals (N=10)	1-7	Before each class	30
Family Theory Presentation	2, 3, 6, 7	See Class Schedule	30
Interdisciplinary Paper	1-7	November	40
			<b>Total: 100%</b>

### 1. Reading Journals

Worth: 30% (10 journals x 3% each)

Length: 1 page (double space, APA style 7 ed.)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html)

Due Date: Before each class (Dropbox)

Grading:

- Pass/fail: Not submitted – 0%; submitted – 3% (10 entries x 3% = 30%)
- Students can skip 2 journal entries during the course and get full mark (30%)
- Instructor will not read journals (unless students ask via email to read all or some journals)

Description: Throughout the course students are asked to individually write and submit journal entries about readings assigned for each class. The purpose of this assignment is to help students deepen their critical thinking, self-reflection, and writing skills. It also ensures that students complete readings which is essential for generative class discussions and collective learning. In their journals, students may discuss readings as a whole or focus on specific parts that stand out for them. There is no need nor expectation to read or reference other works beyond the specific reading for that week. *Students are asked to minimize summarizing a reading and focus on critiquing it.* The following questions are provided as examples of what reflections can focus on (students are free to address other questions in their individual reflections): What is the author(s) purpose? What claims does the author make? Do you find the claims persuasive? What is the author's primary method of persuading the audience? What have you learned from this reading? What have you learned? What questions does this reading raise for you? What issues or considerations are addressed or overlooked in the text? What puzzles or confuses you from the reading? If you find a claim interesting, why was it interesting? If you (dis)agree with a claim, why? In the last Journal 10 students are asked to reflect on their learning and development as interdisciplinary scholars during the course.

## **2. Family Theory Presentation**

Worth: 30%

Length: 60 minutes

Group Size: 2–3 students (see CourseLink/Groups)

Presentation Date: See Class Schedule

Grading: The grading rubric can be found online (see CourseLink/Rubrics)

Description: The study of FRHD is informed by many different theoretical perspectives. Students will work in groups of 2-3 to teach an assigned family therapy. The assignment is designed to provide an opportunity for students to delve into one theoretical perspective in detail, while also learning from each other about a broader range of theories. Students are encouraged to adapt this assignment to their own interests, preferences, and style. In addition to summarizing a theory, students are expected to identify and discuss *critiques* of each theory. Students can choose to present in any format they like (e.g., traditional academic presentation using PowerPoint, poetry, interpretive dance, experiential activities, class discussion). The aim is to effectively teach the class about a theory and develop critical thinking and presentation skills. Students are expected to properly cite others' work. Presenters are welcome to discuss their ideas and plans for the presentation with the instructor to get feedback.

## **3. Interdisciplinary Paper**

Worth: 40%

Length: 12 pages excluding references and the title page (double space, APA style 7 ed.)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html)

Due Date: November (Dropbox)

Grading: The grading rubric can be found online (CourseLink/Rubrics)

Description: This conceptual/theoretical paper will show students' attempts to practice interdisciplinary inquiry. Students can employ any form of interdisciplinarity. They can select a concept from their "home" discipline and apply it to insights/theories from other disciplines. Alternatively, they can import a "new" concept from another discipline into their home discipline. They

can use other ways of integrating knowledge discussed in the course or covered in their readings. Students are encouraged to discuss their plan for the paper with the instructor before writing the paper. The last 2-3 pages of the paper should include students' reflections on interdisciplinarity in tackling their selected topic/concept/issue.

Students can explore any topic that aligns with their field of study, such as family relationships, sexuality, psychology, or nutrition, or any subject connected to academic or scholarly inquiry more broadly. Students can integrate insights from two or more disciplines to explore artificial intelligence (AI), climate change, decolonization, evolving cultural perspectives on family, and other topics. Recent examples of interdisciplinary papers authored by the course instructor are available on CourseLink under Content/Examples of Interdisciplinarity.

## **9. COURSE STATEMENTS**

### **Land Acknowledgement:**

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

### **Course Website:**

There is a course website at <http://courselink.uoguelph.ca>. All components of this course will be housed on the CourseLink site including this course outline, assignments, and links to further resources. Your assignments will be submitted through the Dropbox function. Marks and feedback will also be released on the site. Please familiarize yourself with this website as soon as possible and visit it regularly throughout the semester.

### **Late Assignments:**

Late assignments will be accepted up to 5 days following the due date and will receive a penalty of 10% per day EXCEPT under documented grounds for compassionate consideration.

Assignments submitted more than one week late without documented grounds will receive a grade of zero. If you are going to hand an assignment in late, you must contact your course instructor to inform them when you will be submitting your assignment.

### **Receipt of Grades:**

After you receive a grade on CourseLink, please review your feedback. Any inquiry or dispute over the grade must be made within two weeks from the date they are posted. If you fail to protest any grade during this time limit, changes to the grade will not be considered. Grades will be based on the Grading Procedures outlined in the Graduate Calendar.

### **Turnitin Software:**

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject

to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing academic misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.

## **10. UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS**

### **E-mail communication:**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### **When you cannot meet a course requirement:**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Graduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).

### **Drop date:**

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two- semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses are available in the Graduate Calendar.

### **Copies of out-of-class assignments:**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### **Accessibility:**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student. When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. More information:

[www.uoguelph.ca/sas](http://www.uoguelph.ca/sas)

### **Academic misconduct:**

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is outlined in the Graduate Calendar. The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of



supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it.

Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. Instructors **shall not** determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam. Instructors **can** determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools. For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct see: <https://guides.lib.uoguelph.ca/academicintegrity>

### **Recording of materials:**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

### **Resources:**

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

### **Disclaimer:**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email. This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-%20information/>) and circulated by email.

### **Illness:**

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

### **COVID-19 Safety Protocols:**

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2021/06/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/>

<https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/return-campus>

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.