HDFS 525: THEORIES OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
FALL SEMESTER 2002

INSTRUCTORS:
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MEETING TIME:
Mondays 12:20-3:20

We want to create a friendly, informal class atmosphere. We suggest that everyone bring a bag lunch to class and that people take turns bringing a snack for the break. Ruk and Nan will do this on the first day, and we will send around a sign up sheet for subsequent days.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed to provide an interdisciplinary introduction to issues pertaining to family studies, including some of the major theoretical lenses through which scholars have examined families, the various methods researchers have employed, and the substantive foci that have held scholars' attention in recent years. The instructors are an interdisciplinary team. Ruk Jayakody is a sociologist with demographic and economic leanings. Nan Crouter is a developmentalist with interests in family processes. We have designed the syllabus together so that it encompasses at least some of the many important strands in contemporary family scholarship. In addition to our substantive goals, we hope to encourage critical thinking and writing, integration, and lively discussion.

READINGS:
The weekly readings are all available from our Web page:
http://www.courses.psu.edu/hdfs/hdfs525_rxj9
and can be read there or downloaded and printed at your convenience.

In addition, we have developed a final exam question that asks you to read a memoir and comment on it in light of the course. We have identified memoirs for this purpose and ask that you choose one of them and read it sometime during the Fall. Your final exam question will ask you to comment on it in light of what we have read and talked about all semester. These books, all paperbacks, can be purchased on-line or ordered through the local Barnes and Noble books store. Under each title, we have copied the summary of the book from the Amazon.com web page so that you can make your selection:

ISBN: 0385425473

Editorial Reviews
Amazon.com
In Wild Swans Jung Chang recounts the evocative, unsettling, and insistently gripping story of how three generations of women in her family fared in the political maelstrom of China during
the 20th century. Chang's grandmother was a warlord's concubine. Her gently raised mother struggled with hardships in the early days of Mao's revolution and rose, like her husband, to a prominent position in the Communist Party before being denounced during the Cultural Revolution. Chang herself marched, worked, and breathed for Mao until doubt crept in over the excesses of his policies and purges. Born just a few decades apart, their lives overlap with the end of the warlords' regime and overthrow of the Japanese occupation, violent struggles between the Kuomintang and the Communists to carve up China, and, most poignant for the author, the vicious cycle of purges orchestrated by Chairman Mao that discredited and crushed millions of people, including her parents.


Editorial Reviews

*Amazon.com*
One reason Rick Bragg won a Pulitzer Prize for his feature articles at the *New York Times* is that he never forgets his roots. When he writes about death and violence in urban slums, Bragg draws on firsthand knowledge of how poverty deforms lives and on his personal belief in the dignity of poor people. His memoir of a hardscrabble Southern youth pays moving tribute to his indomitable mother and struggles to forgive his drunken father. *All Over but the Shoutin' is beautifully achieved on both these counts--and many more.*


Editorial Reviews

*Amazon.com*
Born in Hong Kong to parents who immigrated there from the Toishan region of mainland China, Elaine Mar came to America in 1972, when she was not quite 6. Colorado was quite a shock to a girl who had previously shared a five-room apartment with four other families. "She must be rich," Man Yee (her Chinese name) thought, emerging from the basement room where she and her parents slept to explore her Aunt Becky's three-bedroom house in a working-class Denver neighborhood. Not so: her aunt, father, and other relatives worked in the kitchen of a restaurant owned by others, and Mar's pungent memoir of her odyssey from poor immigrant to Harvard undergraduate shatters stereotypes about Asians as the "model minority." She was a smart girl and a good student who soon preferred the American name Elaine and "only spoke Chinese when absolutely necessary," but she found it hard to decipher the "cultural cues" on which social success in school depended. Honestly chronicling conflicts with her parents, whose horizons and expectations seemed unbearably limited, Mar outlines her youthful rebellion and their response with mature understanding. Her observation of American life is as clear-eyed and unsentimental as her self-portrait of a girl adrift between two cultures. --*Wendy Smith*
REQUIREMENTS:
There will be four requirements for this class. Please hand in two copies of everything so that both instructors can evaluate them.

(1) The first involves preparation for class and class participation. A graduate class is successful only in so far as participants take the opportunity to read assigned readings carefully and critically and come prepared to discuss the readings and their own ideas, reactions, and questions about those readings. We will ask individual students or pairs of students to be responsible for introducing the seminar each week. During the class session they are responsible for, they will give a 10 to 15 minute "set the stage" presentation that puts the readings in context. Depending on the set of readings that you are introducing, you may want to present some complementary research that the class would find interesting, bring in some related material (as we will do in Week 2), show a relevant clip from a video and generate discussion about how it fits with the readings, conduct a poll about something relevant to the day's topics, present a measure used in family research on a relevant topic, present material about the phenomenon of interest from the point of view of a different culture, or integrate a session topic with a current political issue or debate. We leave this to your imaginations! But we do ask that this overview in no way be a summary of readings.... Rather, it should be a provocative, substantive, stimulating "kick-off" session. Ruk and Nan will attempt to "model" what we have in mind at the beginning of the session on Week 2.
Your general class attendance and participation is worth 15 points.
Your 10 to 15 minute introduction to one of the weekly sessions is worth 10 points.

(2) The second assignment is to write a series of reaction papers about the readings. These are short, two-page responses to questions that we will pose in advance. You are required to write 5 of these papers. We would like everyone to hand one in for the weeks of September 22 and October 7 so that we can give you early feedback on both your thinking and your writing. Please choose any three additional weeks based on your interest in the material and your schedule, to write reactions papers. Each paper is worth 5 points. Thus, these papers are worth a total of 25 points.

(3) The third assignment is a take-home midterm exam. We will hand it out on October 16th, and it is due in class on October 28th. It will take the form of two essays (you will have a choice of questions to answer). The entire take-home should be about 5 typed pages, double-spaced (no longer than 6 pages, please). The midterm is worth 20 points.

(4) The fourth assignment is a take-home final exam. We hope that this will be creative and fun! Please choose one of the books listed above. Read it at your leisure. Later in the semester, we will provide a handout that explains how we want you to approach this final paper. We have in mind about a 7-8 page, typed, double-spaced paper that comments on the book in light of the material from the course. It is due by noon on December 16th. We want it to demonstrate your ability to think and write critically, to integrate material across topics and disciplines, and to apply what you have learned to something new. This paper will be worth 30 points. (Please note that Nan has a trip to Africa in early December and therefore our plan is to give everyone an “incomplete” and grade the final exams over the Christmas holiday. We will hand in grades first thing in the new year and apologize for the delayed closure.)
Summary of Grading Criteria:
Attendance and Participation in Class: 15 points
Introduction to one of weekly sessions: 10 points
5 Weekly Reaction Papers: 25 points
Midterm Take-Home Exam: 20 points
Final Take-Home Exam: 30 points

Important Dates:
September 22: Reaction Paper 1 due
October 7: Reaction Paper 2 due
October 16: Mid-term exam handed out
October 28: Mid-term exam due
December 16: Final exam due
(Unless otherwise indicated, visiting scholars—who are indicated in parentheses--will attend class from 2 to 3:00.)

Monday, September 9
INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILIES


Monday, September 16
MATE SELECTION


Monday, September 23
SOCIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES ON MARRIAGE


Monday, September 30 (Ruk away)
MARITAL DYNAMICS: PERSPECTIVES FROM CLINICAL, SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Cohan, C. L., & Kleinbaum, S. (2002). Toward a greater understanding of the cohabitation effect: Premarital cohabitation and marital communication. Journal of...
**Monday, October 7**

**IMPLICATIONS OF PARENT’S WORK**
(Note: We’ve moved the material related to work and family to this time so that it coincides with the October 10-11 symposium on campus: Work-Family Challenges for Low-Income Parents and their Children. Please register for the symposium on-line: http://www.pop.psu.edu/events/symposium/2002.htm and attend as much of it as you can. There is no registration fee for Penn State people.) No kick-off session for this week and class will end at 2:20pm.


**Wednesday, October 16 (Wednesday has a Monday schedule due to Fall Break)(Ruk away)**

**DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE (Paul Amato and Alan Booth visit from 1:00-2:00)**


**Monday, October 21 (Nan away)**

**FAMILIES OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE**

- Patterson, C.J. (2000). Family relationships of lesbian and gay men. *Journal of
Marriage and the Family, 62, 1052-1069.


Monday, October 28  *MID-TERM EXAM DUE * (Bob Burgess visits from 1:00-2:00)

**PERSPECTIVES ON PARENTAL INVESTMENT (BIOEVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES; HUMAN CAPITAL; SOCIAL CAPITAL)**


Monday, November 4 (David Eggebeen visits)

**CAREGIVING IN THE FAMILY**


Monday, November 11

**PARENTING AND PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS**

Monday, November 18 (Susan McHale visits)
SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS OVER THE LIFE COURSE


Monday, November 25
THE NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT OF FAMILY LIFE


Monday, December 2
FAMILIES, ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, AND PUBLIC POLICY