PREVIEW!!  

SPRING 2012  
FAMILY BELIEF SYSTEMS  
Family and Consumer Studies 3240, Section 1 — 3.0 credit hours  
Tuesdays, 4:35 - 7:05 p.m., in AEB 340

Successfully passing this course earns Upper-division Communication/Writing Credit

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ON-LINE COPY OF CURRENT SYLLABUS IS AVAILABLE AT:
<http://www.fcs.utah.edu/people/faculty/herrin/>

PREVIEW NOTE: This preview syllabus is from FALL 2011 semester. The assignment due dates, list of class meetings, and reading assignments included below are therefore not completely accurate for SPRING 2012. They are likely to change in some degree before the actual Semester begins. The accurate information regarding due dates, class meetings, and reading assignments will be forthcoming.

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 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.

To do these accurately and effectively, you must learn to perceive things and think about them in a fundamentally different manner than you are accustomed to. You must learn and then be willing to ask yourself questions that help you discover insight, understanding, and enlightenment about the things we study. Seeing things in a different perspective will help you think differently about things you already know as it uncovers new content and considerations. This enables you to identify different ideas and issues, ask different questions, and develop different frames of reference. Learning new ways of thinking helps you understand more critically the ways you think so you can more clearly articulate your beliefs and values with their relevant justifications and implications. These are essential elements of an education that respects and reflects diversity and complexity. Meeting these objectives — and the personal challenges they present — requires us to study and learn the complexity of the course content and our own belief system — and our experience — on much deeper levels. I refer to this kind of education and educating as “deep learning.”

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. This course is also designed to meet the University’s requirements for upper-division communication/writing credit courses. This has been done 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. Finally, this class is designed to be more of a seminar/discussion class than a lecture class. Each class member will be given opportunities to raise questions, make observations, share relevant experiences, and comment on content learned from class reading assignments and in response to things said by other class members in class discussions or in their writing. It is intended that 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 for the term are on “Electronic Reserve” through the Marriott Library. You may access these reserved readings by first going to the Library’s new search experience located at: <http://search.library.utah.edu>. Once there, log-in and then select the course reserves tab. Enter “Herrin” or our course number or the author’s name in the top box. Scroll down through the results until you find the particular reading. The following link takes you to a help page that explains how to access e-reserve readings from campus as well as off campus: <http://campusguides.lib.utah.edu/course_reserves_guide>.
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


OTHER COURSE RELATED RESOURCE MATERIALS

There is an additional course related set of resources that I encourage you to use. It is called “Deep Learning:” A Critical Thinking Resource (<http://www.fcs.utah.edu/people/faculty/herrin/deeplearning.pdf>). Feel free to browse through it and use aspects of it that you find helpful. We will refer to some of the material in class.

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 complete the components discussed below for week four and any seven of the weekly reading assignments thereafter. A printed hard copy of 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. WEEKLY QUOTES AND INSIGHTS are intended to be completed and brought to class before we discuss the reading assignment upon which they are based. **They will be counted late if they are turned in at any other time** (i.e., later in the class period, later in the day, the following day, etc.). You receive full credit for each of these assignments if you complete all the required components accurately and turn them in on time. Your grade for this part of the class is your completed percentage of the eight possible weekly assignments. I do not attempt to evaluate your reasoning or your writing in these assignments. The required elements of these assignments will be discussed in class. The purpose of the writing in these assignments is to write about the things that you discover in the reading assignments that are insightful and useful to you and to write about your insights or increased understanding or sense of discovery and the kinds of questions you have after having read and written to increase your understanding. Pondering on questions and concerns you have identified as you work through your reading assignments and then reading to discover answers to your questions will give you a different vantage point for reflecting on your reading assignments and what you learn from them then you would have if you were simply writing after you had read the assignments simply to complete the assignment. This is intended to be a different kind of writing than writing off-the-top-of-your-head that is more common to the writing we do during our IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES.
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.

LATE WORK. I keep a careful record of if and when you turn-in your eight WEEKLY QUOTES AND INSIGHTS and LEARNING ANALYSES ONE and TWO. At the end of the term, I calculate the percentage of all of these assignments that you turned-in late (if any). I subtract this percentage from the total overall grade you have earned. Your grade will not be affected by one or two isolated cases of lateness if you have otherwise submitted your other assignments on time. If all of your work is turned in late, it will drop your grade a full letter grade, for example, from a “B” to a “C.” I allow you to turn-in late up to 25% of your work without it influencing your grade.

GRADING EXPLANATION. Typically, you are encouraged to include three different emphases in all of your writing and communicating in our class. These emphases are: (1) demonstrating what you learn and come to know, how/why your learning is important and relevant to you, and what makes it worth learning; (2) doing something with what you learn and come to know by articulating changes you could consider making to improve things as they are in your thinking and in the things that you do, the implications for you and important others of taking your changes seriously if they were implemented, and the opposition from yourself and others you could anticipate to your recommendations and your response to this opposition; and (3) your use of good reasoning and intellectual processes such as explaining, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and applying with clarity, precision, accuracy, consistency, depth, breadth, and careful reasoning. These are all things our class is designed to help you learn to do.

GRADING SCALE. Your final course grade is computed using various weights for the different types of class assignments. Letter grades are assigned to percentages according to the scales listed below.

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<thead>
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<th>GRADE</th>
<th>“–” Range</th>
<th>Letter only</th>
<th>“+” Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A = EXCELLENT</td>
<td>90 - 93.9 %</td>
<td>94 - 100 %</td>
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</tr>
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<td>B = GOOD</td>
<td>80 - 83.9 %</td>
<td>84 - 86.9 %</td>
<td>87 - 89.9 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>C = ADEQUATE</td>
<td>70 - 73.9 %</td>
<td>74 - 76.9 %</td>
<td>77 - 79.9 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>D = INADEQUATE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>E = NO GRADE</td>
<td>&lt; 60 %</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

AUGUST 31 !!!REMINDER: LAST DAY TO DROP COURSES!!!
SEPTEMBER 6 !!!REMINDER: LAST DAY TO ADD COURSES!!!
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 ‘□’ means the reading can be found in one of the course textbooks, and a ‘□’ means the reading is accessible from my faculty website (<http://www.fcs.utah.edu/people/faculty/herrin/>) under the section for this course. 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: August 23

□ Course Syllabus and introduction to the study of family belief systems

WEEK TWO: August 30

□ Benokratis. “Introduction” in Feuds about families, 1.
□ Newberg. “A mountain of misperceptions: Searching for beliefs in a haystack of neurons” in Born to believe, 16-44.

WEEK THREE: September 6

□ Benokratis, Nijole V. “How family wars affect us: four models of family change and their consequences” in Feuds about families, 14-24.
□ Newberg. “Feuds about families” in Feuds about families, 39-46.

WEEK FOUR: September 13

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QUOTES (‘Q’), ONE INSIGHT (‘!’), ONE QUESTION (‘?’); MANNING: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?; NEWBERG: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?; 11.]
□ Benokratis. “Defining Marriage and Family Issues” in Feuds about families, 25-29. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]
□ Benokratis. “Current Perspectives on the Family” in Feuds about families, 25-26. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]
□ Fagan, Patrick F. “The breakdown of the family” in Feuds about families, 30-38.
□ Elshtain, Jean, Enola Aird, Amitai Etzioni, William Galston, Mary Ann Glendon, Martha Minow, and Alice Rossi. “A communitarian position on the family” in Feuds about families, 39-46.
□ Coontz, Stephanie. “Why we miss the 1950s” in Feuds about families, 47-57.
□ Newberg. “Becoming a better believer” (from beginning of chapter to end of “The foolish brain”) in Born to believe, 246-258.

WEEK FIVE: September 20

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QS, ONE !, ONE ?; MANNING: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?; NEWBERG: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?; 11.]


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

WEEK SIX: September 27

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QS, ONE !, ONE ?, NEWBERG: TWO QS, ONE !, ONE ?/ = 9.]  
Benokraitis. “Women’s and Men’s Family Roles” in *Feuds about families*, 28. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]


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 SEVEN: October 4

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QS, ONE !, ONE ?, NEWBERG: TWO QS, ONE !, ONE ?/ = 9.]  
Benokraitis. “Love, Sex, and Marriage” in *Feuds about families*, 100-105. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]

Benokraitis. “Love and Courtship” in *Feuds about families*, 100-101. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]


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 “Reserve Police Battalion 101” to chapter end) and other excerpts in *Born to believe*, 147-164, 185-190, 213, 233, 244-245.

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

WEEK EIGHT: October 18

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QS, ONE !, ONE ?, NEWBERG: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?/ = 8.]  
Benokraitis. “Sex and Cohabitation” in *Feuds about families*, 101-103. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]


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


WEEK NINE: October 25

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QS, ONE !, ONE ?, NEWBERG: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?/ = 8.]  
Benokraitis. “Marriage” in *Feuds about families*, 103-104. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]

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


WEEK TEN: November 1

[WQ&I. BENOKRAITIS: THREE QS, ONE !, ONE ?, NEWBERG: ONE Q, ONE !, ONE ?/ = 8.]  
Benokraitis. “Family Crises and Transitions” in *Feuds about families*, 300-309. [NO QUOTE NEEDED.]

Benokraitis. “Divorce” in *Feuds about families*, 301-302. [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.


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.
WEEK ELEVEN: November 8

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.


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

WEEK TWELVE: November 15

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

Benokraitis. “Single-parent Families” in Feuds about families, 173-174. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]

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


WEEK THIRTEEN: November 22

Benokraitis, “Raising Children” in Feuds about families, 174-175. [NO QUOTE NEEDED]


Bartkowski, John P., and Christopher G. Ellison. “Conservative versus mainstream models of childrearing in popular manuals” in Feuds about families, 205-214.

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


WEEK FOURTEEN: November 29

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: December 6


http://www.law.duke.edu/shell/cite.pl?15=Duke+J.+Gender+L..++&Pol%27y+127
http://www.fcs.utah.edu/~herrin/Sp123240.previewco.pdf