

Social Sciences

Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society

HHS4M

Course Description

This course applies current theories and research from the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and sociology to the study of individual development, family behaviour, intimate and parent-child relationships, and the ways in which families interact within the diverse Canadian society. Students will learn the interpersonal skills required to contribute to the well-being of families, and the investigative skills required to conduct and evaluate research about individuals and families.

Prerequisite:

Any university, university/college, or college preparation course in social sciences and humanities, English, or Canadian and world studies.

Strand # 1: Self and Others

- Analyze several viewpoints on similarities and differences in male and female development and on the impact of those differences on the roles individuals play (e.g., Levinson's, Buss');
- Evaluate emerging research and theories (e.g., brain research, evolutionary psychology, feminist theories, theories on aging) explaining the developmental tasks of individuals at various stages of life;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of intimate relationships in the lives of individuals and families, considering the similarities and differences for males and females, and traditional and non-traditional relationships;
- Describe the findings of research on attraction and the development of intimate and love relationships in contemporary Canadian society (e.g., Fisher's study of childbearing in Canada);
- Describe the developments of parent child relationships, drawing on a variety of theories (e.g., social exchange theory, symbolic interactionism);
- Explain several theoretical perspectives on the role of the parent in the development and socialization of children (e.g., learning theory, social role theory), and describe supporting evidence from published research.

Strand # 2: Personal and Social Responsibilities

- Summarize the factors that influence decisions about individual lifestyle at various stages of life (e.g., leaving home, mid-life crisis, retirement), drawing on traditional and current research and theory (e.g., structural functionalism, feminist theory);
- Explain the role negotiation required for effective relationships at various stages of life (e.g., birth of a child, 'launching' of adult children), drawing on a variety of theoretical perspectives (e.g., systems theory, conflict theory);
- Summarize research on the causes and nature of conflict, and evaluate strategies for managing and resolving conflict in intimate relationships (e.g., decision making, problem solving, negotiating);
- Explain the factors that influence decisions relating to childbearing
- Evaluate parenting styles and strategies for achieving developmental and socialization goals, using socialization theories as criteria.

Strand # 3: Diversity, Interdependence, and Global Connections

- Analyze male and female roles in various societies and historical periods, taking into consideration societal norms and ideals, individuals' perceptions of roles and actual behaviours;
- Analyze changes in labour-force participation, taking into consideration male and female participation rates, child-labour, retirement, and the impact of work on socialization;
- Explain family forms and functions and analyze factors influencing the transition of the family form from an economic unit to a psychological one;
- Analyze the historical and ethnocultural factors affecting variations in mate-selection, marriage customs, and marital roles;
- Describe patterns and practices in child-bearing in various cultures and historical periods (e.g., reasons for having children, age and marital status of parents, family size);
- Analyze the roles of children in the family and society in various cultures and historical periods, taking into consideration expectations for pace of development, rites of passage, participation in education or labour and the nature of parent-child relationships;
- Identify cultural, historical and religious variations in parental roles, childrearing practices and the role of the extended family and society in childrearing.

Strand # 4: Social Challenges and Social Structures

- Describe current perceptions, opinions, and demographic trends relating to the life patterns of individuals (e.g., life expectancy, educational attainment, labour force participation, income), and speculate on the significance of these trends for individual development.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the effect of various aspects of social systems on individual development (e.g. legal requirements, such as age restrictions, economic factors, educational opportunities, employment trends, availability of support).
- Describe current perceptions, opinions, issues, demographic trends, and the role of various social institutions with respect to intimate relationships (e.g. definition of spouse, rights and obligations of spouses, social support).
- Describe current perceptions, opinions and demographic trends relating to child-bearing and speculate on the significance of these trends for parent-child relationships.
- Evaluate opinions and research on the subject of working mothers and related issues.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature, prevalence and consequences of child abuse, and describe strategies and programs that would facilitate its prevention and remediation.
- Summarize the current research on the effects of divorce on child development and socialization.
- Summarize the impact of economic and political instability (including war) and migration on child development and socialization.

Strand # 5: Research and Inquiry Skills

- Select and access secondary sources reflecting a variety of viewpoints.
- Demonstrate an understanding of research methodologies, appropriate research ethics and specific theoretical perspectives for conducting primary research.
- Conduct an independent study of an issue concerning individuals or families in a diverse society and report the results, using social science format and documenting sources accurately, using appropriate forms of citation.

- Demonstrate effective use of current technology to facilitate the production and communication of a research paper.