LIST OF LECTURES

Michaelmas Term

Day: Thursday
Time: 11am-1pm
Beginning on: October 10th, 2019

Venue: Psychology Lecture Theatre, Downing Site

Lecture 1 (10th October): Professor Marinus van Ijzendoorn
Introduction to the psychology of the family

Lecture 2 (17th October): Dr Susanna Graham
Introduction to the social anthropology of the family

Lecture 3 (24th October): Dr Robert Pralat
Introduction to the sociology of the family

Lecture 4 (31st October): Professor Susan Golombok
LGBT families

Lecture 5 (7th November): Dr Jens Scherpe
The family and the legal system

Lecture 6 (14th November): Dr Susanna Graham
Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Culture, Gender and Kinship

Lecture 7 (21st November): Professor Susan Golombok
Assisted reproduction families

Lecture 8 (28th November): Dr Susan Imrie
Adolescents and the family

Lent Term

Day: Thursday
Time: 11am-1pm
Beginning on: January 16th, 2019

Venue: Psychology Lecture Theatre, Downing Site

Lecture 9 (16th January): Dr Sophie Zadeh
Single-parent and step-families

Lecture 10 (23rd January): Jo Lysons
Marriage
Lecture 11 (30th January): Dr Sophie Zadeh
Motherhood and the media

Lecture 12 (6th February): Dr Lucy Blake
Family estrangement

Lecture 13 (13th February): Dr Humera Iqbal
Families across cultures

Lecture 14 (20th February): Dr Helen Beckwith
Family therapy

Lecture 15 (27th February): Dr Vasanti Jadva
Doing family research

Lecture 16 (5th March): Anastasia de Waal
Social policy and the family

Easter Term

NO LECTURES

PAPER CONTACTS

Course Organiser
Dr Susan Imrie, si275@cam.ac.uk

Lecturers
Dr Helen Beckwith, hlb52@medschl.cam.ac.uk
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Anastasia de Waal, Anastasia.dewaal@civitas.org.uk
Dr Sophie Zadeh, s.zadeh@ucl.ac.uk
OUTLINE OF PAPER

Course content
In addition to psychology, this interdisciplinary paper draws on material from sociology, social anthropology, law and other relevant disciplines. Psychological and social perspectives on family relationships and child development are examined in relation to specific topics such as motherhood, fatherhood, marriage, new family forms, cross-cultural perspectives, adolescence, estranged family relationships, and family policy. Theories of family life are studied as well as methodologies of family research.

Mode of teaching
The course will be taught by lectures and discussion. Directors of Studies are advised that students should receive 3 supervisions per term on specialist topics. Students should sign-up for supervisions via an online sign-up system (link available on Moodle). There will be an optional session on essay writing skills on Monday 14th October at 11am (Room 606, Centre for Family Research) for students taking the paper from triposes in which essay writing has not been a frequent mode of learning. Development of writing skills will also be taught through supervisions. The paper will be assessed through a 3-hour examination.

Introductory reading


Lecture 1. Introduction to the Psychology of the Family: Attachment

Professor Marinus van IJzendoorn

When attachment is discussed, we usually think of young children with a specific behavioural system that orients them to their caregiver when they are hurt, anxious or alarmed. Yet attachment remains relevant into adulthood, if in a more diffuse way, in how we manage difficult feelings in the relationship with our children and other close relationships. This lecture will explore the transmission of attachment from parents to their infants, with an emphasis on two central measures of attachment: the Strange Situation Procedure and the Adult Attachment Interview. The various approaches to bridge the so-called ‘transmission gap’ and some implications for intergenerational transmission of maltreatment will be discussed.

Supervision Essay Question

What can research on infant and adult attachment tell us about the role of genetics and family environment in the intergenerational transmission of attachment?

Reading

*General background:*


Suggested reading:


Lecture 2. Introduction to the Social Anthropology of the Family

Dr Susanna Graham

This lecture introduces students to the social anthropology of the family by problematising “the family” as a self-evident concept. Rather than families, anthropologists tend to talk about “kinship” or “relatedness”, exploring the different ways and means by which persons consider themselves to be related. Through a historical look at the anthropological discipline, combined with a range of ethnographic examples, this lecture shows how terms which are often taken for granted in social analysis actually require considerable contextualisation. The lecture therefore prompts students to think about who counts as ‘family’, and why.

Supervision Essay Question

What does the term ‘relatedness’ convey that ‘family’ does not?

Reading


- especially chapters by Charis Thompson and Signe Howell


**Lecture 3. Introduction to the Sociology of the Family**

**Dr Robert Pralat**

This lecture will introduce students to sociological approaches to studying families, family life and family relationships. We will explore why the family has been a focus of attention for sociologists and how people's understandings of the family have shifted over time. Discussing various aspects of social change, we will consider why so much about the family sparks heated public debates. With a specific focus on Britain, we will seek to explain some of the reasons for why families are changing and why the change is welcomed by some but feared by others.

**Supervision Essay Questions**

Why has the notion of a nuclear family as the bedrock of society been both criticised and idealised?

OR

Is the concept of the family flexible enough to account for the change and diversity in intimate relations?

**Background Reading**


**Lecture 4. LGBT Families**

**Professor Susan Golombok**

This lecture will examine the influence of parental sexual orientation on children’s social, emotional and gender development.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Are children with same-sex parents at risk for psychological problems?

**Reading**


**Lecture 5. The family and the legal system**

**Dr Jens M. Scherpe**

The lecture will look at the role family law plays, or intends to play, with regard to the family. In particular, the lecture will discuss the increasing number challenges that the family law system because of societal and scientific developments - and possible answers.

**Supervision Essay Question**

What should the role of family law be - to regulate or to regularise family life?

**Reading**


*Eekelaar, Regulating Divorce (1997), especially pp. 142-145.


Lecture 6. Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Culture, Gender and Kinship

Dr Susanna Graham

It is forty years since the first “test-tube” baby was born via in vitro fertilisation (IVF). This lecture will look at how Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) have evolved over time and will explore the cultural, legal and ethical responses that have emerged to them. Through examining global perspectives on infertility and ARTs we will see how although the technologies have spread globally, their specific uses are framed and influenced by local cultural contexts and moral worlds. We will see how ARTs can both challenge and reinforce notions of gender and kinship, making us consider what being a mother or a father entails and what it means to be “biologically related”.

Supervision Essay Question

To what extent have assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) radically challenged the concept of the traditional nuclear family?

Reading


chapters 14, 15 and 16).


**Lecture 7. Assisted Reproduction Families**

**Professor Susan Golombok**

This lecture will look at parenting and child development in families created through assisted reproduction (*in vitro* fertilisation [IVF], donor insemination, egg donation and surrogacy), with an emphasis on families where parents lack a genetic and/or gestational link with their children. It will also examine how disclosure can impact on children’s well-being. The network of relationships that develop as a result of gamete donation and surrogacy and the implications of this will also be discussed.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Should children born using gamete donation and/or surrogacy be told about their birth?

**Reading**


Lecture 8: Adolescents and the family

Dr Susan Imrie

This lecture will look at the developmental stage of adolescence in relation to the family. It will examine the influence of parenting and family relationships on adolescent psychological well-being, as well as considering the roles of the peer group and changes in brain development during adolescence. It will also examine the outcomes for adolescents of teenage pregnancy and parenthood.

Supervision Essay Questions

Evaluate the role of parents in influencing adolescents’ psychological well-being?

OR

Teenage parenthood continues to be portrayed as problematic and undesirable. To what extent could such portrayals be considered misleading?

Reading


Lecture 9. Single-parent and stepfamilies

Dr Sophie Zadeh

This lecture will focus on types of single parent family, as well as stepfather and stepmother families, and the psychological consequences for parents and children.

Supervision Essay Question

Would you expect children born to single mothers by choice to be more at risk for psychological difficulties than children in single parent families resulting from divorce?
Reading


Biblarz, T. & Stacey, J. (2010) How does the gender of parents matter? *Journal of marriage and the Family, 72*, 3-22. [see also commentary on this paper by Strohschein pp. 23-28; Goldberg, pp. 29-34; Tasker, pp. 35-40; Biblarz & Stacey, 41-44]


**Lecture 10: Marriage**

**Jo Lysons**

This lecture looks at the psychology of marriage and couple relationships in general. The lecture will introduce students to the dynamic psychological processes within couple relationships, considering the couple relationship as a fundamental element within the wider family system,
and thinking about what happens when couple relationships break down. This will be within the
course of current and historical demographic trends, including the changing face of marriage
and the rise in cohabitation and divorce.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Can we predict who will get divorced?

**Reading**

Amato, P.R. (2010). Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of
Marriage and Family, 72*(3), 650-666.


Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. R. (2004). Understanding and altering the longitudinal course of

Coontz, S. (2006). The radical idea of marrying for love. In S. Coontz (Ed.), *Marriage, a History:
How Love Conquered Marriage*. Penguin: USA.

Cowan, P. A. & Cowan, C.P. (2002). Interventions as tests of family systems theories: Marital and
family relationships in children’s development and psychopathology. *Development and
Psychopathology, 14*(4), 731-759.

the UK and US: some relevant data from family research and intervention studies. *Journal of
Children’s Services, 3*(4), 4-16.

Dispute and Resolution*. New York: Guilford.

*Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*(3), 630-649.

48-63.


Psychology, 49*, 169-197


**Lecture 11. Motherhood and the Media.**

**Dr Sophie Zadeh**

This lecture will focus on the media and motherhood. It will discuss depictions of ‘non-traditional’ motherhood and related topics (assisted reproduction, fertility decline) in the mass media, and will consider the relationship between media representations and mothers’ views and experiences. The lecture will also look at the relationship between the mass media and its audience in general. Finally, the lecture will outline some of the theoretical approaches to understanding the impact of media messages about motherhood.

(Please note: students writing supervision essays on this topic are not expected to have read all of the reading suggestions. Essays should, however, combine empirical examples with a degree of theoretical insight. Texts good for theory are listed at the end).

**Supervision Essay Question**

“The pedagogical role of the media involves making judgements on what counts as valid and desirable parenting practices” (Assarsson & Aarsand, 2016). Discuss.

**Reading**


Texts good for theory


**Lecture 12: Estrangement - when relationships between family members are characterised by distance and inactivity.**

**Dr Lucy Blake**

The family is often assumed to be a source of support and security, in which relationships between family members are permanent. Relationships that are distant or inactive challenge these expectations and assumptions. This lecture will focus on estrangement between family members, and in particular, parents and their adult children. The causes, processes and consequences of estrangement will be explored.

**Supervision Essay Question**

What are the causes and consequences of estrangement between parents and their adult children?

**Reading**


Bland, B. (2018). It’s all about the money: The influence of family estrangement,
accommodation struggles and homelessness on student success in UK higher education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 20*(3), 68–89.


**Lecture 13. Doing Family Research**

**Dr Vasanti Jadva**

This lecture will look at different methodologies used to study families and will focus on examples of how family research is conducted and the advantages and disadvantages of different methods. The practical and ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when studying new family forms will also be discussed. Examples from selected studies will help gain an insight into the practicalities of doing family research.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Discuss the practical and ethical challenges of studying family relationships in new family forms.

**Reading**


**Lecture 14. Family Therapy**

**Dr Helen Beckwith**
This lecture will introduce students to the principles of family therapy. It will explore how family therapy’s theory and practice has evolved, including changing conceptualisations of power, the role of the therapist, and who or what is considered to be the “problem”.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Contrast and evaluate two approaches to family therapy.

**Reading**


**Lecture 15: Families across Cultures**

Dr Humera Iqbal
What role does culture play in family practices? Do traditional psychological theories and models account for cultural differences? This lecture attempts to answer these questions by exploring family life across different cultures. Using the example of self-awareness, we investigate different parenting styles and practices. Students will also be introduced to the sub-discipline of cross-cultural psychology and we will examine some key theories in the field.

Supervision Essay Question

How can cross-cultural studies of parenting and child development be used to challenge the dominance of Baumrind’s parenting style theory in psychology?

Reading


**Lecture 16. Social Policy and the Family**

Anastasia de Waal

This lecture presents the central concepts within family policy, moving from definitions of social policy to what specifically constitutes family policy. Family policy is then contextualised, exploring its interface with welfare policy, economics, politics and history.

The second half of the lecture goes on to look at key elements of family policy in the UK today, including demographic change and family structure, partnerships, parenting and work, and family income. Central to exploring influences on family life will be discussion around the dynamics between policy and social change, and the interdisciplinary tools used to understand these interactions.

**Supervision Essay Question**

What is the relationship between the changing family and family policy?

**Reading list**


