Families have long been considered the basic unit of our communities and society. From this vantage point, as go families, so go communities and society. The institution of the family can then be understood and studied as a microcosm of neighborhoods, communities, and society. We also have come to understand much more clearly how our neighborhoods, communities, and society shape our families and provide (or do not provide) them encouragement, support, and protection in varying degrees and forms as families endeavor to fulfill their pivotal roles. While these matters are at once social and psychological, they are also economical, political, and philosophical. For us to understand these interdependent relationships we must also become mindful of those things that will make them healthier and stronger as well as more responsive, adaptive, and resilient. Not everyone agrees on what this means should be done, how it should be done, and who should do it. But just about everyone agrees that something should be done. One very important question we will explore is whether families are declining and doing poorly or adapting and doing well. The experts do not agree. However, the experts do agree that there are a number of very critical issues facing contemporary families and, therefore, our communities and society.

There are a host of family issues (some consider them “problems”) — cohabitation, out-of-wedlock births, single parenting, divorce, fathers who don’t provide economic and social support to their children, child and spouse abuse, to name a few — that involve individuals and couples in partnerships, marriages, and families in ways that result in great costs to those individuals and families. Such costs are even more enormous and consequential as they are carried into and manifested in our neighborhoods, communities and society. Part of our course of study will be to assess and understand these costs and what can be done by individuals, families, and our communities to understand them and resolve the related problems where possible. Before we study some of these problems in greater depth and detail, we need to become familiar with some of the important questions regarding contemporary families that are being asked by interested parties in our culture and society today. A major objective of this course is to understand these important questions and how they are variously perceived and answered within different relevant points of view.

What are families? What are families for? Who belongs to them? How do you become a family?
Is cohabitation with someone else sufficient to become a family?
Is marriage to someone else necessary to become a family?
Does your partner have to be a member of the opposite sex or can he or she be of the same sex?
Do you have to create or adopt a child before you can become a family?
Can all adults parent children well enough?
Should all adults be allowed to adopt and rear children?
Who are the best parents for the optimal development of children?
Do these parents need to be coupled in some way?
Do the couples need to be heterosexual or can they be homosexual or bisexual?

Although we may not be able to explore all of these questions, it is through our study of them that we will learn that the experts on these matters do not agree on the answers to these questions. We will also become more aware of the complex concerns and issues that are relevant to the study of strong, resilient, and successful families and the things that make them so. Fortunately, there is much more agreement amongst the experts on the characteristics of strong families. Other matters of focus for this course are building and preserving (1) successful, strong, healthy, and resilient individuals and families, (2)
secure, stable, warm, and open home environments to house and sustain them, and (3) supportive, responsive, and cohesive communities to surround and sustain them.

We live in a culture that accentuates the bizarre, negative, and dysfunctional. In contrast, considerable research has documented the kinds of things that characterize strong and healthy relationships, marriages, and families, such as respectful, appreciative, and supportive relationships, processes, interactions, activities, communication, listening, problem solving, conflict resolution, and coping strategies. A major objective of the course is to study these characteristics with the intent of learning to recognize and create them in our own individual lives, marriages, families, and communities as antidotes to the negative images, messages, and emphases in our society. The course will emphasize the things we have learned through research that couples and families do to provide for individual, family, and community well-being amidst the many challenges facing them in our society. This requires that we acquire an understanding of the workings of relationships, partnerships, marriages, and family systems that are strong, healthy, and resilient which we know contribute to healthy, responsive, and responsible communities. Among other things already mentioned, we also will study things we know to be of importance to strong families and communities, such as shared histories, traditions, and rituals; kinship bonds; intimacy; ethical, spiritual, and religious orientations; coping strategies; parental supervision and monitoring; and ways of reducing delinquency, youth violence, drug abuse.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS AVAILABLE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH BOOKSTORE

1. Some of the required readings for the first half of the term are on “Electronic Reserve” through the Marriott Library.
   - Instructions pertinent to using “E-Reserve” are at the following location on the web:
   - To access “e-reserve” readings from an off-campus computer, see instructions at:
     http://www.lib.utah.edu/information/remote.html.

2. Several required readings for the first half of the term can be accessed directly from web pages on the internet.


Lecture notes for the different reading assignments are available to read and/or download to your own computer from my faculty web site which is located at: http://www.fcs.utah.edu/faculty/herrin/. Simply scroll down to the relevant items listed under the section labeled “Current Course Syllabi, Overhead Notes, and Materials.” The notes are essentially the text of the overheads that I use in class lectures. Hopefully, by having the notes for a particular lecture when you attend, you can listen more for things that are of interest to you and how the things we are learning might be applied in your own lives and jot down some notes about such things rather than having to copy down all the information on the overheads.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS AVAILABLE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH BOOKSTORE


COURSE LEARNING DEMONSTRATIONS, ACTIVITIES, AND COURSE "ODDS and ENDS"

EXAMS (80% of total course grade). There are three in-class exams. The highest two of three exam grades are counted for the final grade after the lowest of the three exams is dropped. If you know that you will miss two of the three exams, please realize it will be difficult to get a grade higher than a D. If you are satisfied with your first two exam grades, you do not have to take the third exam. The exams contain approximately 100 to 130 items that are primarily multiple-choice and true/false items with some matching and short fill-in items. Exams cover both topics and content discussed in class lectures and/or the readings. THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS. THE EXAMS are scheduled on WEDNESDAYS MAY 23, JUNE 6, and JUNE 20. The third exam IS NOT comprehensive and is taken during the last 75 minutes of the class period.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES (20% 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, and turn your work in 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. These exercises are intended to provide experiences with additional forms of learning in addition to reading and listening to lectures. Your grade for these activities will be determined by the percentage of the total number of these activities that you complete in class. There will be at least ten of these activities.

GRADING SCALE. Letter grades are assigned to exam scores and to total points at the end of the term according to the scale of percentages listed below.

- 93 - 100 = A
- 90 - 92.9 = A-
- 87 - 89.9 = B+
- 83 - 86.9 = B
- 80 - 82.9 = B-
- 77 - 79.9 = C+
- 73 - 76.9 = C
- 70 - 72.9 = C-
- 67 - 69.9 = D+
- 63 - 66.9 = D
- 60 - 62.9 = D-
- < 60 = E

REQUESTS for SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS by STUDENTS with DISABILITIES. Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations to meet the expectations of this course are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted during the first week of the term along with the request for special accommodations. To do so, contact the Center for Disabled Student Services, located at 160 Union Building (phone 581-5020).

PRIVACY of STUDENT INFORMATION and MATERIALS. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1974, among other things, prohibits the public posting of grades or test scores using personally identifiable information (such as name or social security number) and the distribution of graded exams and assignments from a public area. If there arises a need to post grades or scores during the term, I will assign each student a random number or name or use an exam booklet I.D. number which will then be used for identification purposes.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT. Avoid all forms of "academic dishonesty" (cheating, plagiarism, collusion, etc.). "Plagiarism" is the appropriation of any other person’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own work offered for credit. "Collusion" is the unauthorized collaboration with any other person in preparing work offered for credit (see Article XI, Proscribed Conduct of the University of Utah Student Code, enacted in 1971, page 8.)

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY. Each of you may formally withdraw from the course for academic reasons up through FRIDAY, JUNE 1. If you remain in the course after this date you cannot withdraw for academic reasons at any other time during the term. The online Student Information System includes the following “Notice” regarding this matter [see “drop/withdrawal deadlines”]:

After the withdrawal deadline, you may petition for withdrawal if you have a nonacademic emergency. Submit a petition and supporting documentation to the office of the dean of your academic college. Undeclared, nonmatriculated and pre-major students apply to the University College. You must submit the petition to the appropriate dean’s office by the last day of regular course instruction preceding the final exam period.
INCOMPLETE POLICY. According to University policy, students must have completed 80% of the course requirements to be eligible for an “Incomplete” grade.

CLASS MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS
This schedule is flexible with respect to timing since we may spend more or less time on a topic as determined by class interest. Exam dates can be taken seriously and planned for accordingly. The reading assignments itemized below a particular date or dates are to be completed before coming to the date’s class meeting. Before each reading, you will find one of several symbols. A ‘كب’ means the reading can be found on the Web; an ‘كت’ means the reading can be found on e-reserve; and a ‘كت’ means the reading can be found in one of the course textbooks.

MEETING 1: MAY 14
INTRODUCTION TO COURSE
WHAT MAKES A FAMILY A FAMILY? WHAT ARE FAMILIES FOR?

FAMILIES ARE FOR HAVING CHILDREN OR JUST FOR ADULTS?

MEETING 2: MAY 16
CONTINUATION
DOCUMENTING CHANGING PATTERNS IN FAMILIES

CONTINUATION
ARE FAMILIES DECLINING OR ADAPTING AND PROGRESSING?

[Also at: http://members.iquest.net/~dkoons/marriage.html]

MEETING 3: MAY 21
CONTINUATION

MEETING 4: MAY 23
CONTINUATION

IN-CLASS EXAM ONE on materials through today; 75 minutes for exam

TO COHABIT OR TO MARRY OR FIRST ONE THEN THE OTHER?
http://marriage.rutgers.edu/Publications/swlt2.pdf or http://www.smartmarriages.com/cohabit.html

http://www.unmarried.org/10problems.php

Alternatives to Marriage Project. (2002). “Frequently asked questions about cohabitation.”
http://www.unmarried.org/cohabfaq.php

MAY 28  !!!MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY — NO CLASS — HAVE SOME FUN!!!

MAY 29  !!!LAST DAY TO ADD COURSES!!!

MAY 29  !!!TUITION PAYMENT DUE!!!

CONTINUATION

PURPOSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF DIVORCE

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002/01/14/usatcov-divorce.htm or
http://www.divorcerecovery.net/resources/newarticles2002/Even_Trying_To_See_The_Bright_Side.htm

http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-gallagher032502.shtml

PREPARATION FOR REMARRIAGE

http://www.smartmarriages.com/remarrying.html

JUNE 1  !!!LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM FIRST SESSION COURSES!!!

CONTINUATION

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG AND HAPPY FAMILIES


MYTHS AND REALITIES ABOUT SUCCESSFUL, HAPPY MARRIAGES


WHY MARRIAGES FALTER

Gottman. “How I Predict Divorce,” in The Seven Principles... (Chapter Two, 25-46).
MEETING 7: JUNE 6

CONTINUATION

BE INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH EACH OTHER’S WORLD

Gottman. “Principle 1: Enhance Your Love Maps,” in *The Seven…* (Chapter Three, 47-60).

HONOR AND RESPECT EACH OTHER TO BUILD A REWARDING, LONG-LASTING ROMANCE


IN-CLASS EXAM TWO on materials from May 23 through today; 75 minutes for exam

BE EMOTIONALLY ENGAGED IN BEING CONNECTED AND INDEPENDENT

Gottman. “Principle 3: Turn toward Each Other Instead of Away,” in *The Seven…* (Chapter Five, 79-97).

MEETING 8: JUNE 11

CONTINUATION

SHARE MARITAL POWER AND RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER’S VIEWPOINTS


CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF YOUR CONFLICTS


MEETING 9: JUNE 13

CONTINUATION

STEPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT IN A LOVING RELATIONSHIP


MEETING 10: JUNE 18

CONTINUATION

COPING WITH AND SOLVING THE RESOLVABLE


MEETING 11: JUNE 20

IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND, AND RESPECT EACH OTHER’S IMPORTANT DREAMS


BUILD DEEPER, RICHER, MORE REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS

Gottman. “Principle 7: Create Shared Meaning,” in *The Seven…* (Chapter Eleven, 243-258).

MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN KEEPING YOUR RELATIONSHIP ON COURSE


IN-CLASS EXAM THREE on materials from June 6 through today (during last 75 minutes of class)

JUNE 20 !!!END OF THE FIRST SUMMER TERM!!!

AUGUST 14 !!!GRADES AVAILABLE ON THE WEB!!!