

University of Rhode Island

Department of Human Development & Family Studies

HDF 130G: “THIS IS US”: INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Emma Pascuzzi

Winter JTerm 2023: **January 2nd- January 20th**

Online, Asynchronous Class

E-mail: emmap8123@uri.edu

Available to meet over zoom as needed

<https://uri-edu.zoom.us/my/emmap8123>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students in this course will watch the hit television series, *This is Us*, and learn about key contemporary issues of human development, family systems, and cultural diversity. This course is designed to help students develop a critical understanding of how individuals develop within the cultural contexts of their families, communities, and social environments. In life, people are presented with decisions that compete with their individual wants and family needs. It is designed to help students grapple with difficult life decisions and consider how to be proactive and intentional in making decisions that will impact their lives, as well as those around them.

Students will learn about ethical and societal challenges related to diversity, privilege, prejudice, parenting and child-rearing, life and death, identity, relationships, and health and well-being. Individual and family development is also best understood through an interdisciplinary lens, with appreciation for how biological, psychological, social, and cultural processes impact human growth.

II. COURSE-LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The outcomes of this course are for students to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of culturally diverse individuals and families and the impacts of discrimination and racial inequality.
2. Explain key issues of contemporary significance (for example, transracial adoption, foster care, obesity, substance abuse, mental health, death, and relational and marital stressors) relevant to individual and family development.
3. Analyze similarities and differences across the disciplines of human development and family studies, psychology, and sociology as related to key issues of individual and family development.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of how to navigate ethical dilemmas between individual and family needs and goals in a way that promotes ethical decision making in families.

III. GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES

This course fully covers the Diversity and Inclusion Responsibilities (C3) outcome and the Grand Challenges (G) outcome.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION RESPONSIBILITIES (FULLY/C3)

1. Demonstrate knowledge of identity development, prejudice, inequality, privilege, and oppression as they relate to culturally diverse individuals and families living in the US.
2. Demonstrates knowledge of the impact of discrimination and racial inequality in culturally diverse families and marginalized communities.

3. Develops problem solving skills related to navigating intersecting cultural identities in individuals and families.
4. Develops an understanding of the experience of marginalized individuals and families living in poverty or disability due to mental and physical illness.

GRAND CHALLENGE

This course is a Grand Challenge course, and the following explains how each key component of Grand Challenge courses is met:

Inclusion of complex issues of contemporary significance;

The television series, *This is Us*, is so popular because it addresses many complex issues of contemporary significance. At its core, the story of *This is Us* examines individual and family development across cultural, social, and generational contexts, and explores how these contexts shape physical, mental, and social health and wellness. Topics of particular importance for future health and human service professionals to understand and consider, including transracial adoption, obesity, miscarriage, substance abuse, mental health, death, and relational and marital stressors, will be explored. Therefore, the class will select topics of discussion each week based on content from the show, which will provide students opportunities to learn and apply their knowledge.

Interdisciplinary approach;

This course will draw from 3 core disciplines including human development & family studies (HDF), psychology, and sociology. While this course falls within the HDF department, HDF itself is a very interdisciplinary field, and psychology and sociology influence HDF scholars and vice versa. Our goal is to help students understand similarities and differences across these three fields. Almost all topics discussed in the course span multiple fields, so we will work to ensure at least two perspectives are covered for each topic. For example, from HDF we will discuss what defines a family and how family dynamics play a role in shaping human development, while also covering multiculturalism and how growing up in a biracial family has its strengths and challenges, a topic of interest to sociology.

Recognition and application of ethical principles;

The television series, *This is Us*, provides many opportunities to discuss key ethical challenges that confront people on a daily basis. Ethical challenges will be examined from a family systems framework, discussing how to navigate conflicts between individual and family needs and goals in a way that promotes ethical decision making in families. Topics such as transracial adoption, gentrification, healthcare, end of life, employment, family workload equity, and child-rearing decisions will provide ample opportunities for students to discuss cultural, personal and family ethical dilemmas that are encountered in society. This will also enable students to grow in understanding how to address ethical dilemmas they may encounter personally and professionally, particularly if they pursue a career as a future health and human service professional.

IV. IDEA OBJECTIVES RELATED TO THE COURSE

This class works to address the following IDEA learning objectives:

- 1) Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) related to individual and family development,
- 2) Learning to *apply* course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions),
- 3) Learning to *analyze* and *critically evaluate* ideas, arguments, and points of view.

V. REQUIRED READINGS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Students are **required** to purchase a Skyepack resource to gain access to all the course readings. See the Brightspace site for information on how to access the resource. This will cost \$35.
- Students **need** to watch the show, *This is Us*, Seasons 1-3. These seasons are available on [NBC.com](https://www.nbc.com) for free (with a cable log in), or students can access the show through Hulu, which currently costs \$5.99/month (with the first month free).

VI. CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

For this online course, Brightspace is a large component of our “classroom.” Please refer to the (START HERE) module for a detailed information on how this course will run via Brightspace, which tools you will need, and how to use those tools. There is also a URI Online Learning Orientation (<https://web.uri.edu/online/online-learning-orientation/>) to help you become more comfortable using Brightspace.

Since this is an asynchronous online course, the importance of regular Brightspace/Skyepack logins and active participation cannot be overstated. I will gauge your participation by your regular, on-time postings and responses, and timely assignment submissions.

Each week will include readings, videos, activities, discussions, and/or quizzes based on the topic of the week. We will also include Guest Lecture videos or facilitated discussions related to faculty and staff interests in HDF and in related disciplines. In addition, some of the readings, videos, and/or applied activities will encourage students to explore interdisciplinary and ethical principles. Please refer to the Class Schedule at the end of this syllabus and the Brightspace site for details on how and when you will be expected to contribute to the course.

The syllabus is your map to this course. This course is divided into 3 weeks. For each week on Brightspace, you will find the learning objectives for the week, content overview, and a to do list of assigned readings, videos, written assignments, quizzes, and discussion activities. Each week you should plan to spend approximately 3-4 watching the required episodes, and 4-5 hours completing the “to-do” list for that week (readings, videos, discussion posts, assignments, studying, quizzes).

VII. ASSIGNMENTS

There are several assignments for this class. Some of the details are included here; but all assignments will be discussed in more detail as the semester progresses. **NOTE: SINCE THIS IS AN ACCELERATED COURSE, LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

1. QUIZZES

There will be eight quizzes throughout the semester that will be completed on Brightspace. The quizzes will require you to reflect on the TV show and readings, demonstrating an understanding of course concepts and critical analysis skills. These quizzes will involve mostly multiple-choice questions with some true/false, matching, and open-ended questions also included. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

2. APPLICATION ASSIGNMENTS

There will be four application assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment is meant to help you thoughtfully consider the role of culture, ethics, and interdisciplinary perspectives for the topics discussed in class.

3. DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION

To receive discussion points, you will need to partake in the discussion forums associated with each module. You will be to post thoughtfully as well as respond to peer posts. Each discussion will require you to reflect on content from the show AND also refer to content from the assigned readings/videos that are on Brightspace/Skyepack. **NOTE: SINCE THIS IS AN ACCELERATED COURSE, YOU WILL HAVE DAILY DISCUSSION POSTS. PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO RESPOND TO YOUR PEERS POSTS AS WELL.**

4. FINAL EXAM

A cumulative final will be given as part of the final module based on key content presented in the course.

VIII. GRADING

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	% of Grade	POINTS
Quizzes	Quiz 1: Module 1 Quiz 2: Module 3 Quiz 3: Module 5 Quiz 4: Module 7 Quiz 5: Module 8 Quiz 6: Module 11 Quiz 7: Module 12 Quiz 8: Module 13	21%	21 points (3 points each; drop lowest)
Application Assignments	Assn. 1: Module 2 Assn. 2: Module 4 Assn. 3: Module 6 Assn. 4: Module 9	20%	20 points (5 points each)
Discussion Questions	Post + respond to 2 classmates All Modules	29%	29 points (2 points per week + 1 point based on overall contribution)
Final Exam	Module 13	30%	30 points
TOTAL:		100%	100 points

What Grades Mean on Individual Assignments:

A = Exceptional or outstanding work.

B = Fully meets undergraduate standards.

C = Unsatisfactory, below undergraduate standards, although all aspects of assignments were completed.

D = Unsatisfactory, below undergraduate standards, some aspects of assignments not done.

F = Failure, assignment incomplete.

How Final Grades Will Be Determined:

A	93-100%	B+	87-89.5%	C+	77-79.5%	D+	67-69.5%
A-	90-92.5%	B	83-86.5%	C	73-76.5%	D	60-66.5%
		B-	80-82.5	C-	70-72.5%	F	59.5% and below

IX. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Computer access to the internet is required in order to successfully navigate this course. The course is delivered through the Brightspace Learning Management System (LMS) platform, which is a set of web applications designed to work with modern web browsers. Recommended browsers (those with the most QA testing effort against them)

are Google Chrome, Safari, and Mozilla Firefox. The mobile versions of these browsers also work well with the majority of operations in Brightspace. Internet Explorer is not recommended.

GRADING FOR WRITTEN WORK

All written work is expected to meet basic standards of writing proficiency. You are expected to use people-first language and to avoid sexist or culturally insensitive language. Written work will be graded for thoroughness and completeness of content, clarity and logic of presentation (e.g. headings), and evidence of critical thought. In addition, papers will be graded for grammar, syntax, and spelling.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz, or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. **Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite, and reference the work of others with integrity.** The following are examples of academic dishonesty:

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently; Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors

The issue of digital plagiarism has raised concerns about ethics, student writing experiences, and academic integrity. Be aware that papers may be checked against web pages and databases of existing papers. Although students may never have engaged in intentional plagiarism, many students do incorporate sources without proper citation, which is a violation. *Please see me if you are uncertain about how to appropriately cite sources.*

A grade of "F" (0 points of the assignment) will be earned if a student is found to engage in academic dishonesty (including all listed above). The instructor will file a Report of Cheating or Plagiarism with the Dean's Office. Depending on the severity of the dishonesty, students may be assigned a grade of "F" for the course.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are responsible for turning in all assignments on the due dates. **NOTE: SINCE THIS IS AN ACCELERATED COURSE, LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY & RESPONSE

I am available by email (emmap8123@uri.edu). I will (almost) always answer your e-mail within 24 hours and am also available to meet on Zoom.

STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with Disability Services for Students Office at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098 (<http://www.uri.edu/disability/dss/>).

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

This is a challenging course. Success requires that students keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. The Academic Enhancement Center (www.uri.edu/aec) is a great place to do this. At the AEC, students can work alone or in groups, and tutors and professional learning specialists are available to help each person learn, manage time and work, and study well. They are open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Fridays until 1 p.m. All services are free (the coffee is free as well!), and no appointment is needed. You can call them for complete information at 874-2367, or stop by the center on the fourth floor of Roosevelt Hall.

ANTI-BIAS STATEMENT

We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the URI Bias Response Team at www.uri.edu/brt. There you will also find people and resources to help.

COVID PRECAUTIONS

The University is committed to delivering its educational mission while protecting the health and safety of our community. As members of the URI community, students are required to comply with standards of conduct and take precautions to keep themselves and others safe.

X. CLASS SCHEDULE

Assignments are due by 11pm.

Module + Due Dates	Topics + Episode*	Key Concept + Ideas	Assignments due:
START HERE January 3 rd @ 11pm		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review “START HERE” Introduction to: Instructor + Students 	
1. January 4 th @ 11pm	Interdisciplinary Perspective to Understand Families S1 E1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological Systems Theory Ethical Decision Making Perspectives of human development, psychology, and sociology 	Module 1 Quiz 1 Discussion Post
2. January 5 th @ 11pm	Family Multiculturalism S1 E 4 & 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of diversity Transracial families and the impact on development How to make the best decisions for adopted children’s development Unconscious bias and privilege Intro to microaggressions and how to cope with them 	Module 2 Application Assignment 1 Discussion + Respond
3. January 6 th @ 11pm	Parenting + Family Dynamics S1 E 8&11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural differences in parenting styles Current issues related to adoption Parenting and prioritizing family needs ahead of personal needs Ethical decision that people must make in difficult situations 	Module 3 Quiz 2 Discussion + Respond
4. January 7 th @ 11pm	Aging, Health, + Social Care S1 E 12&13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making end of life decisions Societal perspectives on widowhood Caregiving Aging and social isolation 	Module 4 Application Assignment 2 Discussion + Respond
5. January 9 th @ 11pm	Mental Health S1 E 15&18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intergenerational trauma and how it affects family development Various mental health issues 	Module 5 Quiz 3

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Societal stigma related to mental health 	Discussion + Respond
6. January 10 th @ 11pm	Substance Abuse S2 E 2&5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Precipitating factors and how our environment and personal decisions impact substance use ● Making decisions to combat genetic predisposition ● Short term and long term + physical and social consequences of SA 	Module 6 Application Assignment 3 Discussion + Respond
7. January 11 th @ 11pm	Child Development S2 E 7&8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Healthy Development ● Adoption ● Emotional aspects of adoption ● Child Neglect + Foster Care 	Module 7 Quiz 4 Discussion + Respond
8. January 12 th @ 11pm	Child Behavior + Body Image S2 E 12&13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child temperament ● Dynamics of siblings ● Childhood Obesity ● Obesity and societal stigma + prejudice ● Eating Disorders ● Fame/Attention related to weight loss 	Module 8 Quiz 5 Discussion + Respond
9. January 13 th @ 11pm	Death, Trauma, + Grief S2 E 14&15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural perspectives/beliefs about death ● Death and the life phase ● Decisions about end-of-life care, caregiving, and home care 	Module 9 Application Assignment 4 Discussion + Respond
10. January 14 th @ 11pm	Marriage + Relationships S2 E18 S3 E 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Role expectation in family + how this may vary by social class ● Parenting burden ● Gender roles + expectations in marriage 	Module 10 Discussion + Respond
11. January 16 th @ 11pm	Socioeconomic Status, Poverty, + Social Justice S3 E 5&6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact of: homelessness on wellbeing + gentrification on families ● Poverty + access to resources 	Module 11 Quiz 6 Discussion + Respond

12. January 17 th @ 11pm	Pregnancy + Sexuality S3 E 9&16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infertility + couples decision making about treatment options • Emotional responses to miscarriage • NICU experiences • Prematurity + • Adolescent sexual self-identity • Older adult sexuality, sexual fluidity, bisexuality, Coming out as LGBT 	Module 12 Quiz 7 Discussion + Respond
13. January 18 th @ 11pm	Tying it all together... S3 E17 and 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course reflection • Course evaluations • Final assessments 	Quiz 8 Final Discussion Final Exam DUE 1/19

*S=season, E=episode

Note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Modifications to the course and the course schedule may be made based on the needs of the instructor and the interests of the class.