



FRHD*4020 Family Theory COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2025

1.CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Credit Weight: 0.5 credits
Course Hours: 3-0 (36 lecture; 0 lab/seminar)
Pre-Requisite(s): 12.50 credits including FRHD*1020
Co-Requisites(s): None
Restriction(s): This is a Priority Access Course. Enrolment may be restricted to particular programs or specializations or semester levels during certain periods. Please see departmental website for more information.

2.COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines theories about families that are used by social science researchers, policy makers, and service providers. It emphasizes the role of culture and critical approaches to understanding family and kinship relations and the role of theory in advancing equity, as well as social and environmental justice.

3.TIMETABLE

Lecture:
Location:
Final Exam:

4.INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Course Instructor: Dr. Olga Smoliak, C.Psych., RMFT, Professor in Family Relations & Human Development
Email: osmoliak@uoguelph.ca
Telephone: 519-824-4120 ext.56336
Office:
Office Hours:

Teaching Assistant:
Email:
Office Hours:

5.LEARNING RESOURCES

Required Resource(s):

Textbook (University Bookstore):

Allen, K. R. & Henderson, A. C. (2023) *Family theories today: A critical intersectional approach* (2nd ed.). Cognella.

The University Bookstore: Print format \$89.99

180-Day eBook (PDF)

\$63.99

<https://campusebookstore.com/link/?id=fb08402d-e8f3-4049-af02-b3b0f8831e6e>

Lifetime eBook (PDF)

\$70.99

<https://campusebookstore.com/link/?id=c47b3ff5-e8d9-4f80-b878-7c586f9f6cef>

These be purchased in-store and online through the University Bookstore website. Prices are subject to change.

University of Guelph Library: There are two copies: one can be signed out and the other is on 4-hour reserve.

Other required readings (Courselink/Readings – can be accessed free of charge):

Fletcher, H. K., & Gallichan, D. J. (2016). An overview of attachment theory: Bowlby and beyond. In H. K. Fletcher et al. (Eds.), *Attachment in intellectual and developmental disability: A clinician's guide to practice and research* (pp. 8-32). Wiley.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Petry, S. (2020). Genograms: Mapping family systems. In *Genograms: Assessment and treatment* (ch. 1). WW Norton & Company.

Sánchez, R. O., Letiecq, B. L., & Ginsberg, M. R. (2019). An integrated model of family strengths and resilience: Theorizing at the intersection of indigenous and western paradigms. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 11(4), 561-575.

Tam, B. Y., Findlay, L. C., & Kohen, D. E. (2017). Indigenous families: Who do you call family?. *Journal of Family Studies*, 23(3), 243-259.

6.LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Describe what theory is and how it can be used to analyze family experience
2. Identify and compare theoretical frameworks used by social scientists and practitioners
3. Describe how theoretical frameworks and concepts shape research and practice with families
4. Demonstrate an understanding of critical approaches to theorizing the family, including appreciation of how social structures of power and marginalization are reflected in and reproduced by dominant theories
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how Indigenous approaches to family and kinship challenge dominant (Eurocentric) theorizing related to family
6. Reflect on your own theoretical biases and developing orientations related to families
7. Demonstrate effective written communication skills
8. Develop effective oral communication skills
9. Develop your participation skill set through personal goal setting and reflection

7.TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Date	Topics	Assigned Readings	Assignments
	Course overview		
	What is theory?	Textbook Ch. 1	
	Functionalist theory	Textbook Ch. 2	
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Attachment theory	Fletcher & Gallichan (2016)	Family Theory Assignment 1
	Symbolic interactionist theory	Textbook Ch. 4	
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Family developmental theory Life course theory	Textbook Chs. 5 & 9	
	Family systems theory	Textbook Ch. 6 McGoldrick et al. (2020)	
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Social exchange theory	Textbook Ch. 7	
	No Class (Fall Break)		
	Family ecological theory	Textbook Ch. 10	Family Theory Assignment 2
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Family stress and resilience theory	Textbook Ch. 11	
	Conflict theory	Textbook Ch. 3	
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Queer theory	Textbook Ch. 13	
	Critical race theory <i>Guest speaker: McKaylah Nurse (Program Assistant, Student Experience, University of Guelph)</i>	Textbook Ch. 12	
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Feminist theory <i>Guest speaker: Sandhya Seeram</i>	Textbook Ch. 8	
	Indigenous families <i>Guest speaker: Dr. Kim Anderson</i>	Sánchez et al. (2019) Tam et al. (2017) Optional: two documents posted on	

		CourseLink	
	Indigenous families <i>Guest speaker: Dr. Kim Anderson</i>		
	<i>Group Presentations</i>		Group Presentations
	Last class Reflection on learning		Participation Reflection Final Exam

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	% of Final
Family Theory Assignment 1	1, 3, 6, 7		10
Group Presentation	1-5, 8	See Schedule	20
Family Theory Assignment 2	2, 3, 4, 6, 7		25
Participation	7, 9		10
Final Exam	1-5		35
			Total: 100%

Students can find a detailed description of each assignment on Courselink under the Assignments section.

9.COURSE STATEMENTS

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that 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 our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them. Acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn and work.

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 Undergraduate 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 Undergraduate 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 Undergraduate 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

Academic misconduct:

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is outlined in the Undergraduate 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 misconduct.

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-information/>) 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/return-to-campus/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/>

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

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