COURSE FOCUS AND CONTENT OBJECTIVES

This course develops your capacity to think and learn critically, actively, and deeply about different world views or viewpoints and their corresponding belief systems or ideologies about the purposes and realities of (a) families; (b) family phenomena such as marriage, parenthood, divorce, remarriage, etc.; (c) family ethics and values; (d) family policy; (e) the social, political, and cultural contexts in which these things are embedded; and (f) your analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of these concerns as you discover their relevance and application to your own family belief system. A belief system or ideology or world view is a composite perspective of organized beliefs, values, morals, ideals, assumptions, attitudes, ideas, etc., for thinking about and understanding people, groups, institutions, as well as issues, problems, phenomena, research findings, policies, the relationships between any and all of these, and many other things. Belief systems help explain the world, the universe, life itself, and virtually all things that “should” or “should not” be a particular way according to the corresponding belief system. Moral or ethical systems of beliefs help us understand ideas about what is considered to be moral or immoral, good or bad, right or wrong. We will study how some of these ethical systems influence the way we think about the different aspects of families and family life that we have just identified above for this course. Political parties, religions, social movements, artists, scientists, professors, students, parents, and children all utilize them quite independent of how explicit or conscious they may be to us. Most of us don’t usually know a lot about the specific components of our personal belief system. Each system you study helps you think differently about things you already know as it uncovers new content and considerations. This will also help you learn more about your own belief system and how it works. The following COURSE CONTENT OBJECTIVES can be articulated:

1. Develop a deeper understanding of and consciousness of different beliefs about families and how they make a difference in the ways we perceive and think about families, their purposes and problems, related family phenomena, and your own family experience within the context of our contemporary society.
2. Develop a deeper understanding of the rich, intricate complexity of issues pertaining to the well-being of families and family members, their development, and the always problematic role of family policy and the family beliefs and values that policies are based on in securing and providing for family well-being.
3. Develop a deeper understanding of some of our society’s more problematic family concerns as they are diversely studied by researchers, therapists, educators, policy makers, and concerned citizens so you are able to see the relevant applications of these things to your personal world of experience, your family, and to different parts of our society.
4. Develop a deeper understanding of the central ideas, values, assumptions, and practices of those who espouse different important contemporary social, political, ethical, and philosophical viewpoints.
5. Develop a deeper understanding of personal and collective beliefs, values, and assumptions; how they are acquired and developed; how resistant they are to change; and how they can be changed.
6. Develop a deeper understanding of the processes that influence the congruity or disparity between beliefs people profess to hold, the related practices or behaviors they enact, and how people can acquire the consistency between beliefs and practices that is necessary for ethical and morally responsible decisions, choices, and actions.
This course has been developed, in part, to meet the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) program standards for competency in “ethical thinking and practice for family and parent educators” as they have been designed and articulated by the National Council on Family Relations. The course is also designed as a writing emphasis (i.e., earns upper-division communication/writing credit) course for a variety of reasons: (a) to provide you with more integrated, holistic, and meaningful learning experiences; (b) to further your understanding of some of the processes of communicating in the social and behavioral sciences; and (c) to help you discover greater depths of understanding about yourself, your personal system of thinking, and the course content. You will have many opportunities to reflect on and articulate through writing and class discussion your questions, learning, and insights.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS AVAILABLE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH BOOKSTORE

4. Some of the required readings are on “Electronic Reserve” through the Marriott Library. You may access these reserved readings through the student portal. Login into My.Utah.edu, click on “Academics” and a link to the reserved readings for this course should be available there for you.
5. Several required readings for the term can be accessed directly from web pages on the internet.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE BOOK AVAILABLE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH BOOKSTORE


RECOMMENDED BOOKS AVAILABLE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH BOOKSTORE


COURSE LEARNING DEMONSTRATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

There are no exams or term projects in this course. Your learning and mastery of course content is transformed into an array of personalized learning demonstrations — the majority of which require some form of writing, analysis, insightful discussion, and careful contemplation rather than summarizing, reiterating, rephrasing, restating, regurgitating, and rote memorizing. Your final course grade is based on the following components:

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES (33% of grade). During most class meetings we engage in activities, as individuals and/or in small groups, that build on your class preparation, readings, and other class activities. A few activities may require work outside of class but most are completed in class. For these activities, you receive credit if you are present, participate effectively, and turn in your work at the end of the particular class meeting with your name on it. Since these activities take place and have their intended meaning within the context of a particular class meeting, you have to be in class to participate.
and receive credit. Parts of activities missed because you were late in coming to class or activities missed because you were not in class at all, cannot be made up. Your grade for participating in these activities will be determined by the percentage of the total number of these activities that you complete in class.

**WEEKLY QUOTES AND INSIGHTS (33% of grade).** Starting with the required reading assignments for the fourth week of the term this assignment will be completed for any eight of the weekly reading assignments thereafter. Your quotations, accompanying insights, and questions are due at the beginning of the first class meeting of each of the eight weeks you select to write about. You receive full credit for these assignments if you complete them accurately. I do not attempt to evaluate your reasoning or your writing in these assignments. The required elements of these assignments will be discussed will be discussed in class. Your grade for this part of the class is your completed percentage of the eight possible weekly assignments.

**LEARNING ANALYSES (34% of grade).** Two times during the term you are to write in essay form, an analysis of some important aspects of your personal learning that you have acquired due to your course-related studies and experiences. This will include an in-depth analysis of relevant quotations and related definitions of important words, concepts, and terms from the course reading assignments. One focus for your analyses will be on what you have learned from your reading and study that you didn’t understand before (the *What!* of your learning). The other focus will be on how you can apply what you learn into your own thinking and actions (the *So what!* of your learning). You may choose what you write about and when you write it. You are encouraged to elaborate on and analyze in greater depth and detail things you have written about in your **WEEKLY QUOTES AND INSIGHTS.** These analyses are intended to help you build on and write about the course-related learning you have been experiencing inside and outside of class. In this course we assume that the authors we study are also some of the “teachers” from whom we will have the opportunity to learn. Consequently, these analytical writing assignments are designed to help you learn to think and write analytically about specific things you learn from your studying of these authors and how they are helpful to you and your understanding of things that are important and relevant for you. In this kind of writing, your own opinions and viewpoints become useful and informative after you have come to understand what the different authors are teaching you rather than before. This is one of the primary means by which you will identify and articulate *insights, enlightenment, or increased understanding* from your reading, thinking, writing, and discussing in our class that can be integrated with your prior thinking and level of understanding.

**NOTE:** The following list of class meetings and reading assignments is from SPRING 2010. It may change to some degree before the Semester begins. The accurate list of class meetings and reading assignments will be forthcoming.

### CLASS MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Each week of the term is listed below with its respective class meetings, dates, and reading assignments. The reading assignments itemized immediately below a particular week are to be completed before coming to the first class meeting of that week and the **WEEKLY QUOTES AND INSIGHTS** selected from them are due at the beginning of the first class meeting of that week and are written-up before the readings from which they are selected are discussed in class. Each reading is preceded by one of several symbols. A ‘□’ means the reading can be found on the Web; a ‘祀’ means the reading can be found on e-reserve; and a ‘.Circle’ means the reading can be found in one of the course textbooks. During most class meetings, we will work directly with the content from one or more of the assigned readings. Bringing copies of the assigned readings to class meetings will be very helpful. I will endeavor to keep you informed of which readings we are likely to work with prior to each class meeting.

#### WEEK ONE: January 12

□ Course Syllabus and introduction to the study of family belief systems
Tavris, Carol. “Women as love’s experts and love’s victims” in Feuds about families, 123-130.

Newberg. “Ordinary criminals like you and me: The gap between behavior and moral beliefs” (from beginning of chapter to end of “Electrocuting a ‘student’ at Yale”) in Born to believe, 132-147.

WEEK EIGHT: March 2

Benokraitis. “Sex and Cohabitation” in Feuds about families, 101-103. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]

Schlessinger, Laura. “Stupid cohabitation: The ultimate female self-delusion” in Feuds about families, 131-137.

Doherty, William J. “How therapists threaten marriages” in Feuds about families, 138-145.

Martin, Andrea. “Why get married?” in Feuds about families, 146-147.

Manning. “Moral perspectives II: Care, fairness, professional codes” (from beginning of chapter to end of “The care voice and the justice voice”) in Guide to ethics, 69-79.

Newberg. “Ordinary criminals like you and me: The gap between behavior and moral beliefs” (from “Reserve Police Battalion 101” to chapter end) in Born to believe, 147-164.

WEEK NINE: March 9

Benokraitis. “Marriage” in Feuds about families, 103-104. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]

Flanders, Steven. “The benefits of marriage” in Feuds about families, 148-152.

Waite, Linda J. “Social science finds: ‘Marriage matters’” in Feuds about families, 153-159.


Manning. “Moral perspectives II: Care, fairness, professional codes” (from “Care and other moral perspectives” to chapter end) in Guide to ethics, 79-88.

Newberg. “Becoming a better believer” (from beginning of chapter to end of “The foolish brain”) in Born to believe, 246-258.

WEEK TEN: March 16

Benokraitis. “Family Crises and Transitions” in Feuds about families, 300-309. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]

Stanton, Glenn T. “Finding fault with no-fault divorce” in Feuds about families, 334-337.

Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. “Dismantling the divorce culture” in Feuds about families, 338-344.

Kurz, Demie. “Why women seek divorce” in Feuds about families, 345-353.


Newberg. “Becoming a better believer” (from “The CIA’s war against bias” to chapter end) in Born to believe, 258-271.

WEEK ELEVEN: March 30

Benokraitis. “Remarriage and Stepfamilies” in Feuds about families, 302-304. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]

Heth, William A. “Why remarriage is wrong” in Feuds about families, 354-355.


Newberg. “Epilogue: Life, the Universe, and our “ultimate” beliefs” in Born to believe, 273-280.

WEEK TWELVE: April 6

Benokraitis. “Parents and Children” in Feuds about families, 173-176. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]

Christensen, Bryce J. “Imperiled infants” in Feuds about families, 177-185.


Newberg. “Nuns, Buddhists, and the reality of spiritual beliefs” in Born to believe, 167-190.
WEEK THIRTEEN: April 13

- Benokraitis. “Raising Children” in *Feuds about families*, 174-175. [No quote needed.]


**RECOMMENDED:**


- Straus, Murray S. “Ten myths that perpetuate corporal punishment” in *Feuds about families*, 215-221.

- Newberg. “Speaking in tongues” in *Born to believe*, 191-214 (read for new ideas and insights about beliefs and how they work, particularly pages 210-214).

WEEK FOURTEEN: April 20

- Benokraitis. “Gay and Lesbian Families” in *Feuds about families*, 175-176. [No quote needed.]

- Burtoft, Lawrence E. “Gay parenting and the developmental needs of children” in *Feuds about families*, 222-228.

- Okun, Barbara F. “Gay and lesbian parenting” in *Feuds about families*, 229-233.

- Stoddard, Thomas B. “Why gay people should seek the right to marry” in *Feuds about families*, 234-238.


WEEK FIFTEEN: April 27

- Benokraitis. “Raising Children” in *Feuds about families*, 174-175. [No quote needed.]


**RECOMMENDED:**
