

SYLLABUS TEMPLATE FOR A COMMON CORE IS COURSE

FNES 147: FAMILY RELATIONS

General Information:

Queens College, CUNY

Department of Family, Nutrition, and Exercise Sciences

Course Mode: Hybrid

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Email Policy: Please include your name, the course name, and section number in the subject line. I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

Course Description:

This course offers an examination of interpersonal relations in contemporary American marriage and family life. Topics include dating, courtship, sex attitudes and behavior, family preplanning, communication, marital conflict, the unmarried, and elements of a successful marriage. This course is hybrid meaning some sessions meet in person and some are online. All course material, discussions, and writing assignments are available on Blackboard.

Textbook Information:

Textbook (required): Schwartz, M.A., & Scott, B.M. (2018). Marriages and Families: Diversity and Change. Pearson.

This text is offered only as an eBook. Download instructions can be found on the Pearson website: <https://www.pearson.com/store/p/marriages-and-families-diversity-and-change/P100002464901/9780134632148>

Other electronic resources: Resources that are not in the textbook, including articles, online media, videos, and activities are posted on Blackboard. Materials are posted under the "Content" tab on Blackboard. All required materials will be posted and linked at least one week in advance of the class meeting and assignment deadlines.

Discipline/Course Specific Learning Objectives:

The learning objectives (LO) that students can expect to achieve in this course are as follows:

LO1. Demonstrate understanding of marriage and family as social institutions

LO2. Examine family roles, relationships, and decision-making from an ecological framework (i.e., consider the interconnections between broad macro-level factors and micro-level proximate influences).

LO3. Apply theoretical perspectives to marriage and family, and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of theories in reference to contemporary family issues.

LO4. Explore cultural attitudes towards marriage, alternatives to marriage, and family life.

LO5. Describe and evaluate historical changes and current trends in marriage, family structures and relationships.

LO6. Describe the role of gender and social constructions of gender in marriage and families.

LO7. Identify and describe the challenges that contemporary families face over the course of the family life cycle.

CUNY COMMON CORE

This course satisfies the following Pathways CORE learning outcomes:

FC1: Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

FC2: Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically

FC3: Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

In addition, this course satisfies the Pathways Individual and Society learning outcomes:

IS1: Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.

IS2: Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.

IS3: Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.

IS4: Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.

IS5: Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.

Note: This course satisfies IS1, IS2, IS4, and IS5. Assignments and activities that meet each learning outcome are reflected in the Course Calendar.

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all in-person meetings, actively participate, and remain engaged in class. During online weeks, students should sign into Blackboard at least once per week to stay on top of announcements, assignments, etc. Although you do not receive a separate grade for attendance, I monitor attendance in class and by viewing Blackboard sign-ins.

Assignments and Exams

Exams (50 points each)

There are two non-cumulative exams, a midterm and a final. Exam material is based on textbook readings, lecture slides, and additional resources. Exams are administered on Blackboard. A review guide will be provided at least 1 week prior to each exam. There are no make-up exams unless arrangements are made in advance of the exam date and documentation is provided (i.e., illness, family emergency, Queens College sponsored event).

Response Papers (25 points each)

Response papers are assigned at the end of each unit. Response papers are based on textbook readings, lecture slides, and other assigned resources. Students apply and integrate concepts across topics in a given unit. Detailed instructions and grading rubrics are posted on Blackboard. Response papers are handed in on Blackboard and should be submitted by the date in the Course Calendar for full credit. Late papers are accepted for a reduced grade (10% deduction for 1 day late, 20% deduction for 2 days late, 50% deduction for 3 or more days late). There are 4 response papers worth 25 points each.

Online Discussion (10 points each)

Online discussions are assigned each week that class meets online (as noted in the Course Calendar). In online discussion forums, students answer a question in response to assigned material. Students must create a discussion thread AND respond to a classmate's post (for a total of 2 discussion posts) for full credit. Discussion forums are posted under the "Discussion" tab in Blackboard and linked in each week's content folder. There are 6 Discussion Forums worth 10 points each. Late discussions are accepted for ½ credit.

Class Participation (20 points)

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions when we meet in person. Participation will be assessed by attending class sessions, actively listening, and engaging in class discussions and group activities.

Course Grade

Grades are calculated using a points system. The total points possible at the end of the semester is 280. The point values used to determine final grades are indicated:

Midterm Exam	50 points
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Final Exam	50 points
Response papers (25 points X 4)	100 points
Online discussion (10 points X 6)	60 points
Class participation	20 points
Total points possible	280

Exams 35%
Response Papers 35%
Online Discussions 20%
Class Participation 10%

Course Calendar

Week	Topic	Readings*	Assignment	Meeting	Objectives/Criteria Met
UNIT 1: Perspectives in Family Studies					
1	Defining Family in a Historical Perspective	Chapter 1	--	In-person	IS1, IS2 LO1, LO4, LO5
2	Ways of Studying Families: Theory and Research	Chapter 2	Discussion Forum 1 FC1, FC2, FC3	Online	IS1, IS4 LO2, LO3
3	Understanding Gender in Context	Chapter 3	Response Paper 1 Due FC1, FC2, FC3	In-person	IS1 LO3, LO6
UNIT 2: Forming Family Relationships					
4	The Faces of Love in Marriage and Families	Chapter 4	Discussion Forum 2 FC1, FC2, FC3	Online	IS2 LO4, LO5
5	Dating and Mate Selection	Chapter 5	--	In-person	IS2 LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5
6	Sexuality and Intimate Relationships	Chapter 6	Discussion Forum 3 FC1, FC2, FC3	Online	IS2, IS5 LO2, LO4, LO5
7	Singlehood and Non-Marital Lifestyles	Chapter 7	Response Paper 2 Due	In-person	IS2 LO3, LO4, LO5, LO7

			FC1, FC2, FC3		
8	MIDTERM		FC1, FC2		
UNIT 3: Sustaining Family Relationships					
9	Marriage and Communication	Chapter 8	Discussion Forum 4 FC1, FC2, FC3	Online	IS2, IS5 LO1, LO2, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7
10	Reproduction and Parenting	Chapter 9	--	In-person	IS2 LO2, LO4, LO5, LO6
11	The Aging Family	Chapter 14	Discussion Forum 5 Response Paper 3 Due FC1, FC2, FC3	Online	IS1, IS2 LO1, LO7
UNIT 4: Family Challenges and Changes					
12	Work and Family Balance	Chapter 10	--	In-person	IS5 LO2, LO5, LO6, LO7
13	Power and Violence in Intimate Relationships	Chapter 11	Discussion Forum 6 FC1, FC3	Online	IS2, IS5 LO3, LO6, LO7
14	Divorce and Remarriage	Chapters 12 and 13	Response Paper 4 Due FC1, FC2, FC3	In-person	IS2, IS5 LO2, LO5, LO6, LO7
15	FINAL EXAM		FC1, FC2		

*Additional readings are posted on Blackboard under the weekly course content.

FNES 147 Grading Rubrics

For Response Papers

	Criteria			
	Excellent (23-25 points)	Satisfactory (19-22 points)	Needs Improvement (16-18 points)	Unsatisfactory (15 or fewer points)
Thoroughness of response	Thoroughly addresses question(s)	Satisfactorily addresses question(s); one component may be incomplete	Does not fully respond to question(s)	Poor response; does not answer question(s)
Thoughtfulness and original insight	Thoughtfully addresses question(s); provides compelling original insight	Satisfactorily addresses question(s); some insight	Response lacks depth or thoughtfulness	Poor response; significantly lacks depth and thoughtfulness
Supporting evidence and application	Accurately and thoroughly applies readings and other course materials; accurately integrates supporting evidence and provides examples	Satisfactorily applies material from readings and course content; supporting evidence and examples are mostly accurate and satisfactory	Does not fully apply materials or is not accurate in application of material and/or use of examples	Conveys little to no information from course materials, is lacking any supporting evidence, or response is completely inaccurate
Integration of topics in the unit	Topics are well integrated into response; clear demonstration of how topics are interrelated	Integration of topics is satisfactory	Topics are not fully integrated; discussion of some topics is inaccurate or incomplete	Integration of topics is completely lacking
Organization, clarity, grammar	Writing is clear and concise, no grammatical or spelling errors	Writing is mostly clear and organized with few grammatical or spelling errors	Somewhat organized; moderate level of grammatical and spelling errors	Unorganized and difficult to understand; large number of grammatical or spelling errors

For Online Discussion Forums

	Criteria			
	Excellent (9.5-10 points)	Satisfactory (8-9 points)	Needs Improvement (7-7.5 points)	Unsatisfactory (< 7 points)
Thoroughness of response	Thoroughly addresses question(s)	Satisfactorily addresses question(s); one component may be incomplete	Does not fully respond to question(s)	Poor response; does not answer question(s)
Thoughtfulness and original insight	Thoughtfully addresses question(s); provides compelling original insight	Satisfactorily addresses question(s); some insight	Response lacks depth or thoughtfulness	Poor response; significantly lacks depth and thoughtfulness
Integration of course materials and key concepts	Accurately and thoroughly integrates readings and other course materials; accurately draws on supporting evidence and provides examples	Satisfactorily integrates material from readings and course content; supporting evidence and examples are mostly accurate and satisfactory	Does not fully integrate materials or is not accurate in application of material and/or use of examples	Integrates little to no information from course materials or response, is lacking any supporting evidence, or is completely inaccurate
Organization, clarity, grammar	Writing is clear and concise, no grammatical or spelling errors	Writing is mostly clear and organized with few grammatical or spelling errors	Somewhat organized; moderate level of grammatical and spelling errors	Unorganized and difficult to understand; large number of grammatical or spelling errors
Response to classmates	Very thorough response to classmates; shows attention to detail	Satisfactory response to classmates	Response to classmates is lacking in depth and thoroughness	Response to classmates is poor or missing

FNES 147 Written Assessments

Discussion Forums

Discussion Forum 1: Ways of Studying Families: Theory and Research

Using the textbook and assigned resources, answer the questions below:

1. Research on marriages and families can be more intrusive than any other type of research. For this reason, researchers must always be cognizant of the principle, “Do no harm.” Applying the [ASA Code of Ethics](#), evaluate the implications of these principles for research on marriage and family issues. How can researchers be sure that the benefits of family research outweigh the risks?
2. Even though we all have personal experiences with family life, objectivity, replication, and precision of measurement are essential ingredients in studying the family. It is important to maintain a distinction between subjective experiences and family analysis. How can family theories and research help us move beyond assumptions that may stem from personal experiences? Describe a family theory from the textbook in your response.

Discussion Forum 2: The Faces of Love in Marriage and Families

Using the textbook and assigned resources, answer the questions below:

1. How do you define love? Do you think modern technology has changed how we define and experience love? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree or disagree that love and individualism are at odds? Is love essential to our survival? Using at least 1 theory from the textbook, explain your response.

Discussion Forum 3: Sexuality and Intimate Relationships

Using the textbook and assigned resources, answer the questions below:

1. In your opinion, whose responsibility should it be to educate children about sex?
2. Describe the role of contextual differences in sex education (e.g., society, culture, government, etc).
3. What age do you think is optimal to begin sex education in the US? Use theory and at least 1 example from the readings to support your argument.

Discussion Forum 4: Marriage and Communication

Using the textbook and assigned resources, answer the questions below:

1. What do you think is the key element in Gottman’s prediction of marital health? Do you believe he can predict divorce that accurately? Why or why not?
2. Do you think culture or technology have implications for Gottman’s approach? Use evidence from the readings to support your argument.

Discussion Forum 5: The Aging Family

Using the textbook and assigned resources answer the questions below:

1. There is considerable debate about the prestige and deference accorded to elderly people in the United States compared to other societies. Some observers suggest that elderly people in other societies enjoy more respect than their counterparts in America. Think about what factors explain the widespread disvalued labels that are frequently attached to the elderly in the United States. How do the viewpoints presented in the video suggest that we view aging? Does the video present viewpoints that go against common conceptions of aging in the US?

Discussion Forum 6: Power and Violence in Intimate Relationships

Using the textbook and assigned resources, answer the questions below:

1. What is the role of society in keeping victims of intimate partner violence from leaving abusive relationships? In other words, does our society contribute to the problem of intimate partner violence, and if so, how?
2. Do you agree that spanking is a dangerous form of discipline? What theory could be used to explain how spanking or physical punishment could turn into abuse? Identify the role of context in your response.

Response Papers

Response Paper 1

In essay format, answer the following questions using the resources assigned in UNIT 1. Be sure to draw on theory and key concepts presented in each lecture.

1. How has marriage as a social institution changed over history? Name and describe 1 change. Do marriage and family still go “hand in hand” and if so, are there cultural differences? Differences according to gender?
2. Do you think today’s patterns in family structures are a continuation of past trends or a new phenomenon? Would you argue that family as an institution is: improving, staying the same, or deteriorating?
3. There are several different theoretical perspectives involved in the study of marriage and the family. Discuss the advantages/disadvantages of having multiple perspectives. Why can we not have just one perspective?

Response Paper 2

In essay format, answer the questions using resources from UNIT 2. Draw on theory and key concepts presented in each lecture to make a cohesive argument.

1. Choose 1 theory from Chapter 4 and apply it to an anecdotal [“Lessons on Love from 100 American Couples”](#). Does the theory support what you learned in the article?
 - a. Do you think any of these lessons on love would look differently in different cultures? Why or why not? Explain.
2. Do you the findings presented in the article [“The Share of Americans Not Having Sex Has Reached a Record High”](#) surprise you? Why or why not? What do you think is the most important factor in society that accounts for the current trends in sexuality attitudes and behaviors? What implications do these changes have for dating, singlehood, and cohabitation?

3. Describe the implications of contemporary patterns in love, dating and sexuality for current trends in singlehood and cohabitation. In your response, be sure to discuss how these relationships have changed over time.

Response Paper 3

In essay format, answer the questions using resources from UNIT 3. Draw on theory and key concepts presented in each lecture to make a cohesive argument.

1. Although many people are delaying childbearing, a majority eventually have children. To what extent are societal pressures at play? Base your argument on either the decision to have children or to remain childfree by choice.
2. Describe the connections between marriage, parenting, and aging. Identify a micro- and macro-level factor that has cascading effects on family decisions regarding marriage, parenting, and caregiving. In your response, include a discussion of how these patterns may differ by culture and historical context.
3. What does an aging society mean for economic wellbeing at macro and individual/family levels? Describe how changes within families, and in policies could be adopted to relieve burdens surrounding aging.

Response Paper 4

In essay format, answer the questions using resources from UNIT 4. Draw on theory and key concepts presented in each lecture to make a cohesive argument.

1. Drawing on information presented in the work/family lecture, what is the role of wealth inequality in the prevalence and endurance of family challenges?
2. Imagine you are a family researcher who needs to implement a program or policy to address and alleviate some of the family challenges presented in UNIT 4. Describe a change you might implement at the individual or societal level and discuss how it could positively affect family life.