



Time & Day: Th, 1 pm – 4 pm

Location: York 116

Instructor: Pilar Hernandez-Wolfe, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Th 11 am to 1 pm and by appointment, 331 Rogers Hall

**Catalog Description:**

This course will focus on family systems' development through the life course. Using family systems and multigenerational developmental perspectives, this course will address challenges faced by contemporary families in the course of their development. Special attention will be given to the following areas: patterns and dynamics of family interaction within family systems; strategies employed by families to accomplish tasks; communication; intimacy; conflict management within family systems; various developmental stages such as transition from adolescence to adulthood; mate-selection and family development; transitions to marriage/civil union; parenting; parent-child relationship system over developmental stages; children during and after parental separation and/ or divorce; family tasks during middle adulthood; separation and divorce/family re-organization; single-parent household; remarriage and step-parenting; elderly-caring; and death, loss and bereavement in the family system.

**Credits:** 2 semester hours.

**Course Description:**

The purpose of this 3 unit course is to examine the various ways in which culture and social diversity affect the development of children and families. This critical course examines diverse developments across the entire life span. In order to help clients' lives, the therapist needs to have an understanding of clients' individual and family developmental processes, as well as socio-cultural and larger systemic issues that affect clients' behaviors, attitudes, and feelings. The course is designed to develop students' awareness of the common issues involved at each life stage and how social class and position partly determine the developmental process. Emphases in the class reflect the dramatic demographic changes that have occurred in recent history. The increase in life expectancy means that people will spend much more time in their families in various roles as parents, grandparents, and adult children. While this course will discuss the entire life span, a substantial portion of the class will focus on familial and systemic issues in later life.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO1: Students will demonstrate integrity, compassion and commitment to working with diverse groups.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate excellent therapeutic skills with individuals, couples, and families.

SLO 3: Students will demonstrate dedication to social justice and global citizenship.

### Learning outcomes

The objectives of the course are three-fold: learning theories/research about development through a cultural lens, gaining knowledge about diverse life transitions and how they are exhibited in treatment, and developing the self-of-therapist. The learning outcomes are derived from these three areas and include:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the biological, psychological, and sociological theories of human development.
- Show knowledge of the constant interplay between cultural factors and child development.
- Understand both micro- and macro-social forces, as well as intra-and inter-personal dynamics that affect development.
- Recognize the theoretical underpinnings of the life cycle/stage paradigm and the life course paradigm.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of possible developments across the life span.
- Acknowledge social constructionist influences on social location issues and how they affect development.
- Comprehend how systemic issues affect the life course.
- Contrast the interplay of the therapist's development with that of the clients'.
- Understand how families cope with normative and non-normative changes across the life span.
- Describe later life issues and apply gerontological theories to clinical work.

### **TEACHING METHODS**

A variety of teaching methods will be utilized during this course in order to achieve the above objectives. Among those methods will be assigned readings, class discussions, experiential activities, and lectures. Students will watch videos clips and engage in group learning tasks and role play demonstrations.

### **READINGS:**

Readings are to be completed for the day indicated. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the ideas and concepts discussed in the readings. You are responsible for all of the assigned readings, whether or not they are discussed in class. Please note that there are more readings assigned for some topics than for others.

### **CPSY Departmental Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness maybe seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Walsh, F. (2011). *Normal Family Processes, Fourth Edition: Growing Diversity and Complexity*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Goldberg, A. E. (2010). *Lesbian and gay parents and their children: Research on the family life cycle*. Washington, DC: APA Books. (selected chapters)

Peluso, P.R., Watts, R.E., & Parsons, M. (2013). *Changing Aging, Changing Family Therapy: Practicing With 21st Century Realities*. New York: Routledge.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Participation (20 pts)

- Full attendance to both days of class is required for a passing grade
- Giving attention to the instructor and/or other students when they are making a presentation.
- Demonstrating ability to recognize and use subtle non-verbal communication cues to assess your impact on your peers and participate in class.
- Demonstrating ability to be open about discussing the impact of your comments on your peers.
- Coming to class prepared (having read the assignment for the day)
- Contributing to in-class discussion based on the topics of discusses and the readings assigned. Contributions may include how you feel about the material but merely articulating your feelings is not sufficient. You are expected to put those feelings in context of your thoughts and analysis of the material.
- Engaging in group discussions with attention and energy.
- Asking questions of the instructor and/or other students regarding the material examined in that class.
- Providing examples to support or challenge the issues talked about in class.
- Making comments or giving observations about topics in the course, especially those that tie in the classroom material to "real world" problems, or try to integrate the content of the course.
- Dealing with other students and/or the instructor in a respectful fashion.
- Active listening. Students will be asked questions related to the course's readings randomly in class by other students and by the instructor. Your participation in small group discussions is also required.

*Assignments are due on the due date unless there is a documented emergency. Three points will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late. All written material should be typed and printed clearly. All assignments will be explained further in class.*

**Childhood Expression (20 pts)**. This is an opportunity for you to give an expression of a memory or experience or emotion from your childhood or adolescence. It is open to any artistic format to get in touch with all parts of your inner child. You will present it in small groups. Example of what you can do include: a painting, a poem, a musical composition, an essay.

**Grading Rubric for Childhood Expression and Reflection- worth 20 points**

	<b>Under-Developed (0-3 pts)</b>	<b>Marginal (3-9pt.)</b>	<b>Appropriate (9-14pt.)</b>	<b>Good (14-19 pts.)</b>	<b>Superior (20 pts.)</b>
Links to childhood experience, creativity, use of cultural context and family life cycle					

**Life Cycle Conversations (20 pts).** Learning not only occurs through the textbook, but also from each other. On designated days, a group of students will participate in a conversation about their own experiences as they relate to a particular stage or issue in the life cycle. Please sign up for a conversation that fits in with your life situation and that you would like to discuss in front of the class. You are not required to share something that you are not comfortable with, please only discuss that which you feel safe to share in a classroom context. In choosing a group, think about what is salient to you right now; for example, if you currently have young children, you will sign up for the “parenting” conversation. It is anticipated that groups will be comprised of about five people. The group will have approximately thirty minutes to converse about their personal reflections of what they are experiencing in the life stage. You should contextualize your experiences within the theoretical frameworks and concepts you learn from the readings. Your social location should be articulated in your discussion, such as sexual orientation, ethnic identity, religious orientation etc. The rest of the class will observe the interaction and witness the experience. They will be allowed to ask questions and give feedback at the end of the conversation. You will be graded on the following items.

**Grading Rubric for Life Cycle Conversation- worth 20 points**

	<b>Under-Developed (0-10 pts)</b>	<b>Marginal (11-13 pts.)</b>	<b>Appropriate (14-16 pts.)</b>	<b>Good (17-18 pts.)</b>	<b>Superior (19-20 pts.)</b>
Links conversation to reading					
Use of personal experiences					
Impact of social location on life stage					
Use of theoretical concepts					
Creativity and openness					

**Case Study (40 pts).** You will write a 5/6 page case study based on a clinical vignette dealing with life course issues, including aging. You should integrate the ideas, concepts, theories, and interventions as discussed in class and the readings.

**Grading Rubric for Case Study- worth 50 points**

	<b>Under-Developed (0-4 pts)</b>	<b>Marginal (5-10 pts.)</b>	<b>Appropriate (10-19 pts.)</b>	<b>Good (20-29 pts.)</b>	<b>Superior (30-40 pts.)</b>
Content of Case Study					
Linking theory to therapy					
Clinical Interventions					
Writing style and grammar					

## Grade Distribution

<b>A</b>	Superior work	94-100%	<b>B-</b>	Average work	75-79%
<b>A-</b>	Excellent work	90-93%	<b>C+</b>	Needs improvement	70-74%
<b>B+</b>	Very good work	85-89%	<b>C-</b>	Failing	below 65%
<b>B</b>	Good work	80-84%			

## Course Outline

Class 1	Introduction, overview of course	Personal Family life cycle sharing of family pictures Walsh Ch 16
Class 2	Views of family normality; aging	Walsh Ch 1, 2; Peluso Ch 1, 2
Class 3	Couples Lesbian and gay parents and their children	Walsh Ch 3, 4; Peluso Ch 6, 7; Goldberg Ch 2
Class 4	Parenting, child development and adoption	Walsh Ch 8, 18; Peluso Ch 3; Goldberg ch 3, 4 Childhood expression assignment
Class 5	Divorce, remarriage and stepfamily life; grief	Walsh Ch 4,5 , 6,7
Class 6	Divorce, remarriage and stepfamily life; grief	Walsh Ch 4,5 , 6,7
Class 7	Cultural dimensions of family functioning Family resilience	Walsh 11, 12, 13
Class 8	Spirituality and family life Rituals	Walsh 15, 20; ; Peluso Ch 10; Life cycle conversation
Class 9	Aging and illness	Peluso 3, 5; Walsh 19
Class 10	Research and practice applications	Walsh 21; Peluso 9
Case study	Due one week after the last class ends	Case study